

INSPECTION REPORT

MELCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fulham, London

LEA area: Hammersmith and Fulham

Unique reference number: 100334

Headteacher: Janet Moffat

Lead inspector: Peter Nickoll

Dates of inspection: 27 - 29 September 2004

Inspection number: 267304

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	318
School address:	Fulham Palace Road London
Postcode:	W6 9ER
Telephone number:	020 8745 7411
Fax number:	020 8741 9977
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ian Craik
Date of previous inspection:	22 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Melcombe Primary School is a larger-than-average, multi-racial school situated in Fulham, London. There are 317 pupils on roll, 163 boys and 154 girls, aged between three and eleven years. Just under fifty-five per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is very high in comparison to the national average of 18 per cent. Approximately two thirds of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups (68 per cent). Just under half the pupils speak English as an additional language. Extra resources are provided to support these pupils. Thirty per cent of pupils receive special needs support: this is well above the national average (17.5%). A significant proportion of these pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are six pupils (1.9%) with a statement of special educational needs, which is close to the national average for primary schools (1.7%). Ten per cent of pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. Many pupils travel a considerable distance to attend the school and pupil mobility is higher than average. Sixty per cent of pupils live in the nearby local housing estate, whilst a significant number live in temporary accommodation including refugees. The school population is very significantly disadvantaged. Children enter the nursery with standards of attainment that are well below those usually seen. The headteacher and staff are committed to all the pupils in their care and work hard to provide a safe and caring learning environment for all pupils, enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and learning-support initiatives. The school was awarded the Beacon School Status in 2001, the School Achievement Award in 2002 and achieved Artsmark Silver in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22033	Peter Nickoll	Lead inspector	Mathematics
11104	Michael Fleming	Lay inspector	
25466	Gary Perkins	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs
18198	Roger Sansom	Team inspector	Foundation stage Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
25189	Jo Willmer	Team inspector	Geography Religious education Personal, health and social education English as an additional language
18214	Elizabeth Lewin	Team inspector	Art and design History 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, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has continued to make many improvements under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. The school is a community dedicated to ensuring that it provides for all its pupils a high quality learning experience. Pupils achieve well throughout the school; pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, whilst those pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. Pupils' achievement is good in English in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2 whilst in mathematics and science it is good in both key stages. By the time they leave, pupils attain the standards expected in all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, except for design and technology and art and design in which standards attained by the oldest pupils are above those expected. Pupils' behaviour, both within the classrooms and outside the school, is very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes, both to learning and towards their school. Teaching overall is very good, especially the teaching of English and mathematics. There have been significant improvements to the curriculum provided for the pupils; as a result, the curriculum is now broad and relevant and meets pupils' needs very well. The support and guidance offered to pupils are excellent and the pupils are extremely well cared for. The leadership and management of the school are excellent; governance is good. **This is a highly effective school that provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The dedicated and inspirational leadership of the headteacher.
- The excellent leadership and management of other key staff.
- The excellent support and guidance that the school provides for its pupils.
- The school is very inclusive.
- The very good behaviour and very positive attitudes of its pupils.
- The good achievement of all pupils.
- The good standards pupils achieve in art and design and design and technology.
- The excellent links with the parents and community.
- Pupils are not provided with opportunities to swim as part of the physical education programme.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. All of the key issues have been addressed. Standards have improved in information and communication technology and design and technology, and the school's efforts to promote good attendance have been excellent; procedures to monitor attendance are extremely thorough and are having a positive impact on the vast majority of families whose children attend the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	D	B
mathematics	B	B	C	A
science	D	C	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.*

Achievement. Overall, the achievement of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, is **good**. The achievement of pupils with special education needs is very good. Pupils enter the nursery, aged 3, with levels of attainment well below those usually seen at this age. Although standards are still below expectations by the age of 5, at the end of the Foundation Stage,

achievement is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development. Clear and measurable progress is made in creative development, in physical development and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world such that achievement is good in these areas. Standards at seven are improving year on year in reading and writing. This is reflected by the priority given to the development of pupils' literacy skills and the changing nature of the school population. However, standards in mathematics have fallen. Standards were below the national average in reading and writing and well below the national average in mathematics in 2003, but when comparisons are made with similar schools, attainment is well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.

Over time, standards are improving in English, mathematics and science. Standards at eleven in 2003 were below average in English, average in mathematics and well below average in science, but when comparisons are made with similar schools (see above), standards are above average in English, well above average in mathematics and average in science. Following analysis of pupils' work, the 2003 test scores and discussions with pupils, standards are judged to be average in English, mathematics and science. Taking account of the standards of the children as they enter the school which are well below average, standards are high enough. Pupils' achievement from age 7 to 11 is very good.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent with particular strengths in the way pupils respect and value each other.

Attitudes. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school.

Behaviour. Behaviour in and around school is very good.

Attendance. Unsatisfactory. In spite of the school's excellent efforts to promote good attendance, attendance rates remain below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good** overall.

On balance, the quality of teaching is **very good**. It is never less than satisfactory, and at times it is excellent. Some very good teaching was observed in all parts of the school. The best teaching was of English and mathematics where the school's model for teaching and learning had a very positive impact upon pupils' interest, motivation and self-esteem. There are significant and major strengths in the teaching of many subjects. This very good teaching ensures that pupil achievement, behaviour and attitudes are very good. The range of curricular opportunities provided by the school is **very good** as is the range of opportunities provided for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities. Currently, the school is unable to provide opportunities for pupils to swim.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher provides **inspirational leadership**. **She is very ably supported by the senior management team.** The management of the school is excellent. Subject leadership is very good. The governance of the school is **good**. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school does not fully comply with all statutory requirements as it does not provide opportunities for pupils to take part in swimming.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school. They appreciate how well the school cares for their children and of the progress that their child makes. The pupils are very positive about their school; they enjoy coming to school; they feel safe and secure; they like their teachers; and they appreciate the range of experiences that they are presented with.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- develop further the whole-school curriculum, especially within the non-core subjects, in order to take more account of innovative practice.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study for physical education are fully taught, by providing opportunities for pupils to take part in swimming.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils including those from the minority ethnic groups, achieve well. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in English, mathematics and science are average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement and progress of all pupils. Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment that are well below those usually seen and leave with standards of attainment in line with national expectations when the refugee pupils are excluded.
- Improvement in the standards in information and communication technology and design and technology.
- The very good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards of art throughout the school.

Commentary

1. Children enter the nursery aged three. Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are well below those that are usually seen. When children move into the nursery many have very limited experiences and their skills in communication and language are particularly low. Basic skills of colour recognition, early numeracy and pre-writing skills are very underdeveloped. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development. Clear and measurable progress is made in creative development, in physical development and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world such that achievement is good in these areas. However, by the end of the Foundation Stage, at age 5, standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development are still below average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (14.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.3 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.0 (15.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Standards in reading and writing are improving year on year. In the national tests in 2003, standards in reading improved upon the previous year; however, they were below average when compared with all schools but well above average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3, was in line with all schools and well above those of similar schools. In writing, standards improved from the previous year and were below those achieved in all schools nationally but were well above similar schools. Standards in mathematics were well below all schools but were above those attained in similar schools. Taking account of the pupils' progress throughout the key stage, the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good in reading, writing and mathematics.

3. Standards in the core subjects continue to improve. This is as a result of the whole-school focus on improving teaching and learning and very good subject leadership. The achievement of all pupils is good. This is a result of effective identification of their needs and well-planned programmes of work. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The achievement of pupils who have English as an additional language is good, as is the achievement of the gifted and talented pupils.
4. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are average. Standards in science, design and technology and in art and design are good, whilst standards in geography, history and physical education are as expected. There were insufficient opportunities during the inspection to make a judgement about standards in music.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.2 (25.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.7 (27.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.1 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. In 2003, standards in English were below the national average but above average when compared with similar schools based on prior attainment. Standards in mathematics were close to the national average when compared to all schools and well above average when compared with similar schools. In science, standards were well below average compared with all schools and average when compared to similar schools. When the performance data for refugee pupils is excluded, standards are in line with all schools nationally in English and mathematics but below average in science.
6. The 'added value measure', that is a measure of school performance, taking into account pupils' progress from age 7 to 11, shows that against all and similar schools the rate of improvement is well above average.
7. The whole-school focus on methods to improve the quality of teaching and learning, together with the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, have improved the quality of teaching for English and mathematics. English and mathematics are very well led by knowledgeable and effective subject leaders who have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within their subject. This is having a positive impact on the standards achieved by all pupils.
8. The school sets itself suitably challenging targets for reading, writing and mathematics for pupils aged 7, and for English and mathematics for pupils aged 11. In order to achieve the targets, the school has appropriate action plans to bring about the desired improvements. It also sets individual targets for all pupils in English and mathematics and has rigorous tracking procedures to ensure that pupils achieve the targets set. The school uses appropriate intervention strategies to enable nearly all to achieve the targets set.
9. The school tracks the achievement of all its pupils and, as a result, is able to provide appropriately for their individual needs thus enabling pupils aged 5–7, who have a particular gift or talent, to achieve well. The achievement of the older pupils aged 7–11, who are gifted or talented, is very good. Individual targets are set both for literacy and numeracy. Also, all pupils set personal targets for themselves.
10. Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection when standards by the age of 11 were judged to be unsatisfactory. Standards are now average. The provision of a

room dedicated to ICT, greatly enhanced hardware and software, as well as effective teaching and leadership and management, have brought about these raised standards. Standards in religious education are average. Effective implementation of the Agreed Syllabus, and carefully planned lessons, have resulted in pupils having a sound knowledge of religious festivals and ideas. Standards in design and technology have also improved since the last inspection and, together with standards in art and design, are above those expected. Standards in religious education, geography, history, and physical education are average. No judgement can be made for standards music.

11. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good within Years 3-6; they make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs). This is closely linked to the very good quality support which is provided in the school. The achievement of pupils from the minority ethnic groups is good. Standards in reading for Black Caribbean pupils, in the national tests for seven year olds, was better than for White British and significantly better than for Black African pupils. However, Black African pupils performed better than either Black Caribbean or White British pupils in mathematics. In the national tests for eleven year olds, Black Caribbean pupils performed significantly better than White British and Black African pupils in writing and reading. Black African pupils performed better than either Black Caribbean or White British pupils in mathematics.
12. Standards for pupils for whom English is an additional language, which includes Black African pupils, are improving. All pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress against their individual targets and most achieve them. However, too few pupils achieve full competency in English by Years 5 and 6. Pupils who have been at the school from nursery perform best. Pupils joining the school, particularly in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 with little or no English, disrupted or little previous education, are given specific support and make good progress. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils are very proud of their school and have very positive attitudes to their learning. They are confident and happy and positively respond to each other and to their school. Pupils' behaviour is very good as a result of the extremely high expectations all staff have of their behaviour. Pupils show outstanding respect for their peers and understand the responsibilities of living together in a community excellently. Pupils' cultural development is excellent. The attendance of a significant majority of pupils is good; however, attendance is below the national average because of the difficulties experienced by the socio-economic circumstances of a number of pupils including refugees.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to learning are very good.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of, and respect for, the values, cultural traditions and beliefs of others.
- Pupils are committed to, and proud of, their school community.
- Pupils are confident, friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils have a very strong sense of fairness and justice.
- Behaviour is very good.

Commentary

13. Attitudes to learning are very good. The school is highly effective in teaching pupils to understand and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils have high expectations of themselves and a very clear understanding of their own learning needs. They respond positively to questions, to correcting errors and seeking help when they need it. Inspection findings confirm the view of parents that pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn.

Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are very effectively supported and developed, ensuring that the oldest pupils are self-assured and well equipped to continue learning. They are keen to talk about their work, are proud of their successes and value the opinions, interests and successes of others. When given the opportunities to do so, they demonstrate a very good ability to work independently and make their own choices. Many involve themselves in the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered. They are responsible in their attitudes to homework and there is little unfinished work.

14. Pupils' spiritual growth is promoted very effectively through assemblies, religious education and through other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for reflection are embedded in school life, and pupils' spiritual development is very good.
15. Throughout the school there are clear and consistent expectations set for very high standards of behaviour. A strong moral code underpins the work of the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, fairness and justice. They are confident that any bullying or other forms of harassment will be dealt with effectively. Pupils are consistently praised and rewarded for good behaviour. Behaviour improves as pupils progress through the school. Inspection findings confirm the view of parents that behaviour is very good overall.
16. Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils like their school very much; they are rightly very proud of it and talk very positively of their sense of belonging. The relationships between adults and pupils are very positive. Pupils value and respect the ideas and contributions of others and are eager to share their own knowledge. They are knowledgeable about many cultural traditions, including their own, and are very well prepared for living in a culturally diverse society. Pupils are supportive of each other, and some older pupils are trained as mediators. An effective buddy system supports newly-arrived pupils and a 'Friendship Stop' in the playground has been established on advice from the school council.

Attendance

The attendance of most pupils is good but the particular problems of a few cause the overall level for the school to be unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school adheres strictly to rules for categorising attendance and absence.

Commentary

17. The school assiduously explains the importance of full attendance and strongly discourages holiday taking during term-time. The majority of parents understand and accept this, and, as pupils enjoy school, they are eager to attend. These factors, supported by the school's many strategies and effective procedures, have combined to improve attendance since the last inspection. However, because of the school's rigorous compliance with rules for authorising absence, and their obligation to keep pupils on roll even when there is no certainty that they are still in the country, the rate of attendance reported remains below the national median. Unpunctuality is no longer a major issue and is usually caused by travel difficulties of pupils who live a significant distance from school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2002 – 2003) (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.0
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

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	66	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	28	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	17	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	18	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	61	3	0
Black or Black British – African	57	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	10	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	39	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

In excluding these pupils, all appropriate procedures were followed.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. The curriculum is very good, being both broad and relevant and enhanced by a very good range of enrichment activities. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils by the school are excellent as are the links with the parents and wider community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. There are many significant and major strengths throughout all subjects. The proportion of teaching which is good or better, and very good or better, has improved significantly since the last inspection, and no teaching is

unsatisfactory. Judgements are based upon lesson observations and scrutiny of work in books and on display.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	17 (37%)	22 (48%)	5 (11%)	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.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ability of teachers to inspire, encourage and motivate pupils, and to challenge their thinking and learning, is excellent.
- Teachers' insistence upon high standards of behaviour is excellent.
- The assessment of pupils' learning is excellent.
- Clear, detailed, logical, evaluated and evaluative planning helps teachers to link previous, present and future teaching very effectively.
- Teachers' questioning skills are excellent and they demand and receive extended and thoughtful answers justified by evidence.
- Pupils' application, engagement with learning, concentration and productivity are excellent.
- A very small number of activities lack a clarity of purpose which hinders pupils' learning.
- A very small number of activities are inappropriate and can be a barrier to the pace and extension of learning which pupils need in order to achieve at high levels.

Commentary

18. All teachers are thoroughly committed to ensuring that children learn to the best of their ability. They teach through a model of learning which involves positive and total interaction between teachers and pupils at all times. This model ensures that pupils' learning needs and preferences are taken into account and acted upon. Teachers and pupils understand how they learn best. This knowledge is used in a highly effective manner to design programmes of study which reflect the best and most appropriate elements of the National Curriculum at each level of attainment and the objectives of the Primary National Strategies.
19. The planning and preparation of teachers are very good. They are sufficiently detailed and clear to ensure that all learning is designed for a specific purpose related to the needs of the learners. This is then thoroughly assessed and evaluated, and planning is annotated to record these observations which are, in turn, used effectively to inform the next stages of teaching and learning.
20. Teachers' command of subjects is good; this enables them to ask searching questions, extend learning effectively to the next stage where this is appropriate, and to tailor learning experiences to the needs of pupils. It also enables them to use resources which are available to them, or which they design themselves, effectively in order to further enhance the learning of pupils.
21. All adults who support pupils are very well prepared and have a very clear understanding of their role and of the needs of the pupils with whom they work. This results in teaching assistants and other adults providing very good support to teachers and high quality support to pupils.
22. Where the teaching is inspirational, pupils are in no doubt as to what the expectations of them are. They are constantly encouraged to aspire to greater achievements and have a clear understanding of what they must do to succeed. Teachers make the steps of learning explicit to pupils who respond constantly through reflection upon what they have learnt, how they have learnt it and what they should do next. The levels of challenge to pupils are appropriately demanding and, because of the high quality relationships evident throughout, the mutual

respect displayed in every room and the desire of adults to motivate pupils to achieve their best, that is precisely what pupils do.

23. In promoting the teaching of modern foreign languages to the extent that they do, teachers are making very clear to pupils what the stages of learning are, and an empathy amongst them of what their best strategies are for learning across the curriculum. This is a highly effective strategy which produces high quality results.

