

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LIMES FARM JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Chigwell

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114932

Headteacher: Mrs G Middleton

Lead inspector: Mr A C Jolly

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 March 2005

Inspection number: 267208

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Junior  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 7 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 150

School address: Limes Avenue  
Chigwell  
Essex  
Postcode: IG7 5LP

Telephone number: 020 8500 7566  
Fax number: 020 8500 7566

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of Mr J Stone  
governors:

Date of previous 8 March 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Limes Farm Junior School is situated within the large local authority housing development of Limes Farm in Chigwell, Essex. Most pupils live in rented accommodation, but a minority live in privately owned properties, all close to the school. Levels of social deprivation in the area are well above the average found nationally. There are 150 pupils, of whom one third come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with the majority being Indian, white and black Caribbean, black British and black African. The main languages of those pupils are Bengali, Gujarati and Urdu. There are 27 pupils whose first language is believed not to be English, which is a high number, but none of them are at an early stage of language acquisition. There are more boys than girls, particularly in Year 3. The percentage of pupils with educational needs and those with statements of special need is above average. The major features of their provision are to support those with moderate learning difficulties and those with social, emotional and behavioural needs. The percentage eligible for free school meals is above average. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The number of pupils leaving before the end of Year 6 is higher than average. There has been a high turnover of staff and the school has found it difficult to recruit and retain staff. The school has been affected adversely by long-term absences.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8750	Mr A C Jolly	Lead inspector	English Physical education Personal, social, health education and citizenship English as an additional language
1166	Mrs R Hussain	Lay inspector	
26405	Mrs C Bond	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology History Geography Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has maintained a **satisfactory** education for its pupils and provides satisfactory value for money. There has been a significant period of disruption caused by the impact of both high teacher turnover and absence. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Although standards have fallen in mathematics to a below average level, pupils achieve well in other subjects and test results compare well with similar schools.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in the 2004 national tests in English in Year 6 were well above those found in similar schools;
- standards in mathematics are below average;
- the provision for those with special educational needs is good;
- the provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is good;
- pupils are well cared for and relationships are good between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds;
- the behaviour of a minority of disruptive pupils, particularly in Year 3, is unsatisfactory;
- assessment information is not used sufficiently by teachers to plan lessons or to set targets;
- the school has too high an accumulated financial surplus.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Test results compare well with those from schools in a similar context and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching, in contrast to the 20 per cent at the time of the last inspection. Planning now takes much better account of different ages and abilities and there are more opportunities to promote pupils' independence and personal development. It has been difficult to develop the role of the coordinators due to the major turnover of staff. The governors are now more efficient and the headteacher has reduced the tasks she handles personally. Although the procedures to assess pupils' progress have improved, the information gained is still not used sufficiently to plan future lessons or set targets for pupils to improve.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement overall is **good**. Pupils join the school with levels of attainment that are below average. Their progress is satisfactory in mathematics, although standards are still below average. Standards in all other subjects however, are average reflecting good achievement. Pupils who have special educational needs and those, whose first language is not English, make good progress. The significant numbers of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated into all areas of school life and they make good progress.

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

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

The results in the above table indicate that results have been erratic in English and mathematics, but generally have been below the national average in all three subjects. However, when the results are related to the test performance of the same pupils at the age of seven and related to schools in a similar context, the results are more impressive. Standards in the 2004 national tests were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Results from 2001 to 2004 have broadly followed the national trend. Standards in the work seen are below average in mathematics. Standards are average in English, science, information and communication technology and religious education, which fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This reflects a decline in standards in the work seen in English and mathematics, but it is clear that pupils are now entering the school with lower standards of attainment. It was not possible to form a judgement on standards in other subjects as they were not the focus of the inspection.

**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.** Many pupils have a positive approach to all areas of school life and behave well. However, a minority, particularly in Year 3, behave badly at times and disrupt the learning of others. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are both satisfactory.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching is **satisfactory**. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, which is a major improvement since the previous inspection. However, the difficulties of recruiting and retaining staff have meant some pupils in Year 3 have had their learning disrupted. The teaching of English is good and there is a satisfactory curriculum. The school cares well for its wide range of pupils and the needs of pupils of different abilities and cultural backgrounds are well addressed. Relationships with parents are satisfactory overall.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is now satisfactory and the governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The Governing Body meets all statutory requirements. They have allowed too high a financial surplus to accumulate, however. The quality of leadership of the headteacher has declined since the last inspection and is now only satisfactory. There is not the same level of drive and vitality as described in the last report.

