

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STANWAY FIVEWAYS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stanway, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114764

Headteacher: Mr Barry Nevin

Lead inspector: Carole Green

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 267983

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	273
School address:	Winstree Road Stanway Colchester Essex
Postcode:	CO3 0QG
Telephone number:	(01206) 574 849
Fax number:	(01206) 766 327
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Yates

Date of previous inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stanway Fiveways is a larger-than-average primary school on the outskirts of Colchester. There are 273 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from a white British background. There are a very small percentage of pupils with English as their second language but they are not at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals fluctuates, but is currently close to the national average. There are 15.8 per cent of pupils with special educational needs and this is similar to the national average. Their needs include specific learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties, and physical difficulties. The percentage of pupils holding a statement of special educational needs is slightly above the national average. The school serves the local population and pupils come from a broad range of social and economic circumstances. Children's attainment when they start school at five years old is generally average and the majority of them have attended some type of pre-school provision before they start school. School awards include Activemark, Healthy Schools, and NAACE for Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The school is currently taking part in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools.

The school was last inspected in October 2002 when, although judged to be providing an acceptable standard of education, it was found to be underachieving.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19578	Ted Worby	Lay inspector	
27447	John Sweet	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Personal, social and health education (Citizenship) Religious education
32163	Mary-Jane Edwards	Team inspector	English Geography History
32611	Ralph Cross	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Stanway Fiveways Primary is a good school.** It gives good value for money. Overall, the standards that pupils attain are above the national expectations and their achievement is good. The leadership and management of the school are good. The governors are well informed and effectively organised. The quality of teaching is good overall, although there are some inconsistencies between and within year groups. Pupils' behaviour is good and they enjoy coming to school, but in some lessons they lack enthusiasm for learning. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection and has the capacity to improve further.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- A whole-school commitment to improvement.
- Attainment of and provision for children in the Reception class are good.
- The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is often very good.
- The effective support of teaching assistants throughout the school.
- The good use of day-to-day assessment, especially in English and mathematics.
- Attendance is very good.
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Standards in science for the most able pupils are too low.
- Pupils are not always actively involved in lessons.

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection two years ago. Most importantly, staff have worked hard to successfully eliminate the significant underachievement of the more able pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6. Standards in ICT for eleven-year-olds are now above average. The standards pupils attain in science have also improved and are now average. The quality of teaching is good overall, as is the day-to-day use of assessment. Since the last inspection the school day has been lengthened and the balance of the curriculum has been reviewed, so that it is now broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Standards in English and mathematics in national tests for eleven-year-olds have often been average when compared to all schools. In 2003 they were below average when compared to similar schools. Standards in science are frequently below average when compared to all schools and in 2003 were well below average when compared to similar schools.

**Pupils are now achieving well.** The current Year 6 pupils are attaining above-average standards in reading and mathematics and average standards in writing and science.

However, more able pupils do not achieve sufficiently high standards in science. When children start school, the standards they attain are average. Children in the current Reception class achieve well, especially in mathematics. They are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year and many will exceed them. Standards in Year 2 are above average in English and mathematics and average in science, but more able pupils do not reach the standard in science of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well because of effective, focused support. Results in national tests in 2004, for Year 6 pupils, showed an improving picture, with average standards in English, mathematics and science, and with more able pupils achieving standards that are level with or close to those in similar schools. This represents good achievement for these pupils, who have now left the school, who when they were seven years old were attaining standards that were well below average.

**Pupils' personal development is good. Their social and moral development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.** Pupils are well behaved and the majority work hard. They readily undertake a range of responsibilities. Although there has been a high number of fixed-term exclusions during the last year, they all relate to one child. There are positive relationships throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good but sometimes they lack enthusiasm and teachers have to work hard to encourage them to take an active part in the lesson. Attendance is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** standard of education. The quality of teaching is **good** overall. The provision and teaching for children in the Reception class are good and at times very good. The high quality of teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6 supports their good achievement. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, especially in Years 3 and 4, where there is some good teaching, but it is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned and interesting and teaching assistants make a significant contribution across the school to helping pupils of all abilities learn well. Teachers frequently assess how well pupils are doing and use this information effectively to plan their next steps for learning. Pupils are well cared for and partnerships with parents and the community are good. There are very good arrangements for ensuring that eleven-year-olds make a smooth transfer when they leave school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and has successfully ensured that since the last inspection the school's main focus has been to eliminate pupils' underachievement. The school has responded well to support from the local education authority (LEA) and this has had a positive impact on pupils' good achievement, especially in English and mathematics. Staff are very enthusiastic and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governance of the school is good. The governing body is well organised and carries out its monitoring role very effectively. Whilst there are good relationships between staff and between staff and pupils, the school recognises the need to improve the attitudes of some pupils to learning as their lack of enthusiasm detracts from the positive ethos of the school.