24. Where teaching is at its very best, for example in a Year 5 mathematics lesson and a withdrawal group for special educational needs (SEN) pupils, this is because
- formative assessment is used so well;
 - there are excellent behaviour and classroom management strategies which enable all pupils to achieve as learners without disruption;
 - learning is carefully structured, layered and supported at all levels;
 - pupils are very active participants and are given regular opportunities to reflect upon their learning, discuss it with others and then move on;
 - learning objectives are clearly displayed, discussed and understood;
 - there is excellent planning and preparation;
 - teachers constantly challenge pupils' thinking and understanding;
 - teachers use a wide variety of teaching and learning styles; and
 - they inspire pupils to want to achieve more and use emotional intelligences very successfully.
25. In these lessons, the school's model of learning is used particularly well and the achievement of pupils is outstanding. They achieve more than would otherwise be expected, and the rate at which they achieve is very high. The teachers in these instances modelled exceptionally high level teaching skills and an outstanding understanding of the ways in which pupils learn. There were numerous other occasions when many of these elements of highly successful teaching were observed throughout the school.
26. Where teaching and learning are not quite so highly effective, although no teaching was unsatisfactory, this is because there are a very small number of occasions when
- the activities selected cause the pace of learning to drop from its otherwise excellent levels, or
 - the clarity of messages is not quite so high.
- For example, in literacy in Key Stage 1, there are occasions when pupils are cutting out text boxes to order the main features of a story. The exercise of the cutting detracts from the momentum which pupils have established in their clear understanding of the story and the knowledge gained regarding key elements and features. Similarly, a story being told to pupils in Key Stage 1 was delivered at such a fast pace that the clarity of the message contained within the story was lost to a significant minority of pupils. This caused a break in the flow of their learning whilst the teacher regained the pupils' concentration and refocused their learning.
27. Teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language is good. In the best lessons the learning environment is exciting and engaging, providing pupils with the structured support needed to acquire and improve their skills in English. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are assessed, initially, for fluency in English, on entry to the school and are subsequently regularly assessed and monitored to ensure good progress is maintained. Those in the early stages of acquiring English are given specialist support.
28. The specialist staff, employed through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, provide good support to pupils. They work mainly with mainstream teachers in the classroom. Pupils are supported in a variety of ways to enable them to access the lesson and make clear gains in their learning. Teaching is focused on key areas identified, such as vocabulary development, correct use of tenses and sentence structure. Features of the best practice were
- providing opportunities for pupils to rehearse their language;
 - modelling good English by adults;
 - ensuring understanding, particularly of the key or subject-specific vocabulary;
 - providing simplified tasks to meet the learning objective;
 - re-enforcing key points or previous learning;
 - preparing pupils for new learning; and
 - using pictures, objects or actions to ensure understanding.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. It is broad and relevant to the needs of all the pupils at the school. The school provides its pupils with excellent opportunities to participate in the arts and other activities. The resources are generally good, whilst the ample accommodation provides many opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides many excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in the arts and other activities.
- Staff plan very carefully to ensure that there is equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The provision of staff, both teaching and support, to provide the enriched curriculum is excellent.
- Currently, the school is unable to provide its pupils with opportunities to take part in swimming.

Commentary

29. The curriculum has developed significantly since the last report in that it has been interwoven with the school's comprehensive adoption of a "learning to learn" philosophy that focuses upon an understanding, both by adults and children, of the workings of the brain and the understanding of different learning styles and their contribution to learning.
30. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides a very good range of learning opportunities. This is especially so in the nursery where activities are particularly well matched to pupils who begin school, in very many cases, with a limited range of basic skills. In the reception class there is more of a mixture of formal and informal learning, equally broad in content but at times less well matched to the learning needs of the youngest pupils, especially where they still exhibit limitations in their acquisition of basic skills.
31. Curricular balance and breadth are also very good in Years 1 to 6. The curriculum is enhanced by the school's espousal of, and comprehensive commitment to, its 'brain based' learning philosophy and the emphasis placed upon higher-order thinking skills. Teachers plan in detail and match their planning to the needs of all pupils. Pupils at all levels are appropriately challenged and are considered to be partners in the learning process.
32. The curriculum is greatly enriched by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs; these include, visiting speakers, links with local facilities (such as the Lyric theatre, architects, a national ICT company, local publishers) and other schools and learning institutions. The school meets the requirements for religious education. The provision for PSHE includes suitable coverage of health and sex education as well as consideration of the misuse of drugs.
33. Equality and access for all pupils to the curriculum is very good. The school provides very well for minority ethnic pupils including those for whom English is an additional language. The delivery of the full PE curriculum is hampered by the lack of playing field facilities. The school does however try to compensate by becoming involved in a range of indoor and hard area activities. The school does not teach swimming due to lack of a local facility.
34. There is an excellent match of teaching and non-teaching staff to the needs and demands of the curriculum. The school employs a range of coaches and experts to deliver parts of the curriculum, for example aspects of physical education and art. Classroom support staff make a very valuable contribution to learning and to the progress that pupils make. They are strongly committed to the school's overall teaching and learning philosophies. The deployment of staff and the quality of support to meet the identified needs of minority ethnic pupils is very good.

35. Resources overall are good for the delivery of the curriculum, and in many aspects are good or very good. Resources for teaching and learning for pupils for whom English is an additional language and to promote cultural diversity are very good.
36. Accommodation and the physical environment, both inside and outside, is on three floors and is generally "tired"; however, the staff make best use of the accommodation and brighten the building with many interesting and informative displays. The extensive accommodation is used well and there is a good library space, a fully equipped information and communication technology suite, music room, art room, parents' room, shop and three halls, together with a number of rooms where language activities can take place.
37. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and this is a very good feature of the school. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by a well-managed team of adults that ensures participation and consequent learning. Well-prepared individual education plans are fully adhered to and, as a result, curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides highly effective care which ensures pupils' welfare. Staff know pupils very well and provide excellent support and guidance. Pupils' views are taken into account with great efficacy.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every facet of the school manifests its ethos of care and the promotion of pupils' personal development.
- Staff establish very friendly and supportive relationships with pupils.
- Teaching and other strategies promote pupils' self-understanding and involvement in their learning.
- Pupils are confident their views are recognised and respected.

Commentary

38. The school provides a very friendly and relaxed environment in which boys and girls from a wide variety of backgrounds are justified in feeling safe and valued. They are encouraged to flourish physically, intellectually and socially by following the excellent models of hard work, respect for others and good humour provided by staff.
39. The arrangements for new pupils, including the significant proportion of them who start school later than the Foundation Stage or at other than the beginning of a school year, are highly effective. All parents and pupils have opportunities to visit the school. They talk with the headteacher who starts the process of communicating the school's ethos which continues throughout pupils' lives in the school. The transfer of information is as good as might reasonably be expected for pupils with such diverse origins. The induction documents and the friendly reception from staff and established pupils combine to help newcomers settle quickly into feeling happy and secure.
40. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from the skilled and inspirational inclusion manager, their teachers and support assistants. Programmes of work for them are highly relevant and appropriate, and they are inspired to achieve by the excellent teaching and very good support which they enjoy. All pupils are included fully in lessons and other activities.
41. The school supplements assessments of pupils' work with surveys which report pupils' views, so teachers develop a broad understanding of pupils' abilities and progress and are enabled to cater well for their academic and personal needs. Pupils share their parents' confidence that they are treated fairly and looked after well. They are secure in their expectation of help being provided when needed or requested. As well as the ready availability of help from their

teachers, pupils feel confident that each class has a voice through their representatives (a boy and a girl) on the school council. This is effective in promoting pupils' maturity and has enabled the school to respond positively to their suggestions about, for example, a school shop and an Anti-Bullying Charter.

42. Effective arrangements for ensuring child protection are in place, with all staff being made aware of the issues, led by the inclusion manager. Procedures and facilities for dealing with accidents, illness or other incidents are sound. For example, displays on the staircase walls take full account of fire safety advice despite the cost implications. Wall displays throughout the school exemplify and play a significant part in the school's comprehensive actions to raise pupils' self-esteem and to help them mature into caring, thoughtful and valuable members of society who are aware of their own potential and of exactly how to go about realising it.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has sustained its very effective partnership with parents. Relationships with many other schools are very good. Pupils receive great benefits from contacts with and support from local businesses and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to encourage and welcome parental involvement.
- Very high quality information is provided through newsletters and other channels.
- Pupils benefit from extensive financial and practical support from community partners.

Commentary

43. Parents are thoroughly appreciative of the school's efforts to educate and care for their children. Most parents express very positive views about most aspects of the school's work, particularly praising the hard and effective work of the headteacher, teachers and other staff. Very few parents express less than strong support for the school; a few have concerns about behaviour, and a very small number feel that more account could be taken of their views. Inspection findings support parents' favourable opinions. The evidence shows that the school takes care to seek and act on parents views (they have very few complaints), which are gathered through surveys and during informal approaches in the school yard. It also shows that pupils' behaviour in the school is mostly very good and that bullying or harassment is very rare and handled very effectively when it occurs.
44. The school continues its work to ensure that all parents are fully committed to supporting their children, which starts by making certain that pupils are always at school when they should be. Its efforts convince parents that the school has their children's best interests at heart, so parents readily accept the school's views and strategies. Commendable efforts are made to explain these strategies in detail. Parents are informed very well about how to support their children at home, partly through the very useful weekly newsletter, and also through well-organised classes. Very clear and engaging information about the school is presented in its prospectus and reports which supplement the newsletters.
45. Staff employed through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant welcome parents new to the English education system to regular meetings to improve their own English, to learn about the school's ethos for learning and to understand how to help their child at home with reading and writing activities. The sessions are very well supported and parents really appreciate all that the school is doing to ensure their children are happy and successful learners.
46. Parents receive very good reports on their children's progress and have suitable opportunities to comment on them and discuss them with their teachers. These reports include well-considered, specific advice on how each child can improve their English and mathematics. The effect of receiving all this information is to promote parents' involvement in their children's

education very effectively. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the production and review of their individual education plans, and are involved at all stages of their development. The 'Friends of Melcombe' parents' organisation raises useful funds which have provided learning resources as well as presents for leavers and for every class at Christmas.