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

Parents believe their children enjoy coming to school and they are expected to work hard and do their best. However, a significant number are critical of arrangements to keep them informed and the attention given to their views and suggestions. Half of the parents responding by questionnaire do not believe the pupils behave well and over a quarter do not feel the school is well led and managed. Pupils have positive views about the school and appreciate the support given to them by the staff.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise standards in mathematics;
- improve the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of disruptive pupils, particularly in Year 3;
- use information gained from assessing pupils' progress to set them future targets for improvement and to help teachers plan lessons more effectively;
- ensure the accumulated financial surplus is spent appropriately and with greater urgency.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average and by Year 6 standards are average in English and science, religious education and information and communication technology, reflecting good progress. However, standards are below average in mathematics, reflecting a decline since the last inspection report. Standards have also fallen in English since the last inspection but it is clear from test results, pupils are joining the school with lower levels of attainment than at the time of the last inspection.

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

- Results in the 2004 Year 6 national tests in English were well above average compared to schools in a similar context.
- Standards in mathematics are below average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
- Standards have fallen in English and mathematics since the last inspection.

#### **Commentary**

1. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average, representing a lower starting point than at the time of the last inspection. The table below shows that in 2004, Year 6 pupils attained standards that were average in English, and well below average in science and mathematics when compared nationally. However, when these results are compared with schools in a similar context, standards are well above the average for these schools in English, above that average in mathematics and the same in science.
2. The trend in the school's test performance has been in line with the national trend. In 2004 the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 both show the same commendable level of improvement when they are compared to their prior attainment.
3. Pupils of all abilities achieved well overall in the test. The school has not made a systematic analysis of pupils' performance, related to their ethnic origin. However, it is clear in both test results and the work seen, that pupils who do not have English as their first language, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve well. Pupils of Indian descent achieve particularly well. Those pupils who have special educational needs make good progress, benefiting from good provision and effective guidance from learning support assistants. There is no sustained difference in attainment by gender in mathematics and science. Boys tend to do less well in English tests when compared nationally, although there was no marked difference in attainment in the work seen.
4. Standards in all aspects of English are average, reflecting good achievement. Standards in mathematics, however, are below average. Although attainment has



declined in both of these subjects since the last inspection, it is less significant than it might appear due to the lower level of attainment on entry.

- Standards are average in information and communication technology and in religious education, which fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. It was not possible to form a judgement on standards in any other subject as they were not the focus of the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (25.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.6 (27.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.9 (27.5)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

The provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Many pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well. However, the behaviour of a minority of pupils, particularly in Year 3, is unsatisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are both satisfactory.

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

- Parents support the school well to ensure the level of unauthorised absence is below average.
- The moral development of pupils is well promoted.
- Although many pupils behave very well, a minority disrupt the learning of others, particularly in Year 3.
- Good relationships are maintained between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

#### **Commentary**

- Behaviour is satisfactory overall. It is invariably good in lessons for pupils from Years 4 to 6 but a minority of pupils behave badly, which has a disruptive effect on learning in Year 3. The behaviour of this small group of pupils confirms the view of half of the parents responding by questionnaire that behaviour is not good. However, pupils' behaviour is good in assembly and the behaviour of some groups, such as the choir, which contains one-third of the schools pupils, is very good.
- Many pupils are enthusiastic to learn and maintain their concentration over extended periods of time. They comment positively about how they enjoy life in school. Pupils in Year 6 are willing to take responsibility, such as reading prayers in assembly, playing music or organising resources to help the teachers. Most of the pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes towards work and they are keen to achieve their targets.
- The school has clear strategies to address misbehaviour and promote good attitudes. These have a positive impact on the minority of very challenging pupils but the implementation of policies to encourage the less well behaved pupil offers noticeably

less reward to the majority who are regularly obedient and self motivated. There have been examples of harassment and bullying but the general perception by parents at their meeting and from scrutiny of records is that these are generally investigated fully and dealt with appropriately.

9. The provision for pupils' moral development is good and the vast majority respond well to it. There are golden rules to guide their behaviour and a playground code devised by the school council. Good relationships are maintained between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and the importance of citizenship is emphasised by a specific award to a representative of every class each week. The personal, social, health education and citizenship education programme also promotes a clear understanding of right and wrong.
10. Pupils' personal, social, cultural and spiritual developments are all satisfactory. Good use was made of two trophies during one assembly to highlight the difference between a shiny and dull appearance, highlighting the positive and negative sides of behaviour. When the dull trophy was polished by a pupil there was a discernible gasp by others when they saw how much better it looked when shiny. Satisfactory links are made with a range of local places of worship.
11. Pupils have a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities in which they participate enthusiastically. The school choir, uniting pupils from all year groups, helps to promote social development. There are also a satisfactory number of trips and visitors to promote the cultural development of the pupils. Examples of Aboriginal art, produced with the support of a visiting artist, decorate attractively the newly completed Atrium.

