

INSPECTION REPORT

LEIGH INFANT SCHOOL

Leigh on Sea, Essex

LEA area: Southend on Sea

Unique reference number: 114774

Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Lucas

Lead inspector: Mr Geoff Cooper

Dates of inspection: 28 February – 2 March 2005

Inspection number: 267203

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant school
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 to 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 264

School address: North Street
Leigh on Sea
Essex
Postcode: SS9 1QE

Telephone number: 01702 476224
Fax number: 01702 471029

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs E Bleach

Date of previous inspection: June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Leigh infant school is situated in a residential area of Leigh on Sea. The area is neither privileged nor underprivileged. The school is large for its type, admitting up to 90 children to the Reception Classes each year. Currently there are 264 boys and girls on roll. School data shows that the proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. Few pupils are learning English as an additional language, although the school celebrates the skills of a significant number of pupils who have knowledge of a language other than English. The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background although a very small number have a background of mixed ethnicity. The school received achievement awards in 2001 and 2002. It takes part in the schools sports partnership and safer journeys to school initiatives. It shares its site and has a close relationship with Leigh North Street Junior School. Few pupils enter or leave the school at other than the usual time of joining or leaving. Attainment on entry to school has been falling slightly in recent years. It is currently broadly average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average but for pupils with a statement of special educational needs (for more profound learning needs) it is in line with the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23647	Mr G W Cooper	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Personal social and health education
14214	Mrs G Smith	Lay inspector	
11419	Mrs P J Underwood	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education
32181	Mrs M Coles	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Music Physical education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE AND SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE ONE	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Leigh on Sea is a **very effective school**, with high expectations of its children. Value for money is very good. The very good leadership of the headteacher has been the impetus in moving the school forward, improving the quality of teaching and thus raising standards. Supportive governors know their school very well and understand its strengths and areas for development. Standards in English and mathematics are above average. In science, standards are well above average. Achievement is very good overall because of the strengths in teaching and learning. There are very effective links with parents whose views of the school are very positive. Pupils' views of the school are equally positive. A particular aid to achievement is the commitment of all adults working in the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- the very good leadership of the headteacher has been instrumental in achieving significant improvements;
- teaching is very good leading to very effective learning and achievement;
- the thoroughness in teaching and pupils' mature attitudes to their work ensure that learning is very good;
- the school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development resulting in very good behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning;
- strategies for gathering information about pupils' progress are very good and used very effectively to match tasks to their needs.

Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The school has responded very well to the key issues of that inspection. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science because teaching is now very good. Planning is more rigorous and assessment is used more effectively to ensure tasks are very well matched to pupils' needs. Provision for information and communication technology has been greatly enhanced with the development of the computer suite, increased teachers' knowledge and their confidence in the subject. Management issues have been successfully addressed as subject leaders have clearly defined roles and the school improvement plan highlights appropriate priorities. The school has worked hard to improve accommodation for the Foundation Stage pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	A	A	A	A
Writing	C	B	A	A
Mathematics	A*	A	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The attainment of children on entry to the Reception classes is broadly average. By the end of the Reception Year most children are on course to meet the early goals in all areas of learning, with many exceeding them in personal social and emotional development, mathematical development and in communication language and literacy. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in writing and mathematics but well above average in

science and reading. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve **very well**. Standards in information and communication technology are above average. In religious education, standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education were not a focus of the inspection and no judgements are made. Leigh Infants is an inclusive school ensuring all pupils have equality of access and achieve very well. Achievement is particularly good because of the very effective the way pupils use and apply the skills they have learned.

The school makes **very good** provision for the personal development of its pupils including the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is excellence in the school's provision for the encouragement of self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes towards school. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to grow in self-knowledge, to work independently, to work together and to learn to respect others. Attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils arrive promptly and in good time to start school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** quality of education. Teaching is **very good**. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They learn very well because of the support they get from all staff. Teachers' planning and expectations are excellent. Their knowledge and enthusiasm captures pupils' interest and motivates them to succeed. Many activities give pupils practical first hand learning experiences. Data is used very effectively to highlight areas of weakness in pupils' learning and additional support provided. The curriculum is very good and well enriched with visits and visitors. Links with the community are very good, especially with local schools. Partnership with parents is very good and the school does a great deal to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. Well-developed strategies for caring and supporting pupils make a beneficial contribution to the overall quality of education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher's very good leadership has been particularly effective in improving the quality of teaching and in raising standards. She provides a very good sense of direction which is shared by all involved in the school. The creation of teams to inspire, motivate and influence is excellent. Other members of staff make a very valuable contribution to the running of the school and implementing improvements. The role of subject leader is very well defined and all provide very effective support and guidance for their colleagues through the monitoring of teaching and learning. Excellent monitoring of performance data ensures action is taken to remedy any weaknesses. The governors play a very supportive role in the work and life of the school, helping to shape its development, challenging decisions and gaining a very good overview of its strengths and areas for development. They ensure that statutory requirements are fully met. Because the school is very well managed it runs smoothly, ensuring a calm environment for teaching, learning and achievement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school expressed through the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting are very positive. They appreciate how well the members of staff know their children and care for them. Pupils are very settled and confident about their life in school. They discuss enthusiastically the learning opportunities provided for them. They appreciate

their part in shaping the future direction of the school, especially through their role on the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In this very effective school there are no significant weaknesses. To raise standards even further and to improve provision the school should continue to work on the priorities identified in its management and improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Overall standards are above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading and science. Standards in information and communication technology are above average whilst those in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement in the school, including the achievement of pupils with special educational needs, is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of very good teaching the performance of the school in national tests in Year 2 is now consistently above average and frequently well above average.
- Pupils achieve very well because they are very well taught and have very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Effective use is made of pupils' developing skills in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology.