47. Links that the school maintains with other local schools (especially through its Beacon status and the Education Action Zone) and the wider community are a real strength and of great benefit to pupils. Relationships with other schools underpin the communication of pupil information to ease transfer, support curricular links which encourage continuity in their learning, and encourage collaboration among staff to disseminate the teaching strategies that have been developed in this school. There are frequent school trips and visitors to the school who support teachers' work. They provide excellent opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experience of working with practitioners in the arts and businesses, for example through well-established links with the local theatre, a local international firm of publishers and with an internationally renowned architectural partnership.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are excellent and the governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership of the headteacher.
- By not providing opportunities for the pupils to swim, the school is unable to provide the pupils with their entitlement to the full programme of study for physical education.
- The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators is very well developed.
- The headteacher and staff provide excellent role models for all the children in the school.
- Highly effective professional development of staff, including the use of modelling and coaching techniques, have played a highly significant part in the raising of standards and in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- The governing body and headteacher have an excellent understanding of the principles of 'best value'.
- Financial management is highly effective.

Commentary

Leadership

48. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She provides the passion, vision and drive that ensure that Melcombe Primary School is a true learning community. She is very well supported by the members of the senior management team who share the ambition and vision of the headteacher and provide excellent leadership of those areas for which they are responsible. Strategic objectives within the School Development Plan very clearly focus on those areas that the headteacher, senior management team and governors have identified for improvement. The whole staff team is committed to providing for the pupils a quality learning experience and works very well together in order to bring about the many improvements that have taken place since the last inspection in 1999. Standards have improved considerably, as has the quality of teaching and learning.

This has been brought about by:

- a clearly expressed philosophy, shared by all, to provide for the pupils the very best teaching and learning experiences;
- a highly effective monitoring programme in order to determine the areas that are in need of development;
- appropriate identification of strategic objectives within the School Development Plan, clearly focused in order to bring about the desired improvements; and

- an excellent professional development programme that ensures that the teachers have the appropriate knowledge to provide very good learning opportunities for all pupils.

49. The headteacher has been responsible for setting the positive ethos that exists throughout the school. Decisions are made to ensure that all pupils are safe and excellently cared for.

Management

50. The school is a highly effective organisation which takes very good account of the needs of all its pupils. The headteacher, senior management team and subject co-ordinators monitor the quality of education that the school provides and, as a result, have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

51. The continuing professional development (CPD) and induction programmes are excellent. They ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and knowledge that enable them to improve the effectiveness of their teaching. The headteacher and other senior staff model effective teaching for the staff. The teachers are then supported by and are provided with coaching in order to continue to improve. Monitoring of teaching and purposeful feedback ensure that the teachers continue to develop.

52. Subject co-ordinators lead and manage their subjects very well. They have been instrumental in leading the developments within their subjects, for the raising standards, for improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum offered to pupils within their subjects. The school has several co-ordinators who are new to this responsibility. However, they have been well supported by the headteacher and other senior staff and shown how to undertake their role effectively. They have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, have undertaken audits of the strengths and areas for development within their subject and designed plans to bring about the desired improvements. All are able to allocate the resources to meet the identified needs following the audit.

Governance

53. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, save for the failure to provide pupils with opportunities to swim within the school's programme for physical education. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they work closely with the headteacher and staff of the school in order to bring about sustained school improvement. In order to gain this understanding, governors are provided with detailed information from the headteacher and staff; they make visits to the school to meet with staff. In their decision making, governors take note of this and other information, including pupil performance data, given to them both by the headteacher and other staff. In discussions during the budget-setting process, they take account of the need to raise standards and determine priorities accordingly. By comparing the school's results against other schools and challenging themselves to be the best, they show an excellent understanding of the principles of best value.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	£1,279,544
Total expenditure	£1,273,758
Expenditure per pupil	£3,980

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	£-5431
Balance carried forward to the next year	£355

54. The school has a very small balance, much less than the five per cent recommended as the expected levels of contingency. The expenditure per pupil is above the median for all LEA maintained primary schools due to increased funding resulting from Beacon School status and the increased financial support received because of the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall, provision for the Foundation Stage is very good.

The quality of the Foundation Stage identified at the last inspection has been maintained. Children are carefully admitted to the nursery following extensive induction procedures that include home visits and careful assessment of key skills already attained. Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are well below those usually expected. When children move into the nursery many have very limited experiences, and their skills in communication and language are particularly low. Basic skills of colour recognition, early numeracy and pre-writing skills are very underdeveloped. As a consequence, standards remain below average throughout the Foundation Stage although measurable progress is made and is demonstrable. Children move on to the reception classes in two stages, in September and January; this process is well managed.

Teaching overall is very good; so by the time that pupils enter Year 1, achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is very well supported by a team of skilled support workers, including nursery nurses, classroom assistants, parents, students and staff employed specifically to support pupils with language difficulties or special educational needs.

The provision is well led and managed by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, supported by the inspiration of the headteacher. As a result of particularly effective teamwork and informed planning, adults in the Foundation Stage are imperceptibly interchangeable, providing pupils with learning opportunities that are exceptionally well matched to needs and abilities. Very good attention is paid to children for whom English is not a first language. Apart from specific language support all adults are skilled at communicating meaning through gesture, animation and the use of a range of words carrying similar meanings.

The curricular provision is very good. It is especially effective and very well planned to give children a wealth of exciting experiences that motivate and enthuse and that accommodates all six areas of learning. There is a good balance between focused activities, where adults teach and assess new skills and learning, and those that children choose to do themselves. Attention is paid to providing a wide range of activities out of doors and it is not unusual to see writing or numeracy activities taking place in the dedicated outdoor provision. Very effective links are made between the different areas of learning. For instance, pupils working on the story of Paddington Bear were using emergent writing skills to make labels for a suitcase, were given opportunities to play in the "station ticket office" and were encouraged to think about where the end of the journey for their own labels might be. In the near future, the children will have the opportunity to make their own journey to the seaside.

The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is all on the ground floor and there is satisfactory outdoor play provision, though the older reception pupils have to use the same provision as that used by the nursery, thus limiting the opportunity for progression. They also have much more limited access to the outdoor provision as this is timetabled for a part of the afternoon session. Classrooms are well organised and careful thought is given to the experiences being provided. Although the nature of the building is limiting and restrictive, the staff work hard to make the provision stimulating and exciting. Resources are satisfactory and are replenished on a rolling programme, though some of the equipment is quite old.

Relationships with parents are very good; the staff endeavour to make parents true partners in the education process. Children generally settle well, but where there are difficulties, parents are encouraged to help the settling process. One father is currently spending a lot of time in the nursery to give reassurance to his son who is still lacking the confidence engendered in most of the other pupils. Induction programmes of high quality help to foster these good relationships.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main Strength and weaknesses

- Adults provide very good role models and their expertise in this area is very good. They lay the foundations for the school's philosophy of 'brain based' learning.
- Learning in this area is promoted by the great number of opportunities taken throughout the day to reinforce the key messages of this area of learning.
- Care, respect and support are given to children and to their parents to help them feel secure and confident.

Commentary

55. At the heart of learning in this area is the respect that adults have for the children and the care that they show for them. Evidence of this can be seen in the sympathetic care given to all children as they begin their school life. The children in the nursery at the time of inspection had been attending for fewer than four weeks but were, in the main, happy, enthusiastic and settled.
56. Teaching and learning are very good and this is illustrated by the comprehensive and well-matched planning that is clearly exhibited on the walls of the teaching areas so that parents are well informed about what the children are expected to do and learn. Adults have high expectations of learning and of behaviour and the children respond well. The children quickly become independent participants in the clearly identified activities, learning successfully and building good relationships with adults and with each other. The expected independence is illustrated clearly by the way that the children in the nursery, "clock in" by locating their name card and placing it in the right frame on the wall to illustrate their arrival, and by the mature way in which they locate and partake of their milk drink without any adult intervention. The Foundation Stage has clear rules that match those of the rest of the school. They are quickly learned but, more importantly, staff take care to ensure that pupils understand the reasons for the rules. Relationships are excellent. Pupils are kind to each other and are patient. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are quickly responded to by the adults who are skilled at resolution in non-dramatic and positive ways.
57. By the time that pupils move on to the reception classes they are confident and self-assured. They clearly know how to apply themselves to tasks and are largely eager to learn. They show sympathy towards those who find tasks difficult and are quick to assist. Learning in the reception area is more formal than in the nursery, especially in the mornings, and some pupils still found it difficult to maintain the high expectations of good sitting, looking and listening for prolonged periods. From the very start of the Foundation Stage, pupils are expected to take care of equipment and resources and they respond to this expectation really well. They tidy away carefully and responsibly and help each other with notable maturity.
58. In this area of learning, pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage; by the time that they transfer into Year 1 they are likely to have reached or be close to reaching the early learning goals for this area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very well-planned curriculum that meets the pupils' needs particularly well.
- Good teaching of basic skills in reading and writing helps children to make good progress in this area of development.