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

Parents' opinions about their children's progress are positive. They say they feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have a problem and that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. However, they find the grading systems on pupils' reports confusing. Inspectors agree and the school is aware of the need to do more to overcome this confusion. A significant minority of parents have concerns about arrangements for homework. Inspectors have scrutinised pupils' homework diaries for this term and find that arrangements are satisfactory. Pupils' views of the school are positive. They feel safe and secure.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:**

- Improve the inconsistencies in teaching.
- Raise standards in science, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

Overall standards are above the national expectations and achievement is good. Children in the Reception class achieve well. The majority are likely to reach the expected goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year, and many will exceed them. By the time they are seven, pupils reach above-average standards in English and in mathematics. When they are eleven years old, pupils attain above-average standards in reading, mathematics and ICT. Year 5 pupils are attaining standards that are above the national expectations in English, mathematics and ICT. Pupils' attainment in science is average overall, but higher-attaining pupils do not achieve well enough. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in the standards pupils attain and in their achievement, especially in the case of higher-attaining pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in English and mathematics in Year 2 are above average.
- Standards in reading, mathematics and ICT are above average in Year 6.
- Year 5 pupils are attaining standards which are above national expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Children in the Reception class achieve well.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- The standards in science of more able pupils are not high enough.

### **Commentary**

1. Children's attainment when they start school is generally average. Assessment data shows that the majority reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Children currently in the Reception class are attaining above-average standards and, as a result of good teaching, are achieving well in all areas of learning. Many are likely to exceed the expected goals by the end of the year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.3 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.0 (16.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Pupils in the present Year 2 attain standards above national expectations in English and mathematics and are achieving well. This shows good improvement over the results of national tests in 2003 and builds on improvements in the 2004 tests. The school is now in a much better position than during the period 2000 to 2003, when its results, compared to those in similar schools, were below or well below average.
3. By Year 2, the standards pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics are above national expectations. In reading, carefully planned guided reading sessions at the beginning of each day are supporting their good achievement. In writing, teachers regularly model the writing process and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and helps them to achieve well. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations and the school is aware of the need to improve these standards to bring them in line with the standards attained in reading and writing. In mathematics, teachers plan lessons well, give clear explanations and use good strategies to engage pupils' attention. This supports the pupils' good achievement. In science, standards are in line with national expectations. Although teachers ensure that a good proportion of pupils achieve the average Level 2, there is insufficient challenge for the higher-attaining pupils, who subsequently underachieve. In ICT, standards for the present Year 2 are in line with national expectations, but the more able pupils are underachieving.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (26.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.1 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (28.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining standards that are above national expectations in reading, mathematics and ICT. This shows good improvement since the 2003 national tests. Early data for the 2004 tests for eleven-year-olds suggests that the standards of this group of pupils are average in English, mathematics and science, and close to average for higher-attaining pupils. This represents good achievement for this cohort of pupils, who were attaining standards that were well below average at the end of Year 2.
5. By Year 6, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations in writing, speaking and listening and science, and above national expectations in reading, mathematics and ICT. Pupils achieve well in reading. They read confidently and with enthusiasm from a wide range of texts. In writing and speaking and listening, their achievement is satisfactory. Teachers' marking is very effective; it recognises pupils' achievements but also shows them what they need to do to further improve. This is

having a positive impact on standards in writing, especially for Year 5 pupils, whose standards are above national expectations. Teachers recognise the need for improvement in speaking and listening skills and are beginning to use good strategies to encourage pupils to articulate their ideas and to listen to each other. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well in mathematics because of the rigorous pace of learning and teachers' high expectations. In science, the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory but higher-attaining pupils do not achieve well. This is because teachers do not plan work for this group of pupils that is sufficiently challenging. Pupils achieve well in ICT because teachers offer a wide range of experiences and ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. Standards in history are above national expectations for Year 6 pupils. Teachers' use of good strategies to engage pupils' interest and their high expectations ensure that pupils achieve well.

6. In Years 3 and 4, achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science. Occasionally, in mathematics, teachers do not explain tasks clearly and the pace of the lesson is too slow. This leads to unsatisfactory progress. In science, although pupils are encouraged to present their findings in a variety of ways, the quality of presentation of their work does not always reflect their ability, especially for the more able pupils.

#### *Whole school matters*

7. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well across other curriculum areas. Many teachers encourage pupils to talk in pairs to clarify their thinking and improve their speaking and listening skills in other subjects such as music and physical education. Older pupils apply reading and writing skills effectively. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills across the curriculum are less well developed. The recently acquired ICT suite provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, but there was only limited evidence of pupils using these skills in other subjects during the inspection.
8. The school carefully analyses the progress made by pupils with special educational needs against the progress made by all pupils and against targets set for them in their individual education plans. The analysis shows that between 1999 and 2003, the majority of pupils with special educational needs made good progress between the ages of seven and eleven. A strength is the progress that pupils make in mathematics and literacy in both key stages. Many pupils identified as having special educational needs attained the national average by the time they left the school in 2004 in at least one core subject. This shows good achievement. Other pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, make good progress in relation to their capability and achieve well because of the good support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants in lessons and through effective additional provision.

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

Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to school are good, but some pupils are not always fully involved in activities. Their social and moral development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance is higher than the national average and the majority of pupils arrive punctually for lessons.

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

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, concentrate well and work hard.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Pupils have good relationships with the staff and each other.
- Pupils collaborate well when working in small groups.
- There are good opportunities for developing pupils' self-esteem and personal development.
- Pupils' social and moral development is good, but their spiritual and cultural development is less strong.
- In some lessons, pupils lack enthusiasm for learning.

