

INSPECTION REPORT

CUFFLEY SCHOOL

Cuffley

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117565

Headteacher: Mr John Fowler

Lead inspector: Selwyn Ward

Dates of inspection: 28th February – 3rd March 2005

Inspection number: 266749

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	413
School address:	Theobalds Road Cuffley Potters Bar Hertfordshire
Postcode:	EN6 4HN
Telephone number:	01707 888100
Fax number:	01707 888101
Email address:	admin.cuffley@thegrid.org.uk
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Collett
Date of previous inspection:	15 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cuffley is a large suburban primary school in Hertfordshire catering for boys and girls aged 3 to 11. There are more boys in the school than girls. All but a small number of pupils are white and of British background. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Although pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, they generally come from very advantaged homes. This is reflected in the low number known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs is low, although a relatively high proportion of these have a statement of special educational need. The specific learning needs covered include severe learning difficulties and autism. The vast majority of pupils benefit from some pre-school or playgroup experience before starting in the nursery. As a result, children have well above average skills and knowledge when they start school. They are confident, with well-developed social skills, but many are used to having things done for them.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9271	Selwyn Ward	Lead inspector	
9053	Viv Phillips	Lay inspector	
2330 0	Lily Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics; art and design; design and technology; music; physical education; special educational needs
2328 8	Marianne Harris	Team inspector	<i>Foundation Stage</i> ; science; history; geography; religious education
3070 5	Graham Stephens	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology (ICT); art and design; design and technology; music; physical education; citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cuffley is a good and improving school. It provides a **good quality of education** for its pupils. It provides good value for money. Very good leadership and management have resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The teaching is good and pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Pupils are developing strong independent learning skills as a result of the school's successful focus on learning and thinking.
- The headteacher has been very successful in establishing an ethos throughout the school where every child feels valued and is keen to achieve their best.
- Pupils behave very well and benefit from the many opportunities they have to take on responsibility.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen, as has the quality of teaching. All of the weaknesses identified in the last report have been successfully tackled, so that some, for example assessment, are now among the many strengths of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high (top 5 per cent of schools); A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E* - very low (bottom 5 per cent of schools). Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make over their time in school as well as how well they do in lessons. **Achievement is good.** This is true for pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with special educational needs. Children's standards are generally well above average when they join the school. They achieve well in their time in the nursery and reception years so that, by the start of Year 1, the vast majority exceed the expected goals for children of this age. Year 2 test scores have risen sharply. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, with results in reading, writing and mathematics that are all well above average in comparison with schools nationally and with those with a similar number of children known to be eligible for free school meals. Test scores in Year 6 have fluctuated from year to year, but they were above average last year. This represents good achievement in relation to how well the same children did when they were in Year 2. Work seen shows a similar picture throughout the school, with pupils achieving well. Pupils in the current Year 6 had relatively low test scores when they were in Year 2 and did not do as well then as they should have done. They have caught up on lost

ground, and standards are currently above average in mathematics and well above average in English and science. In other subjects inspected, standards throughout the school in religious education are well above those expected. Standards are above average in art. It is only in ICT that standards are merely average. Given the pupils' abilities and the experience many have of using ICT at home, they are not doing as well in ICT as they should be.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils behave and get on very well with one another, and are very keen to learn. They have embraced with enthusiasm the school's policy on developing their independent learning and thinking skills, and they enjoy the many opportunities they have to take on responsibility. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Although the length of the school day is below the recommended minimum, time is generally used well and all *National Curriculum* requirements are met. The school makes particularly good use of opportunities to link subjects together, so that work in history is followed up in design and technology and in the books read by pupils in English. Cuffley's innovative emphasis on developing pupils' thinking and learning skills means that children learn to apply their skills in becoming, for example, "history detectives" rather than just learning historical facts. Accommodation and resources are good, overall. Pupils benefit from very good guidance and support and their views are valued. Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school and of their children's education. They raise considerable sums and many help in school. Links with other schools and with the wider community are good.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers, even those who are only at the school temporarily to cover maternity leave, know and get on with the pupils very well. Lessons are well planned, building on the skills pupils have developed so that they are able to apply those skills to new knowledge. Teachers have good subject expertise – particularly in English, mathematics and science. Time is mostly used very well, with pupils set strict time limits for activities so that they work hard and get a lot done. Work is frequently, but not always, well matched to pupils' different abilities. Opportunities, however, are missed for using ICT as a tool for learning. Assessment is good. The involvement of pupils in assessing for themselves the progress they are making is very good but the quality of marking varies too widely. Very effective use is made of individual learning targets in English, but in other subjects, including mathematics, pupils do not know exactly what they need to do to do better.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has very successfully introduced an innovative curriculum and a school ethos with a strong focus on pupils' learning and on children achieving their best. School self-evaluation is very well established. It is accurate and is helping to drive forward school improvement. There have been many staff changes over the past year due to teachers' maternity leave, and it is a mark of how well these changes have been managed that little concern was raised by parents over any disruption to learning. Staff with leadership responsibilities do an effective job. Governance is good. Governors are supportive of the school. They ensure that all legal requirements are fully met and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that could be improved.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils express very favourable views of almost everything about the school. Some parents, however, would like more information about how well their children are doing. Inspectors agree. Although reports give good information to parents on their child's progress in English, mathematics and science, reporting of other subjects is often limited to information about what the class has studied rather than how well the child is doing.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their ICT skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

*"I like school because we learn a lot and do our best."
- Year 4 pupil*

Standards are well above average throughout the school, and pupils of all abilities are achieving well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science.
- The school's focus on pupils' thinking skills is helping them to apply what they have learnt rather than merely to memorise facts.
- Pupils are not achieving as well as they could in ICT because they do not get enough opportunities to develop and use their ICT skills in other subjects.