Commentary

1. Children enter the Reception classes with a range of knowledge and skills that is broadly average. Because they are very well taught they make very good progress and achieve very well. Most pupils are on course to attain the expected levels in all areas of learning. Many will exceed expectations especially in personal, social and emotional development and also in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.2 (17.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.0 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.1 (17.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 89 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The above table shows the results of the school's National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in 2004. These have been consistently above or well above average since the previous report. When the results are compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools, they are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The school was very disappointed that results for mathematics were not well above average as they were very close to achieving this. However, although the results are very good, fewer pupils than nationally exceeded the expected level in writing in 2004. The school is aware of this and it has looked long and hard at improving this situation. Despite this the trend in the school's average points score for all these subjects is above the national trend. In the 2004 tests the performance of both boys and girls in reading was a term and half ahead of the expectations for their age. Unusually, boys perform better in writing than girls. Nationally girls do better than boys in writing. However, in mathematics boys' performance is better than that of girls,

reflecting the national trend. Standards of work seen during the inspection, in Year 2 remain above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading and science.

3. Overall achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are lively, interested and well motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers. Because pupils make good use of their speaking and listening skills they acquire new information quickly. These skills are well developed. Pupils demonstrated their very good powers of reasoning in a science lesson when they had to explain their investigation. They also achieve very well in science because they enjoy many opportunities to investigate for themselves. Standards in information and communication technology are above average because good use is made of teachers' subject knowledge, the computer suite is well used and the information and communication technology technician is very effective in supporting pupils' learning. Very good use is made of tracking pupil's progress so that additional support is well targeted at both the lower and higher attainers as necessary. Support given to lower attainers often enables them to achieve the expected levels. Support for higher attainers provides them with more challenging tasks. Consequently, standards are rising for these groups. No pupils of statutory school age have English as an additional language. Two children in the Reception Year do not have English as their home language. These children are well provided for and they make progress that is similar to that of others in their class. The school has an effective strategy for identifying pupils with particular gifts and talents. It ensures that pupils are enabled to build upon this, for example, in following up soccer talent with an outside provider, through playing the piano in public and with a member of staff and through exhibiting works of art in a local gallery.
4. Pupils attain above the expectations of locally agreed syllabus in religious education. They know more about religion than their recording suggests and demonstrate that they are aware of the importance of religious customs. Good use of resources and very good teacher knowledge has a positive impact on standards. In the previous report information and communication technology was criticised both for provision and teachers' understanding. The school has made great strides in improving teachers' knowledge and confidence so pupils are now achieving well. Provision has also been improved with the new computer suite. As a result, pupils' skills are developing rapidly. The strategic role played by the information and communication technology technician is a key factor in the progress pupils make. Art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education were not a focus of this inspection and no judgements are made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and their punctuality is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and there have been no exclusions. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy taking part in the wide range of opportunities provided.
- Pupils of all ages get along very well with each other and with their teachers.
- Pupils' moral development is excellent and their spiritual, social and cultural development is very good.

Commentary

5. The previous inspection found that pupils had good attitudes towards school and that they behaved well. This positive picture has strengthened over the intervening six years and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now very good. Almost all of the pupils say that they enjoy their time at school and they think their teachers are approachable and very fair. Pupils enjoy being given jobs to do around school, such as being the class helper of the day and returning the registers to the office. Parents endorse their very positive views and there is almost unanimous agreement that their children like coming to school. The quality of teaching has also improved and is now well above average. Teachers plan interesting and stimulating lessons and inspire pupils with a self-confidence that motivates them to have a go and to try their very best. During a computing lesson, for example, Year 1 pupils were learning how to give 'teddy' instructions so that he could use the playground equipment. The teacher and learning support assistant provided very good individual support and, by the end of the lesson, pupils had made very good progress. During lessons, few pupils ever become distracted and almost all can be relied upon to concentrate well and work hard.
6. Teachers provide very good examples of how to behave and have similarly high expectations of the pupils. Pupils know exactly what they should and should not do. Behaving sensibly quickly becomes a natural way of life. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good and are based upon mutual respect and consideration. Pupils appreciate being trusted to do things on their own and say that the other children are friendly. They respond warmly to their teachers and the school has a very warm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils and their parents agree that bullying is not a problem and say that any such incidents are managed very well. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and everyone gets along very well; there have been no racial incidents.
7. The school provides pupils with a very good programme for personal development and they respond very well. Pupils clearly recognise the difference between right and wrong and this is reflected in the school's calm and friendly atmosphere. Pupils have a tremendous respect and interest in each other's cultures, values and beliefs. They celebrate events such as the Chinese New Year and pupils who return from abroad are encouraged to share their experiences. Pupils enjoy using their initiative and are very pleased to be involved with the recently established school council. In the short time it has been running, pupils have discussed how to reduce the noise at lunchtime and improve movement in the relatively narrow corridors. They are kind and considerate to each other and Year 2 pupils enjoy spending time with the Reception children. Assemblies make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Visitors from local churches come in to school and pupils learn to appreciate Christian values and aspects of other religions, such as Judaism. They reflect on the special feelings they have for their parents, friends and pets. They also consider ways in which they can be a true friend and empathise with those who are less fortunate.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Very good teaching and learning are well supported by very good strategies for assessing and supporting pupils' academic and social progress.

Pupils are very well cared for and very good links are made with parents, the community and other educational establishments. Considerable improvements have been made to the accommodation. Staffing is stable and very skilled. These factors have a strongly positive effect on pupils' overall achievement.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. There are very good strategies for supporting the progress of pupils through the assessment of what they know, can do, and understand.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very strong collaborative planning makes the best use of staff skills and ideas and provides a strong impetus for learning.
- All members of staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and application to their tasks.
- Introductions to lessons occasionally do not make the best use of all available adults.
- The school makes very good use of its limited accommodation.
- The stability of staffing is a significant strength in the progress pupils make.
- In their very good learning, pupils live up well to challenging teaching.