## Commentary

### *Attitudes and behaviour*

9. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to school and enjoy the wide range of opportunities that is provided for them. In class, they usually work hard and concentrate well. Where teaching is lively and engaging, pupils are developing very positive attitudes to learning. They are willing to reflect on what they have learned and are sufficiently confident to pose their own questions. In a Year 5/6 lesson, for example, the teacher encouraged the pupils to 'argue' with him in order to challenge pupils to think and to become more involved in their work. Many pupils think that their teachers make learning fun. Good use of resources such as mathematics games is made to reinforce learning and hold the pupils' attention. The new Smartboards are used well as a stimulating visual aid and this also makes learning more exciting. In other lessons, pupils are more subdued and show less enthusiasm for the tasks set for them. In these lessons, teachers have to work very hard to encourage pupils to respond to questions and to become fully engaged in their learning. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have good attitudes to school and are well supported by their peers, support staff and their teachers. In lessons, they are fully included and consequently develop good self-esteem.
10. Pupils collaborate well in lessons because there is a well-established ethos for co-operation. This is most evident when they are asked to work in pairs to discuss questions and challenges posed for them. Pupils have good relationships with each other and their teachers. Teachers and other adults working in the school provide very good role models of caring and fair-minded behaviour. During the inspection, no instances of disrespectful or abrasive relationships were seen, neither were any instances of bullying witnessed. Pupils spoke of feeling safe at school and of knowing who to turn to if there was a problem. They said that any problems that they had become aware of had been resolved quickly. The 'Fiveways Friends' system in the playground plays an important role in ensuring that pupils feel safe at playtimes and lunchtimes and in resolving relationship difficulties.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Number of pupils on roll
264

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
12	1

White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0

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

11. Although there has been a high number of fixed-term exclusions during the last year, they all relate to one child.
12. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good because teachers and support staff manage behaviour well. Each class has a set of agreed rules which are readily understood. Pupils know the consequences of choosing not to behave or co-operate with their teachers or their peers. As a result, most pupils make the best of the learning opportunities on offer.

### *Personal development*

13. Pupils' personal development is good. They undertake a range of responsibilities around the school, including helping to run a 'shop' at break times and undertaking office duties. In lessons, they show respect for each other's views and willingly co-operate to solve problems. 'Circle' and 'bubble time' are used very well to develop listening skills and build self-esteem. New pupils to the school and pupils who need additional support benefit from the opportunity to take part in 'bubble time' activities and the school's buddy systems. Members of the school council show very good personal development. They speak with pride about the school and the opportunities it offers.
14. Pupils' moral and social development is good. All pupils know the school and class rules because they have been involved in their agreement. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and fairness because adults in the school provide very good role models. Pupils are proud of the way the school involves them in fund-raising for good causes. This provides them with insights into how other people live and leads to an improved sense of justice. Their understanding of living in a community is developed well through the curriculum and through whole-school assemblies led by the headteacher.
15. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. While teachers plan opportunities to study belief systems and other cultures through the curriculum, more could be done to raise pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. There are insufficient opportunities in phase assemblies to improve pupils' spiritual development by fostering a sense of self-awareness.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

16. The attendance rate is very high compared to the national average, and unauthorised absence is below the national average. Effective systems are in place for monitoring attendance. Parents make very good efforts to ensure their children come to school and unexpected absences are swiftly followed up. The majority of pupils arrive promptly at the beginning of the day and the small minority who are late enter sensibly and quickly settle to their work without disrupting the rest of the class.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was sound. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly strong and nearly half of all lessons seen were very good. Teaching in the Reception class is consistently good and at times very good, and is a strength of the school. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4 is less consistent. It is good overall in Years 1 and 2 but is no better than satisfactory overall in Years 3 and 4. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their subjects well and make lessons interesting and relevant.
- Lessons are planned carefully so that pupils' work is demanding but within their capabilities, apart from in science and ICT, where higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Regular assessments are made of pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics, so that teachers and pupils know what they need to do next.
- Teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn and how they will know when they have succeeded.
- Interactive whiteboards are used well to stimulate pupils' interest and bring subjects to life.
- Teachers' marking tells pupils how well they have completed their work and what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils' learning. This is a strength of the school.
- In a few lessons, pupils don't understand the work they are given and the pace of learning is too slow.
- More needs to be done to help some pupils become more actively involved in and excited by their learning.

### Commentary

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	9 (22%)	15 (38%)	15 (38%)	1 (2%)	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. Well over half of the teaching is good or very good, and this enables pupils to learn well. Teaching is particularly effective in Year 5 and 6 classes, where more able pupils are given tasks which challenge them and really make them think. As a result, they enjoy lessons and achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when older, higher-attaining pupils were found to be underachieving.
18. Teachers take time in most lessons to share what it is pupils are expected to learn so that they are clear about what they are doing and why. In a Year 5 and 6 history lesson, pupils were challenged to compose the objective for the lesson themselves by the end of the lesson, which meant that they paid very careful attention throughout. Brief sessions at the end of lessons help pupils to reflect on what they have learned and whether there was anything they didn't understand. Most pupils are involved in lessons, especially when teachers ask them to share ideas with a partner. Teaching assistants use skilful questioning to challenge pupils to explain their ideas and justify their opinions. The best lessons make excellent use of interactive whiteboards so that teachers easily switch between film and pictures and notes made during the previous lesson. Consequently, the pace of the lesson is fast and pupils are helped to see their learning as meaningful.
19. In most lessons, pupils respond to the expectation that they will work hard. The warmth of the relations between pupils and staff means that the pupils settle to work quickly and concentrate well on the task in hand.
20. Teachers regularly assess the progress that pupils have made, especially in English and mathematics. Changes are made to plans when they see how well pupils have understood the work they have been asked to do. This ensures that work is well matched to pupils' abilities and supports good achievement. This is less consistent in science and some ICT lessons, where often work is not designed to stretch the most able pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Their comments enable the older pupils especially to know how well they are doing and how they can improve. Teachers make reference to pupils' targets in English and pupils often comment on which ones they think they have met and how hard they found the work. The use of target sheets in mathematics is not as well established across the school.
21. In Years 3 and 4, when teaching and learning are no better than satisfactory, and in one unsatisfactory lesson, the tasks pupils are given are not always well matched to their needs, or teachers' unclear explanations result in pupils not understanding what they have to do. Where this is not quickly picked up and dealt with by the teacher, pupils become confused and lose concentration.
22. In other lessons, where teaching is no better than satisfactory, pupils are reluctant to take part. This is often when the pace of the lesson is too slow or when work is not sufficiently challenging. Sometimes pupils are not eager to learn and join in with their lessons. This sometimes happens when teachers rely too much on a general response from the class so that pupils can choose whether or not to take part. Where teachers do not make their