## Attendance

12. Attendance levels are average. The level of unauthorised absence is below average. Parents at their meeting said that they thought attendance arrangements were appropriate and understood the school's arrangements for when their children were ill.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	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.*

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
91	4	0
3	0	0
12	0	0
1	0	0

Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	11	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. The school has a satisfactory curriculum.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment procedures have improved but the information gained is used insufficiently to help teachers plan lessons and set future targets for pupils.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is set in all classes to match the range of abilities.
- Learning support assistants give effective support to pupils with special educational needs.
- Unsatisfactory behaviour from a minority of pupils, particularly in Year 3, occasionally disrupts the learning of others.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1(4%)	11 (44%)	13(52%)	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.*

13. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Difficulties with recruiting teachers to cover long-term absence have resulted in the pupils' learning being disrupted in Year 3. Present arrangements are now better and leading to improvement. The teaching in Years 4 to 6, particularly in Year 5, is often good leading to pupils achieving well in most subjects by Year 6. There is no unsatisfactory teaching which is a significant improvement from the last inspection when it comprised of one-fifth of the total.

14. One key influencing factor in the pupils' good achievement is the high ratio of adults to pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. This ensures that pupils of all needs and abilities often receive individual support which increases their confidence and enhances their learning. In these lessons pupils are split into small groups and have work set for them that has been matched to their ability. This takes place in the bright, recently completed Atrium which provides a stimulating learning environment. The learning support assistants give effective support to pupils who have special educational needs. The needs of more able pupils are also well addressed as challenging tasks, sometimes as an extension to the main activity, are a regular feature of most lessons.
15. The integration of all pupils was particularly emphasised by a very well taught session with the choir. Despite 50 pupils of all ages being involved in the lesson, the teacher created such a good learning atmosphere and gave such effective encouragement that she maintained their interest. Such was their enthusiasm, that when she asked if anybody would like to sing solos or duets, she was overwhelmed with volunteers.
16. Teachers' good subject knowledge, particularly in literacy, has led to generally good teaching in this subject, which in turn, has had a positive impact on standards. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. Good subject knowledge is also a feature in the teaching of music and information and communication technology.
17. All lessons have clear learning objectives and good teaching strategies are followed. A 'steps to success' checklist, which gives pupils a clear strategy to improve their work, was used very effectively in a number of lessons to develop pupils' learning. Often, when lessons are only satisfactory, it is because pupils are slow to get started on the main task of the lesson and, at times, they make insufficient progress in that part of the lesson. When this occurs it is because the teacher has not made it clear that there is a limited time available and has not given a time by which the task needs to be completed. In the most effective lessons, teachers give pupils timed targets and they display more urgency to complete tasks. This is particularly noticeable in the consistently good lessons seen in Year 5.
18. Pupils' behaviour appears to improve as they progress through the school and older pupils benefit from the more settled, established relationships with their teachers. On the whole, pupils are managed well. Occasionally, the very bad behaviour of a minority of pupils in Year 3 has had a negative impact on other pupils learning in the class. Although this minority of badly behaved pupils continues to pose significant difficulties for the teachers, the quality of pupils' learning has benefited from the permanent staffing arrangements since January, so that it is now satisfactory.
19. The arrangements for homework, although inconsistent between classes due to high teacher turnover and long-term illness, are broadly satisfactory. There are better arrangements for assessing pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' work is generally well marked and a few teachers offer detailed constructive comments to help pupils improve. However, the information from assessment is not being used sufficiently to help teachers plan lessons and to set future targets for pupils.

## **The curriculum**

The school offers a satisfactory curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and resources are adequate.

## **Strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Physical education, and design and technology, are only given a small percentage of lesson time compared to other schools.
- Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory.

## **Commentary**

20. The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a strong focus on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, but less time is spent on physical education and on design and technology than in most schools. An interesting feature of the timetable is the provision of specific times for the development of the pupils' investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics, which the school recognises as a weakness. There are good opportunities for the pupils to use their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. Satisfactory planning ensures that the school meets statutory requirements for all subjects. The school meets its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship.
21. The teachers ensure that parents who have children with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's targets and of the progress being made towards them. They are invited to the termly reviews of their children's individual education plans and are involved in the drawing up of new target.
22. The school looks at ways of improving the curriculum. It has gained the Healthy Schools intermediate award. It participates in the School Sport Coordinator Programme, which enables the pupils to benefit from specialist sports coaching.
23. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. A good number of clubs allow the pupils to pursue their interests outside lessons. These include football, netball, health and fitness, board games, information and communication technology, dance and innovations or craft. There is also a breakfast club and a homework club. A choir meets during lesson time. No competitive sports matches are currently played against local schools. Learning is enriched by visitors and by visits to a number of places, such as the Imperial War Museum and St Albans.
24. Although there has been a high turnover of staff during the past two years, the school currently has sufficient teachers and learning support assistants to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The accommodation overall is satisfactory, with effective displays providing a stimulating learning environment. Strengths include a large information and communication suite and the Atrium, a recently completed space which affords a calm area for the pupils to work in. The steps make access to parts of the building difficult for disabled pupils and there is no disabled toilet. Exterior accommodation is barely adequate. Parts of the building are in need of repair. There are two fenced in playgrounds, which are shared with the local community but there is no sports field. There is considerable litter around the site. There are adequate

resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The library is small, but nevertheless, it contains a good range of non-fiction books.

