

INSPECTION REPORT

DEBDEN C OF E VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Saffron Walden

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115128

Headteacher: Mrs J Gibbons

Lead inspector: Mr A J Dobell

Dates of inspection: 29th - 30th November 2004

Inspection number: 266721

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	126
School address:	Debden Saffron Walden Essex
Postcode:	CB11 3LE
Telephone number:	(01799) 540 302
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Peasgood
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small primary school draws its pupils from Debden and the surrounding villages and also from families posted to the Carver Army Barracks. About one third of its pupils come from army families. This means that the proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school during the course of the year is well above average. As a result: -

The Association of State Schools for Service Children has agreed with Ofsted that it is inappropriate for comparisons to be made with similar schools on the basis of the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals and English as an additional language due to the army 'turbulence' factor.

The school has 126 pupils on roll with 12 in the Reception Year. There are 12 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which, at 9.5 per cent, is below average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The nature of special educational needs includes specific learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and physical difficulties. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2003. The curriculum is enriched by the teaching of French to pupils in Years 5 and 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10373	Mr A J Dobell	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education
19374	Mrs W Sheehan	Lay inspector	
16761	Mr M Hemmings	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
30834	Mrs A Lowson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography History Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school giving excellent value for money. Standards are well above average when pupils leave the school and have improved markedly at the end of Year 2 from those found in the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is now very good over time and the school is very well led and managed. The very high turnover of pupils is a significant barrier to achievement, but the school's systems are robust enough to manage this successfully.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are generally well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Very good achievement results from very good teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning because they feel secure and valued in the school.
- The headteacher, fully supported by her colleagues, has a very clear vision for the school's continuing development.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language.
- There are very good opportunities for enriching learning out of class.

The school has improved very well since its previous inspection. The key issues from that inspection have all been dealt with effectively.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – in the top five per cent; 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. * - The Association of State Schools for Service Children has agreed with Ofsted that it is inappropriate for these comparisons to be made due to the army 'turbulence' factor.*

Achievement is very good overall. In 2004, children entered the Reception Year with levels of understanding that were slightly above average. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage and are likely to reach and sometimes to exceed the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as do the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved significantly since the school was inspected previously and the high standards found at the end of Year 6 have been maintained. Attainment in information and communication technology is above average, as it is in religious education, by the end of

Year 6. Given the very high turnover of pupils, this represents very good achievement overall.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. They have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well in and out of class. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good although they have relatively little direct experience of our multicultural society. Attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides an education of very good quality. Teaching and learning are very good, particularly in Years 3 to 6, because teachers try very hard to make lessons stimulating and interesting. Because of this, pupils have very good attitudes and work with impressive concentration. Very good use is made of teaching assistants to support learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language. Assessment systems to monitor pupils' progress and to plan their future learning are very good.

The school's curriculum is of good quality and there are very good opportunities for enrichment out of class. Pupils receive very good support and guidance so that they feel secure and valued in the school. Links with parents and the local community are good while links with other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher only took up her appointment at the beginning of this term and has not yet had time to have a major impact on the school. However, she has a very clear vision for the school's further development and has developed an impressive unity of purpose with her colleagues. Her leadership and management are currently good as are those of the governing body who ensure that the school meets its legal requirements. The school has a very good commitment to inclusion and pupils have very good equality of opportunity. Management is very good. The school has very good systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance and for taking steps to address any weaknesses that are identified. The professional development of staff is linked very effectively to the school's priorities for improvement. Finances are managed efficiently and the principles of best value are practised effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased that their children are pupils here and all who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children enjoy school. A few have concerns about the way in which they are informed about their children's progress, but inspectors found the school's systems to be good. A larger proportion of parents have concerns about the way in which the school takes their views into account. Inspectors understand these concerns and the school recognises the need to address them. Pupils' questionnaires and their discussions with inspectors confirm that they are very positive about the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no significant weaknesses but, in the context of its many strengths, governors should address the following when formulating their action plan:

- improve procedures for consulting with parents; and
- provide more opportunities for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of our multicultural society.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6 regardless of gender and level of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as do the very few that speak English as an additional language. Standards in English, mathematics and science are generally well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 in spite of the high turnover of pupils. Standards in information and communication technology are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 because they are very well taught and their learning is tracked and promoted very effectively.
- The school includes all pupils in learning very successfully so that those who only stay a relatively short time achieve well.
- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and are likely to reach and sometimes to exceed, the standards expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year.
- The school has a strong commitment to improvement and is enabling all pupils to make very good progress.

Commentary

1. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004, standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher than expected Level 3 in mathematics was below the national average and this prevented the overall standard from being well above average. This was because some 25 per cent of that year group arrived in the school during the course of Years 1 and 2. This is an example of how the very high turnover of pupils can adversely affect standards. However, there is scope for higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 to be offered greater levels of challenge. Teachers' assessments for science were that all pupils were at the national expectation of Level 2, but that none reached the higher than expected Level 3. Since most of these pupils entered the Reception class with average standards, these results represent very good achievement overall and are a very significant improvement since the previous inspection.
2. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. These results represent very good achievement because of the high turnover of pupils. Early indications are that pupils now in Years 2 and 6 are likely to reach similar standards by the end of this school year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (16.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.1 (15.6)	14.6 (14.6)

mathematics	16.8 (18.0)	16.2 (16.3)
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There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (28.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.6 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.0 (32.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Evidence from the inspection is that pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well because they are very well taught. Pupils are presented with high levels of realistic challenge in lessons which are stimulating and engage their interest very effectively. Careful planning enables pupils to build systematically on their existing knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. The learning of all pupils is managed very carefully because very good systems to assess and track their progress are in place. For example, the school is participating in a national project 'Early Reading Research'. This gives the school a very clear measurement of how pupils' reading is progressing in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2 and has been a major factor in improving standards in reading from well below average in 1998 to well above average in 2004. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were making good progress in their learning but longer term evidence is that, over time, they make very good progress. Children in the Reception Year were achieving well.
- The school places a strong emphasis on including all pupils in learning so that they can build on what they already know, understand and can do. This is especially important in a school that has an exceptionally high turnover of pupils. For example, in the school year 2003-2004, the proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school during the course of the year was 35 per cent, which was well above average. This is largely because about one third of the school's pupils are from the nearby army barracks and are in the school for a relatively short period. The school has very effective systems for settling these pupils in and enabling them to achieve at the same rate as other pupils. As a result, this unusually high turnover of pupils does not have an adverse effect on standards overall.
- Children enter the Reception Year with levels of understanding and learning skills that cover a wide range but which are average overall. They achieve well because they are well taught. They are likely to reach the standards expected in the early learning goals designed for this age group in mathematical development, physical development and creative development and to exceed these standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. This represents good achievement.