expectations clear or tell pupils how much time they have to complete their work, the pace at which pupils learn is also too slow.

23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers use questions well to include the pupils in class discussions and ensure that work is matched to their needs. Skilled teaching assistants are deployed well to ensure that these pupils can access the learning in lessons. They are aware of the targets set out for the pupils in individual education plans. The special needs team liaises well with class teachers to ensure that they are well equipped to meet the needs of the pupils with special educational needs in their classes.
24. Some pupils with special educational needs are provided with additional support outside of lessons by the special educational needs co-ordinator or a designated teaching assistant. Where this is the case, the quality of teaching is good and pupils have access to carefully planned programmes designed to meet their particular needs. For example, in a one-to-one session with a pupil with language difficulties, the teacher patiently reinforced the use of comparative language and the pupil made good progress in speaking and listening. Some pupils with special educational needs receive additional support for personal development through the 'bubble time' programme.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

**The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum.** This ensures that pupils have the opportunity to learn well and to make satisfactory or better progress. A wide range of interesting opportunities provided by the school through clubs and activities adds further enrichment to the curriculum. While the school's facilities enable the full curriculum to be delivered, many classrooms are small and activity areas double up as cloakroom spaces.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The ICT suite is well equipped and well used.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Detailed planning takes place for pupils of different ages and abilities in mathematics and English, but less so in some other subjects such as ICT and science.
- There is good provision and support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Staff work hard to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all pupils.
- Classrooms are small and activity areas are also used as cloakrooms.
- There is a wide range of activities to support learning both in the classroom and after school.
- The school prepares its pupils very well for the next stage of education.

## **COMMENTARY**

25. Provision for the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school day has been lengthened and the balance of the curriculum reviewed, so that it is now broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. This continues to be monitored closely by the headteacher, senior teachers and the governors, to ensure that each subject is taught for an appropriate amount of time. Apart from English, mathematics and science, there is a strong commitment to providing a broader base for subjects such as music, art and physical education. The school undertakes some topic work whereby links are made between subjects, while ensuring the work follows the areas of study from the National

Curriculum. Occasionally, 'focus' days are undertaken. Last term there was a 'Roman Day' and this term there will be a day looking at religious celebrations.

26. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are met in the school's curriculum plan. Opportunities are planned for pupils to use their writing, mathematics and ICT skills in other curriculum areas. The ICT suite is used effectively to develop skills in the subject as well as for cross-curricular work. The Foundation Stage curriculum, which is securely based on the expectations in the national guidance, is stimulating and well planned. The school fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2.
27. Teachers plan thoroughly and, particularly in mathematics and English, prepare work which aims to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities in the classroom. Learning objectives are clear, lessons have a clear structure from beginning to end and opportunities are provided to assess what pupils have learnt. These aspects of planning are less well developed in some other subjects, such as science or ICT, where there is less obvious consideration of the needs of more able pupils.
28. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are open to pupils from Year 1 upwards. Several are led by teachers, but in addition other organisations, such as Colchester United and Essex County Cricket Club, come in to school and work with pupils. Activities offered include recorders, 'Jesus at school' club (JASC), ball skills games, French, country dancing, chess, cross-country, the school band, gardening and choir. Competitive games are held against other schools, including rounders, rugby, football, cricket and athletics.
29. Many visitors are invited in to school to promote learning, for example, a local historian, the 'Keep Fit Kids' (a group of gymnasts) and local clergy. Each class aims to have two visits per year to support the curriculum and in the Autumn term, trips have been organised to Kentwell Hall, West Stow and Colchester Zoo. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have returned recently from a successful residential visit to the Isle of Wight which, while it had ICT as a focus, linked effectively to several other areas of the curriculum.
30. The school has a strong commitment to meeting the learning needs of every pupil and to ensuring that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. This is evident in the skilled way that teachers and teaching assistants enable pupils of all abilities to be fully involved in lessons. In their planning, teachers put considerable thought into ensuring that lessons are accessible to all. Pupils are grouped carefully so that all can make good progress but also so that they can help one another and share ideas together. Teachers know pupils very well and they direct teaching assistants to help, coax and motivate pupils with special educational needs to try their best. Teaching assistants share their assessments and ideas for the next steps in learning with teachers so that they are built into the next day's planning. They are supportive of, and sensitive to, the needs of individual pupils and they praise and successfully encourage them to work hard and to achieve well.
31. There are very good links with Stanway Secondary School to ensure a smooth transition for pupils to the next stage of their education. Pupils visit the high school on a number of occasions, as early as Year 5, and transition study units are undertaken which link the Key Stage 2 with the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The Year 7 leader from the secondary

school visits the school at least three times each academic year, and spends time teaching the Year 6 pupils.

