

INSPECTION REPORT

MOULSHAM JUNIOR SCHOOL

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114800

Headteacher: Mr L Kemp

Lead inspector: Mrs E Pickford

Dates of inspection: 14th - 16th March 2005

Inspection number: 267354

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 545
School address: Princes Road
Chelmsford
Postcode: CM2 9DG
Telephone number: (01245) 352 098
Fax number: (01245) 349 604
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Willis Field
governors:
Date of previous 2nd November 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Moulsham Junior School is a large community school situated in south Chelmsford. It shares a campus with two other schools. The 545 pupils are taught in 19 single-age classes. Pupils come from a very wide range of social backgrounds, although the percentage of those known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are more boys than girls overall and significant variations between the ratio of boys to girls in particular year groups.

The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is higher than in other schools nationally. Three-quarters of the pupils are white British. Eleven minority ethnic groups are represented in the school population but no group is dominant. Most of these pupils use English as their main but not their sole language and none are at an early stage of learning English.

When pupils join the school at the age of seven, there is a wide range of ability and considerable variation from one year to the next but overall their attainment is average. Pupils who have the most significant learning difficulties, hearing difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems and physical disabilities are placed on the special needs register. The overall percentage of pupils on the register is similar to the national average, although in some year groups it is above average. Fourteen pupils have statements of special educational need, which is above the national average.

The school has had a high turnover of staff recently due mainly to promotion and partly to ill health. The school does not have difficulty replacing staff.

The school has received several awards since the last inspection, including the Essex Schools Award in 2000, the Schools Achievement Award in 2001, the Active Mark, Healthy Schools Award and Investor in People in 2003. In 2004, the school gained an International Schools Award and the Charter Mark in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that is very well regarded by the pupils, the parents and the local community. Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to learning. The teaching is good overall and much is very good. Standards in Year 6 are average and pupils of all capabilities achieve well. The school develops pupils' personal qualities very well by raising their self-confidence and valuing them as individuals. Very good leadership and good management have improved standards over a number of years. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The excellent innovative and dynamic leadership of the headteacher.
- The governors and staff work well as a team and are committed to achieving high standards in all areas of the school's work.
- The school addresses the needs of individuals very well and is highly inclusive.
- Teaching and learning are good and this enables pupils of all capabilities to achieve well.
- The curriculum is very broad and there are excellent opportunities for enrichment.
- The school has established excellent links with other schools, both locally and internationally, from which pupils gain a good understanding of the world.
- Relationships are very good at all levels within the very caring school community.
- Monitoring of pupils' work is not rigorous enough.
- Assessment is not being used effectively to raise standards further.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1998 and has successfully addressed the issues identified then. Standards in ICT have risen as a result of staff training and improved resources. In music, staff expertise is shared well and good quality teaching has raised standards across the school. The presentation of pupils' work and handwriting in Years 5 and 6 is now good but standards in Years 3 and 4 are not yet high enough. The accommodation is now very good. Other improvements include a higher overall quality of teaching, stronger links with the community and an increase in the number of extra-curricular activities on offer.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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 is good for pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, those whose main language is not English and the higher-attaining pupils. Standards in the 2004 national tests were above average overall, although lower attainment in the writing tests affected the overall results in English. Standards in the current Year 6, where there are an above average

percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a high pupil turnover, are average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils have made good progress since they joined the school, when their standards were below average. Standards in Years 3 and 5 are above average; these year groups have a smaller proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards of writing are improving in all year groups as a result of the recent focus on this area.

The **very good provision for pupils' personal development**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enables them to become very caring, polite, mature and responsible. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning and good achievement. The school takes excellent account of pupils' views and acts on them. Levels of attendance are very good and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. **Good quality teaching overall** results in the pupils learning well throughout the school. There are many instances of very good teaching. Lessons are planned co-operatively by teachers within the year groups and this is very effective in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers question the pupils well and extend their thinking. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants to enhance the pupils' learning. Marking does not always make it clear to pupils what needs to be improved. Assessment is satisfactory but is not used well enough to raise achievement by setting individual targets for pupils. The accommodation and resources are very good and specialist facilities are used well. The curriculum is very rich and provides a broad all-round education for everyone and parents appreciate this. All the required subjects are covered with the addition of French. Religious education is not taught in sufficient depth in some classes. Staff effectively share their expertise in music, French, information and communication technology and physical education across the school. The curriculum is successfully enriched through an excellent range of additional activities. The pupils are cared for very well. There is a very good partnership with parents and there are excellent links with other schools and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good and the management is good. The headteacher's charismatic approach has established a strong ethos of 'Each working for all' which motivates the whole school community. Subject co-ordinators offer very good leadership in a number of areas and those new to post and are beginning to influence the development of their subject. However, the monitoring of pupils' work is not rigorous enough to identify some weaknesses and tackle them. Staff work very well as a team and are ambitious for the school. The governing body makes a significant contribution to the leadership of the school and its successes. It ensures that statutory requirements are met. Careful financial planning enables good levels of staffing and support to be maintained.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the school and the support it gives to them and their children. They are full of praise for the wide range of additional opportunities on offer and the dedication of the staff. Pupils are very happy at school and feel that their opinions are listened to, valued and acted upon. They are very comfortable to approach staff when they have problems.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Use assessment information to set individual targets for pupils to move their learning forward step by step in order to raise standards further.
- Identify areas in need of improvement through a closer scrutiny of the pupils' work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement is **good** in Years 3 to 6, with pupils of all abilities achieving well in relation to their capabilities. Standards of attainment are **average** overall by the end of Year 6. Standards are above average in Years 3 and 5. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls, nor within the small numbers of pupils from different ethnic minority groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, standards are above average in Years 3 and 5.
- There is regular challenge and support for the higher-attaining pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English have clear individual targets and achieve well.
- Standards of work seen in the current Year 6 are average overall.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and music have improved since the last inspection due to staff training and the sharing of expertise across the school.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are below average in Years 3 and 4.
- The majority of pupils are given year group targets which are not so effective in raising the achievement of individual pupils.
- Work samples in religious education show inconsistencies between the classes in emphasis given and depth of study.

Commentary

1. The majority of pupils join Year 3 from two infant schools and a small number come from denominational schools in the town. Attainment on entry, judged by the national tests for seven-year-olds, is average overall. It varies widely from year to year depending on the percentage of pupils who need extra learning or English language support and the percentage of higher-attaining pupils. Since the last inspection, the percentage of pupils joining the school with special educational needs has risen sharply. Although these pupils are well supported and achieve well in relation to their capabilities, they do not always reach the expected level by the end of Year 6, which lowers standards overall. Assessments made by the school at the start of Year 3 do not always match Year 2 test results. This causes difficulties in establishing the baseline and in accurately measuring the progress pupils make as they move through the school.
2. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests, attainment was found to be average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. The average point scores, detailed in the table below, show improvement in mathematics and science compared with the previous year. In the writing task, pupils' performance was lower than expected and this affected the overall results in English. The school has since prioritised writing as an area for development and improving standards were seen as a result. Standards in reading are above average. When compared to schools whose attainment was similar at the end of Year 2, performance was below average overall, in contrast to 2003, where it was well above average. The school achieved the targets