Commentary

8. Teaching and learning are very good. The school has worked hard since the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching. The table below shows how successful school development has been.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	26 (58%)	17 (38%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

9. Teaching is uniformly strong in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. A particular success of the teaching is the strength given through collaborative planning. This ensures good progression and continuity from year to year but also equality of opportunity across parallel classes in the same year group. Pupils make very good progress in acquiring the basic skills of learning because the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is very good. Planning, the encouragement and engagement of pupils, the way pupils are challenged and the insistence upon high standards of behaviour are all aspects of excellence within teaching and learning. Because of these strengths pupils learn and achieve very well. Their application and productivity are excellent. Because learning is so good, children in the Reception Year make the progress that takes their standards above those expected of children of similar age. Similarly in Year 1 and 2 pupils work consistently above and frequently well above the standard expected for their age. A particular feature of learning is the way the school provides support and guidance to pupils of different prior attainment. Pupils with the potential to achieve the higher levels possible get the intensive support they need. Those who find learning more difficult and who are identified as having special educational needs are

very well provided for. They frequently make sufficient progress to ensure that they achieve the levels expected for their age.

10. The school has good strategies for ensuring pupils understand how to develop independent study skills. This is apparent in information and communication technology where pupils use a restricted form of the Internet to investigate current history topics. It is apparent in science where great stress is placed on the investigation and exploration of practical themes in science such as pushes and pulls leading to a mature understanding of the scientific principles of force. Many teachers have a particular gift for questioning that ensures all pupils are involved in the activities and that clarifies and assesses what is being learned. This type of intensive and demanding questioning ensures that all pupils are involved in the thinking process. The work of learning support assistants is an asset to teaching and learning. In almost all cases, learning support assistants have a high degree of involvement in the learning process. These additional adults in the classroom are well qualified and possess many valuable skills. Only occasionally are the skills and talents of support assistants not fully capitalised upon when they are relatively passive during the introductions to lessons. A particular asset is the work of the information and communication technology technician whose very good knowledge of some ageing hardware makes sure the lessons continue to flow.
11. The school has very good strategies for keeping track of pupils' progress. All areas of achievement are effectively measured. Excellent use is made of this information to identify whole school priorities for learning, to identify where specific support needs to be injected for groups and to target and move on the learning of individuals. This good practice extends into the Reception classes where informal strategies are used to record children's experience and progress. These methods are then translated into formal assessments that support further progress. Frequently in Years 1 and 2 learning support assistants make valuable observations and assessments of individuals and groups while the teacher is focusing on the needs of the whole class. Because of efficient assessment pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to make further progress.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. It is broad and balanced, fully meeting statutory requirements. It is well enriched through visitors and visits. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The accommodation has been improved a great deal. Resources are sufficient to meet the learning needs of pupils. Teaching and learning support staff are well qualified, highly skilled and work well together in the interests of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that fully meets statutory requirements; this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum is made challenging and interesting by effective cross-curricular links and through visitors and visits.
- Very good provision ensures that pupils with special educational needs do not fall behind their peers in their learning.
- The school makes very good use of a stable and skilled team of adults working in the classroom.
- While there remain limitations to the accommodation available, good improvement has been achieved in the way the building is maintained, developed and used.

Commentary

12. Aspects of the curriculum and planning were criticised at the time of the previous inspection. Shortcomings found then have been thoroughly resolved and improvement has been very good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and fully meets requirements. All subjects of the National Curriculum - and especially those areas that support the development of pupils' basic learning skills - are well catered for. A particular strength of the work of the school lies in the way staff plan together. This ensures that there is great consistency between lessons in parallel classes, that good ideas are shared and that work is progressive from year to year and within the year groups. Planning for children in the Reception Year is equally thorough. It makes sure that children benefit from a very broad range of activities that give wide coverage to the nationally recommended 'stepping stones' of the Foundation Stage curriculum (the curriculum for children in the Reception Year).
13. There is very good provision for pupils who find learning easier and have the potential to achieve the higher levels of the National Curriculum. These pupils are well identified through effective use of assessment. Once their needs are identified there is specific small group support to maintain the intensity of their progress. Assessment is used equally well to identify the specific learning needs of those who find progress more difficult to maintain. These pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for through individual plans for their learning. All staff are clear what the learning objectives are for these pupils and the support is well used to ensure progress is maintained. The school is skilled at identifying and catering for groups of pupils with specific barriers to learning. Overall, the school makes very good provision for equality of opportunity for all pupils and for full access to the curriculum whatever pupils' potential, aptitude or background.
14. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. A specific programme of study is delivered through assembly, science and religious education lessons and through focus sessions such as circle time (a time when pupils sit in a circle and discuss matters which are important to them in their personal development). The provision includes sex and relationships education and drugs education at a level appropriate to the age and needs of pupils. The outcomes of this provision are very positive and manifested in pupils' very positive attitudes to school, school activities and towards each other.
15. The curriculum is well designed to stimulate pupils' interest. Activities are planned thoughtfully and imaginatively. Often effective links are made across subjects to ensure that learning is relevant and meaningful. For example, work in art and design frequently supports learning in science, geography, history and religious education. Very good links are made between the use of information and communication technology skills and the way they can be used to enhance learning in art and design. Information and communication technology is very well used to support learning in science and history. A specific computer program enhances pupils' learning in numeracy. Added to this the school has a stimulating programme of activities after school, including sport and chess. Pupils are taken into the locality to use the environment for learning activities and interesting visitors are used to enrich further the curriculum. For example, a fascinating regular visitor to the school is the Red Falconry display team with their collection of birds of prey. Good support is given in assembly by local ministers of religion.

16. The team of adults working in the classroom is very experienced, skilled and very well deployed. It is a significant element in the make up of this team that many have served the school for a long period and that they know parents and pupils very well. Teamwork in planning and teaching is very strong. Considerable skills are brought to bear by the support given to teachers by experience and well-qualified learning support assistants. Resources are thoughtfully provided to give the support necessary to learning activities. While the accommodation has limitations in the space and facilities available a great deal of thought has gone into improving it since the previous inspection. The school benefits from the use of a large multi-purpose hall and the computer suite. Accommodation has significantly improved for children in the Reception classes and now enables the full Foundation Stage curriculum to be well taught. While there is no school field the school benefits from a swimming pool on site.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance and involves pupils very well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very safe and supportive environment within which pupils develop into happy and confident young people.
- Working relationships are excellent; pupils readily seek help or advice if they need it.
- Teachers provide very good personal and academic support, advice and guidance.
- Induction procedures are very good so that new arrivals settle in quickly.
- The school encourages pupils to voice their opinions, acting upon them whenever it can.