Commentary

1. Children join the school with a range of capabilities, but, overall, they are well above average, although many are unused to doing things for themselves. The curriculum in the nursery and reception years is well matched to the children's needs and, as a result of this and good teaching, the children achieve well. The vast majority significantly exceed almost all of the early learning goals, which is the standard expected of children by the end of the reception year. Their progress is satisfactory rather than good in physical development, however, because the children do not have enough access to a suitable outside play area.
2. The tables below show the average points scores attained in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests in 2004 (with the 2003 scores in brackets). One point represents roughly one term's progress, so the tables show, for example, that in Year 2, pupils last year were around two terms ahead of pupils nationally in mathematics. In common with other schools in the area, Cuffley was last year part of a trial study into a different system of testing in Year 2. The comparisons for Year 2 scores in 2004 are therefore with other schools nationally that were part of the same trial, rather than with all schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.4 (14.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.4 (17.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.1 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Results in the Year 2 tests last year were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards seen during the inspection were broadly similar, although writing skills are not as strong overall as those in reading and mathematics because there is a small

number of pupils whose writing skills are still at a quite early stage of development. Pupils' test scores, and the standards seen, represent good achievement. In comparison with schools where a similar proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, the standards are well above average. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in science.

4. Results dipped last year in the Year 6 tests. They were above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. When compared with schools where pupils had performed similarly in the tests they took in Year 2, this represents good achievement. In this year group, and in the current Year 6, the pupils did not do as well as they should have done in the tests they took when they were in Year 2. The Year 6 test results, and the evidence from work in the current Year 6, shows that pupils have caught up ground lost through any previous underachievement. They do particularly well in Year 6, where they benefit from much very good teaching. Standards in the current Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (30.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.5 (29.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.5 (30.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. In other subjects inspected, standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average in religious education, in response to good teaching. They are above average in art, where teaching is satisfactory. Only in ICT are standards only in line with those expected nationally. Given pupils' high ability and aptitude, and that many have access to computers at home, this represents a degree of underachievement because pupils are capable of doing better. The school has already recognised that there are some shortcomings in their resources for ICT, which contributes to this, and that pupils currently have too few opportunities to use ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they benefit from good support in class that enables them to fully participate and to make good progress towards meeting the learning targets set for them in their individual education plans. A number of able pupils have been identified as being gifted and talented. They too achieve well because of the high level of challenge in much of the work they are set.
7. Throughout the school, achievement has improved since the last inspection in line with the improvement seen in teaching and learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

*"There are a lot of responsibilities and I like to be kept busy."
- Year 6 pupil*

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal qualities, including their spiritual moral, social and cultural awareness develop very well. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's very positive ethos and learning culture shine through its everyday life so pupils of all backgrounds and abilities enjoy school and behave very well.
- Pupils are actively involved in ways of learning and thinking for themselves, thrive on the challenges set and want to explore ideas further.
- Pupils develop an impressive sense of responsibility to others within and beyond the school community.
- Too much valuable schooling is missed for avoidable reasons, such as holidays in term-time.

Commentary

8. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development have improved very substantially since the last inspection, when two of the key weaknesses identified were over pupils' lack of independent learning skills and their awareness of other cultures. Both of these are now strengths of the school.
9. Cuffley nurtures pupils' original ideas and personal qualities through all it does, as evident in adults' lively interactions with children and colourful, stimulating displays around the building. A consistent focus on different, exciting ways of learning captures pupils' imagination very well so they really want to be in school. Many insist that they *"like everything about it!"* They strive to behave very well, not only because adults expect this but also because they have a very strong sense of right and wrong. They are quick to notice if people misbehave and to own up if they do wrong. On occasion, one or two pupils who are less used to taking turns to hear all points of view, set out to get more than their fair share of attention, but pupils are adamant that serious misbehaviour is rare. There have been no exclusions over the past year.
10. Pupils have been fired with enthusiasm for understanding and for using the full range of skills involved in learning, thinking and drawing conclusions, so relish activities where these are put to the test in full. They love all the challenges and brainteasers set, including tantalising clues to the character chosen by the headteacher for *World Book Day*. In discussions with inspectors, pupils reflected thoughtfully on experiences of school and gave telling examples of the advantages of their range of analytical skills. They value the way that these help with solutions to puzzles and insight into other lives. For example, they know why they are raising funds for an African school and understand that they can learn much from Kenya and its children, whose experiences are so different from theirs.
11. The school values high standards not just in learning, thinking and academic work, but in personal development, so provides a rich variety of opportunities to foster different personal qualities. It has a very high regard for pupils' capacity to use initiative and take responsibility so gives them every opportunity to take the lead and set an example. Year 6 pupils have a key role to play in setting the tone and helping others, which is marked by badges they wear to show they are role models. Many pupils have particular jobs to do in class or just volunteer happily to help teachers because this is part of the school culture, so all through the day children of all ages are part of a hive of activity. As one pupil stressed *"there are a lot of responsibilities and I like to be kept busy."*
12. The school plans imaginatively to create awe-inspiring moments, including fascination for all those in Year 5 who watched spellbound as a clutch of eggs hatched. Adults and children were enthralled and excited to see ten fluffy chicks cheeping and tottering in the incubator. Pupils' social and cultural awareness are fostered equally well through

collaborative work, team-building activities and carefully planned enriching experiences such as a visit to a mosque to deepen understanding of similarities and differences in faith and custom. Pupils value all their experiences.

13. In the nursery and reception classes, almost all of the children surpass the early learning goal for personal, social and emotional development. Though many join the school with already well-developed social skills, they are used to having things done for them, but they quickly develop independence so that they are able to do things for themselves as well as work and play co-operatively with others.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data:	0.1
National data	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

14. Attendance dipped below the national average in the year before the inspection, although unauthorised absence was a little lower than in schools generally. Year 6 pupils make more visits to a wider range of secondary schools than is often the case, which affects overall figures. A significant factor, however, is that more and more families have taken children away for holidays in school time. The school and its governors are acutely aware of the need to sharpen guidance on unnecessary absence, including frequent term time holidays, before their effect on children's experiences and all round achievement starts to show. Absence rates to date this year are lower, suggesting a small improvement in attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The teaching is good. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. There is a very effective partnership with parents and there are good links with other schools and the local community. Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are very good.