- Many children find reading difficult and by Year 1 these pupils are only reading with confidence a limited range of words.
- Despite good teaching of writing, many children still find letter formation a challenge at the beginning of Year 1.
- The specialist staff and support staff give very good support to those children who speak little English or who have other specific needs, as well as giving good general support to all children.
- Despite a low starting point the majority of children develop their accomplishment of the English language very well, and by the end of the Foundation Stage are well prepared to learn and progress in a wider range of skills.

Commentary

59. The curriculum planned for this area is very good. It is very well taught and pupils' achievement is satisfactory although standards at the entry to Year 1 are well below average. Many children begin in the Foundation Stage with only a limited knowledge of books and writing so they start from a very low point. The early skills of reading and writing are well taught, from the production or emergent writing in the nursery to careful teaching of letter formation in the reception classes.
60. There is very good support given to promote the development of spoken language which is particularly important as, apart from the large number, over 50 per cent of pupils do not have English as their first language. There is also a significant minority of pupils who do, but whose language skills are still very limited. Role-play activities and well-taken opportunities for adult interaction in activities help to build language skills.
61. Books are promoted at every opportunity and story telling is a frequent vehicle for supporting learning and promoting vocabulary. Positive attitudes to reading are promoted and the older pupils in the Foundation Stage begin to participate in the school's bespoke reading system – the five steps model – which promotes both reading and parental participation in reading. There are book areas in all of the classrooms though some of the contents are in need of replenishment. Very good teaching helps children to recognise letters of the alphabet, and the weekly planning includes a feature letter sound linked usually to the initial sound of one or more pupils' names. Weaknesses in early skills upon entry still inhibit pupils as they move into Year 1 and so, although good progress is made, few children are yet reaching average standards. Nevertheless, there is measurable achievement in this area of learning.
62. Early writing skills are well taught. Emergent writing is a feature of the early curriculum and children progress steadily onto formal written forms. Adults model writing well and are eager to emphasise the importance of writing clearly. Progress is steady but from a very low base. Many children, as they leave reception, still need considerable support because they are not yet able to write independently. While good foundations are laid by the Foundation Stage staff, and children's achievement is largely satisfactory, the majority of children do not reach the standard of writing expected nationally by this stage.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good planning for a very practical curriculum, especially in the nursery.
- Basic numeracy skills are well taught.
- The range of activities to promote investigational learning is good.
- Aspects of shape, space and measure are imaginatively and successfully taught.

Commentary

63. Good mathematical activities are planned in both the nursery and the reception classes and these, linked with enthusiastic teaching by staff with good subject knowledge, motivate children to do well.
64. Every opportunity is taken to teach basic numeracy skills. Opportunity is taken to link counting to a whole range of activities including singing, role-play, story telling and outdoor play. The outside area contains a number snake and other items that offer the potential to reinforce counting skills. Skilled staff use a range of visual clues to support the learning of key skills, helping to overcome any language difficulties that pupils may encounter.
65. Although pupils make good progress in their mathematical development, they begin from a very low base and upon transfer to Year 1, few have reached the expected national standard. However, the progress is well tracked and documented and achievement is satisfactory.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children entering the Foundation Stage have little understanding of the wider world around them.
- A very rich and interesting curriculum that includes regular visits away from the immediate surroundings gives children a wealth of learning experiences.
- Teaching is very good and adults have very high expectations of what children can and should do.
- Effective resources promote children's interests and help them to learn with confidence.
- Children make good progress in the use of information and communication technology – especially computers.

Commentary

66. The experience of the world for the nursery children is varied but many have very limited knowledge. Very good staff awareness and high expectations of what children are able to learn help them to provide a wealth of activities which lead to good knowledge acquisition. The commitment to regular outside visits is a strength, and trouble is taken to provide pupils with new and stimulating experiences. For example, the nursery is currently building towards a seaside visit and reference is made to this at every appropriate opportunity. Cross-curricular links are sought, and children counting with plastic animals, for instance, also talked about the countries of origin of some of the more exotic animals.
67. Information and communication technology is taught from the beginning of nursery, and children explain with confidence the basic tools of computing (keyboard, mouse, screen, icon etc). Even the youngest nursery children were observed using computers with confidence to draw and count.
68. Despite the very good teaching, high quality of planning and the good progress made throughout the Foundation Stage, the children are still well below the national expectations at the commencement of Year 1. Nevertheless, the achievement of pupils is very good given the low starting threshold.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in Physical Development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and the vast majority are expected to meet the standards expected for their age by the time that they enter Year 1.
- The curriculum is very good. Attention is paid to ensuring the development of both fine and gross motor skills.
- The resources to promote development in this area are good but would be enhanced by the opportunity to use a field for some more expansive activity.
- Teaching is very good; pupils are continuously encouraged to improve and extend their skills in movement.
- Outdoor play facilities are safe and stimulating but are more appropriate to the nursery than they are to the reception classes, who use the same area in the afternoons.

Commentary

69. The outdoor play area is used well in all weathers. Safety surfaces are relatively new and provide a good base for the low level climbing activities. A good mixture of outdoor activities is planned and some of the more formal learning from other learning areas spills out into the outside environment. During the inspection pupils were seen climbing over, under and around large equipment, encouraged to travel forwards, backwards and sideways with good control. Opportunity is taken to develop the appropriate vocabulary as well as the motor skills. By the end of reception, pupils are achieving the early learning goals in movement, sense of space and use of large equipment. In addition they also use small equipment and have learned to cut, stick and manipulate materials, and dextrously use construction equipment. Pupils in the nursery were very skilled at using commercially produced construction equipment to build and refine their models. Resources are generally good and are enhanced by good art and craft materials, which children are encouraged to explore.
70. Staff are very good at developing an understanding of health and healthy lifestyle. Children understand from early on about staying healthy and they not only wash their hands before eating and after toileting but many can explain the reasons why. Planning indicates that Foundation Stage children learn about, for instance, the importance of fruit and vegetables and healthy exercise.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in Creative Development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Creative skills are largely underdeveloped at the beginning of the Foundation Stage. Drawing and painting skills of the younger children are very immature.
- The curriculum is rich and interesting and enhances the development of children's imagination.
- Story activities, investigational maths and science and role-play situations are used effectively to promote subsequent creative activity.
- Music and singing, including background music, are strong features of the planning for this area of the curriculum.
- Role-play is encouraged and initiated to extend both imagination and basic vocabulary.

Commentary

71. Only a minority of pupils have had good creative experiences prior to starting school. School staff strive hard to address this and teaching is very good. Exciting and stimulating creative activities are a feature of each day's planned arrangements. Adults lead activities wisely and

extend skills effectively. Children enjoy role-play situations and participate enthusiastically. A range of planned themes extend the pupils from role-playing familiar settings to more unfamiliar ones. Artistic skills observed were very basic and exploratory, and even the examples of work scrutinised in the reception class indicated limited creative skills. Skills in the exploration of materials, drawing and painting, though developed significantly, are still below national expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage.

72. The provision for music is good in the Foundation Stage. Carefully selected background music is used in some story telling sessions, and singing and rhythm are a daily feature of activities. Again, children achieve well throughout the Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **very good** and has many highly effective features. It meets the needs of the National Curriculum and the Primary National Strategy for Literacy.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places an appropriately demanding and challenging emphasis upon the acquisition by pupils of basic skills throughout the school, and this aim is pursued relentlessly in all classes.
- The models of learning which the school promotes and uses, especially in reading and writing, are excellent.
- Leadership of the subject by key school leaders is excellent. It provides vision, inspiration and motivation both for teachers and pupils.
- Teaching is of a very high quality overall and secures very good achievement.
- Teachers' use of assessment to inform their planning and the next stages of learning for pupils is excellent.
- Sometimes the activities selected hinder the otherwise excellent pace of learning.
- The levels of expectation and challenge for pupils by teachers are excellent, both in terms of achievement of learning objectives and of high standards and quality of behaviour.
- Pupils' application of their subject skills, knowledge and understanding is excellent, resulting in very good achievement in English as they progress through the school.