Commentary

17. The strengths in care, support and guidance noted in the previous report have improved further and they are now very good. This is a very caring school and parents are pleased with the way in which their children are nurtured and supported. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety and security are comprehensive and governors undertake their responsibilities very conscientiously. First aid procedures are comprehensive and pupils who feel ill during the school day are very well looked after.
18. During discussions, pupils say that they feel really well looked after and that they would willingly confide in their teachers if the need arose. Parents are equally positive and they ensure that teachers know about any particular problems or circumstances. Analysis of the pupils' and parents' pre-inspection questionnaires shows that almost everyone regards members of staff as being very fair and approachable. This puts teachers in a very good position to be able to support pupils and to spot emerging difficulties at an early stage.
19. Very good tracking systems are in place to monitor and support pupils' academic progress and personal development. Self-assessment is well-established and older pupils help to review their past progress and set targets for improvement. Teachers provide clear and well-targeted advice and guidance and their skilful interventions during lessons make a considerable contribution to the rapid progress pupils make in their learning. The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs and involves outside agencies as and when necessary. Individual education plan targets are well thought out. They focus clearly upon the most important and relevant things each pupil needs to learn.
20. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting spoke highly of the support provided when their children joined the school. Inspectors agree; induction arrangements are very well planned and this high standard of care helps new children to settle in quickly. Links with local pre-school groups are close and incoming children attend school events such as plays and the

Christmas nativity. They also attend several sessions in the Reception class before they actually enrol and this helps them to make friends and become familiar with school routines. In order to ensure that their first day goes smoothly, children join in small groups and teachers offer a home visit to each child. These very good arrangements help to ensure that new children feel welcome and this helps them to make rapid progress in their learning.

21. The school is keen to hear pupils' views and incorporates them into plans whenever it can. Pupils think teachers are very approachable and they are especially pleased with the way in which teachers take time to listen to what they have to say. The recently formed school council meets every few weeks and it is providing a useful forum through which pupils can voice their views and suggestions. So far, pupils have influenced various aspects of school life, such as helping to reduce the noise during lunchtime and corridor congestion.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong links with parents and the local community make a very good contribution to the curriculum and pupils' learning.
- Parents receive very good information about the curriculum and the progress their children are making.
- The school actively seeks parents' views and responds to their suggestions or concerns very promptly.
- Constructive links with other schools strengthen the curriculum and ensure a smooth transition at the end of Year 2.

Commentary

22. This school enjoys a very good reputation and it is heavily over-subscribed. Parents are especially pleased with the high standard of teaching. Their wholehearted support and encouragement contribute to their children's very positive attitudes to school life. Analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaire shows that parents have no major concerns and that there is little about the school that they would like to change. Parents agree, almost unanimously, that their children like coming to school and that they are making rapid progress in their learning. They also say that the school is approachable and are exceptionally pleased with the way in which the school listens and responds to their suggestions or concerns. Several parents regularly help during the school day and members of staff really appreciate their reliability and quality of their help. Parents also provide generous support for the fund-raising and social events that the parents' association organise. For example, over the last four years, the school has collaborated with the receiving junior school to raise funds for a swimming pool enclosure and changing rooms. A very significant sum of money has been now been raised and work has started. The installation of the pool cover will mean that pupils can use the pool for a longer period and therefore improve their swimming.
23. Links with the community are very close. Volunteers regularly come in to help during lessons and their support helps to develop pupils' self-confidence and ability to read. The school enjoys a strong sense of local identity and links with local churches and businesses are very good. They have provided generous support for the swimming pool appeal. The post office also makes special deliveries of letters and parcels to 'John the Giant' in the Reception class and this helps to develop the children's imagination.
24. Parents are kept fully up to date with their children's progress. Three consultation meetings each year and pupils' annual reports give parents a very good idea about what their child can and cannot do. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report are very detailed and regular class and subject newsletters provide full details of the work the pupils undertake.

Classroom windows, the playground notice boards and the website provide comprehensive information about everyday school life.

25. The school encourages parents to be open and frank about voicing their views and, whenever possible, the school incorporates them into plans for the future. Each year, a questionnaire is circulated with the pupils' annual reports. Parents can also speak to staff during the many informal opportunities at the start and end of each day. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are especially close and their attendance at review meetings is very good.
26. The school's building interconnects with the receiving junior school. Curricular and social links are exceptionally close. Transition arrangements are very good and help pupils to settle quickly once they arrive at the start of Year 3. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 swap stories and there are close curriculum links in English, science, mathematics and information and computer technology. There are also close links with other schools in Leigh on Sea and teachers from all phases undertake shared training on matters such as effective learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

The overall governance, leadership and management of the school are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very effective leadership and management of the headteacher is a key factor in the school's improvement.
- The leadership and management of the school are constantly focused on raising standards and improving provision.
- The subject leaders are very effective in their areas of responsibility.
- There is a significant contribution and support from governors for the work of the school.
- The school has successful strategies for monitoring and evaluating its work.