Teaching and learning

*"I enjoy my lessons and finding out new ideas."
- Year 6 pupil*

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are developing strong independent learning skills.
- Most lessons have a brisk pace, so that pupils get a lot done.
- Work is usually well matched to pupils' different capabilities.
- Pupils are given very good guidance in English on what they need to do to improve, but they do not have targets for improvement in mathematics.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	10 (19%)	26 (50%)	15 (29%)	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 profile of teaching is significantly better than was seen in the last inspection. Teaching is particularly good in Year 6, and this contributes to the often very good progress that the older pupils are making. Teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is generally better than in other subjects. The headteacher has led a whole-school initiative to focus effort on developing pupils' learning and thinking skills. Several initiatives are used in the school, all of which are understood and appreciated by even the youngest pupils. In developing pupils' thinking, teachers make reference to the *thinking hats* concept promoted by psychologist Edward de Bono, so that teachers and pupils throughout the school refer, for example, to *red hat thinking* when discussing their emotional response to a piece of writing. Pupils are similarly conscious of *the 5 R's* (none of them 'riting or 'rithmetic) of effective learning: *responsibility, reflectivity, resilience, resourcefulness and reasoning*. The effect of these initiatives is to develop strongly the responsibility that pupils take for their own learning. This was identified as a weakness in the last inspection report, when pupils were too passive in lessons. Now it is a considerable strength of the school.
16. Teachers know the pupils well and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. This is the case even among temporary staff, some of whom are quite new to the school because they are covering maternity and sick leave. The friendly relationships that permeate the school contribute to the ethos where pupils are made to feel valued. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons, and this helps them make similar progress to the other pupils in the class. Sometimes, however, teaching assistants could be more actively deployed by the class teacher to make fullest use of this valuable resource. A daily slot is allocated to help pupils develop their reading skills, and this is particularly helpful to some of the pupils with special educational needs. Since the last inspection, criticisms about withdrawal from lessons and assemblies have been addressed effectively.
17. Lessons are well planned. Particularly in English, mathematics and science, teachers make effective use of the information they have from marking and other assessment about how well each child is doing so as to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' different capabilities. As a result, most lessons provide appropriate challenge to pupils of all abilities and pupils make good progress because they are helped to build on what they have learnt before.
18. Time is very well used in most lessons. When pupils are set individual, paired or group activities, it is usually against a set time limit, often marked with a 2-, 3- or 5-minute egg-timer. This helps ensure that pupils settle very quickly to their tasks and they get a lot done in the time. Even where there are some very short (15-minute) or very long (90-minute) lessons timetabled, these are productive because the time is used well and pupils are helped to settle to work without fuss.
19. Where teaching, though satisfactory, was relatively less effective, it was because work was not always well matched to pupils' abilities. In these lessons, pupils of widely different abilities were set identical work. Sometimes, where teachers forgot to use

timers, pupils were slower to get settled to the tasks set and the pace of the lesson was much more pedestrian.

20. Assessment was identified as a weakness in the last inspection. It is now good, overall. The involvement of pupils in assessing for themselves the progress they are making is very good. A simple recording system using smiley faces to indicate success or lack of understanding in achieving a learning aim enables pupils of all ages to log their own progress and communicate it clearly to their teachers. Recording sheets typically then go on to, more challengingly, ask pupils to detail in their own words what they have learnt, what more they would like to find out and how they think they can improve. There are examples within the school of some very good marking that gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. This is not consistent in every subject nor in every class, however. Some marking does little more than acknowledge that work has been done. Pupils have very good, precise targets in English identifying what they need to focus on, particularly in their written work. They know what their targets are and they refer to them when they are writing. There are no similar targets, however, in other subjects such as mathematics. In these subjects, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to better.

The curriculum

"I love everything we do. Best of all are the school trips. I would not change anything. I love the school the way it is."

- Year 5 pupil

Curriculum provision is good. There is a satisfactory range of clubs and other out-of-school activities. Resources and accommodation are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Topics are made more interesting and covered in greater depth because they are linked together well.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop and use their skills rather than just learn facts.
- There are not enough opportunities to use ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects.

Commentary

21. Although the school day is below the recommended minimum, time is generally used well and all *National Curriculum* requirements are met. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is matched well to the children's needs, particularly taking account of their generally high level of capabilities, although the lack of an outside play area impinges on the progress the children make in their physical development. In Years 1 to 6, the linking of subjects means that pupils' enthusiasm can be harnessed and they can follow up topics in greater depth. In Year 6, for example, work on World War II in history had been linked to books being read in English while, in design technology, pupils designed and built motorised balsa wood combat vehicles. In each of these subjects, pupils' interest and understanding was heightened through the parallel work being done in the other subjects. Opportunities are missed, however, to use ICT as a tool for learning in other curriculum subjects. Although all of the expected aspects of ICT are covered, pupils do not, as a result, do as well in ICT as they are capable of doing.

22. Some subjects are taught irregularly but in bursts. For example, a recent Technology Week involved a block of design technology lessons over consecutive afternoons. Some parents voiced some reservations about this approach, but inspectors found no evidence that it was adversely affecting standards. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is good and fully meets the requirements of the *Code of Practice*. Pupils' individual education plan targets are precise and enable support to be organised appropriately in lessons, particularly helping pupils to make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
23. The school has been highly innovative in introducing a range of initiatives over the past eighteen months to promote and develop pupils' thinking skills and different styles of learning. These permeate every curriculum subject, as well as whole-school activities, such as assemblies, and they have resulted in very good improvement in the curriculum as compared with the last inspection. Rather than merely learning facts about science, history and geography, for example, this is resulting in pupils increasingly using their skills within each subject and applying it to what is being taught. As a result, pupils are acting as scientists, historians and geographers in lessons. In each of these subjects, the emphasis on deduction through investigation is boosting learning and achievement.
24. Extracurricular provision through after-school and lunchtime clubs is satisfactory. Many of the after-school activities are run by outside organisations, including local sports clubs, and the participation rate is not particularly high. Some good enrichment of the curriculum is provided through the *Cuffley Challenge*, which involves voluntary "thinking" assignments for pupils in each year group to take home with them. Able pupils have the opportunity to tackle *Challenges* set for older pupils.
25. The accommodation and resources are good, overall. The school has some high quality facilities, including two halls, neither of which have to be used for lunches, and an attractive well-stocked library. Some classrooms, however, are very cramped, particularly for older pupils. The lack of an outside play area for children in the nursery and reception classes is also a weakness. The school has already identified the need to upgrade and improve its ICT facilities. Some of the school's computers are approaching the end of their useful life.