set for English and mathematics in 2004, except that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 in English was slightly lower. Since 2000, the trend in the school's average point score in the core subjects has been above the national trend. Standards are similar to test results reported at the time of the last inspection in 1998, although several changes have been made to the tests and curriculum since then.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (28.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.6 (28.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.4 (29.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 125 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Standards in the current Year 6 are in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science, which is lower than in recent years. Data from the feeder schools indicates that overall standards for this year group were below average at the start of Year 3 and a large number of pupils have joined the year group since then, several coming from abroad. There are now an above average percentage of pupils in the year group who have special educational needs. Some classes experienced a lack of continuity of teachers last year due to illness. However, additional classes and support are in place to minimise the effect of this. Recent assessment shows that a smaller percentage of pupils are likely to achieve the higher Level 5 by the end of the year. The majority of teaching seen in Year 6 is very good and pupils of all capabilities have made good or very good progress so far this year. However, it is very unlikely that the targets set with the local authority for this year group some time ago will be met. Most pupils do not have an understanding of the level they are working at in comparison to national standards and what they have to do to improve.
4. In Years 5 and 3, pupils' attainment is above average in the core subjects. In Year 4, which is the smallest year group, standards in some classes are below average. This year group has the highest percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and also those learning English as an additional language. Pupils who need additional support are not distributed evenly between the four classes, and the ratio of boys to girls also varies considerably from class to class.
5. Gifted and talented pupils are identified when they join Year 3 and their progress is carefully tracked as they move through the school. They are given many opportunities to extend their learning both in class and through philosophy sessions, where they share ideas with pupils from other local schools. Good challenge is also provided for higher-attaining pupils through 'quick thinkers' and booster groups in English, mathematics and science. Some able mathematicians in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to work on problem-solving activities with the grammar school staff. In 2004, 44 per cent of pupils attained the higher Level 5 in mathematics and in science 62 per cent of pupils, which is above average nationally.
6. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make at least as much progress as their peers, when taking account of their prior knowledge. They make good progress towards the targets identified for them in their well-structured individual education plans. This is the result of the very good support

from the co-ordinator, class teachers and from the teaching assistants. In some classes, they make very good progress due to the very careful match of activities to their needs.

7. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. The teacher and the teaching assistant deployed to specifically support these pupils do a very good job of helping the individuals concerned to improve their use of English and, in particular, ensure that pupils have a good level of comprehension in dealing with unfamiliar language. Although numbers in minority ethnic groups are small, data analysis does not show any underachievement. The school has been involved in a project which provides support for Bangladeshi pupils and additional help has been given to children to help them catch up following extended visits to their families. This is proving to be very beneficial.
8. Standards of speaking and listening are high across the school. Pupils are orally confident due to the good opportunities they are given in class discussion and to perform in assemblies and concerts. In all lessons, pupils are introduced to subject-specific language and encouraged to use it in their answers and written work. They listen well to each other and to adults, which enables them to follow instructions and quickly settle down to work. Pupils enjoy reading regularly, using the library and discussing their books, and this has enabled the above average standards to be maintained. Standards of handwriting and presentation have improved in Years 5 and 6 but standards are not high enough in Years 3 and 4. The increased focus on writing is already showing improvements and the gap between boys and girls noted in this area is narrowing as a result of changes made.
9. In mathematics, there has been a focus on problem solving, and in science, improved opportunities for experimental and investigative work have helped to raise standards in these subjects. Standards in ICT are now average by the end of Year 6 and reflect the improved resources and impact of staff training since the last inspection. Elsewhere in the school, standards are higher because the good teaching and more structured curriculum has had a greater impact over time. Assessment is used well to match ICT activities to individual needs. Good use is made of ICT in most curriculum subjects to further develop skills. The library and the Internet are used well for carrying out independent research.
10. Throughout the school, pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Good opportunities are found for pupils to use their writing in history, geography and science. Pupils' knowledge of religious education was found to be below that expected in Year 6. Work sampling in the subject showed a lack of consistency in the emphasis and depth of study in some classes. Opportunities to use literacy skills in religious education are often missed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Behaviour is **very good**. Pupils have a **very good** attitude towards school. Attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour management procedures are very positive and the school is a very orderly and happy environment where pupils behave very well.
- The excellent and trusting relationships help pupils to learn.
- Attendance is above the national average.

- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

Commentary

11. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a very positive attitude and they are interested and keen to learn. They enjoy being in school and they are very enthusiastic and eager to take part in all the activities provided for them. Pupils of all ages are very polite and helpful towards visitors and this reflects the very good role models provided for them by the staff. Relationships in the school are excellent and pupils are very trusting of their teachers and learning support assistants. This helps them to gain confidence and to want to learn. During lessons, most pupils concentrate well and work hard. They listen well to their teachers and to each other, and they share resources co-operatively and sensibly. Behaviour is very good in assemblies and pupils move around the school quietly and politely. Older pupils are proud of their role as play leaders in the playground and this makes a strong contribution to ensuring good behaviour and support for individual pupils. In all classes, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's high expectations and fair and consistent behaviour management procedures. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying or racism in the school and they are confident that any problems would be dealt with promptly and effectively by the staff.
12. Pupils' personal development is very good and is closely linked to the school's very positive ethos. Parents are very satisfied with the way the school encourages pupils to mature and behave well. During assemblies and personal and social education, pupils discuss a range of social and moral issues which affect the school and the wider community. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to join a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and this contributes very well to developing their confidence and extending their experience. The school recognises that a few parents are concerned that some clubs are over-subscribed, resulting in some pupils missing out on their choice of activity. Pupils of all ages show respect for the feelings of others and a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Throughout the school, pupils confidently take on a range of responsibilities for tasks around the school, and they value this opportunity and are keen to help.
13. Overall, the school has improved its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is good and, in subjects such as English, art and design, music and drama, pupils often reflect on aspects related to their own lives and they are encouraged to consider the world around them. Although assemblies form an important and integral part of the school day, opportunities are missed for pupils to reflect on religious beliefs and the way in which they impact on people's lives. Moral and social education is very good with a strong focus placed on happy and respectful relationships and caring for others. The good provision for personal and social education and displays around the school very effectively develop pupils' understanding of their responsibilities for living within a community and pupils regularly support local and national charities. Cultural development is strong and the school prides itself on being an international school which develops pupils' awareness of a multicultural society well. Close links have been well developed with European schools and continuous support is provided for a school in Ghana. The school's steel pan band is well established and pupils value the opportunity to perform. Through the curriculum, for example in art, music and dance, pupils gain a good understanding of their own culture, as was seen when pupils in Year 3 took part in maypole dancing.

Pupils regularly visit places of educational and cultural interest, and they have a good opportunity to take part in productions and musical performances.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.3	School data:	0.5
National data:	5.5	National data:	0.4

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

14. Attendance is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The school has very good procedures to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality. Unauthorised absence is followed up promptly and parents are reminded regularly of the effect of good attendance on their child's progress. Most pupils arrive punctually in the morning and are very keen to come to school.