6. When the school was inspected previously in 1999, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average at the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 were judged to be likely to achieve average standards by the time they left the school. In 2004, standards in reading and writing were well above average at the end of Year 2 while standards in mathematics were above average. At the end of Year 6, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. This very significant improvement in standards resulted in the school receiving a School Achievement Award in 2003. The improvement has been achieved because the school has a strong commitment to improvement and because governors and staff are ambitious for their pupils to be as successful as possible. This strong commitment puts the school in a good position to maintain its current high standards and to improve them further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are now very good. There is an enthusiastic climate for learning.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and helps pupils to develop very mature opinions.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality levels are very high so that they make the most of their learning opportunities.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of our multicultural society.
- Children in the Foundation Stage have good attitudes to learning and behave well.

Commentary

7. By Year 6, pupils have developed very good attitudes to learning. Older pupils are very mature and talk to adults very sensibly. They consider responses carefully before answering questions and show great enthusiasm and excitement when posing challenging questions to extend their learning further. For example, during a Year 5/6 geography lesson linked to the Global Challenge yacht race, one pupil asked, "do the sea currents cause the movement of land in some countries?" In lessons, they settle quickly and are very eager when responding to questions and participating in discussions. They support each other very well in paired work and, in group work, they happily share resources. For example, in a Year 4/5 religious education lesson, pupils were learning about St Francis of Assisi and, in pairs, they prepared a three-dimensional poster on their learning. They worked very effectively as pairs, listening to each other's ideas and helping each other to complete the task. Pupils who have special educational needs are given very good support so that they feel confident and have very good attitudes in lessons. In a Year 1/2 lesson in mathematics, for example, pupils spontaneously applauded the successful contribution of a pupil with

special educational needs. This reflected very clearly other pupils' understanding of his need to feel successful. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported very well and, again, this results in very good attitudes to learning. These very good attitudes make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

8. Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school day and when on visits out of school. The majority of lessons are delivered at a very good pace with minimal disruption for inappropriate behaviour. Playtimes are friendly, social occasions with pupils of all ages mixing and joining in games together. 'Friendship stops' in the playground ensure that pupils are never left out and always have someone to involve them. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that behaviour was good. No bullying was observed during the inspection and, in discussion, pupils say that, when rare instances occur, staff deal with the issues quickly and sensitively. Procedures to monitor and record any instances of bullying are fully in place. Very positive attitudes and very good behaviour ensure that pupils make full use of all learning opportunities.
9. Pupils' spiritual development is supported very well by very good opportunities in lessons to develop their self-awareness. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. At the end of a religious education lesson, for example, pupils quietly reflected on the plight of homeless Columbian children and were very moved by the pictures and music. Opportunities to develop pupils' social and moral skills are very good. For example, pupils have been learning about the racial, social, and ethnic issues during the life of Nelson Mandela and have also discussed the moral issues relating to the location of the Elgin marbles. Pupils' work and behaviour is well rewarded through a system of stickers, positive praise and through attractive displays of their work. These raise pupils' self esteem and wish to succeed. Pupils often encourage their peers to behave appropriately and older pupils act as excellent role models for younger pupils. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups of three or four where they are encouraged to share, take turns and work co-operatively on a range of tasks. Pupils have a good appreciation of their own cultural traditions through visits to museums and art galleries.
10. The school provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of our multicultural society. Although there have been occasional events in school to help pupils to develop an understanding of other cultures, there has been insufficient planned development to support pupils' understanding of Britain's own multicultural society.
11. Children soon get used to the school's routines when they join the Reception class and quickly develop good attitudes to learning. They behave well and co-operate well in paired and small group work. Most are likely to exceed the standards expected nationally in personal, social and emotional development by the end of their Reception Year.
12. All pupils attend regularly and punctually thus making the best use of learning opportunities. Attendance levels have continued to remain very high since the previous inspection. Procedures to monitor attendance include contacting parents on the first day of absence. Holidays during term time are actively discouraged through

making all absences over five days unauthorised and asking parents to meet with the headteacher before agreeing to any holidays.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.9	School data	0.3
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides an education of very good quality. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language and these pupils achieve very well. The school provides its pupils with a good curriculum with particular strengths in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Pupils are very well supported in their learning and systems for assessing and tracking their progress are very good. Links with parents and the community are good and links with other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall with particular strengths in Years 3 to 6. Systems for assessing pupils' progress are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers prepare lessons that challenge and motivate pupils because their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching are very good.
- There are very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and effort.
- Teaching assistants are very effective, particularly with pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Very good systems for assessment enable the school to monitor learning very effectively.
- Good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables young children to achieve well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	8	10	2	0	0	0

- Over time, the quality of teaching is very good because teachers have a very secure grasp of the subjects of the curriculum. This enables them to plan lessons which stimulate and challenge pupils so that they achieve very well. This is particularly so in Years 3 to 6 where there are examples of excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6 and teaching is mostly very good. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson, the introduction was pacy and the teacher used information and communication technology very effectively to quicken pupils' responses. Work was carefully graded

so that pupils at different stages of learning could build on their existing knowledge. The teacher's high expectations and very good subject knowledge and understanding presented pupils with high levels of challenge so that they achieved very well. Information and communication technology was used very effectively to give two higher attaining pupils a very high level of challenge. During the summary at the end of the lesson, these two pupils explained their work. One had achieved 100 per cent in his responses while the other had achieved 88 per cent. These very good results illustrate why over 50 per cent of the class are already exceeding the levels that they are expected to reach by the time that they leave the school. In contrast, in a satisfactory mathematics lesson in Years 1 and 2, the pace was less brisk and no extension activity was planned to challenge higher attaining pupils who finished their work before the allotted time.

14. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and effort in lessons. Because lessons are interesting and motivate pupils, they are willing to put considerable effort into their work. Very good relationships between pupils and adults mean that pupils want to make progress and try hard with their work. Because of this, almost no time is lost moving from one activity to another or in maintaining order in class. Pupils and adults co-operate very well together in learning so that all pupils achieve very well. They are valued for what they can contribute and their successes are appreciated and celebrated. This means that pupils develop a positive self-image and want to be successful in their work.
15. A key element in these very positive attitudes to learning is the very good contribution that teaching assistants make to learning, particularly, but not exclusively, with pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils are very well supported and are fully involved in all learning activities. Their work is carefully matched to their individual education plans so that they make very good progress towards their targets. Similarly, the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are given very good support and are making very rapid progress. They are able to add interest to lessons, for example, by telling the class how English words would sound in their own language. Other pupils value these contributions, so that pupils with English as an additional language feel that they are full members of the school community. This gives them the confidence to achieve very well.
16. The school has developed very good systems to assess pupils' standards and to enable them to make further progress. Written work is marked regularly and thoroughly with suggestions to help pupils to improve their work. The combined Assignment Book and Reading Record gives parents very good information about their children's learning and helps them to support their children. Pupils' standards in English and mathematics are assessed each term and information from these assessments guides the planning of future learning. Pupils' standards in other subjects are assessed after each unit of work and this information builds up into individual Records of Achievement which enable teachers to track the progress of all pupils over time. The school's results in the national tests are analysed to identify any areas of relative weakness so that future learning can address these. For example, an analysis of last year's mathematics test at the end of Year 6 shows that pupils were relatively unsuccessful in problem solving. The school now gives pupils more practice in this area. This kind of careful assessment is particularly useful in a school where the proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school during the course of the year is

well above average. It enables learning to be managed very effectively, so that well above average standards can be maintained.

17. Children join the school with levels of understanding and learning skills that cover a wide range but are generally about average. In 2004, they were very slightly above average. Effective teaching in the Reception Year enables children to achieve well so that they are likely to reach the standards expected nationally in the early learning goals designed for this age group and to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world, by the time they join Year 1. They are well prepared to begin their work on the National Curriculum.
18. Very good teaching and very effective management of learning enable pupils to achieve very well overall. The school is in a good position to maintain its present impressive standards and to build on them.

The curriculum

The school's good curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. All pupils have access to a very good range of enrichment activities, including extra-curricular clubs, which are held after school and add much interest to learning. Accommodation and resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good curriculum development since the previous inspection to make learning more relevant to the needs of pupils.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to learn about life within a multicultural society.
- There is good use of information and communication technology to help pupils to learn in other subjects.
- The match of support staff to meet the needs of pupils is very good.
- Pupils benefit from accommodation and resources for learning of good quality.

Commentary

19. Issues from the previous inspection relating to the curriculum have been tackled successfully. For example, religious education now has a greater focus in the curriculum and planning for pupils' spiritual development is now good. Comprehensive schemes of work have been developed in all subjects to help to ensure continuity in pupils' learning. The building of a new hall has meant that pupils now have access to the full curriculum in physical education.
20. The school's curriculum is well planned, effectively meeting the needs of all pupils in the mixed age classes. The school's long-term curriculum plan is reviewed annually to take into account any changed year groupings. As a result, the duplication of work is avoided and pupils are given activities which build well on their previous learning. Good links are being planned between subjects so that pupils can use skills developed in one area to support their learning in others. The National Literacy and Numeracy

Strategies have been put into place thoughtfully, so that pupils have many opportunities to refine their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. This is one of the reasons for pupils' very good achievement in English and mathematics. The emphasis on developing pupils' learning thorough structured, practical investigations is a key factor in the high standards that they attain in science. The computer suite is timetabled well for all classes, enabling teachers to incorporate information and communication technology effectively into lessons. Because of this, pupils have good quality opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. The school acknowledges the lack of opportunity for pupils to learn about and appreciate the diversity of the different cultures in modern day Britain. Plans are in place to review this aspect of pupils' education so that improvements can be made. The curriculum is usefully extended by the teaching of French, by a modern language specialist, for all pupils in Years 5 and 6. However, there was no opportunity to see this during the inspection, so no judgement is made on standards or quality of teaching. A well thought out programme of visits and visitors, as well as very good extra-curricular opportunities, also add variety and interest to the curriculum.

21. A strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' creative talents, as well as their academic ones, so as to promote their skills in art, drama and music. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 are in the school choir and a significant number are members of the orchestra. The funding of a specialist teacher in dance enriches the curriculum for physical education well. Pupils have had the opportunity to develop their artistic skills by working alongside an artist in residence. They are also able to take part in a range of performances for parents and members of the community which include music and drama.
22. Good use is made of a range of local and national initiatives to provide valuable learning opportunities for all pupils. There is effective involvement in the local cluster of small schools to provide further significant learning opportunities. The school is currently taking part in the Early Reading Research project to improve pupils' literacy skills. As part of the 'Comenius Project', pupils are becoming more aware of different ways of life in the wider European community.
23. The curriculum is fully inclusive and promotes pupils' personal development effectively. All pupils are prepared very well for the next stages of their education. The school's accommodation has improved considerably since its previous inspection with the addition of a large hall, a new classroom, a learning zone for small group work and an outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage. Further improvements to the Foundation Stage outdoor play area have already been agreed. As a result of these improvements, the overall quality of the school's accommodation is now good. However, the classroom for the combined Reception/Year 1 class is not large enough for the accommodation for the Foundation Stage to be better than satisfactory. Resources for learning are good and promote pupils' achievement well.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a safe environment are good as is provision for pupils' care and welfare. Procedures to involve pupils are satisfactory. Very good opportunities are in place to promote and guide pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' academic and personal development are monitored very carefully to set targets for further improvement.
- Very good relationships ensure that all pupils are cared for individually and strategies to value pupils' views are improving.
- The school's procedures for health, safety and child protection are good and ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment.
- Induction arrangements to settle children into school are good.

Commentary

24. The school's very good assessment procedures are used very effectively to guide pupils in their learning. All staff have a very good knowledge of pupils' standards and, coupled with very good relationships with pupils, this creates a positive learning environment in which pupils want to achieve. Marking is used effectively to guide pupils' learning and informative verbal feedbacks about pupils' work in the previous lesson help pupils to improve further. Pupils' targets are written in their assignment books and often include personal development targets. This attention to individual needs ensures that pupils make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language are supported very well to ensure that they make very good progress in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early through the school's very good procedures and so quickly receive the support that they need. Ongoing assessments by teachers and teaching assistants contribute very well to reviews of their progress and effectively guide the setting of new targets. There is good liaison with outside agencies when extra support is needed to meet the needs of these pupils.
25. All adults in the school create a friendly, supportive atmosphere in which pupils mature and flourish. Adults are very good role models for pupils and, additionally, older pupils exercise impressive care for the well-being of younger pupils which leads to a purposeful and caring learning environment. Throughout the school, all pupils are friendly and supportive to others and a helpful, co-operative, community atmosphere exists. Pupils' views are carefully listened to in lessons. The school council and class councils have only been introduced this year and have yet to have any significant impact. However, the school council's request for extra dictionaries to help them to communicate with pupils who have English as an additional language reflects the consideration that pupils have for others.
26. The school ensures that regular health and safety checks are carried out and the governing body is involved in these arrangements. Good procedures, including risk assessment for visits, are firmly in place to promote a safe learning environment. Through work in science and personal, health and social education there are good opportunities to ensure that pupils learn how to keep safe and healthy. For example, older pupils attend 'Crucial Crew' safety awareness training. Child protection procedures are well embedded and the school is diligent in monitoring the welfare of all its pupils.