Care, guidance and support

*"I like my school because teachers help me when I am stuck."
- Year 2 pupil*

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are catered for very well. Pupils benefit from very good support and guidance. The school takes pupils' views very seriously.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good care pupils receive ensures that they are ready to respond to the school's efforts to inspire them to learn.
- Pupils feel valued and respected so are confident enough to have a go with hard work and take a risk with tricky, thought-provoking questions, without fear of failure.
- Pupils ask for help happily and receive very good guidance with their work and any worries.
- Pupils have a strong voice in determining improvements to school life based on unusually consistent encouragement to think for themselves and share their own imaginative ideas.

Commentary

26. The school sees high quality care as a building brick in helping pupils to do as well as they can, not just as an end in itself. Parents and pupils are very clear that the school looks after and listens to children very well. As a result, pupils feel secure, valued and trusted and are eager to take advantage of chances to learn alongside friends. The atmosphere of great trust and support ensures that they are happy to try things out and risk being wrong, knowing that this is a key part of learning. They take pleasure in each other's successes and are willing to keep on trying because they feel valued.
27. Remedying shortcomings identified in the last inspection, all the required policies and procedures are fully in place, including those for child protection and health and safety, and are familiar to all staff, so very good attention is paid to pupils' well-being in and out of lessons. When children are sick or hurt they receive very good care so, because they know this, they are quick to tell someone if a friend has fallen over or is unhappy. Older pupils enjoy hearing younger ones read and look after them carefully in the playground. They take pride in this, so talk with amusement about "*standing by the 'friends' stop' looking out for anyone who needed someone to play with*", to be asked by a small child "*are you lonely, shall I play with you?*"
28. Assessment has been radically improved in the recent past, with significant involvement of pupils in evaluating their own efforts and progress. Although the school recognises that work remains to be done to bring all subjects up to the level of the best in marking, evaluating results, fine-tuning work to match everyone's needs and target-setting, pupils now receive very good support and guidance. This is mainly because they are so well involved in the process and have a keen understanding of what improvements they need to make and what sort of extra help they might need. They are very good at using their initiative to ask for help, rather than waiting until it is offered. Adults know the pupils, their abilities and backgrounds very well, so are quick to notice any changes in mood or behaviour and give necessary support. There are very good arrangements for monitoring the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and their progress is very well tracked and recorded.
29. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being part of an active school council that is very well organised, has lively debate and manages fundraising effectively. They know that people are interested in what they have to say, and that they listen and act on their suggestions. Pupils benefit from an unusually strong culture of original and shared ideas which ensures that their views are heard regularly in and out of class. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, support and guidance.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

"Teaching and learning evenings provide parents with an opportunity to adopt similar methods in supporting their child's learning at home. This has been very useful."

- Year 2 parent

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very keen to see their children do well so are involved impressively in their learning at home and at school.
- Although parents receive a lot of very good information about what is going on at school and have a good idea about their children's progress, this is not always comprehensive enough.
- Community links widen pupils' horizons and experiences well, which helps their personal qualities to flourish.

Commentary

30. Parents are very actively involved with the school and raise huge sums of money through all the varied parents' association activities. This is because they want the best deal for their children. As a result, they flock to events in school and to workshops such as that on new approaches to learning. This reflects their exceptional involvement in their children's learning and progress. Parents take their responsibilities extremely seriously when it comes to their children's education so make time to read with them and give active help, including revision for tests. Some parents, however, could support the school more by ensuring that they do not take their children out of school for family holidays during term time. Parents think that the school offers a good, all-round education and inspectors agree. Parents find the school approachable. As one parent wrote, *"The headteacher advocates an open door policy and I am confident that any complaint I raise will be given the proper consideration."*
31. Although parents are very satisfied with the school's work as a whole, they feel that it has scope to keep them better informed about their child's progress. The school accepts this. It has already begun to explore ways of improving reports and knows it has more to do to identify strengths, weaknesses and targets beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It does involve parents far more actively than usual in shaping what happens in lessons and guidance given to pupils by inviting detailed comment from parents at meetings to discuss how well their children are doing. It then uses this information scrupulously to plan activities and as part of its checks on pupils' progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in helping their children to reach their individual education plan targets. Appropriate outside advice is actively sought by the school from specialists and professionals.
32. The school is very much a part of its community so welcomes and entertains visitors such as elderly local residents who come to lunch regularly. Pupils take part in local carol services and Christmas festivities and take harvest gifts to the elderly. They also have a wider sense of community through charity initiatives for *Comic Relief*, *Children in Need* and *Vision Africa*, and, recently for the *Tsunami Appeal*. This perspective is enriched considerably by the summer term visit of groups of children from a school in Belarus. Pupils benefit from a good range of sports coaching made possible by links with local clubs. Harlow College has helped the school to redesign the ICT suite. Links with a local secondary school that has specialist status as a language college allow pupils to take short courses in French. Such links make a positive difference to pupils' maturity, range of experience and personal development. The extent and quality of partnerships with parents and the wider community have improved well since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

*"The management is very positive and encourages the children to think and learn."
- Year 4 parent*

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. School self-evaluation is very well established and the school is very well run. The leadership and management of key staff are good. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very strong leadership of the headteacher has created an ethos that promotes effective teamwork with a clear focus on learning.
- School self-evaluation is thorough and accurate.
- Key staff are developing a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and lead and manage staff teams well.
- Governors play an active role and have a clear overview of the school.