Commentary

27. The headteacher has worked closely with her deputy headteacher to address all the key issues raised in the previous inspection and has brought about a number of improvements. Her clear educational vision and high aspirations have ensured these improvements have focused on raising standards through effective strategic planning. She has successfully created and trained a united and supportive staff team who share this vision and work very hard to ensure that all pupils are well supported and valued. Her leadership ensures that the school is self-evaluative and constantly strives to make teaching and learning more effective. The school is successful in providing a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment for all its pupils. Justifiably, it has a very good reputation in the area. It is oversubscribed and is the school of choice for many parents in the area.
28. Management systems are rigorous but flexible so that monitoring and evaluation are accepted parts of the school's analysis of its performance. The headteacher monitors and evaluates teaching and learning regularly. Very good use is made of data analysis and national test results by the leadership team to evaluate pupil performance and progress. The data is used to set targets in English and mathematics and to identify

the need for additional support. A comprehensive performance management system is in now place and is used effectively to inform the staff development programme.

29. Members of staff with subject responsibilities have developed their roles particularly well. Most monitor and evaluate the provision and standards in their subjects in line with the priorities detailed in the school improvement plan. The leadership of the work for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and ensures that these pupils are supported very well.
30. The governance of the school is very good. The governing body works well with the headteacher as professional partners and has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members have established comprehensive systems of working which offer support and challenge to school. They effectively monitor standards and the quality of education within the school. Governors fulfil all statutory duties very well
31. There has been very good improvement in leadership, management and governance since the previous inspection. All the issues identified in the previous report have been addressed very effectively.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	715, 689	Balance from previous year	69, 269
Total expenditure	733, 459	Balance carried forward to the next	51, 499
Expenditure per pupil	2,768		

32. The funds carried over into the 2004/2005 budget are part of a long-term expenditure plan. These have been used to rebuild and refurbish the current staff room, adult toilets and storage in corridors. The governing body and headteacher work closely together to plan and monitor the budget effectively. The school improvement plan is closely linked to budgetary expenditure and targets funding towards identified areas for development. The best use is made of all school financial resources to benefit the pupils and continue to raise standards. The commitment to employing and training learning support assistants is an example of very good value for money given the contribution they make to the maintenance of high standards in the school. Overall, the school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. This stems from the very good leadership and management of the stage. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and this is well supported by very good strategies for assessment and the use of assessment information. Curriculum planning is very closely linked to the national guidance for the Foundation Stage, that is, to the 'stepping stones' towards the recommended early learning goals. Staff have a very good understanding of the learning and developmental needs of children of this age. They plan a rich and diverse range of activities that give very good support to the children's learning. Since the previous inspection the accommodation has been improved a great deal. In particular space is planned to enable the full range of Foundation Stage activities to take place either within the classrooms or in the 'outdoor classroom'. The richness and diversity of the curriculum is a strength of the overall provision. This strength is well complemented by the effective teamwork of the three teachers and their support staff.
34. Admission into the Reception Year is in September of the school year in which the child is five. The school is considerably oversubscribed. Admission is phased in for all children, part of a very secure structure for admission which includes pre-admission meetings between parents and staff, visits to pre-school playgroup settings and visits to school by the children. Classes are organised largely by children's ages. Careful note is taken of assessment made by pre-school settings to identify any children who need particular emotional, social and learning support. Attainment on entry to school is broadly average, although this varies a great deal from child to child and from year to year. The school makes very effective use of its assessments of children's early attainment, ensuring that this is well built upon. A considerable weight of evidence shows attainment on entry is falling over the years. By the end of the Reception Year most children will achieve the learning goals set nationally in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and in mathematical development. A significant proportion of children are well on track to exceed these goals, especially in personal social and emotional development. In the work seen in other areas of learning, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements. However, in all the activities seen, children work at a level which is at least equal to that expected for their age and many exceed expectations.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff support the establishment of good routines and work patterns that help children quickly to feel settled, happy and confident in the learning environment.
- Children work and play together very well because members of staff have high expectations of their behaviour.
- All activities are seen as opportunities to enhance this area of children's development.

Commentary

35. Achievement is very good in this area and almost all children are well on track to achieve or exceed the national goals by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is very good and as a result children learn very well. All staff are quick to reinforce the messages that support the development of positive attitudes and learning routines. Members of staff are good role models in themselves and this encourages the children in their relationships with adults and with each other. Because there is a common rhythm and routine to the day in each class children are settled and very confident. Members of staff make their expectations very clear and children flourish because they know what to expect. Children are calm with each other and focus well on their tasks whether these involve the whole class, have the expectation that children work cooperatively within a group or concentrate on an individual activity. Not only do children respond well to adults' questions, they are sufficiently confident to initiate conversation. Children expect to manage themselves, whether this is the straightforward social task of removing outdoor clothing on arrival to school or the more socially complex task of sharing an activity with another.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children listen very well because members of staff create a good social environment for learning.
- All children have ample opportunity to take part in discussion and conversation.
- Regular time is set aside for changing and sharing books.
- Good opportunities are created for a range of early writing activities.

Commentary

36. Teaching and learning in this area are very good. Children make very good progress and most are well on target to achieve the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. A significant number of children will exceed the goals. Achievement is very good. This is a useful measure of the success with which activities are planned across the year group to extend children's experiences and interest. All members of staff are quick to seize the initiative in instigating meaningful conversation with children. This begins at the time set aside for whole class activities, especially in the skilful way in which all teachers draw children into the discussion with carefully calculated questions that give children very good opportunities to express themselves. This ensures that articulate children do not dominate discussions and that those who need encouragement get the space and opportunity that they need. It is very clear that the small number of children for whom English is not the language of the home get well planned opportunities to make their contribution. Teachers and adults supporting lessons are adept at encouraging good listening and speaking skills through a range of whole class, group and individual activities. Good role-play opportunities ensure that children develop the imaginative side of speaking and listening. They enjoy being Goldilocks or one of the three bears. They love to hear the teacher tell the story.
37. Good arrangements are made to encourage children develop a love of books. Book changing time is a significant opportunity to develop early reading skills. Children are quick to show their maturity and independence in choosing and sharing with other children or adults. The school has good procedures for sharing reading with the home,

ensuring that there is a continuous dialogue about reading progress. Children enjoy activities that help them develop phonic awareness (the skill of analysing words by their sounds) and they play games and take part in other activities that encourage word recognition skills. Many children have an early fluency that leads to efficient reading skills. Members of staff provide very good and effective opportunities to develop writing skills. Most children have a good understanding that print conveys meaning and begin to write down sequences of letters that are recognisable words. For example, they write down what is to be chosen from the role-play café menu. Progress in the earliest stages of writing is very good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a good range of activities that encourage understanding of number in the everyday routine of their experiences and through effective use of songs and rhymes.
- Members of staff plan a rich variety of activities to extend number and all round mathematical awareness.
- There is a strong insistence on the development of mathematical language that aids understanding.