27. Due to the nature of the catchment area of the school, there is considerable pupil movement during the course of the year. The majority of parents feel that the school's induction arrangements are good. Links with the village playgroup are good and children from the group are invited to events in the school. Children entering in the Foundation Stage receive very good opportunities to settle into school and parents are given useful support on helping their children. Pupils joining other year groups are helped to make friends quickly and, in discussion, one pupil said, "by the end of the first week I felt part of the school".

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools are very good and opportunities to work with the local community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' views of the school are generally good, although many felt that there were insufficient opportunities for parents to be consulted.
- Links with neighbouring primary and secondary schools are very good.
- The school welcomes community involvement and this contributes well to learning.
- Information for parents is good overall so that they are well informed about the school's activities.

Commentary

28. Parents' views, collected through the parents' meeting and questionnaires, show that the majority are pleased with most aspects of the school. All feel that their children enjoy school. Parents' main concerns were that they felt the school did not seek and act on their views sufficiently. Inspectors recognise this concern. There are currently no formal procedures for parents to express their opinions or concerns although the newly appointed headteacher is readily available before and after school to meet parents.
29. Very good links exist with neighbouring primary schools within the cluster and opportunities for them to work together are encouraged. There are very good relationships with the main feeder secondary schools to which pupils transfer. These include transition projects for pupils to help them to get to know the school and members of staff who will be teaching them.
30. The school has developed good links with the community which help to broaden pupils' experiences. The school is on the edge of a village and continually explores opportunities to be involved with the local community. For example, local people are invited to the dress rehearsals of school performances and the local vicar takes assemblies each week. Opportunities to explore wider links have been particularly well developed through the Comenius European project, which has enabled teachers and pupils to develop a good understanding of school communities in other European countries.
31. Information for parents is good. Termly opportunities are offered to parents to discuss their children's progress. The 'Pupil Assignment Book' provides a very good three-way communication channel between pupils, parents and teachers. It contains a very clear

plan of what each pupil will be studying that week and includes homework and any comments by the teacher, pupil or parent. It is especially helpful for parents who are unable to visit school regularly. The quality of the documentation that the school provides for parents is satisfactory. The governors' annual report and school prospectus are clearly written but do not currently meet all statutory requirements. The school plans to correct this. Pupils' annual reports are written in great detail and most show what pupils have achieved and where they need to make further progress. However, the quality of the information is inconsistent between classes. Newsletters are sent out every two weeks and provide useful advance information on events and activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher took up her post at the beginning of this term and is already providing good leadership. The leadership of other key staff and management systems is very good. Governors are effective and the school deals with an unusually high turnover of pupils very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is very good and has resulted in improved standards.
- The headteacher and her colleagues have a very clear vision for the school's future development.
- The school is very effective in motivating staff and pupils so that all, including those who spend a relatively short time in the school, feel valued.
- Strategic planning is very effective.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and potential for development and ensure that it meets its legal obligations apart from a few minor omissions in information to parents.
- The principles of best value are applied well and finances are managed efficiently.

Commentary

32. Subjects are managed very well and this very good management is a key reason for the high standards achieved by pupils. The core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are led and managed very well so that learning in the subjects tested nationally at the end of Year 6 is very secure. Skills in information and communication technology are taught well and there are examples of information and communication technology being used very well to support learning in other subjects. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator has a very clear grasp of the way in which needs are being met across the school. She ensures that pupils who need extra help are identified early and that their progress is carefully tracked so that their future learning can build on their present levels of understanding. The learning of the very few pupils speak English as an additional language is very well managed so that they take a full part in lessons and are making rapid progress. Religious education has developed very well since the school's previous inspection and very good leadership and management mean that pupils are attaining above average standards by the time that they leave the school. The effective leadership of creative and

physical subjects enables pupils to have a very good level of experience in these areas because of the very good provision for enrichment out of class.

33. The headteacher, fully supported by all her colleagues, has a very clear vision for the school's future development. Essentially, this is to enable all pupils to achieve their potential academically while developing personally so that they become confident and caring young citizens. The school has a very strong ethos which is evident throughout its activities. This includes a very clear commitment to fully including all – adults and pupils – in its activities so that all have equality of access and opportunity. For example, teaching assistants feel a valued and appreciated part of the teaching provision. This level of inclusion and the robust systems which make it possible, are crucial in the school because of the unusually high turnover of pupils. This does not adversely affect standards overall because pupils quickly settle into the school and make very good progress from their existing levels of knowledge and understanding.
34. This is made possible because the school is very evaluative. It monitors data relating to standards rigorously, interprets the evidence carefully and then makes plans to overcome any areas of weakness. The continuing professional development of all staff is seen as central to this and has a high priority. Strategic planning is in a transitional phase because of the headteacher's recent appointment, but the plan that she has prepared to take the school to the end of the school year, skilfully addresses the school's perceived needs.
35. Governors are an important part of the team. All the governors have a subject responsibility and most visit the school regularly to see pupils at work and to meet subject leaders. This means that governors can bring first-hand experience to their discussions so that they have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and potential for development. The governing body ensures that the school meets its legal obligations with the exception of a few minor omissions in the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. The school plans to include these aspects in the future.
36. Governors are involved well in ensuring that the school achieves best value from its expenditure. They supervise the school's finances and participate in creating the budget and monitoring expenditure over the year. Careful analysis of data helps governors to challenge the school to ensure that future priorities will achieve best value. This is exemplified by the focus that governors have placed on information and communication technology. The good improvement in resources since the school's previous inspection means that pupils have above average skills in information and communication technology and use them well and often very well, to support their learning in other subjects. This analysis before plans are finalised means that the school applies the principle of best value well. Finances are managed efficiently by the visiting bursar and the school's secretary. The school's accounts were last audited in 2001 and the report made a number of recommendations, largely to update the school's systems in the light of current best practice. These recommendations have been adopted.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	387,814
Total expenditure	367,037
Expenditure per pupil	2,659

Balance from previous year	109,429
Balance carried forward to the next year	130,206

37. This very high carry forward figure has been used for building maintenance and improvement and to maintain staffing levels in a situation in which pupil numbers change rapidly and are unpredictable because of the number of pupils coming from the nearby army barracks. The newly appointed headteacher is aware that the school has some shortages in resources, for example, in library books and plans to reduce the carry forward sum by correcting these.
38. Given pupils' very good achievement and very good personal development, very good teaching and learning, very good leadership and management, a very good record of inclusion and its below average costs per pupil, the school is giving excellent value for money. The headteacher only took up her appointment at the beginning of this term and so has not had time to make a major impact on the school. However, she is already providing purposeful leadership so that the school is in a good position to build on its many strengths and improve further.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Since the previous inspection, this provision has improved well. Children now receive good teaching and have their full entitlement to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Provision for children's physical development is now much better than it was and, although the outdoor area has still to be constructed, plans have now been approved.