32. There are sufficient numbers of teachers to cover the curriculum effectively and they have access to a good range of training opportunities to improve and develop their practice. Their involvement in such training programmes as 'Early Reading Research' (ERR), the National Leadership Programme and 'Effective Lifelong Learning' (ELLI) has raised teachers' professional expertise and resulted in more effective and imaginative approaches to delivering the curriculum. Teaching assistants are experienced, professional and well qualified. They work closely with teachers to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Their contribution to the good achievement that pupils make is a strength of the school.
33. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school has adequate facilities to teach all requirements of the National Curriculum, although classrooms are cramped where pupil numbers are large. This can restrict some more practical activities and teachers are unable to gather pupils together in one area of the room. The library and office areas are small, and there is no medical room. The school has good plans to improve the accommodation, including library facilities, the provision of more work areas and a new classroom. Learning resources are satisfactory and are used well. The use of ICT facilities by teachers is particularly effective.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

Care, guidance and support for pupils are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school takes care to ensure that pupils are safe and secure.
- Arrangements for pupils when they are unwell are unsatisfactory
- Arrangements for the induction and transfer of pupils are good.
- The school regularly seeks pupils' views.

### **Commentary**

34. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are comprehensive. Child protection procedures are effective and are carried out vigilantly by the headteacher and staff. There are good links with outside agencies to monitor children who are causing concern.
35. The arrangements for identifying pupils with special educational needs are effective and the special educational needs co-ordinator regularly liaises with teaching staff to ensure that the criteria used in assessing need are understood. Pupils' individual education plans include specific and measurable targets and progress is monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The school has plans to involve pupils more fully in the setting and reviewing of targets.
36. The caretaker and governors regularly carry out health and safety checks of the premises to ensure pupils' safety and accident records are carefully analysed to identify any possible areas for improvement. Arrangements for dealing with First Aid need to be improved. There is no designated room for pupils who are hurt or are unwell. Currently

they have to sit in a main entrance area next to the secretary's office where there is no privacy. The school is aware of this issue and has plans to remodel the main entrance area of the school to include a medical room.

37. Teachers know pupils well. Their relationships with pupils are very positive so that pupils feel safe and know they have an adult to turn to if they have any worries. They appreciate the guidance and help that teachers give them. The headteacher and staff meet regularly to discuss pupils causing concern to ensure that information is up to date.

#### *Induction and transfer*

38. There are good arrangements in place for the induction and transfer of pupils. The headteacher meets with all parents when children first start school and records any physical, emotional or social concerns. Teachers in the Reception class meet regularly with parents to discuss how well children have settled in and address any arising issues. For those pupils who join the school at other times, an attractive welcome board next to the secretary's office displays photographs of pupils and staff who have recently joined the school, and this helps to make them feel valued members of the school community. Arrangements for Year 6 pupils when they transfer to the local high school are very comprehensive and include a number of visits to the school during the year prior to transfer, as well as staff from the high school making regular visits to meet the Year 6 pupils.

#### *Involving pupils in the work of the school*

39. Pupils' views are sought regularly. Pupils throughout the school agree class rules. The well-established school council (which includes representatives from all classes from Year 1 to Year 6) invites pupils to bring issues of concern from their classes to each meeting. Not only are these issues aired but where possible, pupils' views as to how they might be solved are also sought. A recent concern has been football in the playground and, having sought the views of the school council, areas of the playground are now clearly designated for particular activities. The views of the school council have also been influential in determining the good range of after-school activities that is available. Governors also actively seek pupils' views when monitoring different aspects of school provision.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Overall, partnership with parents and with the community is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parental support for literacy enhances pupils' progress.
- The school works hard to seek parents' views.
- There are very good links with local schools and colleges.
- Reports to parents are informative but parents find the grading system confusing.

### Commentary

#### *Links with parents*

40. The school keeps parents well informed through regular newsletters, and parents feel that staff are very approachable to discuss their concerns. Staff meet individually with parents in the autumn and spring terms to discuss their children's progress. Parents find these meetings useful and they are well attended. Efforts by the school to inform parents about curriculum matters have not always been successful, but the headteacher and staff have persevered and this is now linked to phase assemblies and successfully attracts more parents. Annual reports to parents are well written and informative so that parents generally know how well their children are doing. However, parents find the grading system used in the reports confusing. Although the school has attempted to explain the gradings in an accompanying letter, many parents are still unsure about them. The headteacher recognises that more needs to be done to overcome these confusions. The school regularly seeks parents' views on a range of matters, including priorities for the school development plan.
41. Parents are encouraged to help in classrooms, especially with literacy work ('guided reading') at the beginning of each day. The good response from parents of the younger children in Years 1 and 2 is having a positive impact on the good progress they are making. The Parent Teacher Association is effectively run by a handful of parents who are very successful at raising funds for school equipment. A significant minority of parents have expressed their concerns about arrangements for homework. Some feel that they are not sufficiently well informed about how they can help their child at home and others feel that the comments they make in homework diaries are not always acknowledged or responded to. Some of their concerns about mis-communication have been linked to classes where there are job-share arrangements. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting suggested that matters had improved this term. A scrutiny of homework diaries, which are new for this term, suggests that these issues have been dealt with satisfactorily and that those parents who regularly comment on their children's work are supporting them well.