Commentary

38. Children achieve very well in this area of learning. This is because they are very well taught. Most are well on target to achieve or exceed the goals set for the end of the Reception Year. Teachers and learning support assistants create a wide range of opportunities for children to understand about number and its place in everyday life. Children enjoy counting the class at registration and working out one more than or one less than. All are comfortable with numbers up to ten and most have a secure working knowledge of numbers up to twenty. They weigh the bear's presents and they understand the concepts heavier than and lighter than. They begin to understand the language of number through lining up in a defined order and develop a secure sense of one to one relationship through counting, sorting and arranging objects. Some have a well-developed sense of doubling, confidently saying that double two is four, double four is eight and only hesitating at double eight, although some know the correct answer. Rhymes and number songs confirm their understanding of counting by adding on and taking away. All adults working with children insist that children use the correct terminology to support the development of number. For example, children unhesitatingly use zero when counting forward and back and they are familiar with terms such as add on and take away. Many pupils begin to have a secure understanding of number bonds. In a clever strategy, children count balloons out as a present for the bears, working out how many if each got one, two, three or four balloons. The fun was intensified as the children counted backwards as the teacher popped the balloons. The children had a very good understanding that if starting at ten and one balloon bangs, nine are left and so on to zero.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

39. Observations of knowledge and understanding of the world were made as part of general observations in all three classes. No overall judgements can be made about provision, standards, teaching, and learning. Planning gives effective and stimulating coverage of this area of learning. All the limited amount of teaching seen was either good or very good. Children learn well in these sessions. Children use computers well on a regular basis extending their early reading skills. They make porridge as part of their topic on 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' effectively developing an early understanding of kitchen hygiene and how to work from a recipe.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

40. Limited observations were made of activities in physical development. No overall judgements can be made about provision, standards, teaching, and learning. Where the teaching was seen as part of a different observation focus, the pupils learned well. There is good coverage of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum, with specific focus for both the development of fine motor skills and gross motor skills. For example, planned activities involve children in developing cutting and pasting and handwriting skills. They take enthusiastic part in these activities and develop good skills. Good use is made of the outdoor environment and pupils can climb, jump and propel wheeled toys giving them good opportunities to develop gross motor skills. Lessons in the school hall complete a picture of a broad and balanced curriculum in physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

41. A significant amount of work in creative development was seen during the inspection but no direct observations were made with this area of learning as a focus. No judgements are made about overall provision, standards achieved or teaching and learning. In pupils' displayed work, their self-portraits are particularly striking, effective and realistic. Children's application of paint is particularly effective. There is good application of manipulative skills in making Chinese lanterns. Children enjoy learning through songs and nursery rhymes. They sing tunefully and with good diction. The celebration of festivals relating to different faiths and cultures links well with the very good provision for their personal development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are above average because teaching is very effective.
- Very good progress and achievement is well supported by pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Very effective subject leadership ensures the subject is well evaluated and developed.
- The library is underdeveloped and therefore underused.

Commentary

42. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils, standards in English were well above average for reading and writing when compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. The percentage of pupils exceeding the expected level in reading was well above the national average but in writing it was average. Standards found during the inspection are above average for writing and well above average for reading. Since the previous inspection standards have risen to the present level. All pupils are making very good progress, especially pupils with special educational needs. These pupils often succeed in attaining the expected level because of the very good support provided. All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve very well, given that attainment in entry is broadly average and at the age of seven it is above or well above average.

43. Throughout the school pupils are given many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. By the end of Year 2 these are above average. The majority of pupils are confident articulate speakers using interesting words. Pupils are encouraged to use the correct vocabulary for the subject. In a science lesson, pupils demonstrated good use of technical language and very good reasoning skills as they explained their work. There are limited opportunities for drama or role play to extend the pupils' range of language experiences. This is something the school has identified for further development. All pupils listen well to their teachers and peers and show respect for each others' views.
44. Listening to pupils talk about books and hearing them read is a joy. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average. They are excited by books: fiction, non-fiction and poetry. All pupils talk very enthusiastically about their favourite authors and stories. The higher attaining pupils read fluently and accurately and often with expression. They develop a range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words. However, lower attaining pupils only sound out the word rather than use other clues to help them. There are some opportunities for pupils to carry out research particularly in history. However, the library facility is not well developed or well used. The school has already highlighted this area as a priority.
45. Standards in writing are above average both in Year 1 and by the end of Year 2. Pupils write for a range of purposes including writing a diary, poetry, instructions and free writing. Many of the pupils use interesting and exciting vocabulary. Punctuation, including speech marks, is used correctly by most pupils. Spelling is not always accurate but many higher attaining pupils make very good attempts at writing the words as they sound. Presentation is often neat and all Year 2 pupils are effectively developing joined up writing.
46. The quality of teaching and learning overall is very good. Teachers plan collaboratively and offer their pupils interesting tasks which capture their imagination leading to a successful outcome. Questioning is used very effectively to extend learning and vocabulary. Tasks are carefully planned to match the needs of all pupils but sometimes the higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. Very good relationships encourage pupils to respond to questions even when they are unsure if their answer is correct. Good pace in lessons keeps the pupils well focused on their tasks. Occasionally, the plenary session is not used as an effective way to reinforce learning because it is rushed. The very good support provided for pupils with special educational needs ensures they have access to the curriculum and remain on task.
47. The subject leader is very effective, being enthusiastic, knowledgeable and interested. She has developed a comprehensive scheme of work to complement the National Literacy Strategy. This ensures continuity and progress across the school. There have been many opportunities to observe teaching, look at pupils' work and to check planning. Data from assessments and detailed tracking of each pupil's progress ensures that weaknesses are highlighted. As a result, additional support is provided for these pupils and has a positive effect on raising their standards. Similarly, higher attaining pupils attend an additional session to challenge them further. Visiting theatre groups provide pupils with first hand experiences of drama and enhance their enjoyment of the subject.