Exclusions

15. There have been no exclusions during the last academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. Teaching and learning are enhanced by a very broad curriculum, with an **excellent** range of additional activities to enrich it. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English is very good. **Very good** levels of care and guidance and a **very good** partnership with parents strengthen the ethos and climate for learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are **good** overall and there is a high percentage of very good teaching. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching is good and often it is very good.
- Teachers plan collaboratively to meet the needs of the different ability groups within the class.
- Teachers give clear explanations and question pupils well.
- Relationships in the classroom are very good.
- Teaching assistants are well directed and reinforce learning very effectively.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and achieve well.
- Assessment is satisfactory but information from it is not used well enough to set individual targets for improvement.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work.

Commentary

16. Teaching is good overall and shows improvement since the last inspection in the percentage of very good lessons seen. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The full

benefits of the very good teaching have yet to fully impact on pupils' learning in some classes. To some extent, the current system of group target setting contributes to this. Several classes had a number of teacher changes in the previous year due to staff illness but additional support systems are in place to minimise the effect of this. The majority of teaching and learning seen in Year 6 was very good and the pupils also benefit from specialist teaching in several subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	20 (37%)	25 (45%)	10 (18%)	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.

17. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed and lessons are jointly prepared with other teachers in the year group. Collaborative planning gives pupils a clear sense of direction in lessons, allows staff expertise to be shared and new staff to be supported. Previous learning is built on appropriately so that pupils are given the opportunity to meet year group targets set in reading, writing and mathematics. The different stages of lessons are very well sequenced, and group work activities are very closely matched to pupils' prior attainment; this ensures that the work is within pupils' compass and all abilities achieve well. A weakness is that at the end of the lesson not all teachers help pupils to consider what they have gained by giving opportunities to summarise the main aspects of their learning. In the classes where this is done well, pupils can articulate any difficulties they found and how these were overcome. The preparation and use of resources, including interactive whiteboards, is good. Support staff are used very well in all parts of the lesson. Teachers make notes on their plans to alert the support staff to the needs of the individuals or the group they are helping in that particular lesson. As a result, staff are very clear about the approach needed and the focus for assessment. There is very good communication between all the support staff and the class teachers in all year groups.

18. In the good and very good lessons, pupils are very well managed, so that a successful atmosphere for learning develops. Many teachers have a good voice quality and present pupils with a very good model of speech. They give instructions clearly and their explanations include the careful introduction of key words and ideas which are important to pupils' learning. Very good questioning of pupils results in discussion in which pupils feel confident to ask questions and make effective contributions that are valued. This acts as good preparation for the practical activities in lessons and enables pupils to move on quickly. Teachers also set clear and high expectations of their pupils. Many teachers effectively give time limits for group or individual activities which enables pupils to work productively and learn well. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and consistently teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. Furthermore, teachers' very good relationships result in good motivation of pupils, which stimulates learning. As a result of the variety of opportunities provided, all pupils work very well, both collaboratively and independently, in lessons.

19. Although the satisfactory lessons are well planned, they are not delivered with sufficient pace. The whole-class introduction is often too long. Teachers do not sufficiently adjust their teaching methods to the subject or the learning style of their own class. Most of the satisfactory lessons were seen in Year 4 where classes were larger and there was a very wide spread of ability. Throughout the school, homework is used well to reinforce and extend classwork in all classes and is completed by most pupils.

20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. A secure learning environment is achieved and good relationships are established which enable pupils to become confident and want to improve. Class teachers and teaching assistants are well aware of individual needs and pupils who require additional support are identified early. Teaching assistants are meaningfully deployed and have a considerable influence in guiding the learning of pupils with special educational needs. For these pupils, assessment is good. Individual education programmes have clear targets which are reviewed regularly and pupils have a good understanding of improvements in their work and the next steps in their learning.
21. Teachers ensure that pupils with English as an additional language are fully included in all class activities. Good attention is given to ensuring that tasks match the needs of the pupils concerned. Class teachers work closely with the specialist teacher and teaching assistant specifically deployed to help these pupils. Together, they run a skilful and suitably flexible programme that ensures support is built in at the right times to accelerate progress as and when extra boosting of pupils' confidence or comprehension is required. Assessment is good, both by the specialist staff and class teachers, who closely monitor progress to identify areas of the curriculum where extra support is needed. Clear targets are set for these pupils and they understand what they need to do to improve.
22. Assessment is satisfactory overall and is used well to group pupils and track their achievement in English, mathematics and science. The new systems that are in place for other subjects are sufficient to indicate what pupils have achieved and are used when planning for different ability groups within the class. There are no systems to track progress in religious education. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils, identify underachievement and provide additional support or challenge where it is needed. Target setting is at a year group level for the majority of pupils. Analysis of end of year tests is used by co-ordinators to set general targets in reading, writing and mathematics for the following year. Progress towards achieving these targets is monitored by the class teacher but practices are not consistent across the school. In some classes, pupils are not clear about their targets, nor are parents.
23. Marking is regular and good in English and mathematics and shows the benefits of recent staff training. In other subjects, it varies in quality and often does not help pupils to recognise improvements in their work. In a minority of classes, pupils are effectively involved in assessing their own work and commenting on their own learning. In design and technology and physical education lessons, pupils are skilled at evaluating their work and that of others. However, most pupils do not have an understanding of the level they are working at in the core subjects, in comparison to national standards.
24. Overall, assessment is not used well enough by all staff to focus sharply on how well all pupils are doing and to set challenging targets for individuals to raise achievement. The school has set up an electronic system which tracks pupils' progress and provides information about trends and the performance of groups of pupils within the school. Data analysis is used to plan for school improvement in areas such as writing. Due to recent staff changes, the school is not making best use of this system for analysis, to identify variations in attainment and weaknesses within year groups when the pupils join the school. As a result, staff are not fully aware of issues and not able to take prompt action to rectify weaknesses.

25. Since the last inspection, the leadership of the school has worked successfully to raise the quality of teaching and learning through monitoring and training. Some of this expertise has been lost as senior staff have moved on. Several of the staff who joined the school this year are newly qualified and some are new to teaching in this country. Through monitoring and sharing best classroom practice, the improvement in teaching quality is being maintained.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good** and **excellent** opportunities are provided for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very broad and rich curriculum.
- Pupils have the chance to take part in an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- There is very good access and opportunity for all pupils to the very wide range of learning experiences offered.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
- Curriculum development and innovation are very good.
- Very good accommodation and resources impact positively on pupils' learning and specialist rooms are used to good effect.
- In some classes, topics in religious education are not studied in sufficient depth.

Commentary

26. The school has a very broad curriculum and allocates appropriate amounts of time to each subject, including French. Although the school has placed suitable emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, it is fully committed to providing a wide range of experiences and promoting life-long learning skills. Cross-curricular links are well developed. Pupils learn basic computer skills in the well-equipped computer suite and teachers work hard to ensure that pupils get the chance to use ICT in a broad range of subjects. In addition to meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, the curriculum is dynamic and innovative, actively promoting the development of pupils' thinking skills. For example, the school organises termly philosophy sessions for its most able pupils to work with groups from other local schools known as 'Plato's People'. The new syllabus for religious education is not covered in sufficient depth in some classes. Citizenship is very effectively promoted, partly as a result of the school's extensive international links through its involvement in the European Union's 'Comenius Project'. A large number of pupils and parents took part in an international evening during the inspection. Provision for the teaching of personal, social and health education is very good and shows improvement since the last inspection. For example, all pupils in Year 5 follow a First Aid course and most gain a Young Lifesavers Award. The school nurse is involved in developing the sex, drugs and relationship programme. The school has worked hard to achieve the status of a 'Health Promoting School'. Pupils develop considerable self-confidence and maturity through the opportunities they are given within lessons and other activities. The school has recently been awarded the 'Charter Mark Award' for the quality of its customer service.
27. The school provides very good equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum for all its pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, as are those learning English. Teaching assistants provide extra help for both high and low-

attaining pupils. Teachers take into account the needs of gifted and talented pupils when planning their lessons. In addition, pupils have the chance to learn several other languages, develop their thinking skills through the philosophy club and to develop their talents through an extensive range of arts and sporting activities.