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

The school offers its pupils good care and satisfactory support and guidance in a safe environment. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is good but, for their academic development it is barely satisfactory. The school's endeavours to seek pupils' views are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pastoral care and welfare procedures support pupils well.
- Pupils' personal development is monitored well but monitoring of and support for academic development is less well developed and only satisfactory.

### **Commentary**

25. Pastoral care and welfare procedures support pupils well because staff know the pupils well and pupils are confident that there is an adult they can speak to if they have a problem. Support and guidance for pupils are satisfactory because the school has clear guidelines through its policies, which ensure consistency across the school concerning matters such as child protection, first aid procedures and health and safety. Some parents expressed concerns about the level of care particularly in the playground and in some classes but no evidence was found during the inspection to support these views. One or two parents are also unhappy with the induction of their children into school. The induction procedures ensure most pupils quickly settle in to school when they join because they have several opportunities to visit the school from the Infant School next door. However, the current problems with staffing in Year 3 have had an unsettling effect on some pupils which the school has tried to address through consultation with parents, and by adopting a three-class system.
26. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is good because it has improved with the introduction of interim reports, which cover all areas of personal development. The golden rules and team points systems also help teachers to monitor daily how pupils are progressing. Circle time and personal, social and health education in which pupils are encouraged to learn about and discuss issues relating to their personal development support this.
27. Monitoring of pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory because the school has worked closely with their advisory teacher on the monitoring of progress in literacy and numeracy. It is, however, still in the process of adopting a target tracker system to assess pupils' achievement. Members of staff have yet to undergo training in how to use the system which will increase their ability to track pupils' development securely over time.
28. The school satisfactorily seeks pupils' views, having established a school council three years ago to canvass pupils' suggestions. Pupils have been involved in drawing up school rules in several areas but further development is needed to discuss decisions at a higher level to empower pupils to influence school decisions. The school has recently introduced a pupil questionnaire to ascertain pupils' views on a variety of issues but there is no evidence at present to show how these views will be acted upon.

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

The partnership with parents is satisfactory though at present there is significant parental dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the school. Information on pupils' progress is good on a termly basis and regular contact between home and school is satisfactory overall. Parental involvement in pupils' learning and support for the school is satisfactory. Links with other schools and the local community are satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Information on pupils' progress through written reports is good.
- A significant minority of parents is dissatisfied with several aspects of the school's provision.
- Educational links with local secondary schools and links with the local community extend pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

29. Partnership with parents is satisfactory because many parents are satisfied with most aspects of the school. However, there is a significant minority of parents who are unhappy about several aspects. Letters and discussions with parents indicate that teacher absence leading to an increased use of supply teachers has been a factor in undermining parents' confidence and increasing dissatisfaction. The school operates an open door policy but this is not as successful as it could be because, although many parents feel comfortable about approaching the school, nearly a quarter of parents who responded to the questionnaire have reservations. Likewise, despite the school's attempts to encourage parents to become more involved, over a third of parents who responded do not feel that the school seeks their views or takes account of their suggestions. Parents' support and involvement in the school are satisfactory because several parents help regularly in school and many volunteer to accompany trips. Attempts to set up a parents' association to involve greater numbers however, had little response. Workshops for parents on topics related to the curriculum have not taken place this year because of staffing difficulties though the school has introduced a library for parents to encourage them to become more involved in their children's learning. Most parents give satisfactory support for their children's work at home and parents are informed if their children have not completed their homework.
30. Written information about pupils' progress is good because the school has improved the annual reports since the last inspection and introduced interim reports. There are three parent consultations a year, where the spring and summer term consultations follow the issuing of reports so that these can be discussed. Homework diaries and home/school books for pupils with concerns help to keep parents informed about progress on a daily basis. Day to day information on general matters is barely satisfactory because letters are sent irregularly so parents do not know when to expect them and they are missed or mislaid. The school has tried to improve this by putting a file in the foyer with all letters which parents can consult, and a notice board with important information. There is however, no regular newsletter to keep parents informed.
31. Links with the local community are satisfactory because the school plays its part in the Lime Farm Community Association and provides a computer course free of charge for parents and members of the local community. The course is run by a trainer from the