Use of literacy across the curriculum

48. The school's policy is that literacy skills are used wherever appropriate for learning in other subjects. These skills are used very effectively across the curriculum particularly in science and history. In these subjects, pupils are expected to write information and record investigations in their own words. There are fewer opportunities for recording in religious education. This is because many of the lessons are discussions that do not require any writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Standards of work are above average because the quality of teaching is very good.
- Because pupils' attitudes are so good, they achieve very well and make very good progress.
- Very good assessment helps teachers to track pupils' progress very well and promote further progress.
- Excellent subject leadership provides a considerable impetus to standards and achievement.

Commentary

49. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make very good progress and most achieve standards above national expectations. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. There is no significant gender difference in achievement. The pupils' work in books and during lessons shows a good use of mental strategies which help them with calculations and problem solving. During the inspection pupils in Year 1 demonstrated these skills in counting confidently backwards and forwards from zero to one hundred in fives and tens. They were able to predict the next number and explain patterns in their answers. In a Year 2 class, pupils were confident in using a series of one digit numbers to make two and three digit numbers. They accurately used mathematical vocabulary such as: equals, doubles, digits, more than, less than. There is good evidence around the school of work in shape, space and measures including some models of dragons using two and three-dimensional shapes.
50. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The teachers use excellent assessment systems which ensure that they know exactly what their pupils know, can do, and understand. They use this information very well so that lessons are very well planned and activities are well matched to the pupils' needs and ability levels. Their high expectations ensure that higher ability pupils are challenged appropriately while the less able are supported very well. Very able and skilled learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in this curriculum area. Teachers' excellent use of questioning and maintenance of a brisk pace during lessons means that learning time is maximised. The pupils' attitudes to learning throughout their lessons are very good. They remain constantly focused and engrossed in their lessons because the lessons are interesting and stimulating. They listen well to their teachers and their peers and work well in collaboration with each other.

51. The excellent leadership of this subject has had a significant impact on the continuing high standards. The subject leader is very knowledgeable, and is highly committed to ensuring all pupils do well. She has an excellent grasp of the subject and she monitors and evaluates work and results regularly. This has enabled her to focus teaching on areas of improvement. For example, this year it is to improve problem solving skills. She contributes to the very good links the school has with parents by sending out a termly mathematics newsletter to all classes. The school link governor for this subject monitors the subject effectively and reports to the governing body regularly.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Mathematical skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum. In science, pupils use numeracy skills to measure how far a car can travel on different ramps. They use tallies to see how many fruits and vegetables children in each class eat as part of a healthy eating initiative and make block graphs to show other data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good subject provision is the result of very effective subject leadership.
- The positive attitudes of pupils enable them to achieve very well, especially in practical and investigative science.
- Teachers manage the learning of science very effectively, especially through their questioning and their planning of interesting practical activities.

Commentary

53. Standards in science are currently well above average for pupils' ages. They achieve very well. Much of this achievement is because pupils work extremely well together when working practically on investigations. It is also due to very skilled questioning techniques that shape pupils' thinking very effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of how electricity has revolutionised every day life. They distinguish effectively between mains power and battery powered appliances. They talk with interest about the use of electrical power for work, domestic life and recreation. Among significant pupil comments was 'A circuit is complete when power surges from its source to the appliance'. This sort of dialogue is greatly stimulated by teachers' demanding questions which never presume to give the answer but consistently probe 'What do you think?' and 'Why?'. Less able pupils make as much progress as their peers because they receive demanding questions at their own level, because they work well within a group and because they receive very good support from the teacher and learning support assistants.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers plan extremely well together and this ensures effective continuity and progression among parallel classes. Questioning is a skilled activity that raises pupils' expectations of themselves and makes intellectual demands of them. Activities are mainly practical and give higher attaining pupils the opportunity to express their creativity and thinking while providing good working opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. The strategies for assessment are effective and lessons are modified in the light of how well pupils

learn. The curriculum is carefully planned and evaluated from year to year to ensure that coverage is good and that any shortcomings are rectified.

55. Subject leadership is very effective. A full role is played in reviewing and evaluating provision and creating plans for its development. Lessons are visited and evaluated and this has improved the quality of teaching. Planning is monitored and plans are taught very effectively. Good links are made with other subjects, especially with literacy where pupils make good use of reading skills and record their investigations in their own words and with numeracy where pupils carefully record the data that come out of their practical work. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved are good because of strengths in teachers' knowledge and the way the computer suite is used.
- Good and effective links are made with other subjects of the curriculum.
- Although some of the technology available is aging, the skill of the information and communication technology technician enables lessons to flow smoothly.