Children entered school with learning skills and levels of understanding that were slightly above those expected for their age in 2004, particularly in their language and communication skills. Many children display a good general knowledge. However, the skills that children bring with them do vary considerably year by year and are more typically within the average range. The majority of children reach standards above those expected by the end of the Reception Year in personal and social development, language, literacy and communication skills (particularly in their ability to develop early reading skills) and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They reach the standards expected for their age in mathematical, physical and creative development. Overall, all children achieve well in the Reception class, including those with special educational needs, because they receive good teaching and benefit from well-planned learning activities. This is not an easy task for the teacher, because there is a mix of both Reception and Year 1 children in the class, so planning appropriate learning activities is always going to be a challenge, but this is tackled well and children receive a satisfactory curriculum in the Reception Year.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed well by the Reception teacher, who organises learning support staff appropriately so that activities are matched to the needs of both Reception and Year 1 children. Learning support staff provide effective teaching support and, sometimes, they give good support to small groups. However, there are instances when learning opportunities are missed and there is scope for further staff training in the Foundation Stage curriculum. Good procedures are in place to help children to settle in when they first start school and positive relationships with parents are firmly established. Learning resources are satisfactory, but would benefit from being better organised into the different areas of learning. However, this is not easy to do because the accommodation, whilst satisfactory, is quite small for the number and mix of children and this does make the organisation of activities more difficult to achieve within the space available.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are planned for children to work with others and act responsibly.
- Staff have high expectations for behaviour and, as a result, children behave well.

Commentary

39. This area of learning is taught well through effectively planned daily activities and, by the time they have reached the end of the Reception Year, most children are likely to have reached standards above those expected for their age. Children achieve well, particularly in their ability to take responsibility and to consider others when making choices. The teacher uses snack time very well to develop independence. For example, children put out place mats around the table and independently fill jugs very carefully with water or milk. They make sure that table surfaces have been cleaned and wash their own hands before they peel and prepare fruit for the other children. They make sure that all children have fair shares of fruit and drinks and then clear up very well after snack time. This is all done quietly, without any fuss, making clear that this is part of everyday activities. Children behave well because this is what all staff expect of them and they respond well to this clear structure.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in early reading skills.
- The teaching of the sounds of letters (phonics) is effective and this has a positive effect on learning.

Commentary

40. Most children are likely to exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. The teaching of basic skills in reading is particularly good and children achieve very well. Parents give very good support, either through regular and effective help in the classroom, or by supporting their children at home and this has a very positive effect on learning. Literacy lessons are well planned and make effective use of recent visits or visitors who have inspired the children. For example, children have recently had the experience of seeing owls and birds of prey, so the classroom story, based on 'The Owl Babies' was very well chosen to extend their interest. Children listen very intently to stories and, when asked a question, they give clear and appropriate answers. The teacher uses questions well to extend children's vocabulary. Most lessons start with a very structured session of early phonic (the sounds of letters) skills and this is helping children to recognise letters and words. Many children write their own first name and some are beginning to write, independently, simple words such as 'in' and 'on'.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some missed opportunities to extend number skills in other activities.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support number recognition.

Commentary

41. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory and most children are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. Children achieve soundly, but their achievement could be better. There are examples of missed opportunities to use other activities in the classroom to develop number skills. For example, in one lesson, the learning support staff gave good support to a small group of children as they took part in a number recognition task. One girl successfully recognised the number five, saying, "Look, it is the same as my age!" However, other children were engaged in different activities which could have been better planned to extend number awareness. Information and communication technology, however, is used well to support learning. Children are given opportunities to work independently and, when observed, were able to identify the number of spots on a ladybird's back and count numbers in order up to ten.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early science skills are taught well, so that children learn key concepts thoroughly.
- Visits and visitors are used well to support learning.

Commentary

42. Teaching is good and most children are likely to exceed the standards expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year. Children achieve well, particularly in their grasp of early scientific concepts. For example, in one lesson exploring light and darkness, children knew that it got dark at night because the sun is not there. The majority of children can tell the difference between natural and artificial sources of light and many children know that a 'reflection' can often be seen in water, or when looking in a mirror. Higher attaining children know that some street lights have sensors which switch the lights on automatically when it gets dark.

43. Visits into the local village are used well to teach children early geographical skills and they have looked carefully at buildings and their uses as they go on a village walk. Many children already appreciate that they live in houses of historical interest, some dating back to Tudor times and this is built upon well by the teacher to extend their knowledge of local history. Skills in design and technology are developed well as children use a range of tools and materials to design the houses and buildings they have seen. Information and communication technology skills are developed well because the teacher makes effective use of learning support staff to give children the opportunity to work in the computer suite on quite challenging programs. Because of this, most children are developing a good understanding of how to create images, change colours and make objects larger or smaller. Children explore their own beliefs and the beliefs and customs of others well, often through stories or role-play activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good support is given to individual children so that they develop new skills quickly.
- The outdoors area is still underdeveloped.

Commentary

44. Teaching is good and activities are planned well to support children's physical development. As a result, most children are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. There have been good improvements to the school's provision for physical development since the previous inspection and children now have regular access to lessons in the well-equipped hall. Children achieve well, particularly when working on small apparatus and being given individual or small group support by the teacher or a member of the learning support staff. Whilst planning permission has been approved for the development of the outdoor area, this work has still to be done and, at this stage, pupils do not have the opportunity to extend their physical skills further in a stimulating outdoor learning environment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have daily activities that are planned to develop their small scale skills and give them experience of using a range of tools and media.

Commentary

45. No direct teaching of creative development was seen, so no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching, but evidence from work on display in the classroom indicates that children are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the Reception Year. Children have been making self-portraits by looking in a mirror and then trying to represent what they observe by using collage techniques. Children use their imagination well during role-play activities and had great fun planning an 'owl nest' for the owl babies that they had read about in the class story.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in standards that are well above average.
- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Very good systems for assessment enable learning to be managed very well.
- Literacy skills are promoted very effectively in other subjects.