Commentary

33. There has been very good improvement in leadership and management since the last inspection. The headteacher, who has been in post for eighteen months, is rigorous and determined in his focus on learning and the pursuit of high standards through pupils achieving their best. He has motivated all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to establish effective teams that strive to achieve a shared vision. He leads by example and presents a very good role model to both pupils and staff, initiating developments and supporting subject leaders effectively. Parents' views reflect strong confidence in the headteacher's leadership.
34. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that all staff and governors are involved in rigorous self-evaluation procedures that show that the school has a very accurate picture of how well it is doing and which have resulted in the identification of key priorities for development, including practical measures to tackle the relative weakness of ICT. He has addressed the key issue from the last inspection by clearly defining the roles of subject leaders and establishing procedures to monitor both the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum. He has successfully introduced a whole-school focus on learning and thinking styles that is understood not only by staff but also pupils, and which is reflected in all of the school's activities. Procedures to effectively track the progress of individual pupils have been established in literacy and performance management procedures have been used well to ensure that whole-school approaches have been adopted to further improve the quality of writing in subjects across the curriculum. There have been many staff changes over the past year due to teachers' maternity leave. These changes to have been managed very well, without disruption to pupils' learning, and this process has been made easier because good induction procedures help new staff adapt quickly. The school already has plans in place to provide suitable slots of non-teaching time to every teacher to meet the needs of next year's new workforce reform regulations. These plans include the appointment of specialist teachers for ICT and physical education.
35. Subject leaders lead their subjects well. They are enthusiastic and determined to succeed in raising standards. Some have recently been appointed and yet they have moved quickly to review provision and establish priorities for action in order to achieve the vision they have all established. They are very well supported by the headteacher and their confident approach is encouraged by his support, enthusiasm and guidance. All monitor provision in their subjects and scrutinise pupils' work, sharing outcomes with colleagues in their pursuit of further school improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored in those subjects highlighted as a priority for improvement. Special educational needs are managed well, so that there are now very clear and procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress that are standardised across the school. All of these factors contribute significantly to the improvements seen in teaching and learning and pupils' achievements.
36. Governors do a good job. They work closely with the headteacher in helping to shape the vision and direction of the school. All legal requirements are fully met. Committee structures are secure and systems are in place to ensure that governors have a good appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The skills, knowledge and understanding of individual governors have been harnessed well, hence an accountant currently chairs the finance committee. Visits are made to classes but these tend to be informal rather than planned with a specific focus. The further improvement of the quality of the buildings and supporting the headteacher in his management of

temporary staff, have been recent priorities. However, governors have produced, with the headteacher and staff, a detailed and useful school improvement plan that is geared to ensuring that school improvement continues to be at the heart of school governance.

37. Systems are in place to ensure that the governing body strives to obtain best value for money and to ensure that funding is used well to support school priorities and pupils' learning. Consequently, financial planning and management are good. The headteacher and governors are supported well by efficient administrative staff. Funds have been appropriately allocated to further improvements of the school building and this is the reason for the balance in the accounts carried forward in 2003/04.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,055,839	Balance from previous year	83,240
Total expenditure	1,036,807	Balance carried forward to the next	102,272
Expenditure per pupil	2,557		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Provision for children in the *Foundation Stage* (nursery and reception classes) is good. When they join the school, the children have skills and knowledge that are well above average, and staff work very closely with parents to find out exactly what the children can do and plan work and activities that are appropriate. The children benefit from good teaching and so they make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning, except physical development, where they achieve satisfactorily. There is good provision for children with special educational needs. Their needs are carefully assessed and support staff are used well so that all children are included. Teachers and other staff work closely together so that the children move seamlessly from nursery to reception, and the skills they have learnt are built on so that they make good and steady progress.
39. The *Foundation Stage* is well led and managed in the school. Areas for development have been identified and plans have been drawn up to tackle these. By the time they join Year 1, almost all of the children are likely to exceed the expected goals for children's learning, and many have already reached them by the time they leave the nursery. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and the minor issue in creative development has been tackled effectively. Accommodation and resources are good overall, but the lack of an outside play area impinges on the children's progress in physical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers insist on a high standard of behaviour.
- Children are encouraged to work together in many activities.
- Staff encourage the children to become increasingly independent.

Commentary

40. Children make good progress in this area of learning because staff make sure that they settle into school quickly and happily. Induction procedures are good and staff take time to talk to parents about their children and find out their particular interests. Children behave very well because staff insist that they work together in a co-operative manner and help each other. This is particularly noticeable when all of the classes are changing for physical development sessions. Staff in both the nursery and reception classes expect the children to try and undress themselves and put their clothes on, but are on hand to help if they get into difficulty. The children are encouraged to help each other with buttons and seeing that their clothes are on the right way. Children happily help each other and chatter excitedly as they change. Children with special educational needs are fully included in these activities and staff make sure that they receive the right help without taking away their developing independence. This independence is further encouraged for all children when staff encourage them to choose activities for themselves.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are confident speakers and attentive listeners.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught well.
- Children are encouraged to make up their own stories and act them out.

Commentary

41. Children make good progress in their language development because they are taught well. During whole-class lessons, the children listen attentively to each other and make relevant contributions to the discussions. The time they spend on the carpet is appropriate and gives them the opportunity to practise speaking and listening. Early reading skills are taught well because children in both the nursery and the reception classes take books home and have access to high quality books to read, with very good support from parents. This means that they are interested in learning to read and are very keen to talk about books.
42. Teachers place a great importance on children learning to write and form letters correctly. During small group sessions, teachers explore letter names and sounds. In the nursery, the emphasis is on initial sounds, and children make good progress, so that, by the time they are in the reception class, they are confident when blending sounds together. They use their knowledge well in their writing. Many of the children write independently, whilst others try to write for themselves and are helped whenever necessary by the staff team. Staff also provide good writing areas where children can practise writing in play situations. Good role-play areas have been set up and the children really enjoy making up their own stories in the *doctors' surgery* or in the *home corner*.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery count confidently to ten and beyond.
- Children in the reception classes use a wide variety of mathematical language.
- Children enjoy mathematical activities.