Commentary

56. Standards attained are above average. This is because the school teaches a full curriculum with good skill development sessions where learning is effective. Using the program, 'The Playground', Year 1 pupils give a series of instructions to make the teddy bear follow their intentions. They quickly recognise that the computer is very intolerant of errors in the instructions. Year 2 pupils can log on to the Internet and find information relating to their studies in history. Pupils generally have good access to the keyboard. They find their way around effectively. They log on independently and have good mouse control that enables them to access different features of the program they are using. In the work seen there are good examples of pupils' word processing skills and their ability to create imaginative computer generated paintings. Pupils can combine text and graphics to create an effect and convey a message. Because pupils are taught information and communication technology in half classes, the teacher and technician are well placed to give effective support to all pupils. This is particularly important for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, all pupils make good progress and achieve well.
57. Achievement is good because teaching is consistently good and provides effective opportunities for pupils' learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their knowledge is well complemented by the subject specific skills of the information and communication technology technician. The computers available are aging considerably and can be temperamental. The practical skills of the technician ensure that temperamental machines do not get in the way of the flow of teaching and learning. This is a considerable aid to overall achievement. Some teachers are making good use of digital whiteboards in the classroom. Where this technology is available it is being used very effectively. However, not all classrooms are so equipped. The subject leader is new to the position. She is very enthusiastic and has a clear plan for

the development of the subject. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. Information and communication technology is used very well across the curriculum. Programs are available and used effectively that enhance learning in literacy and numeracy. Creative written work is word processed, enhancing presentation and good early use is made of data collection programs to produce and interpret graphs. Pupils have good opportunities to use the Internet for research, especially in history. Examples of creative art work produced on the computer are on display around the school. Digital photography is used to enhance the quality of pupils' work. Still to develop is the use of information and communication technology in music.

HUMANITIES

59. **History** was not timetabled during the inspection because this half term geography is being taught. No lessons could be observed so it was not possible to make judgements about standards. However, pupils enjoy visiting the local area to support their learning.
60. It was not possible to make any judgements about **geography** because it was not a focus for the inspection. As a result, insufficient evidence was collected to make judgements about standards. However, from the lessons observed, teaching was good overall and standards in those sessions were above those expected for the age of the pupils. Interesting approaches to the subject motivate pupils to achieve well. The local area, particularly the beach, is used effectively to provide pupils with first hand experiences.

Religious Education

The provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus because very good teaching and learning ensures pupils achieve well.
- An effective scheme of work that reflects the requirements of the local syllabus gives good support to the pupils' learning.
- A range of visits, visitors and improved resources enhance pupils' understanding of different faiths.

Commentary

61. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Younger pupils ably demonstrate their knowledge about God's world and the Creation story. They know the Bible is a special book for Christians. They enjoy the story of Noah and are amazed at the size of the Ark. Older pupils recall information about Sikhism, in particular, how important it is for boys to grow their hair. During a lesson they begin to recognise the differences between a Christian and a Hindu wedding. These pupils enjoyed the lesson about a Hindu wedding very much and

asked very relevant questions. Some of the pupils' recording show sensitive ideas and thoughts emerging as they imagine various things happening.

62. In a lesson about a Hindu wedding, very good use was made of the learning support assistant. She showed her wedding photographs and sari to the pupils. Special wedding artefacts and a Christian wedding photograph were also provided. The pupils were fascinated by everything they saw. They asked very pertinent questions about the day. By the end of the lesson they were more aware of the differences between a Christian and Hindu wedding. They were so captivated in the lesson they were disappointed when it ended.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, an improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher does most of the teaching and all pupils make good progress and achieve well. An effective scheme of work has been devised that complements the locally agreed syllabus. This ensures that pupils' understanding of other faiths is well developed. Questions are used very effectively to assess pupils' understanding and to extend their learning. Very good relationships give pupils confidence to explain their thoughts and respect the views of others.
64. The subject is very well led by the headteacher. Because of her expertise she teaches each year group and suggests follow up work. Effective assessment procedures are in place. The range of artefacts has been improved since the previous inspection. With these and the variety of visits and visitors, pupils' understanding of different faiths is enhanced and their enjoyment increased. However, there is limited opportunity to visit places of worship other than Christian.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, and design and technology

65. No overall judgements are made in these subjects because they were not a specific focus of the inspection. Insufficient lessons were seen to make overall judgements about standards and teaching and learning. There are many examples of pupils' **art and design** work on display throughout the school. Pupils experience a good range of activities, from imaginative work to careful close observational work. They learn to paint in the style of famous artists. They use computer programs to create colourful and imaginative paintings. A strong feature of the work in art and design is that paintings are used to stimulate and explore feelings and emotions enhancing pupils' understanding of themselves and others.
66. In **design and technology** an effective programme of study ensures that pupils have an appropriate range of experiences in focused practical tasks designed to develop skills, learn the design, and make process. Very limited work was seen because this subject is not a focus of the timetable at this time of the year. Where work was seen it is clear that pupils are developing effective making skills with good quality finish to their products.

Music and Physical Education

67. These subjects were sampled during the inspection. The scheme of work for **music** follows national guidelines. There is a satisfactory range of resources including percussion instruments. Music is taught regularly to each class by a subject specialist.

Indications from a limited number of lesson observations are that teaching is satisfactory overall and that standards are in line with national expectations. Singing in assemblies and lessons was good. Pupils sang well with clear enjoyment. They sang in tune, keeping the rhythms and the pitch, appropriate to the song. They remembered most songs without the use of song sheets or word prompts.

68. No lessons were observed in **physical education** during the inspection and therefore no judgements are made on provision, standards or teaching and learning. The school has a scheme of work in place following national guidelines and has appropriate indoor and outdoor facilities and resources. Recent fundraising is focused on the swimming pool well placed to enhance greatly the provision for this subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good programme of study gives strong support for pupils' personal development.
- This area of study encourages very mature behaviour and very positive attitudes in pupils.

Commentary

69. Pupils develop very positive and mature attitudes because the programme for personal, social and health education builds very effectively on the qualities and family values instilled in pupils before they join the school. The programme is delivered through assembly, science, religious education, lessons such as circle time (when pupils sit in a circle to discuss matters important to their personal development) and through the consistent role modelling of all the adults working in the school. The provision encourages an understanding of self and the valuing of others. It teaches respect and tolerance as well as honesty and endeavour. It has a very effective impact on overall behaviour, attitudes and the work ethic in the school. The provision ensures that pupils receive positive messages appropriate to their age and needs in managing relationships and life problems. It caters for sex education and the management of drugs issues at an age appropriate level.
70. A significant number of assemblies and lessons were sampled. The quality of teaching is always at least good and frequently very good. Teachers are very knowledgeable about the needs of pupils at this age and they are well placed to provide effectively for these needs. The area is well led and managed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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