local college. There are also links with local institutions such as the police, fire brigade and local places of worship and a local business that help to extend pupils' learning experiences. Links with local schools are satisfactory overall. Links with the local Infant School are satisfactory because there are many informal contacts and the two schools co-operate well in relation to the induction of pupils. There are no formal curriculum links though there is occasional sharing of resources. The school sends pupils to several local state and private secondary schools and enjoys good links with three in particular. They have curricular links in mathematics to extend the learning of the more able pupils and share a sports programme with West Hatch School which organises lunchtime football training at Lime Farm. They also provide teachers for a swimming course and the use of their swimming pool.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and the management of the school are satisfactory overall, as at the time of the last inspection. The governance of the school is satisfactory, which reflects an improvement on the findings of the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership is being given to the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The leadership is successful in providing for the needs of pupils of varying abilities and from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The leadership of the senior management team, although setting a clear educational direction, lacks drive and vitality.
- The governors have an improved understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The school has too high an accumulated financial surplus.

### **Commentary**

32. The leadership and management of the headteacher is satisfactory, which is a decline from the findings of the last report. The headteacher has been successful in leading and managing the school through a period of instability and staff turnover to maintain appropriate standards. She has provided the necessary resourcefulness and pragmatism to deal with unforeseen events and difficulties. The headteacher has also epitomised the commitment to meeting the needs of pupils of varying abilities and backgrounds. She is no longer handling too many tasks, which was a criticism of the last report.
33. The senior management team of three has been restricted by the extended absence of one senior teacher. The other senior teacher has onerous responsibilities and needed to deputise last term for the headteacher's absence due to illness. The headteacher and senior teachers have managed to steer the school in a clear educational direction, but more drive and vitality is needed to raise the performance of the school above a satisfactory level. This is reflected in the high number of parents responding by questionnaire, who did not believe the school was well led and managed.
34. The Governing Body is more settled than at the time of the last inspection. The chair is committed to doing the best for the pupils from the Limes Farm Estate. He has given



the headteacher effective support, particularly in the ambitious project of converting a section of the building into the stimulating learning environment of the Atrium.

35. The governors visit the school regularly and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have emphasised correctly the need to have a high ratio of adults to pupils, which has ensured the pupils' good achievement. The Governing Body fulfil all their statutory duties.
36. The major turnover of staff and illness has meant some subjects have not been coordinated for any extended period. Good leadership in English, science and information and communication technology however, has underpinned good achievement in those areas. There is good leadership from the special educational needs coordinator who has developed close links with relevant agencies and schools. The newly appointed coordinator of mathematics is also putting effective systems in place to bring about the necessary improvement.
37. The day-to-day management of the school is satisfactory. Systems are in place to ensure consistent practice in key areas such as behaviour and special educational needs. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are good. The coordinator works closely with class teachers in drawing up individual education plans and in monitoring the pupils' progress. There are very good links with relevant outside agencies and with special educational needs coordinators in the infant and high schools. There are adequate resources to support special educational needs work. There is also a race equality policy that is translated into effective practice and an ethos created where pupils of all backgrounds feel valued.
38. There has been monitoring of teaching in subjects such as English, but the monitoring and analysis of performance data have been limited restricting the potential of target setting to bring about improvement. The school has satisfactory arrangements for professional development and a good feature of the school's commitment to training is its involvement as a founder member of a School Centred Initial Teacher Training Consortium. Induction arrangements for new staff are satisfactory.
39. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the monitoring of its finances. However, it has accumulated an under-spend that is too large. The income and expenditure per pupil are both high. A very large proportion of the school's expenditure is on teaching and non-teaching staff, which has had a good impact on achievement. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily and this has been particularly evident during the building of the new Atrium.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	592,622	Balance from previous year	99,158
Total expenditure	508,385	Balance carried forward to the next	84,237
Expenditure per pupil	3,389		

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

## ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the Year 6 national tests in 2004 were well above average compared with schools in a similar context.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well related to their prior attainment from Years 4 to 6.
- Good opportunities are provided to develop pupils' reading.
- The bad behaviour of a minority of pupils, particularly in Year 3, occasionally disrupts the learning of others.

### Commentary

40. Pupils join the school with standards which are below average, measured by the Year 2 tests in reading and writing. This is a lower starting point than at the time of the last inspection. Therefore the decline in attainment in the work seen in Year 6 since the last inspection in 1999 must be viewed with caution.
41. The Year 6 test results were very impressive in 2004. The percentage attaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 were both in line with the national average and well above levels found in schools in a similar context. Results for reading and writing were both good. Boys fared better against their own sex nationally than girls in 2004, although traditionally, the girls in the school have performed better relatively than boys. After a dip in 2002, the school has had two years of improved results.
42. Standards in the work seen in Year 6 are average overall, reflecting good achievement related to the below average standard of attainment on entry. Boys and girls attain equally and pupils of all abilities make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who do not have English as their first language, achieve well, benefiting in some cases, from individual education plans and effective assistance from learning support assistants. Pupils of Indian descent perform particularly well.
43. Standards in reading are satisfactory. The school gives considerable time to developing pupils' reading throughout the week, either in groups or on an individual basis, which is well supported at home by most parents. Reading record books, which include guidance for parents, are well completed and monitored to ensure that the pupils read regularly. Pupils understand strategies to help them read better and older pupils, reading quite advanced stories, can discuss different authors and characters, outlining their views and preferences. There is a good range of reading resources.
44. The school also gives specific emphasis to developing the pupils' skills in writing. There is an hour given each week for extended writing and targets are pasted into the front of pupils' exercise books. Pupils are given a wide range of writing opportunities and standards are average by Year 6.
45. Regular opportunities are given for pupils to develop their handwriting in all classes. A commercial scheme is used consistently throughout the school. Each class has a spelling test each week, reflecting letter patterns and the lists from the National