Commentary

46. An analysis of pupils' work and evidence from lessons show that standards in the present Years 2 and 6 are likely to be well above average by the end of this school year. This will maintain the high standards attained generally in recent years. These high standards are the result of very effective teaching. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding enable them to plan interesting work which motivates pupils to give of their best. Learning activities challenge pupils at different stages of learning so that they build on their current standards. Time and resources are used very well so that lessons have very good pace and pupils concentrate for long periods. Teaching assistants are very effective, particularly, but not exclusively, with pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, these groups of pupils achieve at the same rate as all pupils.
47. Achievement is very good throughout the school. Very good opportunities for speaking and listening are created so that pupils become used to speaking with accuracy and precision and to listening carefully to others. As a result, speaking and listening are above average in Years 2 and 6. The school is participating in a national project to promote early reading and this is having a positive effect on pupils' progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have very secure phonic skills to break down unfamiliar words into their different sounds and so to pronounce them. Higher attaining pupils read with good expression and understanding and discuss their reading with good insight, comparing books and characters. Discussing how libraries work, a higher attaining pupil in Year 2 was able to say that, to find a book on crocodiles, he would "look for a shelf with reptiles". Average and lower attaining pupils in Years 2 and 6 are already achieving the levels in reading that they are expected to reach at the end of this school year, while higher attaining pupils already exceed these levels.

48. The quality of writing is above average and higher attaining pupils in Years 2 and 6 clearly have the potential to be well above average by the end of this school year. Their writing covers a wide range with particular strengths in poetry. They are capable of expanded pieces of work using interesting and imaginative vocabulary. For example, a higher attaining pupil in Year 6 wrote, 'spring dances round the garden surrounded by glowing daffodils: winter looks through the frosted glass to see her garden covered in a sheet of white snow'. By Year 6, handwriting is generally neat, joined and of even size and punctuation and grammar are used accurately. Spelling is less secure. In Year 2, spelling and handwriting are inconsistent but spellings are generally phonically recognisable. Pupils at different stages of learning are capable of good imaginative writing.
49. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because the subject and their learning are led and managed very well. The subject leader has been involved in the marked improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 since the school's previous inspection. One of her current targets is to improve the standards of higher attaining pupils in the national tests at the end of Year 2. She has improved the quality of the resources available for learning, although she recognises the need for an improved reference library. She promotes high quality learning opportunities by encouraging pupils to enter literary competitions both within the school and outside. Pupils have been successful in winning prizes in competitions, particularly for their poetry. High quality work is celebrated, for example, the 'Aboriginal Art Stories' written by pupils in Year 5 and the poems 'About School Places and Events in 2003' written by pupils in Year 4. Very effective leadership and management ensure that pupils benefit from a rich curriculum.
50. Very good systems for assessing pupils' progress and planning their further learning are an important aspect of this very good management. Pupils' standards are assessed frequently and the school is developing a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work. Teachers indicate both orally and in writing how pupils can improve their work. Parents are involved very effectively through the 'Pupil Assignment Book' which doubles as a record of pupils' reading. Evidence from assessments is built into a record of achievement for each pupil so that their progress can be tracked and their future learning managed to enable them to build up their knowledge and understanding systematically. These systems are supported by an analysis of the school's performance in the national tests so that any areas of relative weakness can be identified and plans can be put into place to tackle them. This very careful management of learning puts the school in a strong position to maintain its considerable strengths and build on them further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The use of other subjects to support learning in English is a strength of teaching and learning. Very good opportunities are taken in lessons to use discussion to promote pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning with writing being word-processed and the Internet being used for research for projects. Subjects such as geography, history and religious education are used very effectively to enable pupils to practise different forms of writing. For example, in religious education in Year 6, pupils have written

harvest poems and written the story of David and Goliath as a newspaper article before writing choruses to celebrate David's entry into Jerusalem. These very effective opportunities make a marked contribution to very good standards and to pupils' very good achievement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2 and is very good, sometimes excellent in Years 3 to 6 and, as a result, pupils achieve very well and reach high standards.
- There is scope for more challenging activities to be planned for higher attaining pupils in Year 2.
- Very good leadership of the subject has led to significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum is well planned and the use of key skills in both literacy and information and communication technology supports pupils' learning.

Commentary

52. Pupils in the current Year 2 are likely to achieve standards above national expectations by the end of the academic year and, in the current Year 6, it is likely that pupils will achieve standards that are well above national expectations. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2, including those pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving very well, particularly in their grasp of the mathematical skills needed to solve problems and to apply their mathematical knowledge to a range of situations. High standards are being achieved because the quality of teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2 and is very good and often excellent in Years 3 to 6. A key strength of mathematics teaching in the school, particularly for the oldest pupils, is in the provision of opportunities for pupils to use their problem solving skills in a wide range of challenging activities. This supports their ability to apply the mathematical knowledge that they already have to tackle some complex tasks. For example, in an excellent lesson in a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher's very high expectations, very good subject knowledge and well planned, challenging activities, enabled pupils to change the scale of a two-dimensional drawing which they had done by using co-ordinates on isometric paper. The highest attaining pupils were given a task to complete using an Internet link to a local university, which kept them fully engrossed on what was a very challenging task and they were justifiably proud of what they had achieved at the end of the lesson.
53. There is scope for the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 to tackle more challenging work, however. For example, whilst these pupils are currently reaching standards above those for their age, there are some missed opportunities in lessons to develop their learning further. This could be achieved by planning a more challenging range

of extension activities. Occasionally, these pupils begin to lose their focus in lessons and become restless because they are ready to tackle more complex tasks.

54. The subject is led and managed very well by an excellent mathematics teacher, whose drive and enthusiasm have led to very good improvements in the subject since the previous inspection. For example:
- pupils now reach much higher standards, particularly by the end of Year 2;
 - the quality of teaching throughout the school is much improved and is consistently good and, more often, very good; and
 - a clear focus has been placed on developing teachers' skills in the teaching of investigative, problem solving activities and, as a result, pupils now have a good range of skills in this aspect of mathematics.
55. Key improvements have been made because the subject leader is herself an exemplary mathematics teacher and has ensured that good quality staff training has taken place to improve the quality of teaching. This is checked regularly, with honest and evaluative feedback given to staff to help them to improve their skills. All staff work very well together as a team and this is having a very positive effect on how well pupils' achieve. Test data is rigorously analysed to identify any emerging areas of weaknesses in what pupils know, understand and can do and, if identified, these areas are tackled very quickly with whole-school strategies. Very effective procedures are in place to check pupils' learning and this information is then used well to plan the next steps to learning.
56. The curriculum is very well planned and pupils enjoy their lessons because learning activities are made interesting and fun for them. All teachers make very effective use of key skills in literacy and information and communication skills to support pupils' learning. For example, in Year 2, information and communication skills are used for pupils to explore symmetry and to draw and interpret simple graphs. Older pupils are given many independent, research-based activities to pursue over an extended period and they are required to produce work that is well presented and organised to display a widening range of problem-solving skills. Those pupils who have English as an additional language are given very effective support in lessons and because of this, they achieve very well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. In all subjects, teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils to use numbers, make calculations and draw and interpret graphs, using a good range of strategies. Pupils are required to and do, use correct mathematical vocabulary. In science, pupils use a good range of mathematical skills to draw graphs or take accurate temperature readings. In geography, older pupils use mathematical skills to calculate longitude and latitude bearings, to calculate the distance between continents and to draw graphs to show and compare climate patterns across the world.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and so reach high standards.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There is strong emphasis on developing pupils' learning through well planned practical investigations.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