Commentary

43. Children reach standards in their mathematical development that are well above average. By the time they leave the nursery, most children can count accurately to ten and recognise the numbers. Their skills are developed appropriately in the reception classes as they learn to count to 30 and beyond, and begin to understand about counting on and back. Simple, everyday, activities, such as discussing how many children are away and calculating how many are present, give the children good opportunities to explore simple addition and subtraction. Teachers and support staff encourage the children to use mathematical language whenever appropriate and children begin to compare lengths and discuss comparative weights. Children in all of the classes are very enthusiastic about mathematics and enjoy the activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to use ICT.
- Children learn about the local environment effectively.
- There are many activities that help children explore the world around them.

Commentary

44. Children reach standards that are well above average in this area of learning because teachers plan a lot of exciting activities. In the nursery, the children have planted beans and related this to the work they have been doing on *Jack and the Beanstalk*. They learn what plants need to thrive as they watch their seeds grow. In the reception classes, children learn about the local environment through well-planned activities that encourage them to look at their houses and learn what they are made from. Good resources are used well so that children build their own models and work well together discussing their designs. In a good ICT session, the teacher used a programmable *roamer* so that the children could become accustomed to programming a toy to move in certain directions. This was challenging for the children, but they persevered and all in the group managed to move the *roamer* in the right direction.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of the school's inside accommodation to encourage physical development.
- The outside area is inadequate for children in the *Foundation Stage*.
- Children use a wide range of tools safely and with increasing co-ordination.

Commentary

45. Children make reasonable progress in this area of learning, but the lack of a large outdoor space means that the children do not have the room for robust physical play. The space is too small for the children to ride wheeled toys and learn to steer equipment. However, teachers make good use of the school halls to encourage the children to use large apparatus and practise their climbing and balancing skills. There are many opportunities for the children to use a wide variety of tools in creative activities. This means that the children are very good at cutting and sticking, and at holding pens and pencils correctly so that they can form letters well.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy all creative activities.
- Skills are well taught and children make good progress.

Commentary

46. Teachers plan many interesting activities that capture the imagination of the children. For example, in the reception classes, the children made puppets from paper and cloth, and used them to act out their own stories. In the nursery, the children paint and print enthusiastically, and enjoy talking about their work. During whole-class time, the children sing and their learning in mathematical development is supported well through the singing of number rhymes. Teachers encourage the children to try their best and the efforts of all of the children are celebrated. The role-play areas are very well used by all of the children and they make up complicated stories, working well together and enjoying their activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 & 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards in Year 6 are well above average.
- Teaching is effective, ensuring that pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Precise individual targets give pupils a clear indication of what they need to do to improve their work.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent.

Commentary

47. In the 2004 national assessments, standards were well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Currently, standards in reading and speaking and listening in Year 2 are well above average. Writing is above average. Pupils In Year 6 are attaining well above average standards. This represents good achievement and an improvement since the last inspection.
48. Pupils throughout the school are confident speakers and quickly become involved in discussions during lessons. Their extensive vocabulary enables them to express themselves clearly and precisely, engaging the interest of both adults and their peers. This vocabulary is often reflected in their writing that, by the end of Year 6, is well presented and shows an awareness of audience and purpose. The school has identified spelling as an area of weakness, although inspection evidence indicates that, by the end of Year 6, spelling is at least satisfactory for the majority of pupils and a significant minority spell very well. The development of reading and the enjoyment of books is a very high priority throughout the school and most pupils are avid readers. Younger pupils have the opportunity to read to an adult regularly and parents support the school well, often writing evaluative comments in the home/school reading record. The well-stocked library is used extensively under the guidance of the part-time librarian, who supports the pupils well when they are selecting books. Newly installed ICT systems track lending over time, and this is beginning to inform staff of reading patterns as well as details of the books read by individual pupils.
49. Teaching is good overall and very good in Year 6. Teachers build well on pupils' skills and understanding. They set tasks that interest pupils and that are well matched to

their ability. This contributes significantly to pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject. Effective teamwork, the sharing of good practice and the careful analysis of pupils' work has ensured that teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and pupils' needs and this ensures that teachers are confident delivering lessons with pace and enthusiasm. Teachers are skilled at asking questions that encourage pupils to reflect, justify and explain and that also encourage pupils with special educational needs to respond, thereby including them very well. Teaching assistants support these pupils well but they are sometimes underused in lessons, particularly while the teacher is introducing the lesson.

50. Leadership and management are very good. Arrangements for guided reading have been reviewed and there has been a significant improvement in both the quality and quantity of reading resources. Systematic monitoring, tracking and scrutiny of children's work have ensured that leadership and management have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development, and that these are appropriately prioritised. Very effective procedures have been established to keep track of the progress of each individual pupil and to set them precise individual targets, particularly for writing, that give them very clear guidance on what they need to focus on in order to improve their work. The best marking also gives pupils very good guidance on what they need to do to do better, but this is not yet consistently the case throughout the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils report accurately in science, empathise with the plight of refugees in history, and write letters of thanks after a school visit. There is a good, whole-school emphasis on learning appropriate vocabulary and on accurate spelling. Pupils extract relevant information from non-fiction text, usually from books, although sometimes also from the internet.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6, and achievement is good because expectations are high.
- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and teach mental skills very successfully.
- Pupils routinely assess their own learning at the end of lessons, although they have no individual targets to tell them what they must aim for next.
- Grouping by ability sets in Year 6 is successful because it allows teachers to raise challenges and meet learning needs at a suitable pace.

Commentary

52. Standards in mathematics are well above average by Year 2 and Year 6. From a well above average start on entry to school, achievement is good in Year 2. For pupils with special educational needs, achievement is at least good and, for a few pupils, it is very good. The

current Year 6 performed poorly when they were in Year 2, and their standards then were well below the national average. Their progress has been very good as they have caught up.