Commentary

73. In 2003, at the age of seven, standards of attainment were below the national average in reading and below the national average in writing when compared with all schools in the country. At age eleven, standards in English were below average when compared with all schools.
74. In comparison with similar schools standards of the seven year olds were well above average in both reading and writing. At age eleven, in comparison with similar schools (prior attainment), standards were above average in English. Standards of attainment and achievement in reading, writing and English have improved each year since 2000.
75. Observation of pupils working in lessons, via scrutiny of work in books and on display, shows that the school is on course to continue this improvement and to meet the inspirational and demanding targets which it sets for itself. The work seen in lessons suggests that a large number of pupils should attain at or above national average levels by the end of Year 6 in 2005.
76. Standards of attainment in speaking and listening reflect the progressive nature of pupils' learning at the school. By the age of seven, standards are below those expected, but by the

time that pupils leave the school, standards are in line with national expectations. By the age of eleven, pupils speak and listen confidently in a range of contexts, adapting their dialogue to the purpose. They listen carefully and with concentration and employ many of the characteristics of Standard English and grammar appropriately. This is as a result of the school's successful model of learning which promotes time for thinking and reflection and then demands appropriate responses both to and from individuals. As pupils gain confidence and competence in these skills, moving through both key stages, so their attainment gains momentum and their achievement levels improve at pace.

77. In reading, pupils in Year 1 begin with very low levels of competence and understanding. Due to the effective strategies employed, they make good progress by the end of Year 2. The emphasis upon progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding via the self-developed "Steps" method, and the very good teaching of basic skills such as phonic awareness, sentence structure and reading for meaning and pleasure, means that pupils enter Key Stage 2 with greater confidence and competence. By the end of Key Stage 2 they have a clear understanding of significant themes, ideas and characters, develop the ability to infer and deduct from text, read for a variety of purposes and become very good at justifying their views based upon evidence from text. Throughout the school, the teaching of guided reading as a focused session outside other literacy teaching has a major impact upon this positive achievement.
78. At the age of five, attainment in writing is well below expectations. Pupils achieve well, though, so that by the end of Year 2 they communicate meaning through using simple words and phrases, have a basic grasp of punctuation and write using letters which are usually clearly shaped and correctly positioned. Some pupils develop paragraphs which are demarcated correctly with punctuation and usually spelt correctly. By the age of eleven, the very effective teaching methods and support mechanisms employed ensure that most pupils have the ability to sustain and develop ideas in a variety of forms and for a number of purposes. They have an understanding of writing for different audiences and extend meaning in increasingly complex, grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs. Spelling is usually accurate and handwriting becomes fluent, joined and legible.
79. The achievement of pupils aged 5–7, who are gifted or talented, is good in both reading and writing. This is because of the teachers' understanding of what the pupils already know and therefore they are able to provide these pupils with challenging activities. The achievement of the older pupils, aged 7–11, in English is very good. Very effective teaching, well matched to what the pupils need to know next, ensures this.
80. The evidence seen during lessons and scrutiny of work suggests that pupils this year may achieve higher levels of attainment than those in previous years. Their knowledge and understanding of the writing process and the expectations of what is required are very secure.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, with a high percentage of very good and excellent teaching.
82. Where teaching is at its best, this is because the teacher's subject knowledge, and understanding of the variety of learning needs, methods and strategies, are excellent. Teachers assess thoroughly and use this constructive assessment for learning to evaluate pupils' stage and rate of development in order to fully inform the next activities and learning strategies which will be used. Their planning is annotated and evaluated thoroughly to reflect upon previous learning. There is excellent use of activities planned at different levels to promote learning for pupils at all stages of development. Teachers are very aware of how pupils learn best, and promote learning using a variety of approaches to include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning experiences. This has a very positive impact upon pupils' achievement and progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Teaching and learning are undertaken at a very good pace which enables pupils to maintain

concentration for extended periods of time. Opportunities for reflection upon learning and preparation for the next steps in learning are particularly effective in maintaining momentum and motivation amongst pupils whose attitudes towards their work, application and productivity are excellent.

83. For example, in lessons in both key stages, there are examples of teachers being very clear with pupils about the learning objectives for the lesson, how they fit into the wider lifelong learning of pupils, setting very high expectations regarding achievement and behaviour very clearly and then pursuing these expectations relentlessly. The periods of reflection upon learning, opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and chances to refresh their brain and body are especially useful in enabling pupils to concentrate and maintain this high pace. All of this is underpinned by the excellent quality of relationships throughout the school, seen in every lesson, and the very obvious mutual respect and focus upon learning which is created within classrooms and other areas.

Example of outstanding practice
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A small group session involving a group of KS2 special educational needs pupils working with their group teacher on strategies for spelling.

<p>The pupils are encouraged and expected to be thinking about and reflecting upon their learning in the previous session. From the moment they enter the room until the moment they leave they are totally immersed in effective learning strategies. Through her sheer persistence and the high quality of her expectations, the teacher wills these pupils to succeed. She reassures them constantly about their value, and about the progress they are making compared to their last session. Learning objectives are discussed openly and understood, as are the reasons why this learning will help pupils in their learning journey to adulthood. They are expectant of her every word, and the visual and verbal cues she gives them are always used with a purpose in mind which is centred upon helping these pupils to learn. She uses music and rhyme to encourage them to understand the difference between the variety of spellings of the words “there, their, they’re” and the pupils are so engaged with their learning that they dance and sing to the music, despite the presence of other adults. They recall the spelling patterns and understand the different meanings and uses for the first time, committing what had been short-term memory gains to their long-term memories. The pace at which she works with the pupils, constantly maintaining eye-contact which is both motivational and inspirational, is relentless yet appropriate. She demands extended responses from them, justified by evidence, and the pupils leave the room with a greater understanding than they have had before, successful because of their excellent attitudes, but also because of the outstanding skills of an outstanding teacher.</p>

84. Where teaching could be improved, this is because some of the activities selected slow the pace of learning. An example of this was when pupils in two lessons were cutting out boxes of text using scissors when ordering the main events of a story. The impact of this was to hinder their focus upon the literacy objective and divert attention towards the accuracy of their fine motor skills, which was not an explicit learning objective for them on those occasions.
85. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The key members of staff with leadership responsibility work tirelessly to raise standards of achievement. Their vision for the subject and sense of direction are shared clearly and unambiguously with all members of staff, as is their determination to achieve their goals. Monitoring of pupil achievement and tracking of progress are of a very high quality. There is an excellent, detailed action plan with measurable success criteria, which is reviewed and revised annually. From this plan, new targets are set which are aspirational and challenging, and a bid is made for funding for the plan. This is then presented to, monitored and evaluated by the governing body as well as the leadership team of

the school. Modelling of the expectations for teachers and pupils, and demonstration teaching, has an excellent impact upon maintaining the very high standards of teaching and learning. Resources are of a good quality, with an appropriate range of reading materials, including very good guided reading texts and big books, and excellent support materials for pupils' writing. Many of these higher quality materials are produced by the school themselves.

86. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. Throughout the school, these pupils receive very good support both from teachers and teaching assistants during all phases of learning. There are appropriate systems in place to provide differentiated levels of support, combining in-class work with focused withdrawal work when pupils work in small groups. The effect of this provision is that pupils with SEN achieve very well in their learning.
87. There is no significant variation in the achievement of pupils from different groups, either race, gender or ability.

Language and Literacy Across The Curriculum

88. There are good examples of this aspect of provision developing well. In all year groups, pupils write for a variety of purposes. They describe their feelings in PSHE for example, and write extended pieces of project work each summer in preparation for their next stage of learning in the year group above. Pupils record their science experiments and mathematical investigations very well, using supportive frameworks. They describe the processes for making pots, faces and shoes from clay in art, and how they would design a London landmark in design and technology.
89. The school has focused appropriately in recent years on raising standards in the core subjects and teaching the objectives of the National Strategies strongly. They are well placed now, though, to extend the influence to the non-core subjects and enable pupils to have greater opportunities to use their literary and mathematical skills in other subjects to a much wider extent. This would enable them to give a greater clarity to pupils' understanding of the application of core skills across the curriculum and enable the school to allocate increased teaching time to cross-curricular work.
90. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is very good. There has been an increase in the quality of the teaching and learning throughout the school. The impact of leadership has been very good and standards continue to rise year upon year and are very high when compared to schools in similar circumstances.