Literacy Strategy. Spelling mistakes are regularly corrected. These strategies ensure that standards in spelling and handwriting are average.

46. The quality of teaching is good overall. The basic skills of literacy are well taught so that pupils receive a good foundation for learning in other subjects. All lessons have clear learning objectives, which are usually discussed and reviewed at the end of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge so that pupils receive informed guidance.
47. There is usually a very good ratio of adults to pupils in lessons. For example, in a well-taught lesson for a mixed age Year 5 and 6 class, a learning support assistant helped the teacher with a few pupils, whilst in the Atrium, a support teacher helped a group of eight pupils, actively promoting the pupils' understanding of the learning objective, in harmony with the rest of the class. This individual or small group focus has a direct influence on the good achievement of pupils.
48. Instructions are invariably clear to pupils and work is planned well to meet the varying needs and abilities within groups. However, teachers do not outline to pupils regularly enough, the limited time they have to complete tasks. As a result pupils often begin slowly and complete less of the task than they should. Although all teachers have good strategies to manage classes, there is a minority of badly behaved pupils who occasionally disrupt the learning of others.
49. Pupils' work is well marked, particularly in a few classes where the teachers offer detailed constructive comments on how pupils can improve. However, the information gained from pupils' assessment is used insufficiently to set targets for improvement.
50. The coordinator has led and managed the subject well to maintain good standards. She has been able to monitor teaching and completed a scrutiny of pupils' work to monitor provision and identify areas to improve. Although clear priorities have been identified, there has not been a systematic analysis of performance data to identify areas of weakness to maintain the pattern of improvement.

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

51. There are satisfactory opportunities to use English across the curriculum. Pupils regularly write up experiments in science and there is good project work in Year 5 on the earth, sun and moon. They write about their environment in geography and about the varying experiences of different branches of society in several historical periods.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

#### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' skills in basic numeracy and in problem solving are weak.
- Subject leadership is good.
- Marking of pupils' work is thorough and helpful.
- More opportunities could be provided to use mathematics in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

52. By Year 6, the achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is broadly satisfactory. Standards are below average which is a decline from the previous inspection when they were average. In the latest national tests, the girls performed less well than the boys, although currently, there is no significant difference in attainment by gender.
53. Basic numeracy skills are weak. For example, the pupils find multiplication and division difficult and they make many errors in work on fractions. Even the higher attaining pupils make careless mistakes. Problem solving skills are weak. The pupils often find it difficult to understand what information is being provided and what exactly they have to find out.
54. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. The teachers use a variety of strategies to develop the pupils' skills of mental calculations. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher made effective use of a card game to enhance the learning of number bonds. The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think carefully, and they ensure that all groups of pupils are fully included in learning. They encourage the use of correct mathematical terms and this aids understanding.
55. The teachers make good use of a strategy for success, which reminds the pupils of what they need to know before settling down to their group work. The teachers match tasks well to the wide span of academic ability which is apparent in most classes. In lessons for pupils in Years 4 and 5, higher attaining pupils were given a challenging task to calculate the areas of some difficult compound shapes. There are always extension activities for the more able pupils to move on to. The teachers try to make learning relevant for the pupils. There is a strong focus on developing the pupils' problem solving skills. The teachers make effective use of resources, including information and communication technology. In a Year 5 lesson, the use of a computer program helped some lower attaining pupils to calculate the area of shapes. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively and they help lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, with helpful guidance as to how they might improve. There is regular weekly homework for all classes, to consolidate and extend learning.
56. Whilst most of the pupils are keen to learn and have positive attitudes towards work, there are some, especially in Year 3, who are much less motivated. They display very challenging behaviour, which, at times, slows the pace of lessons and disrupts the learning of others.
57. The coordinator has made a very successful start in leading the subject. Being well aware that standards need to improve, she has developed a very clear action plan to address this issue. She has carefully analysed pupils' performance in the most recent national tests, in order to see where pupils have difficulties. This has led to specific periods on the timetable where each class works on mathematical investigations and problem solving. The coordinator monitors other teachers' planning, in order to ensure all pupils cover the same work, particularly in the mixed age classes. This has led to more emphasis being placed on using information gained from assessments to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning. However, more emphasis could be placed on setting the pupils specific targets to aim at, in order to help them improve. The coordinator has monitored the quality of teaching in some classes to attain more consistent standards. There are worthwhile after-school sessions to boost the