53. Teaching and learning are good because teachers have high expectations and learning is well paced to keep the interest of pupils. The organisation of pupils into ability sets in Year 6 is effective because it helps to ensure that work in these classes is particularly well matched to pupils' abilities and that it offers appropriate levels of challenge. Throughout the school, in often lively mental oral sessions, pupils are fully involved using small whiteboards, number fans, as well as *true* or *false* cards. Speaking and listening skills develop very well in Years 1 and 2, as pupils explain different ways of doing calculations and teachers' praise encourages them. Year 2 pupils identified four different ways of combining two tens and units numbers by using a number line, 100 square, mentally counting and doubling.
54. Pupils' attitudes are never less than good. They often work very well in pairs to discuss how to perform a task, and they are actively involved in assessing for themselves whether they have learnt what is expected of them. Pupils feel sufficiently confident to be honest about their assessment of their own learning in lessons and teachers take action to give extra support and to adjust planning for the following day. Where teaching observed was relatively less successful, there was too much of a challenge for the less able or the noise level was too high during independent tasks so that less work was done. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who encourage pupils and, at times, fetch practical resources to help pupils to understand tasks set. There is evidence of very good progress by some pupils with statements of special educational need, supported by very competent teaching assistants who record their progress in detail. Not enough use is made of ICT, although there some special programs are used with lower attaining pupils.
55. Leadership and management are good. The *National Numeracy Strategy* is well embedded into practice and taught well, but short-term planning is often insufficiently detailed temporary staff to follow. Pupils have regular formal assessments giving *National Curriculum* levels twice yearly. This information is used effectively to monitor achievement in different areas of mathematics, identify weaker areas for individuals and to look into gender differences and learning styles. It is not used, however, to set individual targets for learning or to track pupils' progress from year to year, which the school is keenly aware of and is seeking to improve. The attainment levels of pupils with special educational needs are collated at six-monthly intervals and give a clear view of progress in mathematics. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. There are good opportunities for mathematics in design and technology where pupils are measuring accurately when drawing their plans of boxes. They measure carefully when mapping the depth of a river bed in geography and in science when producing charts and tables for analysis.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and most reach standards that are well above average.
- There is very good emphasis on promoting scientific skills.
- Marking in books does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.

Commentary

57. In the national tests last year, standards were above average, but this still represented good achievement in relation to pupils' starting point, which, for example, was only average for the Year 6 pupils when they took their Year 2 tests. Good leadership and management have resulted in pupils being enthusiastic about science and reaching standards that are well above average. Whatever their ability, pupils achieve well because teachers have high expectations and include all pupils in lessons. By Year 2, pupils have explored a good range of scientific ideas and can organise their work, record their findings and give clear explanations of what they have found out. In Year 6, pupils use planning sheets to organise their work and carefully explain how they would set about an investigation. In a particularly successful Year 6 lesson, the pupils knew exactly how to go about investigating growing mould on a sandwich, and worked together very effectively to produce a careful explanation of their experiment.
58. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils being scientific in their approach and use resources, such as planning sheets, very well, so that pupils are methodical. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support so that they can fully participate in the lesson and record their findings using their own methods. More able pupils are challenged in lessons and teachers pose problems and know that the pupils will rise to the challenge. Many lessons offer pupils the chance to carry out investigations, such as, do big birds lay bigger eggs? As a result, pupils are very interested in science and work hard in lessons. They learn to predict what they think will happen and draw up tables to record their findings. Work in books is marked regularly with encouraging remarks, but there are few comments that would help the pupils to improve. Sometimes the teacher poses a question for the pupils to answer, but all too often these remain unanswered.
59. The staff know the particular strengths of science in the school, but they also acknowledge the weaknesses. Much work has been carried out and this has led to there being good improvement since the last inspection. The strengths have been built on and the quality of teaching has improved. Scientific skills and thinking are promoted well throughout the school and pupils are enthusiastic. Good use is made of resources, with, for example, and the pupils in Year 5 have particularly benefited from being able to watch chicks hatch out as part of their work on life cycles.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils are capable of doing better.
- Teachers do not consistently plan to use ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Some of the equipment is approaching the end of its useful life.

Commentary

60. By Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Given pupils' generally well above average capabilities and that so many

have access to computers at home, this represents unsatisfactory achievement. Although all aspects of the ICT syllabus are covered, not enough use is made of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects. Computers are available in shared areas but access is limited because there are too few computers for the number of pupils that need to use them. These computers were not observed in use during the inspection. Also teachers do not consistently plan for pupils to apply the skills taught in ICT lessons to support learning in other subjects. The computer suite, timetabled for all pupils to use, includes equipment that is approaching the end of its usable life. It does not enable some programs to be run simultaneously on all computers and this sometimes inhibits effective teaching. The suite contains the school's only interactive whiteboard and opportunities to use this to support learning are not always seized.

61. Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are keen to learn and they listen well, initially, to instructions. However, when the pace of lessons is too slow and introductions are too long, the attention of a minority of pupils begins to drift until they can access the computers and apply the skills taught. Pupils with special educational needs are supported and included well by teaching assistants. Pupils have a good understanding of the applications of ICT, both in the school and the wider community. Staff provide good role models, for example, in using the digital camera to record dance lessons and thereby allowing pupils to be involved in assessing the quality of their performance.
62. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Shortcomings in the quality and use of computers have already been identified, and at the time of the inspection sixteen new computers were awaiting installation. Plans to further improve the subject include the recruitment of a specialist teacher to release teaching staff for other work and to work alongside them to further develop their confidence in and use of ICT in other subjects. Despite the weaknesses, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Although there are some examples of ICT supporting learning in other subjects, these are mostly restricted to the use of paint programs, researching some topics on the internet, and experimenting with text and applying word processing skills. Too many opportunities are missed to apply and develop ICT skills through other subjects, particularly in science and mathematics.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. Geography and history were sampled.

64. Two **geography** lessons were seen. In a good lesson, pupils in Year 3 learnt about the Arctic and the Antarctic and began to understand about the features of each area. The lesson built on what the pupils had learnt for homework and was successful in reinforcing the key facts. In the sample of work seen, there is good coverage of geography. A satisfactory lesson in Year 5 dealt with the effects on tourism of an imaginary new attraction opening in the area. By the end of Year 2, pupils have learnt about the local area and identify a variety of features on a map. By the end of Year 6, pupils have carried out fieldwork and systematically recorded their findings. Some have done some imaginative work at home, for example in researching rivers.