58. Over the last few years, the results of the national tests for 11-year-olds have been well above the national average. Most pupils currently in Year 6 show the same high standards. During their time in school, these pupils have made very good progress and achieved very well.
59. The main reason for the high standards achieved by pupils is the very good quality of teaching that they receive throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise which enable them to plan activities which effectively challenge pupils of all abilities. Questioning is used very well to develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding and to extend their scientific vocabulary. This was shown clearly, for example, in a lesson on micro-organisms for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The teacher had very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance, which resulted in them working to their full capacity. The lesson built well on the homework that had been set previously to let pupils use their prior knowledge to support their learning. A notable feature of this lesson, as of others, was the way information and communication technology was used to stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The activities were linked to everyday life so that pupils could use their own experiences to help them to develop their understanding of how micro-organisms can be useful.
60. The emphasis on learning through structured practical investigations results in pupils being adept at devising and carrying out a 'fair' test independently of the teacher. They are encouraged to consider what their findings tell them so that the conclusions to their experiments are good evaluations of what they have been finding out. Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively so that pupils receive a high proportion of direct teaching. This results in all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, being challenged and supported very well.
61. The subject leader has a clear view of how provision can be further improved. For example, she is currently trialling new assessment material in an effort to increase the number of pupils achieving the higher levels by the end of Year 2. The newly appointed headteacher is keen to develop the subject leader's monitoring of teaching and learning, to further her ability to support and advise colleagues. The curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development since they are often given opportunities to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, during their experiments. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their numeracy skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 have taken careful measurements during their investigations into which of a variety of magnets were the strongest. Assessment procedures are successful in enabling the school to track the attainment

and progress of individual pupils. Because pupils are given stimulating activities, they enjoy their work and behave very well so that they have a high work rate. This has a positive affect on the quality of their work and the high standards they achieve.

62. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement is better, as are teaching and learning and leadership and management.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve standards beyond those expected for their age.
- Teaching and learning are good, which helps pupils to make good progress through the school.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Assessment procedures lack rigour.
- There is good use of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects.

Commentary

63. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards beyond those expected for their age. This shows that they achieve well and make good progress during their time in school.
64. Teachers make good use of the computer suite to teach basic skills and to encourage pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. Secure subject knowledge enables teachers to demonstrate new ideas and techniques confidently. This was evident when pupils in Year 2 were being taught how to access the Internet, in order to research information about Victorian seaside holidays as part of their work in history. Teachers also use information and communication technology well in classrooms during the introductions and conclusions to lessons. For example, in a science lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's very good information and communication technology presentation effectively deepened pupils' knowledge and understanding of how micro-organisms can be useful. Lessons are planned well to maintain pupils' interest and to encourage them to work collaboratively in pairs on the computers. This makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together so that all pupils have a high proportion of direct teaching. Because of this, pupils have a high work rate and are productive when using computers. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils are fully involved in all activities and progress well.
65. The subject leader has worked closely with one of the governors to create a comprehensive action plan to develop the subject over the next few years. The plan shows a very clear understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in the school now. It identifies how improvements can be made, for example, by the further

development of assessment procedures to chart individual pupils' progress more effectively as they pass through the school. The curriculum is planned well so that all strands of the subject are covered. Resources have been improved and are now good. Because of this, pupils are better able to use information and communication technology when they want to, independently of the teacher, as a means of developing their learning in lessons. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work, are very well behaved and show a great deal of interest and enjoyment in what they are doing.

66. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The standards that pupils achieve, teaching and learning and leadership and management of the subject are all better.

Information communication technology across the curriculum

67. There are good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. In English, for example, pupils in Year 6 have used a word processing program to change the style, colour and size of text to add interest to their stories and poems. In mathematics, they have used a data-handling program to produce graphs showing the types of Christmas cards preferred by people of different ages. The Internet is used well as a means of research in science, history and geography.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and sometimes excellent teaching in Years 3 to 6 means that pupils reach standards that are above expectations by the time they leave the school.
- The school plans a very innovative and exciting curriculum for older pupils.
- No significant weaknesses were identified.

Commentary

68. Standards match those found in most schools by the end of Year 2 and are above those typically found by the end of Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in the subject. The quality of teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2 and, as a result, pupils are developing key geographical skills, such as the use of maps, atlases and aerial photographs to identify features in a landscape. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a clear understanding of how the water cycle works and are challenged to consider why, if 97 per cent of the water on the planet is salt water, rainwater is not salty! Pupils were able to refer to the work they had done in science on evaporation to explain this and were able to understand that, because humans and animals require fresh water to live, the storage of fresh water may sometimes have a significant impact on the environment.

69. The school's geography curriculum, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6, is very well planned and innovative. For example, pupils are currently following the 'Global Challenge' yacht race. Each pupil has chosen a yacht to support and follow during the race period from October 2004 to July 2005. They use the Internet to download the route the yachts are taking, appreciating that they will be travelling against the prevailing wind and sea currents. They also use the Internet to access daily logs written by crew members. The teacher makes learning challenging, fun and very exciting and this has a very positive effect on pupils' achievement and on their interest and enthusiasm for the subject. For example, in an excellent lesson, pupils were able to demonstrate very clear factual knowledge about the countries that will be visited during the 'Global Challenge' race and the effect that going against the sea currents will have, particularly on the New Zealand leg of the journey. Pupils appreciate that the 'Challenge' sailors have to face daily, very tough and often dangerous, conditions.
70. An analysis of pupils' work throughout the school shows that teachers make very effective use of information and communication technology to support learning in geography. Literacy and numeracy skills are used very appropriately to plot graphs and co-ordinates and all pupils take great care in the presentation of their work. The subject is led and managed well. Improvements have been made to the quality of geography teaching since the previous inspection and all teaching is now at least good and is more often very good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are offered a good curriculum because teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and ahead of expectations at the end of Year 6.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