#### *Links with other schools*

42. There are very good links with local schools through the Tiptree and Stanway Primary Schools Consortium. These include shared professional development for teaching and non-teaching staff and a good range of curriculum and sporting opportunities for pupils. Very good transfer arrangements with the local high school ensure a smooth transition for Year 6 pupils.

### *Links with the community*

43. The school continues to develop its links with the local community. A number of local groups use the school premises for their meetings and the school takes an active part in the local parish fair. Good links have been established with local industry to support pupils' learning. The school recognises the need to capitalise more on using the local community as a resource, but a good start has been made in the recent invitation to older members of the community to come into school and talk to pupils about their World War Two experiences.
44. Partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school encourages parents and carers to attend meetings when their children are being discussed. Those parents who attend report that their children are making good progress and are pleased with the support they receive. There are very good links with the local secondary school and an additional visit was arranged to ease the transition for pupils with special educational needs transferring in 2004. The school also enjoys good links with visiting specialists, such as health professionals and the LEA educational psychologist.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher and the senior management team work well together to provide good leadership. The management of the school is effective, and the governing body is well informed and gives good support to the school.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The headteacher is very successful in promoting and developing leadership skills in others.
- There is a whole-school commitment to improvement.
- The school has responded well to support from the LEA and to other initiatives.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The governing body is effective and well organised.
- Financial management is good.
- Subject leader roles are well developed.
- The school needs to do more to improve pupils' attitudes to learning.

### **COMMENTARY**

45. The quality of leadership and management has improved since the last inspection.
46. The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and he and his staff are committed to running an inclusive school. Since the last inspection the headteacher, through his good leadership, has successfully ensured that the focus of the school's work has been to eradicate underachievement. He has achieved this by nurturing good relationships throughout the staff, which has led to a whole-school commitment to improvement. He has been particularly effective in creating leadership in depth through the development of an enthusiastic and committed school management team. As phase leaders and core subject leaders, the team members have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play a central part in promoting and monitoring agreed priorities for improvement.

47. The role of the senior management team has been further developed through the school's involvement in the Primary Leadership programme. This has been particularly successful in enhancing their monitoring role and in promoting effective assessment procedures. The headteacher is keen to introduce innovative curriculum initiatives where they support the school priorities for improvement, and the school has responded well to support and advice from the LEA. There is good evidence that where these initiatives have had time to become embedded into daily classroom practice, especially in English and mathematics, they have supported the improvement in achievement throughout the school.
48. The role of subject leaders is generally well developed. Although some teachers are new to the role, they all have clear action plans outlining priorities for development for the current year. Where subject leaders have been in post for some time, they are well informed and develop appropriate strategies to ensure further improvements.
49. The enthusiastic special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership for staff and ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable pupils remain a priority in the school. She has a clear vision for the development of provision in the school and sees her role as supporting all the lower achieving pupils. She works very effectively and liaises well with staff. She carries out a rigorous analysis of the progress made by pupils and uses this information to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision and target support to where it is most needed. She has produced an effective special educational needs development plan which clearly sets out the priorities for the coming year. A comprehensive programme of professional development is arranged for all staff concerned with the needs of pupils with special educational needs and the impact of the various training programmes is evaluated.
50. Whilst the headteacher and senior managers have been successful in creating good relationships between staff and between staff and pupils, they recognise that more needs to be done to improve pupils' attitudes to learning. Their lack of enthusiasm and commitment to their work in some lessons detracts from the good ethos of the school.
51. The headteacher and senior management team ensure improvement in standards and the quality of education through effective self-evaluation procedures. These include the thorough analysis of data and the close monitoring of teaching and learning. For example, the analysis of data from English and mathematics test results leads to the setting of curriculum targets which not only identify targets for improvement, but more importantly identify what teachers and pupils need to do next to reach those targets. This is having a positive impact on raising standards and achievement. Recent monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher and the senior management team is closely linked to performance management and is central to raising the quality of teaching and learning. The monitoring of priorities in the school development plan by senior managers and governors ensures that targets are met.
52. Financial management is effective. The school uses the skills of the consortium manager well. The planning of the budget supports priorities for improvement. Strategic financial planning has ensured that staffing has only been reduced by a minimum, during a time of falling numbers on roll. This has supported the school's drive to raise levels of achievement. Day-to-day management of the budget is very efficient and areas for improvements outlined in a recent auditor's report have been successfully addressed.