28. The school provides excellent opportunities for enrichment, both in and out of school hours. The atmosphere is 'buzzing'. The staff and members of the local community generously give their time and talents to develop pupils' interests and hobbies. There is an extensive range of very well attended clubs, which cater for the interests of most pupils. Links with a Japanese school in London have given all the pupils the opportunity to learn Origami and Japanese arts. Sports offered include carpet bowls, fencing, basketball, cricket, table tennis, netball and football. Musical activities include the steel band, choir (who recently performed in the Royal Albert Hall), maypole and line dancing. Pupils can learn to speak French, Italian, Russian and Spanish. Visits to museums, galleries and places of historic interest, to take part in historical enactment, regularly feature on the school calendar. In addition, pupils benefit from a broad range of visitors, including the police, health services, clergy and the local Member of Parliament. Pupils' social development benefits from the many opportunities to mix with pupils from other age groups and other schools through the additional activities on offer. Year 6 pupils have the chance to take part in a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. In addition, the school runs a number of 'focus events' and 'themed weeks' during the year, which allow pupils to focus on areas such as 'creative arts' in greater depth.
29. Pupils benefit from very good accommodation, which is spacious and very well maintained. Considerable improvements have been made to the building since the last inspection. Displays are used very well to create a stimulating learning environment. There is an ICT suite, a library and two halls which are used well to enrich learning. The outside environment is attractive and pupils have lots of space to play. A fitness trail has been created for use during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils benefit from well qualified teachers and very well qualified teaching assistants. Resources are very good and have improved considerably since the last inspection, especially in ICT. Resources are used well to stimulate interest and motivate pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils receive **very good** advice and guidance based on monitoring. Pupils have **excellent** opportunities to make a strong voice in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' health and safety at school is assured through very good procedures.
- The school is a safe environment where pupils are happy and very well cared for.
- Excellent relationships effectively support pupils' individual academic and personal needs.
- Pupils' personal achievements are very well monitored by staff who know them very well.
- The school involves pupils exceptionally well in shaping the school environment.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and are very well integrated.

Commentary

30. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to maintain a high level of care and support for all pupils. Parents speak highly of the level of pastoral care their children receive at school. Those parents whose children have special educational needs and English as an additional language are full of praise for the support and care provided by staff which enables the pupils to make the best possible progress. The good provision of a counsellor contributes well to additional support for some vulnerable pupils. The staff and governors follow very good procedures to monitor all aspects of health and safety, and the school is committed to ensuring that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. Child protection procedures are very good and all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. The school makes very good provision to support pupils' individual needs and this makes a strong contribution to their progress and achievements.
31. The monitoring of pupils' personal achievements is closely linked to the school's very positive ethos and the excellent relationships. Pupils are very trusting of the staff and they have confidence in their relationships and the help and advice they receive. During lessons, teaching assistants provide very good support for individual pupils and groups to ensure that all are included in the full range of activities. Induction arrangements are good and the school works closely with parents to ensure that pupils settle quickly into Year 3 and their designated house. Pupils joining the school at different times are warmly welcomed and receive a high level of care and support.
32. The school makes excellent arrangements to involve pupils in the sharing of ideas and decision-making for improving the school environment. Pupils have a strong influence on the school development through the school council, whose members have alerted staff to a number of minor safety issues which have since been dealt with. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to take on special responsibilities such as play leaders, librarians and first-aiders. Pupils are proud that they have a voice in the school and that their ideas and suggestions for improvements are valued and often acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and other schools are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very welcoming to parents and is committed to working closely with them.
- Parents' views are sought and valued in the development of the school's work.
- Regular communication keeps parents well informed about events and other aspects of school life.
- Reports do not provide enough clear information about progress and the level of achievement.
- The very strong links with the community and other schools enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

33. The school's links with parents are a strength and parents appreciate the accessibility of the school. The majority of parents are very supportive and most are very satisfied with the quality of education provided. They value the fact that their views are regularly sought and acted upon and that staff are always available to them to answer questions or discuss concerns. A group of parents help regularly in school and with

extra-curricular activities. Regular fund-raising events organised by the Friends of Moulsham Junior School (FOMS) are very well attended and provide the school with a range of additional resources to support teaching and learning.

34. Parents are very satisfied with the regular newsletters, curriculum information and guidelines to support their child's learning at home. The regular consultation evenings are well attended, and the school effectively encourages parents to take part in curriculum evenings and information events. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about individual education plans, assessments and target setting. The prospectus is good and contains a good amount of helpful information about the curriculum and parents' partnership with the school. The quality of information provided in the annual reports is inconsistent between classes. Overall information provided about progress and some targets is not clear enough and specifically subject focused to help raise standards. Some parents would like more information about the grades achieved and their child's progress in relation to the national standards.
35. The school's links with the community are excellent and this helps to enrich the curriculum and to foster pupils' personal development and experience. Pupils benefit from taking part in a wide range of activities such as the Chelmsford Arts Festival and the Chelmsford Cathedral Festival Fringe. Some pupils had the opportunity to sing in the Royal Albert Hall, and Year 5 pupils have been part of the 'Adopt a Musician' programme when they performed at Chelmsford Civic Theatre. Regular visitors from the community enhance the curriculum and work with pupils on special topics such as the World War II week. The thriving Past Pupils Association issues its own newsletter within the community and provides a range of additional support for the school.
36. There are excellent links with other schools and this makes a very strong contribution to the quality of education provided. The school works closely in partnership with other local primary schools and the high school with regular staff meetings and sharing of information. Plato's People workshops are well organised by the school and this enables higher achieving pupils from different schools to work together for joint philosophy sessions. The international co-ordinator has successfully raised the profile of the school's international links with schools in Italy, France and Ghana, and this is providing pupils with a wealth of experience of different cultures and lifestyles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led and management is **good**. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership for the work of the school. He is supported by a very hardworking governing body, which ensures that governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides dynamic leadership for the school.
- The governing body makes a major contribution to the leadership of the school and its successes.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to fully including all pupils in the life of the school and helping them to do their best.
- The leadership of the other key staff is good.
- All staff work well together as a team, respecting each other and sharing their expertise.

- Management is good but currently data analysis is not being used effectively to raise achievement.
- The good leadership training given prepares staff to take over key roles when vacancies arise.
- Monitoring of pupils' work is not thorough enough to identify weaknesses and address inconsistencies when they occur.