71. The school follows the Essex Agreed Syllabus for religious education which offers a broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress because teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and work hard to provide learning activities that will motivate pupils and stimulate their interest. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection and the school has successfully overcome the criticisms contained in the report from that inspection.
72. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a secure introduction to some world religions and develop a sound early understanding. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, all pupils understand that there are special people and all could name and draw a person special to them. They knew that Jesus was special. By Year 2, they understood that other cultures have different people who are special to them and that this needs to be respected. This understanding is deepened by comparing, for example, Christian and

Sikh weddings. By Year 6, understanding has deepened further and standards are above those expected. For example, pupils had observed a piece of modern art and found that they had interpreted it in different ways. This was used to introduce them to the idea that Bible stories such as the creation can be interpreted in a range of ways. This shows a good depth of understanding. The way in which this level of knowledge and understanding is developed was exemplified in a very good lesson for Years 4 and 5 in which pupils were very good at using their existing knowledge to make assumptions. This enabled them to grasp the basic facts about St Francis quickly and to achieve very well. A similar quality was evident in a good lesson for Years 5 and 6 in which pupils compared being wise with being clever. Among a large number of interesting and valid suggestions was that being wise is having understanding and judgement while being clever is being quick to learn.

73. The subject is led and managed well and effective leadership has brought about the significant improvement which has been achieved since the previous inspection. Opportunities for visits and for inviting visitors representing other faiths into the school are now being taken to deepen pupils' understanding. The subject is contributing very well to pupils' spiritual development by providing opportunities for reflection and promoting tolerance for the views of others. The recording of pupils' work has improved very well and standards are now above average by Year 6. This reflects teachers' higher expectations with regard to standards. The subject leader has prepared an action plan for further development in the subject and the school is in a good position to improve further.

History

74. Work in this subject was sampled, so no overall judgement on the quality of the school's provision has been made. Only one lesson was seen, so that no overall judgement has been made on the quality of teaching in the school. In the lesson seen in a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils, the teaching was very good. The lesson used challenging and interesting material about the lives of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, which enabled the pupils to discuss, in some depth, the political, moral, and social issues surrounding both segregation in America and apartheid in Africa. Pupils gave very articulate answers to the searching questions posed by the teacher and were achieving standards above those typical for their age. The evidence from an analysis of pupils' work throughout the school shows that teachers make effective use of information and communication skills to develop pupils' historical research skills. Effective links with other subjects are made, particularly with geography and English and the school provides pupils with an interesting history curriculum through well planned visits to museums and historic houses.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled and no judgement is made on the quality of teaching.

Art and design

75. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with pupils having opportunities to use a wide range of materials to develop their skills in different artistic techniques. Good

emphasis is placed on developing pupils' artistic ideas by studying the work of famous artists. There are good links to other subjects, for example, in the work of some pupils in Years 5 and 6 who have used paint, felt tips and white pencil crayons as part of their work in history, to make good quality representations of Greek pots. Good use is made of information and communication technology programs to create a range of patterns and pictures. The weekly art club enriches the curriculum. This is exemplified by the way in which pupils in the club have used colour washes to create good quality, vibrant watercolour scenes. The displays of artwork around the school are of good quality and reflect the care that pupils take in their activities, as well as the way that staff value their efforts.

Design and technology

76. The curriculum is planned well to enable pupils to use a wide range of materials to develop their skills in the subject. They are encouraged to experiment with different ways of joining these materials and to consider their fitness for the purpose. There is good emphasis on looking at and talking about existing designs and products as a stimulus for pupils' activities. For example, pupils in Year 2 have designed and made glove puppets after studying a range of commercially produced ones. After designing and making products, they are expected to make evaluations and say how their products might be improved. There are good links with other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have used their scientific knowledge and understanding of forces to help them to design, make and then to evaluate a range of columns made from paper and card, as a part of models of Greek temples related to their work in history.

Music

77. Whole school singing in assemblies is good when accompanied by piano and satisfactory when accompanied by a tape. Pupils sing with greater verve and enthusiasm when responding to a 'live' piano. The school provides a wide range of musical opportunities for its pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to experience different activities in music. They participate in performance at Christmas and on other occasions and a school video provides evidence of performances of good quality, for example of Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Pie Jesu' and of an exciting drum solo in a spirited performance of 'Rock around the Clock'. Many pupils take advantage of opportunities for instrumental tuition and the school has an orchestra of some 33 pupils – over one quarter of the school's roll – and all pupils in Years 3 to 6 are in the school choir. Pupils benefited from a visit from two woodwind players from the London Mozart Players and then attended a performance by the orchestra. The subject is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic and committed teacher who ensures that pupils have the opportunity for a lively curriculum based on a commercial scheme and covering all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Music has a high profile in the school. For example, the Christmas performance for this term combines music and dance and has a multicultural theme, 'visiting' different countries around the world and so contributing to pupils' cultural development.

Physical education

78. Facilities for physical education have improved significantly since the previous inspection with the building of the new school hall. This enables the National Curriculum to be fully covered. Standards in swimming are well above average with all of last year's Year 6 pupils able to swim at least 25 metres by the time that they left the school. The majority of pupils swim much more than this because the school devotes an above average proportion of curriculum time to swimming with all pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 swimming weekly. Pupils have good opportunities for external coaching in soccer, tennis and hockey (a few pupils are now playing for the county). Pupils benefit from a number of tournaments arranged at the local high school, for example, in rounders and the school also has a netball club. A residential visit to Scarborough every other year enables pupils in Years 5 and 6 to experience outdoor and adventurous activities. A visiting dance teacher ensures that pupils have rich experiences in dance and is, for example, contributing to this term's Christmas production. The subject is well led and the subject manager is developing an action plan to develop pupils' experiences further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for personal, health and social education and citizenship is good.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to develop fully their personal and social skills, self-awareness and understanding of citizenship.

Commentary

79. Personal, social and health education and citizenship has a high priority and is seen as an integral part of the curriculum. Regular whole-class discussions are timetabled to help pupils to express their ideas confidently and to learn to listen to others. There is a clear long-term plan to ensure that personal, health and social education and citizenship is covered effectively. However, a system of formal monitoring of the delivery of this aspect of the curriculum has yet to be established. Planning includes appropriate sex and relationships education for older pupils, in which they learn about body changes in puberty, the importance of relationships and the dangers of drugs and other substances.
80. Regular opportunities for whole-class discussions successfully promote pupils' speaking and listening skills and help them to appreciate and respect the views of others. Their opinions and views are valued and taken seriously so that they develop confidence and a positive self-image. This term the school has focused on establishing school and class councils to develop pupils' understanding of democracy. Many opportunities to take responsibilities around the school enable pupils to develop good citizenship skills.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
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	1

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).