progress of certain pupils to help them improve and to reach the expected level in the national tests.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. There are opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematical skills in science. For example, they draw satisfactory bar graphs of changes in pulse rates after exercise, of the lengths of arms and legs in work on the human skeleton and of the different foods eaten by pets. Nevertheless, more opportunities need to be provided for the pupils to make use of mathematics across a range of other subjects.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant amount of good teaching in Years 5 and 6 contributes to good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy their lessons.
- Provision for checking on the quality of pupils' learning has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.

### Commentary

59. Standards in last year's national tests were below average for pupils in Year 6, but matched those achieved by similar schools. At the time of the last inspection, test results were above those of similar schools. Although this shows a decline in standards, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the level of learning expected for their age. In 1999, 66 per cent achieved the expected Level 4 compared with 80 per cent in 2004, of whom 20 per cent achieved the higher Level 5. On admission to Year 3 and in Year 4, attainment is below average, but some good teaching in the upper school enables pupils to make good progress, and attain average standards by the time they reach Year 6.
60. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and most show a good attitude to their learning, particularly in practical sessions. The emphasis now placed on investigative work in many lessons has had a positive impact on pupils' progress, but the opportunities for pupils to organise and plan their own experiments is not consistently planned for across the school, and investigations are too heavily directed by the teacher. Consequently, although pupils have a satisfactory knowledge base, they are not encouraged to think like scientists. There are some good opportunities given for pupils to use scientific language, particularly when they are explaining their findings to other pupils, and there are some good systems in place for recording experiments, but these are not used consistently throughout the school.
61. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good lessons in Years 5 and 6. The high ratio of adults to pupils in many classes has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning, particularly in those classes where the behaviour of a small number of pupils causes disruption. Pupils are able to continue working well, whatever the disruption, and always have an informed adult nearby to give guidance and advice. Members of the support staff are effective, as are the strategies used by all adults to manage pupils' difficult behaviour. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 promote learning well, making each topic exciting and challenging by good questioning and imaginative use of resources. Explanations are less clear for some younger pupils, causing difficulties in understanding and delaying opportunities for pupils to discover the key learning planned for a lesson. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Work is appropriately matched to their needs and the staff and other pupils give effective support. Although all lessons conclude with a summary of learning for that day, the marking of pupils' work is very inconsistent. Some work in the books of younger pupils is incomplete, and there is little guidance on how pupils can improve.

62. The new co-ordinator, who has only been in the school a few weeks, has a clear vision for improving teaching and learning in science, so that standards can rise again. She has not yet created appropriate systems for checking pupils' progress and analysing data to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately balanced across all aspects. Although leadership since the last inspection has been satisfactory, development has slowed down considerably, causing a loss of momentum with a subsequent drop in standards across the school.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and enables the pupils to achieve well.
- Subject leadership is good and is a significant factor in raising standards.
- Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum.

### Commentary

63. By Year 6, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Higher attaining pupils make particularly good progress. Standards are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
64. The pupils' word processing skills are satisfactory. They alter the size, style and colour of font to suit the audience, for example in producing a set of rules for the playground. They make satisfactory use of a spellchecker, cut, paste and other editing techniques. They combine text and graphics well to produce advertisements, using persuasive language. They access the Internet for research in subjects such as history, geography, science and art. Higher attaining pupils bookmark their favourite websites. They produce satisfactory multimedia presentations on a variety of topics. They communicate by e-mail.
65. Teaching overall is good and this is leading to effective learning. The teachers' knowledge and expertise are developing well and there is now more focus on modelling and control than at the time of the previous inspection. In a mixed age class of Year 5 and 6 pupils, they successfully devised a set of instructions to program traffic lights. The teachers are using information and communication technology as an effective learning tool. This was evident, for example, in a Year 3 science lesson, in which it enhanced the pupils' understanding of habitats and environmental conservation. There is a good balance between direct teaching of skills and allowing the pupils to experiment for themselves. The teachers organise work well in the information and communication suite and they deploy learning support assistants usefully.
66. The coordinator has made a very good start in leading the subject and this is a significant factor in improved provision for the subject. The information and communication technology suite provides very good accommodation. The coordinator monitors planning and samples of pupils' work, in order to ensure consistent coverage of work and to gain an overview of standards. She has not yet had the opportunity to formally check the quality of teaching, but, during the inspection, she taught alongside another teacher, in order to share expertise. She has developed a clear action plan to raise standards further. She has developed satisfactory procedures for assessing the pupils' progress. Learning is enriched by two lunchtime information and communication technology clubs.



## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

67. Information and communication technology is being used well as an aid to teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects. In literacy, the pupils use their word processing skills to help them write poems. In mathematics, they record data by means of accurate pie charts, pictograms and bar charts and they make effective use of spreadsheets to record data and to carry out calculations. In art, they produce imaginative calligrams, spray can pictures and patterns on a theme of 'warm and cold'. They draw pictures after listening to music and watching the sound frequencies generated by the music. In work linked to geography, the pupils resize and reposition images on plans of rooms. In a lesson for pupils in Year 3, the teacher made good links with music and literacy, as the pupils programmed an electronic keyboard and wrote words to describe the various sounds.

## **HUMANITIES**

68. History and geography were not foci of this inspection. There is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on provision for the subjects, on the quality of teaching or on standards. An analysis of planning and of pupils' work indicates that the subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
69. In **history**, the pupils know about aspects of life in ancient Greece, such as the role of trade and the Greeks as a nation of seafarers. The pupils are familiar with a timeline of the Victorian age in Britain. They research information from books and from the Internet and they make satisfactory use of their literacy skills to write about child labour and the difference in the lifestyles of the rich and poor in the nineteenth century.
70. In **geography**, the pupils know about environmental pollution and about the need for conservation and recycling. They investigate pollution in the school's immediate locality and noise levels around the school. They have a satisfactory understanding of the water cycle and of the importance of water in peoples' lives. The pupils are making satisfactory progress in developing their map and atlas skills, for example in locating countries on a map of Europe.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision for religious education is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The issues highlighted in the last inspection have not been addressed.
- The locally agreed syllabus provides good lesson plans which the school uses satisfactorily.
- There is little enthusiasm for the subject in the school.

### **Commentary**

71. Standards have been maintained at the expected levels for pupils in Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, learning the key facts about three of the major faiths in the country. This meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is

satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were often given tasks that were not stimulating and lacked challenge. This remains the case, limiting pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and reducing the impact of learning on pupils' personal development. There is no system in place for recording pupils' knowledge and understanding.

72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils learn about Christianity and Judaism, making clear links with modern international issues that feature regularly on television. Much of the work in books is neat and well presented but several of the pupils record only the learning focus for the lesson. With no system in place to check the quality of pupils' learning, and inconsistent evidence in books, teachers remain unsure of the progress each pupil is making in knowledge and understanding of the subject. Marking of pupils' work rarely indicates how pupils might extend their learning further.
73. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, giving advice and support to teachers when asked. She has no opportunity to check the quality of lessons, although she ensures that planning follows the appropriate sections of the syllabus. Her leadership is satisfactory overall.

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

74. Very few lessons were observed in **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education** which were not the focus of the inspection. As a result no overall judgement on standards, teaching or provision is possible.
75. Evidence from assemblies and choir sessions indicates that **music** is well taught, and that pupils enjoy performing. The choir consists of a third of the pupils in the school, who undertake some challenging pieces of music to a high standard, benefiting from the teacher's excellent subject knowledge. Teachers' planning includes an appropriate range of opportunities, covering the curriculum satisfactorily. The whole school participates in a musical production each year.
76. Displays around the school are made attractive by the quality of pupils' **art and design** work exhibited there. Pupils show good drawing skills, and take a pride in their pictures and patterns. The range of displays indicates that curriculum requirements are satisfactorily followed. There were no lessons in **design and technology** during the inspection, and no evidence around the school or in planning files to provide indications of the range of learning that pupils' experience. Discussions indicate that pupils make moneyboxes and musical instruments.
77. **Physical education** is currently underemphasised in the curriculum as all classes only receive one hour of teaching a week. Some of the usual extra-curricular activities have not taken place this academic year. The school is involved in the nationally funded Sports Coordinator Programme and is receiving support from a nearby high school to enable one of the teachers to develop and teach a programme of Health and Fitness for life. The school has satisfactory resources and a reasonably sized hall for indoor activities. However, the outdoor accommodation is limited, particularly as there is no specific field on which pupils can play.

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

78. Arrangement for personal, social, health education and citizenship are generally good. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to discuss relevant issues, such as feelings, kindness, responsibilities towards animals, the need for rules and resolving conflicts. The pupils develop social skills in clubs and through participation in school productions. Each week, one pupil in each class is recognised for 'good citizenship'. Older pupils are given responsibility in carrying out tasks around the school. Some pupils are members of the School Council. The pupils support a number of good causes, including Guide Dogs for the Blind and the recent Asian tsunami appeal. They learn about healthy eating and about the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse. In the summer term, there is formal sex education for pupils in Year 6. The school nurse helps with this area of learning.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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