53. Governance of the school is good. The governing body plays an influential role in the strategic management of the school. It is well organised and the effective committee structure works well. Governors use their links with subject leaders successfully to ensure that they are well informed. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and staff, but at the same time they take their roles seriously and hold the school to account. The chair of governors has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and meets regularly with the headteacher to ensure that he is kept up to date with current issues. He sees his role as that of a critical friend.
54. Governors have developed their monitoring role well. Besides monitoring in their designated subject areas, they regularly seek the views of parents and pupils on whole-school issues. They respond well to parents' concerns. Governors have a good understanding of the principles of best value and apply them to all school purchases.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	779,428	Balance from previous year	112,751
Total expenditure	685,451	Balance carried forward to the next	93,956
Expenditure per pupil	2,510		

55. The unusually high balance carried forward into the 2004/2005 budget has been appropriately earmarked for structural and maintenance repairs, internal refurbishing and ICT equipment.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision for children in the Reception class is consistently good in all areas of learning, and is a strength of the school. Staff have created a stimulating learning environment both in the classroom and in the dedicated outside area. The wide range of well-planned activities provides a balanced curriculum and ensures that the learning needs and styles of all children are met. There is an appropriate balance between adult- and child-led activities and this encourages these young children to plan their own learning and become deeply involved in their self-chosen activities. The quality of teaching is good overall and at times is very good. This shows good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching assistants are used well and give sensitive support, encouraging children to become more independent in their learning. Good day-to-day assessment informs planning and leads to a high level of challenge for all pupils but especially for higher achievers. Staff track children as they move between activities to ensure that they experience a balanced curriculum. Attainment on entry is average. The school admits children at the beginning of each term and at the time of the inspection there were only seven children in the class. This is predicted to rise to 30 by the beginning of the summer term. Children are taught during the week by two teachers through a job-share arrangement that is working well. The majority of children are likely to reach the expected goals in each of the areas of learning and many will exceed them.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Children have positive attitudes to learning.
- Routines are well established and children move between activities confidently.
- Children play and co-operate well together.

### **COMMENTARY**

56. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well in this area of learning. Most are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year and many will exceed them.
57. Children have settled in well. They respond enthusiastically to the wide range of stimulating activities and resources that are available. They concentrate well on self-chosen tasks and persevere when they are challenging. For example, a child with special educational needs, who normally finds it difficult to concentrate, spent a long time experimenting with some Russian dolls and putting them in the right order, without any adult support. When there are two adults present, children enjoy moving between indoor and outdoor activities. This provides good opportunities for children to play together. They quickly become engaged in their tasks and their play is purposeful. Many of the planned tasks encourage children to co-operate well together and most are learning to take turns fairly. Adults act as good role models and this helps children to form positive relationships. Their behaviour is good and they are beginning to learn right from wrong.

Teachers are very skilful at seeking children's ideas and taking their initiatives and developing them further. This leads to the children's high self-esteem.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children listen carefully.
- Children have good knowledge of initial letter sounds.
- Children have positive attitudes to writing.

### **Commentary**

Children attain standards above national expectations in this area of learning and most are likely to exceed the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide a good range of activities to support the children's progress in this area of learning. Achievement is good. Children enjoy listening to stories and also listen carefully to instructions. Adults encourage them to empathise with the characters in books, fostering an early love of literature. Stories are chosen sensitively to link with the children's own experiences as well as the themes and resources in the classroom and this helps to consolidate the children's knowledge and understanding. More able children talk confidently and are able to negotiate with others when disagreements occur. Regular teaching of initial letter sounds contributes to children's good knowledge. They use this well when attempting to decode unknown words and when trying to spell their name. More able children are beginning to construct their own sentences using their good knowledge of a range of simple words. Teachers provide a wide range of writing opportunities, often skilfully linked to the role-play area. Children are encouraged to write for a real purpose, for example, a shopping list for the new baby or a card announcing the baby's birth. Children's positive attitudes to writing lead them to attempt to write unknown words confidently.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are beginning to use mathematical language confidently.
- Children achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is very good.

### **Commentary**

58. Children attain standards in this area of learning that exceed national expectations and most are likely to exceed the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Achievement is good.
59. Teachers plan well for this area of learning and this gives children a range of opportunities in which to use and apply their growing mathematical knowledge. For example, in the role-play baby clinic, two higher-achieving boys were learning new mathematical vocabulary about weight and balance and used their counting skills confidently as they checked whether the toy baby was heavier or lighter, using a simple balance. Many children can count to and recognise numbers to five and beyond, with the

most able counting to 30 confidently. They know that if they have nine objects they need one more to make ten. The majority of children are beginning to know the names of basic shapes and can sort objects according to their size.

60. The quality of teaching is very good in this area of learning because teachers ensure that children are learning in a meaningful context, and this supports their very good progress.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most children are likely to reach the expected goals in this area of learning.
- Although ICT activities are planned for, no children were observed using computers during the inspection.

### **Commentary**

61. Children attain standards that are similar to national expectations in this area of learning and most are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Achievement is satisfactory. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Children are beginning to use their senses well and to develop a sense of curiosity about the world around them. They make attractive books using a range of materials and paper to create different textures, and this helps not only to develop their cutting skills but also to extend their descriptive language. Teaching assistants patiently encourage children to persevere with tasks and to work independently. Good use is made of the outside area. The children's own garden provides a real opportunity for them to learn about how plants grow and the different seasons of the year. Whilst staff provide opportunities for children to use computers and construction materials, children appear to be reluctant to work with them. Teachers are aware of this and the need to plan some adult-led activities to promote children's interest in these areas of development.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of resources to support learning.
- Good planned links with other activities.

### **Commentary**

62. Children attain standards that are in line with national expectations and most will reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. The quality of teaching is good. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in improving the outdoor area and in the provision of suitable equipment to support this area of learning. Consequently, through the use of large and small equipment, including wheeled toys, children are beginning to move with good control and co-ordination. Many activities are skilfully linked to other areas of learning. For example, one morning when children were unable to go outside because it was raining, the teaching assistant incorporated a physical activity of moving in different ways across the room with a planned mathematical activity. Children responded well and were quickly able to think of alternative ways of moving. Staff provide good opportunities for the development of fine motor skills.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good resources for role-play.