Commentary

37. The headteacher has been in post since the last inspection and continues to demonstrate his enthusiasm and ambition for high achievement in all areas of the school's work. He is widely respected by all members of the school community and colleagues in the area. Even though the school is large, he knows and values each pupil and they enjoy his lively lessons and assemblies. Under his innovative and charismatic leadership, the school has gained a deservedly high reputation in the area, not only for achieving a number of prestigious awards but for the all-round education it provides and the strong inclusive ethos that has been established. Evidence that the school truly recognises the value and contribution of all its staff was the receipt of the Investor in People Award in 2003. A real sense of pride and team spirit is evident within the school community and is working towards awards in several areas, including the provision for gifted and talented pupils. The headteacher has created strong management teams and confidently devolves to them responsibilities for key developments in the life and work of the school, but at the same time ensuring a measured and clear overview of its direction. In this way, leadership development is supported and encouraged. Staff are prepared for leadership by 'shadowing' the co-ordinators in key areas and take over when vacancies arise. House staff provide very good leadership and management for pupils' personal and social development and contribute significantly to the very good levels of individual care and support provided by the school.
38. Currently, leadership and management by other staff with responsibilities is good overall. The acting deputy headteacher is covering maternity leave and has been in post since September. He has quickly established himself as a leader and knows the school community and pupils well. He provides very good support for the headteacher and staff, especially those who are new to the school. Owing to high staff turnover recently, there is some variation in the quality of leadership within the school. There have been three changes to the senior management team and several subject co-ordinators have only recently taken on their responsibilities, including English and mathematics. The assessment leader is also new to post and is also supervising the computer assessment tracking system. These new post holders are working hard to establish their roles by continuing and developing the work of their predecessors. All are enthusiastic and have a clear view about what needs to be done but, as yet, do not have all the information at their fingertips. They are managing their subjects and budgets well but it is too soon to judge their influence on their areas of responsibility. Established co-ordinators for special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and those learning English as an additional language give very good leadership and management, which enables provision in these areas to be very good. The subject leaders for ICT and music also show very good leadership and prepare lesson plans for all year groups. These resources have contributed to the improved standards of teaching and learning in these areas. Some co-ordinators lead staff training and share their expertise by exchanging classes. Those new to post have the capacity to have a significant influence on their subject across the school. Much progress has been made

by the co-ordinators since the last inspection, for example, by setting up schemes of work, long-term planning and assessment systems in their subjects.

39. The governing body provides a high level of support for the school, with specific skills used very well in such areas as the curriculum, health and safety, inclusion, managing finances and school publications. Governors work and communicate well as a team, fulfil their statutory duties and are very involved in development planning. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the challenges it faces regarding staff turnover, changes in the catchment area and the increasing numbers of pupils with particular needs who join the school in Year 3. Governors are involved in monitoring through regular visits with a specific focus. On these occasions, they talk to subject leaders, visit classes and talk to pupils, which helps them to see how well the school is working. Reports are given to other governors to give them clear information and to help with school planning. Many are well trained and experienced and are able to act as a critical friend to the school.
40. The headteacher and deputy observe lessons on a regular basis. Through their monitoring, they are able to identify areas for professional development and deploy staff effectively according to their specialist knowledge and talents when vacancies arise. Good practice is shared and modelled within the school. The monitoring, training and support of staff has helped to improve standards of teaching through a time of considerable staff turnover. Subject leaders gather information by monitoring planning, teaching and interviewing pupils. This information informs their action plans. In the core subjects, tests are analysed on an annual basis to look for areas to improve. A weakness in monitoring is that workbooks are not sampled on a regular basis to highlight inconsistencies in marking, presentation and the depth of coverage in some subjects. There is not a clear enough view of attainment in relation to national levels to set individual targets for all pupils and raise standards in a structured way. Staff performance is managed well and staff have good training opportunities both within the school and outside. The systems in place have brought about improvement in a number of areas, including science, ICT and music. Teaching assistants are very well trained and qualified and are included in the staff performance programme.
41. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and it makes effective use of the opinions of local authority staff, other schools, parents and pupils to make judgements. However, the analysis of data is not thorough enough to provide a clear picture of standards at the start of Year 3. The challenges presented by particular year groups and classes are not identified soon enough so that prompt action can be taken. Assessment information is not used well enough to set individual targets for all pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,194,569
Total expenditure	1,206,060
Expenditure per pupil	2,306

Balances (£)	
Budget adjustment from previous year	64,110
Balance carried forward to the next year	52,619

42. Financial planning is very good. It is based on a good understanding of the school's priorities, with budgetary decisions made consistently on the basis of 'how this will improve provision'. The school receives good advice and support from the Consortium Finance Manager. Currently, it is finding it difficult to fund the requirements to give teachers regular management time. Office staff provide effective administrative support for the school. They are welcoming and helpful to visitors, parents, pupils and

staff, and make a significant contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Overall, considering the costs and the pupils' achievement, the school provides good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching overall across the school, and very good teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- Lessons are well planned with clear aims that are shared with the pupils.
- The use of assessment to set targets and move pupils on to the next level of attainment is ineffective.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Marking is thorough, constructive and provides good pointers for improvement.

Commentary

43. The 2004 test results show that at the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment was in line with the national average. When compared to similar schools, attainment was below average in Year 6. Indications are that, although standards will be maintained at average in 2005, they are markedly rising because of the overall very good quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds and who are learning English as an additional language, achieve well.
44. High standards of speaking and listening have been maintained since the last inspection because teachers question pupils well and value their opinions. Pupils of all abilities are orally confident. Standards in reading are above average overall when pupils join the school. Most pupils enjoy reading and develop their skills well as a result of good teaching and parental support. Books are well promoted and pupils enjoy using the library. Standards in writing vary throughout the school. For example, the standards are higher in Year 5 than in Year 6. Pupils in all year groups learn how to structure their stories and poems and are given the opportunity to write for a variety of audiences. They develop good strategies for spelling complex words and make good use of dictionaries. The key issue from the last inspection to improve handwriting has been successfully addressed in Years 5 and 6, but handwriting remains unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. In Year 5 and Year 6, most pupils produce well presented work with carefully drawn diagrams and handwriting that is fluent and well oriented. Marking of the pupils' work has a sharper focus and gives a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. The scrutiny of pupils' work highlights that the standard of presentation is weak in some of the younger classes. Pupils are not consistently learning to take more care with the appearance of their work, for example, being satisfied with messy crossings out and underlining without a ruler to guide them. The school has worked hard to raise the boys' self-esteem and achievement through introducing, for example, more visual aids and specific speaking and listening activities.

45. The good quality teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Overall, the teaching and learning is good with a high proportion of very good teaching in Year 6 and Year 5. The overall good teaching has a positive impact on the pupils' learning and how well they achieve. In Year 6, very good questioning skills probe the pupils' understanding of the features of a character. This enables the pupils to build on their perception of empathy as the author evokes a response from them. Resources are thoughtfully prepared that stimulate the pupils' interest and keep them focused on the task they have been given.
46. Lessons are very well planned and take very good account of the needs of all the pupils: good interaction with pupils by all adults and the clear instructions given mean that they know what is expected of them and they respond very positively to these. Teachers use time effectively and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to promoting the pupils' learning. In all the very good lessons observed, the teachers challenged all abilities well and the teaching assistants provided very good reinforcement to pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.
47. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The current subject leader has only very recently taken over the post, so it is too soon to judge her impact on the subject. There are appropriate monitoring procedures in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Assessment procedures are in place, but the individual reading and writing targets are currently unmanageable. They do not help the pupils to clearly understand what they need to do in order to improve and move to the next level of attainment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Language and literacy are appropriately developing across the curriculum. The scrutiny of the pupils' past work on display and in books shows that useful opportunities are provided in ICT, science, design and technology, history and art and design. For example, pupils interpret through painting, '*The witches' spell*' from *Macbeth*, they record facts and experiments and use word processing and research skills. In history, the pupils read the diary of Anne Frank and others write letters from Roman soldiers; they add to a basic recipe to improve a plain biscuit in design and technology and make use of storyboards to work out their monster models, using pneumatics.