Modern Foreign Language

91. The school has successfully introduced the teaching of German to some classes and plans to extend this to include French, Italian and Spanish. Many pupils at the school already speak two or more languages. A number start school with very limited English. The school recognised that it would support everyone's understanding of language acquisition if a language was taught that few, if any, pupils understood. Pupils themselves say that it is a valuable experience, understanding how new learners to a language feel and how their listening skills are being developed. The school is also recognising and building on the linguistic skills of its bilingual pupils.
92. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and no overall judgements can be made. The lesson was very fast moving, building on pupils' previous learning and actively involving them in acquiring new vocabulary. All pupils were totally engaged in the lesson and clearly enjoying themselves. Two new pupils were supported by the class teacher and were fully involved. All the pupils were keen to contribute fully, prepared to use known and new vocabulary, and as a consequence they made good progress.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The mathematics co-ordinator monitors the standards achieved by pupils throughout the school very well. As a result, the subject co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject.
- Achievement in mathematics in both key stages is good.
- Teachers' planning is very good, especially the weekly planning. Planning always identifies the learning objectives which are shared with pupils; as a result, pupils have a very good understanding of what it is they are going to learn.
- Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well.
- Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils, whose first language is not English, well and, as a result, they make good progress and their achievement is good.
- The teachers' management of pupil behaviour is excellent. This ensures that pupils are on task and sustain interest throughout the lesson. This has a very positive impact upon pupils' learning.
- Pupils' workbooks, across the school, were marked well.
- The teachers had very high expectations both of pupils' behaviour and of the quality of the work that they achieved.
- Overall, pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics.

Commentary

93. By the age of 7, standards in mathematics are well below average when compared with all schools nationally; however, when compared to similar schools, standards are above average. Standards have remained fairly static at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, but the changing nature of the schools' population accounts for this. Since 1999 the proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language has significantly increased. Achievement is good with nearly all pupils, including those pupils who are gifted and talented, making good progress. The good achievement is a result of very good assessment practices where teachers identify what the pupils already know and match the teaching and learning appropriately to meet their assessed needs.
94. Overall the achievement of pupils aged 7 to 11 is very good. This good achievement is a result of effective teaching and very good assessment practices, allowing teachers to match learning closely to pupils' needs. These good practices and the setting of challenging activities mean that the gifted and talented pupils achieve very well. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Early identification and appropriate learning targets, together with good quality support from the learning support assistants, ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Effective support and good teaching ensure that the achievement of those pupils with English as an additional language is good.
95. Standards attained by the eleven year olds in 2003 were average in comparison to all schools. When compared to schools with similar prior attainment, the progress that the pupils make in the four years from age 7 to 11 is well above average. Attainment in mathematics is well above average, once the pupils who are refugees are excluded. This is both in comparison to similar schools (FSM) and by prior attainment. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. The impact of the continued implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the improved teaching brought about by the development of the school's model for teaching and learning, together with the very effective support from the subject co-ordinator account for this improvement.
96. Overall, the quality of mathematics teaching is very good. Teaching is very good for pupils aged 7 to 11, whilst that for the pupils aged 5 to 7 is good. Excellent teaching was observed within the Year 5 class. In all lessons, very good planning and the sharing of learning intentions

with pupils had a positive impact upon pupils' learning as it enabled most pupils to understand what they were going to learn. In a majority of lessons teachers made very effective use of ICT, including using the interactive whiteboard and hand-held devices that enabled the pupils to actively participate throughout the lesson and respond to the teacher's questions. This enabled the teacher to have a good understanding of which pupils had understood the teaching point and those who needed further input. Diagrams, charts and displays were used well by teachers to support the visual learners whilst well-placed 'brain breaks' were included in all lessons to help the pupils sustain concentration and maintain an interest throughout the lesson. In response to teachers' questions, the pupils were given numerous opportunities to discuss with each other what it was they were learning. This 'chatterboxing' had a positive impact upon pupils' learning as it encouraged all pupils to participate and share with their group what it was that they were learning. Teachers used this practice to very good effect.

Example of outstanding practice

A whole-class mathematics lesson to Year 5 pupils on using rounding to estimate the answer in real life situations. This excellent lesson exemplifies the school's consistent approach to learning and teaching.

The outstanding feature of this lesson was the application of the school's approach to problem solving. This approach is applied consistently throughout the school. The mathematics subject co-ordinator has developed a staged process that teachers use to help pupils understand how to solve problems. In order for this framework to be of help to pupils and make sense to them, the school has used a colour code to break down the process of problem solving into stages. This very visual approach assists pupils' learning and allows them to 'see' the problem in its stages.

The five-stage process first encourages pupils to think about the problem, and then they are asked to determine what calculation or calculations they will need to carry out. Next, they are encouraged to estimate the approximate answer. Pupils then undertake the calculation and finally they check for accuracy by using the inverse operation. This structure gives pupils a strategy to solve problems and was effective, enabling nearly all pupils to undertake the task successfully.

The lesson was excellent because all pupils not only achieved the learning objective but had an understanding of what they had achieved and how they would apply this learning in real life situations.

97. Teachers and classroom assistants provide very good support for pupils who have special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language. This ensures that these pupils make good progress and those with special educational needs achieve very well, whilst those with English as an additional language achieve well.
98. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic subject co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge; thorough monitoring and evaluation has enabled her to have a real understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across the school and she has well-developed plans that will enable the standards in the subject to be further improved.
99. She undertakes detailed analysis of pupil performance data as well as undertaking regular and thorough monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. She uses this information well to determine future developments. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of recent research into the teaching of mathematics and provides support and advice for colleagues to put some of these findings into practice. These activities are valued by colleagues. The co-ordinator also monitors planning and examines samples of pupils' work. Resources for the teaching and learning of mathematics throughout the school are very good. The school is well

set to continue to improve the quality of its mathematics provision in order to raise standards even further.

100. Since the last inspection the school has successfully developed the National Numeracy Strategy and incorporated the school's model for learning within it, and, as a result, the curriculum offered to the pupils is both challenging and practical.

Mathematics across the curriculum

101. Effective examples of the application of mathematics across the curriculum were observed in measuring and data handling in science and ICT lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning across the whole school and effective teaching has led to good achievement from a very low baseline. By the age of 11, standards of attainment are above those of similar schools. Pupils make good progress.
- Teachers concentrate on scientific enquiry to develop good scientific knowledge and skills.
- Sound assessment and the production of good quality portfolios help staff to understand pupils' levels of ability and how they learn as they progress through the school.

Commentary

102. There has been steady improvement in science since the last report as indicated by the Key Stage 2 national test results over the last five years. Despite a slight dip in the most recent statistics, the trend over time is rising and must be judged as such.
103. By the age of seven, standards, as judged by teacher assessment, are below those expected nationally. By the age of 11, standards are well below average. However, when compared with similar schools, standards are average.
104. There was insufficient science seen during the inspection period to make a judgement on the quality of teaching based upon lesson observations. However, evidence from the scrutiny of work indicates that the teaching of science is good. Planning is good, both to show how the programmes of study for science are covered and for individual lessons. The school's overarching 'mind mapping' techniques lend themselves well to the investigational aspects of science. The consideration of "the big picture" worked well in both lessons observed.
105. Scrutiny of work also indicates that pupil achievement, including that of the gifted and talented, is good. From a low base on entry, pupils gain skills and knowledge across the school. An appropriate focus on science investigations enables teachers to present challenging activities, closely matched to their identified needs, to the more able. There are growing curricular links especially in mathematics and in design and technology. One lesson observed in Years 4 & 5 design and technology, for instance, related the work that they were doing on the design of musical instruments to previous work in science on muffling sound.
106. The subject is well led by a newly appointed co-ordinator. Although she has not been the subject leader for many weeks she worked with the previous co-ordinator and already has a good understanding of the subject priorities and has plans for the short and medium term.
107. Resources for teaching science are good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge. He leads the subject very well.
- Good standards of teaching resulting from extensive training opportunities.
- Improved resources including computers and peripherals since the last inspection.
- Limited cross-curricular links to other subject areas.

Commentary

108. Standards have improved since the last inspection and by age 11, standards of attainment are close to national expectations. Pupils in Year 6 manipulate text, import pictures from the Internet, handle data and use graphics. They have a good understanding of safe use of the Internet. The pupils are beginning to use ICT creatively but they still have some development to make in this area.
109. Younger children are now beginning to gain from the investment in ICT and there is increasing use of the information and communication technology suite by the younger pupils. During the inspection, ICT 'monitors' from Year 6 were observed making a significant contribution to information and communication technology teaching with the younger pupils in Year 2. Achievement in ICT is now good.
110. Resources have also improved and are now very good. The improved resources have transformed the subject since the last inspection. Improved teacher confidence, following effective training, has resulted in good teaching. Pupil confidence in ICT is growing.
111. Interactive whiteboards are a new feature in all of the Key Stage 2 classrooms. Despite having only been operational for 1 week prior to the inspection, the staff training for their introduction had been particularly successful, and confident use of this new tool was observed. The use of the whiteboard helped to increase pupils' levels of engagement and their interest in the lesson. Pupils, too, had good understanding of the operation of new resources. Pupils in a spelling lesson in Year 6 were effectively using a remote facility to carry out multiple choice voting which the class teacher could monitor and analyse, and modify his teaching to take account of pupils' misconceptions.
112. This subject area is very well led by a co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge. He acts as a good role model for other staff and he has introduced good planning to lessons. He has also vision for the potential for his subject and produced an action plan which he has used to encourage the headteacher and governors to invest heavily in this area of the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

113. The overall use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. This is a developing area and under the guidance of the subject leaders collectively, opportunities are being sought to develop the use of ICT in all curricular areas. There has been good progress made in linking with mathematics and science but less opportunity to use ICT creatively.