65. There were two **history** lessons seen. In these lessons, pupils in Year 2 made very good progress learning about the life and work of Florence Nightingale, and in a good lesson in Year 6, pupils discussed what it must have been like to be an evacuee during World War II. Work in the books show that pupils cover a wide range of historical topics and learn to use both primary and secondary sources when researching subjects such as Britain since 1930. They are encouraged not merely to learn historical facts but to interpret and apply them and begin to think as “historical detectives”.
66. In both history and geography there is very good assessment carried out by the pupils. Each topic is discussed and pupils identify individually what they have learnt and what they have enjoyed. They also think about what they would like to research further.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a good understanding of what they can learn from different religions.
- Work is well presented in books and pupils are enthusiastic in lessons.

Commentary

67. Standards in religious education are well above those expected in the locally-agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about various religious signs and symbols and, by the time they are in Year 6, they have developed their skills well so that they are able to look at a variety of religions and compare the important symbols of each faith. By Year 2, pupils have learnt about Christianity and know stories about Jesus. This knowledge is broadened in Years 3 to 6, so that pupils know about Buddha and his teachings, as well as the importance of Guru Nanak.
68. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are encouraged to think about various faiths and discuss what they can learn from them. So, for example, pupils in Year 6 have learnt about the importance of music for Sikhs and how art is symbolic in the Hindu faith. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and they present their work well. Throughout the school, pupils are asked to think about their own beliefs and how it affects their lives. In a lesson on the Last Supper, pupils were asked to decide who they would invite to a special meal and why. Their answers were thoughtful and mature.
69. Religious education is well led and managed in the school. It is carefully planned so that skills and knowledge are built on effectively and pupils learn about, and from, a wide variety of religions. Good use is made of the *thinking hats* strategy so that pupils can identify with various groups of people and discuss how they might be feeling. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design was inspected in full and is reported below. Design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.

70. One **design and technology** lesson was observed, but inspectors also looked at displays and the school’s planning. In the Year 5 lesson, pupils had the task of drawing

out the plan of a box that they were designing. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Pupils had difficulties in understanding the overall width and length of the box in order to judge the suitability of pieces of card. Most pupils needed help and guidance to do this and would have benefited from making the nets on squared paper before the finished product. The link between mathematics and this subject is strong. Preparation in sketchbooks shows good opportunities for writing notes and following instructions. There is little planned use of ICT. Assessment lies in pupils evaluating the success of their own work. From time to time the school sets interesting year-group challenges such as constructing a tall tower to support the weight of a tennis ball.

71. In the good **physical education** lesson observed, pupils were achieving well because of a constant focus on building skills step-by-step. Pupils used their chances to evaluate their work thoughtfully with guidance from their class teacher. Through high expectations, clear instructions, good demonstration, praise and tips for improvement, all pupils learnt equally well. There are good opportunities for sports outside of school time and there are fixtures with other schools. Those include football, rugby, netball, cricket and athletics.
72. No **music** lessons were seen, but the results of pupils in Year 6 designing a musical score with symbols for different sounds were observed. Time for music from planning seems low and pupils expressed the opinion that they would like more opportunities for singing. With the temporary absence of the music co-ordinator, after school music clubs have been discontinued for now. Pupils have opportunities for violin and piano lessons in and after school time. In assembly, opportunities to learn a little about the music of different composers was missed as no reference was made to the music as pupils entered the room.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest in art and design is very good and the quality of the work they produce is above average.
- Pupils' work is all on a small scale which limits their creativity and opportunities to work co-operatively.
- During the limited time available for art and design too much time is given over to discussion which limits practical work but enhances speaking and listening skills.
- Planning art and design to link with other cultures and subjects is good, especially in designing and printing, but there are too few planned opportunities to learn about the work of artists.

Commentary

73. Standards in art and design are above average at Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils produce work that shows attention to detail, thoughtfulness and good understanding. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory in art and design, their creativity is restricted by the small pieces of paper they are limited to working with. This is evident in work in progress, sketchbooks and displays of work around the school, almost all of which is limited to A4 (the size of the paper in this report). An exception to this was in Year 1,

where pupils have been making sculptures on the ground from natural materials after looking at photographs of the work of artist Andy Goldsworthy.

74. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. In lessons observed, because of discussion time, relatively little time was given to practical work. Pupils contribute well in discussions and work with care and imagination, contributing well to their spiritual, social and cultural development. Literacy skills are promoted well in art and design through research and writing to accompany displays and notes in sketchbooks. Displays and sketchbooks show that pupils have learned to mix colour and have read and researched well about aspects of different cultures. They create designs inspired by Tapa Indians, Aboriginal art, and Methi henna hand painting. They use sketchbooks well but often these are used for finished pieces rather than preparatory work. Examples of this are drawings and work related to Monet's use of colour.
75. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. A recent review has resulted in revised planning to ensure breadth of coverage and better establish the development of skills by viewing art as a *"journey in learning"*. Satisfactory use is made of ICT within art, with pupils using paint and drawing programs. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

76. Pupils have many opportunities to learn how to live responsibly within a community through making informed decisions and articulating their views and opinions. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. All adults present very good role models. They encourage pupils to take responsibility for themselves and their learning, and value the many contributions pupils make both in lessons and in exercising their responsibilities around the school. These range from team captains organising races on sports day to the school council organising fundraising events for charity and to further improve school facilities. Pupils are made aware that a duty of care exists beyond the school community. Year 6 pupils invite a group of elderly residents from the local community to lunch every two weeks and plan entertainment for each visit. The whole school community have established links with an African village and raised sufficient funds to build and maintain a school.
77. A suitable programme of drugs, sex and relationships education is planned for and taught as part of **personal, social and health education**. Teachers plan well ensuring that themes focussing on personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught regularly. In lessons observed, Year 6 pupils discussed how to make informed decisions and in Year 2 they learned how to respond if they got separated from a parent on a shopping trip.

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	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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