French

49. Work in French was sampled because it is now being taught throughout the school. During the inspection, three lessons were observed. From these lessons, teachers' planning, pupils' bookwork and displays, it is clear that pupils are being very effectively introduced to the language. Several staff have expertise in French, which is beneficially shared through exchanging classes. Sessions that are largely oral are developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of everyday vocabulary such as numbers, dates, parts of the body and food and drink. Pupils are encouraged to respond in sentences to their teacher's questions using recall of previous vocabulary. Pupils can do this with confidence copying the good models of accent and intonation provided by staff. Teachers conduct the majority of the lessons in French, including the giving of instructions. Work is carefully planned and homework is given on a weekly basis. Pupils learn a repertoire of songs that fit in with the themes of their lessons and reinforce vocabulary and enjoy role-play activities. Displays and work in books illustrate how older pupils are being taught the correct spelling of common

words and how to build phrases and sentences by combining these. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons, which provide good preparation for the next stage of their education. Older pupils have the opportunity to visit France. Many pupils join Spanish, Italian and Russian clubs, which are held regularly and run by staff with linguistic talents. Pupils are encouraged to develop their linguistic skills through contact with pupils in other countries.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics as they move through the school and they have a very good attitude to the subject.
- Teaching and learning in mathematics are good overall and often very good.
- Teachers plan lessons well together in year groups and the National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded in the school's practice.
- The recently appointed subject manager is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and provides good leadership and management.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge in problem-solving activities.
- The use of mathematical skills across the curriculum is good and pupils use their mathematical skills well in subjects such as science and ICT.
- Assessment data is not used effectively and consistently to set individual and group targets to raise standards in a structured way.

Commentary

50. Year 6 pupils achieve standards that are broadly average, which is not as good as last year. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 showed standards to be above average and average compared to similar schools. There were an above average number of pupils attaining the higher level. However, in the current Year 6, there are a high number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and several who have joined the school other than at the normal time of entry in Year 3. Some pupils had several changes of teacher during Year 5. Most pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs who have a numeracy target, achieve well as they move through the school. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported so that they develop a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary and they achieve well. Standards in Years 3 and 5 were found to be above average for age. Throughout the school, pupils achieve equally well in all the different elements of mathematics, including numeracy, shape, measures and problem-solving. Standards of mental calculation are above average overall because there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills and mental agility.
51. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons, and from looking at pupils' work, is good overall, with very good teaching observed in a third of lessons. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks shows that pupils receive a good range of activities linked well to problem-solving activities. Teachers plan well together in year groups to ensure that pupils receive similar experiences, although there are occasional inconsistencies in approach. The National Numeracy Strategy is well embedded in the school's practice

and curriculum coverage is wide. Most teachers show at least good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with a range of activities to meet the needs of different ability groups. Lessons start promptly with teachers clearly explaining learning intentions so that pupils are fully aware of what they will be learning and doing. Lesson introductions are used well to encourage pupils to use mental skills in solving problems. However, teachers often only take answers from those pupils who raise their hands and there are few follow-up questions to challenge and engage others. Most teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well, showing very good concentration and application to tasks. Relationships are very good and this aids pupils' attainment and progress. However, final sessions are not always as long or as effective as they could be because teachers often tell pupils what they have been doing rather than letting them explain and evaluate their learning. The good range of quality resources is used effectively to support pupils in their learning. In classes where interactive whiteboards have been installed, teachers use these well in their teaching. Most teachers' marking provides good support and often indicates areas for improvement.

52. Throughout the school, teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics to solve real life problems. Teaching assistants are used very well to support groups of pupils during the main part of the lesson but are not always used as effectively during the beginning and end of sessions to monitor and support pupils. Homework provision is good and extends pupils' learning very well, giving parents effective opportunities to be involved in their child's learning.
53. Assessment and its use is satisfactory overall. Regular assessment is used to monitor pupils' progress and identify weaknesses and adapt planning. However, this information needs to be used more effectively to set individual and group targets for pupils to raise standards even further and is an area for development already identified by the school. Detailed monitoring and tracking procedures have recently been introduced but the information is not yet used sufficiently well to set realistic targets. Although results from annual assessments are used to set year group targets, data is not used to set individual targets which ensures pupils' learning moves forward step by step to the next level.
54. The very good attitudes observed at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils settle quickly to tasks and work hard independently or with partners and behaviour is very good. They show very good respect for what others do and say. Discussions with pupils across the school indicate that most pupils enjoy mathematics lessons.
55. The recently appointed subject manager is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and provides good leadership and management and a very good role model. She is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and offers effective support to colleagues and parents. She undertakes monitoring of planning, has undertaken lesson observations and sampled pupils' workbooks, although this needs to take place more frequently to ensure consistency of approach across year groups. She is effectively supported by co-ordinators in each year group. Useful parent booklets have been produced for each year group outlining expectations and helpful guidance so that parents can give support at home and improve parental knowledge and understanding. There are very good relationships with the adjacent high school which provides support and expertise for higher-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6.
56. Improvement since the last inspection six years ago has been good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is very well established in the school's practice. The school has become involved in the accelerated learning

project, provided support for parents and developed strong links with the local high school. Resources have been updated and improved and the role of the subject leader has developed to include monitoring of planning, teaching and learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Good use is made of mathematical skills across other subjects, especially in science, ICT, design and technology, and physical education, where they measure, draw charts and interpret data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' attainment in national tests is generally above average.
- Teaching is good overall and ensures pupils enjoy their learning.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve.

Commentary

58. In last year's national tests, pupils achieved standards which were well above the national average. Standards in the current Year 6 are average and they are progressing well in relation to their attainment on entry, which was below average. There are significantly more pupils with special needs in Year 6 than in previous years and a high level of mobility. A number of pupils have joined the year group from overseas and have limited background subject knowledge and vocabulary. Pupils' work samples show that pupils do a lot of work in the time available and they display a good depth of knowledge across all aspects of the subject. Pupils of all capabilities achieve well. Standards of attainment vary across the school. Standards in the current Year 5 and Year 3 are above average overall for age. In Year 4, standards are below average in some classes because of the high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties.
59. Work in science makes a positive contribution to the development of literacy and technical vocabulary is developed and used in all lessons. In some lessons, pupils apply their skills of accurate measurement and also draw graphs to display the results of experiments. They observe carefully and have a good understanding of how to set up a fair test. They also understand the importance of repeating experiments before conclusions can be drawn. Frequent opportunities to experiment enables pupils' investigative skills and interest to develop well. However, there are variations in the quality of work produced between classes in the same year group and from one year group to another.
60. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject. They find the work interesting and enjoy their learning. As a result, they generally behave very well, listen carefully to teachers and each other, and are keen to ask and answer questions. They show good levels of responsibility and work co-operatively in pairs and small groups. Pupils of all ages take care to present their work neatly and attractively.