HUMANITIES

114. The humanities, consisting of history, geography and religious education, were not a main focus during the inspection. No lessons were observed in history and geography, and only one lesson was seen in religious education. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about the school's provision in these subjects or the quality of teaching and learning but there are strong indications, based on curriculum planning, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with subject leaders, that standards of attainment are in line with nationally expected levels.
115. The subjects are taught in blocks as part of a rolling programme. An appropriate range of topics is covered within each subject and pupils have adequate opportunities to develop the relevant skills and understanding. The curriculum for religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus. In response to the findings of the previous inspection, a history skills map has recently been developed to help teachers, when planning history lessons, to ensure pupils are taught the full range of historical skills, especially those related to historical enquiry. Teachers now have a clearer understanding of progression in learning and use the skills map to help with the monitoring of pupils' progress

116. A focus on the 'Brain-Based Learning Model' ensures that pupils are given the "big picture" at the beginning of a unit of work, and the learning objectives and learning outcomes are made clear to the pupils during lessons. High-order questioning is a high priority and pupils are encouraged to raise questions as well as respond to them.
117. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. The school's pledge contained within the prospectus states that:
 "At Melcombe School we promise every child will:
- have at least one educational visit to a place of interest, which is directly linked to their learning, once a term;
 - have an opportunity to be involved in an outdoor learning experience which helps them understand more about their environment, at least once a year;
 - have the opportunity to take part in an annual International Festival that celebrates cultural diversity in the school;
 - have the opportunity to meet with trusted members of the local community at least once a term to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world."
- For example, a local theatre company provides interactive history shows and drama sessions which are used on a regular basis with all pupils across the school. Younger pupils visit Littlehampton to support their studies of holidays at the seaside, today and in the past. Older pupils go to Godstone in Kent to study a contrasting locality, and for Year 6 pupils there is a proposed residential trip to France.
118. Subject leaders within the humanities work very well together. They are all new to the role but are well supported by the headteacher and have a good understanding of the role. Action plans are shared and curriculum maps have recently been updated to ensure better links between subjects, and portfolios of work have been developed to reflect standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

119. Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects, consisting of art and design, music and physical education, were not a focus of the inspection. No lessons were observed in music or art so it is not possible to form an overall judgement about the school's provision in these subjects or the quality of teaching and learning, but there are strong indications based on curriculum planning and analysis of pupils' work that standards of attainment are in line with nationally expected levels in music and above nationally expected levels in art and design.
120. It is evident from the curriculum map and the wide range of work displayed around the school that pupils enjoy a particularly strong and varied curriculum for **art and design**, with opportunities to explore a wide range of media and processes. The quality of displayed artwork not only enhances the school environment but also demonstrates the above-average standards. Resources are plentiful and there is a dedicated art room with a potter's wheel and kiln for firing clay.
121. Portraits drawn in the style of Picasso by Year 6 pupils, with key facts about his life, analysis of some of his paintings and opinions about his work, illustrate an example of their knowledge and understanding of artists from different times and cultures. Cross-curricular links with history are clearly depicted in Year 6 pupils' designs of a range of buildings using different architectural styles from different eras. They are also reflected in the work of Years 3 and 4 pupils when, as part of Black History Month, they worked with a company of artists in residence. They practised selecting and preparing fabrics and strings suitable for weaving. Pupils worked in small groups and every pupil's work is represented in the collaboratively woven wall hanging. The work of the youngest pupils, in the style of Monet, demonstrates their ability to mix colours successfully to create lighter shades. Pupils in Year 5 sketched a range of flowers and then experimented with colour mixing to achieve different textures with paint. Some excellent examples of pottery, displayed with the learning objective, show how pupils use different joining techniques effectively.

122. The Melcombe pledge promises that every child will:
- see at least one theatrical performance per year.
 - take part in at least one performing arts production per year.
 - work with an outside artist once a year.
 - have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument at some point in their time at school.
 - have access to a wide range of extra curricular activities both in Key Stages 1 and 2.

DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **good**. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Design and technology is now a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator with good subject knowledge and a flair for her subject. She presents a good role model to other colleagues.
- The subject is well resourced; recent investment has taken place.
- High quality assessment and planning processes support the subject across the school.
- The skills map developed by the co-ordinator is a good support to teaching of this subject.
- Excellent improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

123. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection period but scrutiny of work and of portfolios indicates that this subject is being taught effectively and that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are now introduced to a wide range of materials and experiences that test their design abilities and produce some high quality work. From a low baseline when pupils begin their schooling there are some very good skills learned, and standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with expectations.
124. Given the low level of skills as pupils enter the nursery, the achievement in design technology is good. Cross-curricular opportunities are sought out and design technology supports a range of other learning. For example, older pupils studied Olympic athletes. They looked at body form and took photographs of each other in athletic poses, making purposeful links with science and information and communication technology. They then used the photographs to design models of athletes on wire frames. The final products are of high quality, as are the evaluations that the pupils produced at the end of the process as they considered how they might have done better.

Physical Education

Overall, provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- School makes good use of 'experts' to coach the pupils.
- Older pupils do not receive the full programme of study for physical education.
- Subject leadership and management is good.

Commentary

125. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations. Four lessons were observed during the inspection, two in Year 3 classes and one in Years 2 and 4. Two of the lessons observed were taught by a coach from Queen's Tennis Club as part of a nationally planned project to improve tennis skills with youngsters.

126. The quality of teaching and learning in three of the four lessons was good and in the other one it was satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and learning outcomes which are shared with and understood by the pupils, enabling them to evaluate successfully and improve their performance. Where teachers know the pupils well, behaviour is well managed, expectations are high and achievement is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to warm up before physical activity and the need to cool down afterwards.
127. The physical education curriculum is taught in half-termly blocks, with every class covering the same area of physical education each half term. Games, gymnastics and dance are each covered twice over the year and, where possible, links have been made with other areas of the curriculum to develop a more topic based approach. There is no swimming in Key Stage 2. During the summer term a "Fitness Week" is organised to encourage and raise awareness of a healthy lifestyle and the need to take regular exercise. Professional coaches work with pupils throughout the week, links are made with secondary schools in the borough, and local police, fire fighters and dieticians also take part. Cross-curricular links are made, especially during this week, and are reflected in displays around the school and in the school portfolio. The older pupils also take part in ice-skating, bowling and rock climbing.
128. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of after-school clubs organised and run by professional instructors including: football, basketball, netball, street dancing and drama and soon to begin tag-rugby.
129. Physical education is led well by the subject co-ordinator. She has recently completed an audit of resources which are adequate. Accommodation includes three halls and limited playground space. Pupils do not have access to a grassed area. Monitoring of standards is carried out by the headteacher and subject leader to ensure appropriate teaching and progression in skills. All teachers receive written and oral feedback with points for action. The co-ordinator organises an annual 'Fitness Week' to supplement the physical education programme. The pupils enjoyed the experiences that they were offered.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weakness

- The school's very effective promotion of positive behaviour and self-esteem
- The whole-school commitment to BASICS (Belonging, Aspiration, Safety, Identity, Challenge and Success)

Commentary

130. The school very successfully promotes pupils as active learners who have a clear personal responsibility for their achievements and behaviour as part of the school community. Through lessons and assemblies pupils develop their understanding of the school's model for learning of BASICS. The inspirational and challenging displays which are in evidence throughout the school promote and explain BASICS to pupils, staff, parents and visitors alike. Pupils' work reflects and supports these displays, showing their depth of understanding and commitment to it.
131. Pupils' personal and social development is fostered very well through the whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour and developing pupils' self-belief in themselves. The programme for PSHE, including 'Circle Time', provides structured opportunities for pupils to explore relevant issues such as perseverance, challenge, belonging, fairness and justice as well as opportunities to discuss their feelings and viewpoints in a safe and respectful

environment. Pupils aged seven to eleven are trained as mediators to sort out minor issues in the playground and all pupils are taught how to respond positively to others or react appropriately to a difficult situation.

132. Pupils' health is very well promoted through a variety of events and activities such as Fitness Week, Anti-bullying and Drugs Awareness plays and talks from the community police officer and school nurse.

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	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1

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