61. Overall, teaching and learning are good. A significant amount of very good teaching was observed during the inspection. However, an examination of pupils' work indicates that there are some inconsistencies between the quality of teaching in different classes. Teaching seen in Year 4 was satisfactory because the structure of the lessons was not so well adapted to the concentration span of the pupils. In Year 3, teaching was very good because the lesson was broken up into a number of short activities which built on each other, developed knowledge and maintained pupils' interest. Teachers generally demonstrate very good subject knowledge and plan interesting activities that the pupils enjoy. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the quality and quantity of work done by the pupils. They use questioning effectively to find out what pupils already know and to get them to apply their knowledge in new situations. ICT is used to support learning and whenever possible, work is linked to ongoing work in other subjects. Teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
62. In most lessons, assessment is used to provide a range of activities to match pupils' needs. Marking of pupils' work varies in its frequency and does not always tell pupils what they have done well or how to improve. Tests are often used at the end of units of work and at the end of the year. Teachers accurately assess the levels pupils are working at, but the information is not shared with the pupils nor used to set targets. As a result, pupils do not know what is needed to reach the next level.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are good, even though the co-ordinator works in the school for only two days each week. She has been in post for almost two years and has had a strong influence on the development of the subject and is always looking for ways to improve. The co-ordinator has high aspirations and a very good knowledge of the subject. She has developed very good links with local secondary schools which have been of considerable benefit to pupils' learning. She has organised relevant training for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge of the subject, for example, a secondary school is training them in the use of data logging equipment. A good example of this is the chance for gifted and talented pupils to study forensic science at a local secondary school. The co-ordinator monitors teaching, teachers' planning and pupils' work and provides useful feedback. This has led to improvements in practice. However, it has yet to ensure consistency of experience for pupils in parallel classes and across the year groups. The co-ordinator has carefully analysed pupils' answers in previous SATs papers. This has enabled teachers to concentrate on relatively weak areas and thereby raise standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good** and has improved very significantly since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved since the last inspection, especially in developing specific ICT skills.
- The curriculum is very well planned and delivered based on national guidance to ensure progression of skills and knowledge.
- The recently appointed subject leader is enthusiastic, leads by example and has a clear vision for the future.
- Previous subject leaders have worked hard to address the issues raised at the time of the last inspection by providing very good lesson plans to support teachers.

- Skilled support staff are used very well to enhance pupils' learning.
- The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is good and progressing well.
- There are good whole-school assessment procedures in place to monitor pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The use of resources is not monitored regularly to ensure all are being used effectively to raise standards further.

Commentary

64. From lesson observations, looking at planning and discussions with pupils, standards by the age of 11 are broadly similar to that expected nationally, although pupils' understanding of the benefits of using ICT over other methods and use outside school needs further development. All pupils, including those identified as having special needs or English as an additional language, are achieving well. This is because pupils have individual access in the very well equipped computer room and lessons are very well planned. The current facilities have only been fully operational for just over a year and the older pupils have not had the full benefit. However, pupils lower down the school are making good progress in their acquisition of skills and knowledge.
65. Improvement since the last inspection, when ICT was identified as a major area for development, has been very good, especially considering the increased curriculum requirements since 2000. Government funding has been used efficiently to establish a very well equipped computer room with 30 workstations so that pupils can work individually. Eleven classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and plans are well advanced for all rooms to be equipped by the end of this July. There are also two mobile laptop trolleys containing 18 units for use in classrooms, although their use needs to be monitored more closely. Regular staff training has raised teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding. This has meant that they are more confident and knowledgeable and, along with very good quality lesson plans, has significantly raised the quality of teaching.
66. In lessons seen, and from looking at samples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers use the very good lessons plans effectively to ensure ICT skills and knowledge are well covered. Each lesson begins with a focused ten-minute individual keyboard practice session, which is rapidly improving pupils' skills as they monitor their own progress. All pupils use these word processing skills to write stories and poems in literacy lessons. They learn to use graphics to display information on posters. Pupils in Year 5 show that they can input and retrieve information from a database effectively. They draw graphs and charts to record the results of their experiments in science. Most teachers show good subject knowledge and motivate pupils well so that they have a very good attitude to learning. Time and activities are managed effectively and most pupils are keen to learn because of this. Observations and conversations with pupils show they are positive about the use of ICT, clearly enjoy their lessons and work effectively individually or in pairs on the laptops in classrooms. Many older pupils have regular access to computers at home, which they say they use for research, word processing and practising key board skills.
67. The newly appointed subject leader is enthusiastic, keen and knowledgeable but has had insufficient time in post to undertake rigorous monitoring of standards, teaching and learning. She is clearly aware of what needs to be done to raise standards further and has clear plans in place. She provides good support to colleagues and is assisted by two well-qualified part-time teaching assistants who provide very good support for teaching in the computer room. There are clear and comprehensive weekly lesson plans for each unit of work and for each

year group based on national guidance. This provides good support to teachers and ensures similar-aged pupils receive the same entitlement. Good whole-school computerised assessment procedures have recently been established to monitor and track pupils' progress. There is a very good range of other resources, including scanners, digital cameras and listening systems, but there is no effective monitoring of their use. The library has a computerised issuing and retrieval system run by pupils with bar coded books, which raises their awareness of the use of ICT in the wider world. The school is now well equipped and placed to further raise attainment and develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. The use of ICT across other curriculum subjects, such as mathematics, English, geography, history and science, is good and developing well. The school has identified this as an area for further development.

HUMANITIES

Overall, too little evidence was available to enable judgements about the quality of provision to be made for **history** and **geography**. Three history lessons were seen and no geography lessons were observed. However, the samples of work and discussions with staff and pupils give indications that pupils are likely to achieve at least average standards.

69. Pupils gain a detailed knowledge in some aspects of their **history** work. For example, good planning of work by the Year 3 teachers and good use of resources, such as aerial photographs and video clips, ensured pupils gained a good insight into the life of Roman soldiers on duty at Hadrian's Wall. Very good teaching in a Year 4 lesson also helped pupils acquire good skills with learning to research items such as the Ancient Greeks Olympic Games using the Internet. Leadership and management of this subject are effective overall. The co-ordinator has done some good work in centralising and upgrading the provision of resources and building links with local museums. She recognises rightly the need to improve the current systems for monitoring the quality of work across the school, particularly in lessons, to give greater consistency to the depth and detail in which history is taught in different classes.
70. Planning and work samples seen indicate that pupils cover an appropriate range of work and are on course to attain at least average standards in **geography** across the school. For instance, Year 6 pupils carry out detailed map work to help them compare different geographic regions. The subject is effectively led and managed. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is busily launching good new initiatives to raise the profile of the subject further and deepen links into other subjects. Interviews she has conducted with pupils confirm inspection findings that work is sometimes taught in different depth and detail in different classes, leading to inconsistencies in the depths of pupils' understanding.
71. In both history and geography, teachers carefully assess how well pupils are learning at the end of sections of work and gain a good overview, for example, of those performing at an above average or a below average level. Whilst this information is used effectively to help future planning, it is too imprecise to help teachers analyse how well pupils are progressing as they move through the school.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities in most classes for pupils to reflect on how they can deal with emotions and to discuss and appreciate the opinions and beliefs of others.
- In some classes, topics are not covered in sufficient depth.
- There is no system to measure pupils' progress over time.

Commentary

72. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection, owing to timetabling arrangements. Teaching in two of these lessons was good and it was satisfactory in the other. However, talking to a group of Year 6 pupils and looking at samples of their work showed that their knowledge and understanding of holy books, places of worship, artefacts and festivals of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam was below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in Year 6 are not as high as at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Years 3, 4 and 5, standards were found to be in line with what is expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
73. The school follows the recently revised Essex locally agreed syllabus but this is not yet fully embedded in the school's practice, especially in Year 6. Here, insufficient use is made of the good lesson planning and guidance provided and not enough thought and imagination is given to what pupils are expected to learn and do. Activities often lack challenge, especially for higher-attaining pupils. Too few opportunities are provided for using and developing literacy skills.
74. There have been several changes of subject leader in recent years, which has contributed to the lower standards found in some classes. The current co-ordinator has only been in post for two months, so that it is not possible to make a judgement on her leadership and management. She is keen to develop the subject and has not yet had time to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and standards to ensure planned activities are delivered with sufficient depth and rigour and consistency across year groups. There are currently no whole-school assessment procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress and this is an area for development. Although there are sound links with the local church, these have yet to be developed with representatives of other faiths in the community to provide pupils across the school with first hand experience. Resources are currently satisfactory to support pupils' learning and very good resources have been developed for staff to support lesson planning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

It is not possible to give judgements on provision in these subjects, or to give firm judgements on standards and the quality of teaching and learning, because only a few lessons were observed. Where possible, the pupils' work was sampled, and discussions took place with pupils and teachers.

75. Only two lessons were observed in **music**, in Year 5 and Year 6. In these, standards were above expectations for the age group and pupils made good and very good progress. Stimulating teaching ensured that pupils listened attentively, were well behaved and persevered at the tasks set. One of the noteworthy features of the very good lesson observed in music was the very good building up of the pupils' skills in reading musical notation, through the well thought out activities and the provision of well-chosen and stimulating resources. For example, pupils in Year 5 skilfully used

both tuned and untuned percussion instruments to play a waltz in three parts. A pupil set the pace and provided a steady beat on the African drum.

76. The subject is very skilfully led: the co-ordinator has written the individual lessons for all year groups, planned and produced a scheme of work and modelled lessons to help build teachers' confidence. There are very good opportunities for musical enrichment. There are many opportunities for the pupils to learn to play the piano, recorder, guitar, keyboard and woodwind instruments through effective tuition from visiting music specialists. In addition, there is a successful steel band club that takes place at lunchtime and an after-school choir club, which performs at a number of concerts and music festivals. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
77. Only two lessons of **design and technology** were observed during the inspection. Pupils clearly enjoy this subject and are encouraged to show creativity and independence. Indications are that pupils are likely to achieve at least average standards by the age of 11. However, their designing and evaluating skills are generally above average, whilst their ability to produce objects with a high quality finish is more limited. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to further develop the scheme of work to ensure that pupils' making skills are progressively developed as they move through the school. Teachers plan interesting activities, many of which link well with ongoing work in other subjects, for example, pupils in Year 3 designed, made and packaged a healthy sandwich. This linked well with their healthy eating work in science. Year 5 pupils have done a lot of investigative work into making strong structures in order to make their photograph frames successfully. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has improved the resources and the scheme of work. Assessment follows recent national guidance, but is not used to enable teachers to effectively plan lessons which build on what has gone before. In addition to their lessons in school, pupils have been challenged to design a new trolley for Tesco. They have generated some very good ideas and Tesco has rewarded them for their efforts.
78. The school clearly values **art and design** and ensures pupils spend an appropriate amount of time studying it. From the evidence gathered, indications are that pupils attain standards similar to those expected nationally for pupils of their age. Pupils say they enjoy this subject. They are happy to show their work and talk about it. There are good quality displays around the school and they contribute to the stimulating learning environment. Pupils have the chance to acquire a good range of skills. They work with lots of different media, including paints, pastels, fabrics, clay, 'modroc', paper, charcoal and natural materials. They work independently and in groups, on a large and small scale. Pupils are introduced to the work of a good range of artists, for example, Year 6 pupils were studying Picasso and producing portraits in his style during the inspection. Teachers link art to ongoing work in other subjects wherever possible. Pupils have listened to music and responded through drawings and paintings. They have worked in groups to produce paintings and collages to represent famous stories. They have found out about Greek masks and pottery, Egyptian tomb paintings and the Bayeux tapestry linked to their work in history. Teachers plan interesting opportunities to use ICT to support their work, for example, Year 4 pupils have used ICT to design and make Christmas cards. In the few lessons observed, teachers provided competent demonstrations and had prepared good quality resources, which helped pupils learn. Teaching assistants made a positive contribution, providing those who were less confident with the support they needed to achieve success. Teachers also encouraged pupils to evaluate their own and each

other's work at the end of the lesson. Pupils did this well, making relevant comments sensitively. This clearly made a positive contribution to their social development. Pupils benefited this year from an arts week. The subject has a good range of resources. It is well led and managed and is beginning to assess pupils' work using national guidance. The school is keen to gain Arts Mark status and is starting to work towards achieving it.

79. During the inspection, three full lessons and one part lesson were observed in **physical education**. In these lessons, the teachers generally showed good subject knowledge and good coaching skills, for example, ensuring pupils gained a full understanding of how to warm up properly at the start of any physical education work. Activities were geared to maximise the full involvement of all pupils and to provide them with sound games, athletic and dance skills. Teachers are good at ensuring pupils have the opportunity to evaluate the work they have done and that individuals use such evaluation to improve their work in the future.
80. The physical education programme is well organised across the school to ensure that pupils have a wide range of opportunities. The very good depth of staff expertise and enthusiasm translates into the provision of a very wide range of sports clubs and coaching available to pupils. The school is very good at identifying those with particular talents and in making sure that these individuals are given full opportunities to develop their skills by receiving high quality coaching.
81. Good initiatives, such as those to involve staff in training through the use of secondary school physical education specialists, developing strong links with outside sports clubs and agencies, and involving pupils in organisational aspects such as refereeing and managing events on sports days, show an innovative approach that provides a strong boost to pupils' learning and understanding of the wider aspects of sport.
82. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' overall understanding of healthy living in the context of sport. The establishment of the well-constructed fitness trail is a particularly good example of the way the school raises pupils' awareness in this respect, and most pupils in the school make extensive use of the trail to improve their fitness level.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

83. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is very well established and has a high profile. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about safety and how to respond in emergencies through First Aid courses in Year 5. Visitors, including the school nurse and police, contribute to the programme. Pupils benefit from discussion groups where they are invited to share their feelings and learn about each other. Through the school council, pupils have shown consideration for the needs and welfare of others within the school and wider community through supporting a number of charities. The international links that have been developed provide pupils with a good insight into issues in the wider world. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in community activities and learn how to become responsible citizens.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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