### Commentary

63. Children achieve well in this area of learning and the standards they reach are above national expectations. The majority are likely to exceed the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. The very good resources both within and outside the classroom encourage children's active involvement in role-play. Teachers model roles skilfully and this significantly raises the quality of the experience so that children's play becomes purposeful. They are fully engaged and use their imagination well. Children experience a range of other well-planned activities that promote skills in colour mixing and pattern making. They enjoy learning and singing familiar songs and are beginning to explore the different sounds made by musical instruments. The quality of teaching is good and this supports children's good achievement.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing have improved since the last inspection.
- There is much good teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers' lesson planning is thorough for all groups of learners.
- Teachers know the subject well and their enthusiasm for it is infectious.
- Guided reading sessions are well planned and taught.
- Teachers model writing effectively so that pupils are more able to have a go themselves.
- Marking gives a clear picture of how well pupils are doing and how they can improve.
- Teaching assistants offer very effective support.
- The subject leader has been effective in bringing about improvements and has a clear view of how standards can be raised further.
- Standards in speaking and listening and spelling are not as high as in reading and writing.

### Commentary

#### *Standards achieved*

64. Standards in reading are above average in Year 6 and Year 2. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and are average in Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening and in spelling are average across the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 and in current Year 5 and 6 classes are achieving well.

65. Early analysis of the 2004 test results also suggest an improving picture, especially in reading. Results for the most able pupils suggest standards were broadly in line with those in similar schools for reading and above average for writing.
66. It is likely that results from national test for eleven-year-olds in 2004 tests will again show improvement, including the performance of more able pupils. Results from this group of pupils at the age of seven indicate that they made good progress by the time they were eleven.
67. The inspection found that most pupils make at least sound and often good progress in Years 1 and 2, especially in reading and writing. Pupils' ability to explain their ideas fully and use a wide variety of words and expressions is improving but is average overall. By the age of eleven, most pupils have made good progress, especially during Years 5 and 6, as a direct result of good teaching. There are still some gaps in their previous learning, however, resulting in spelling skills being less well developed.
68. Standards in speaking and listening are average throughout the school. In most lessons younger pupils listen carefully to their teachers but sometimes have difficulty in expressing ideas. Some older pupils lack the confidence to join in with discussions and justify their opinions. The school is aware of the need to improve standards in speaking and listening and most teachers regularly give pupils the opportunity to talk in pairs. This gives all pupils the chance to rehearse what they want to say with a partner and listen to others' ideas.
69. Pupils achieve well in reading. Standards are above average both in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils read every day in carefully planned Guided Reading sessions with the support of staff and parents. Teaching assistants are skilful at encouraging pupils to justify their opinions with evidence from the text, especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' enthusiasm is clear when they read to the class with expression and really bring a book to life. Pupils across the school enjoy reading books they have chosen themselves and they regularly read at home. Older pupils enjoy the challenge of a wide choice of titles including such classics as Jules Verne's 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth'.
70. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6, but some good and very good writing was seen from pupils in Year 5 and the more able pupils in Year 6. Teachers regularly write with a whole class or small groups so that pupils can see how writers makes choices of what to include and what to change. This gives pupils very good preparation for beginning their own writing. Teachers' marking gives very clear feedback to pupils who are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned. Pupils often add comments on which of their writing targets they have achieved.

### *Teaching, learning and assessment*

71. In the lessons seen, teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory. It was good overall. Teachers make the aim of lessons clear at the beginning and always give pupils the chance to explain what they have learned at the end. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers plan carefully to support their needs, and teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator are effective in making lessons enjoyable and rewarding. Teachers know the subject well and, in the best lessons, they read and explore sample texts before pupils are encouraged to apply

what they have learned in their own writing. Good use is made of ICT so that pupils can explore the differences between information in books and on websites. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 lesson in the computer suite. The satisfactory teaching in a Year 1 and 2 lesson could have been improved if pupils had been given books or pictures to stimulate ideas in preparation for writing.

72. Assessment systems have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good. Teachers carry out regular assessments of pupils' writing and these are used to decide on individual targets for improvement. Careful analysis of pupils' writing across the school means that all teachers have a clear idea of where improvements are needed.

### *Leadership and management*

73. The subject leader has a competent grasp of current standards and how standards in writing may be developed further. The impact of recent improvements in Guided Reading and Writing has been carefully monitored. The subject leader has overseen the recent introduction of talk partner work into whole-class teaching, which is visibly improving pupils' confidence in joining in and being able to give fuller and more detailed contributions in lessons.

### *Language and literacy across the curriculum*

74. The skills that pupils acquire in reading and writing are increasingly put to good use in other subjects, for example, history, religious education and science. The use of short-talk partner sessions in these subjects helps pupils to support and develop their speaking and listening skills across the whole curriculum. Pupils use their writing skills naturally when gathering information in history, for example, when older pupils knew that using bullet points was by far the best way of recording their ideas.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and have improved since the last inspection.
- Good planning ensures that the needs of pupils of all abilities are catered for.
- Teachers make learning mathematics fun.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Teaching in the Year 5/6 classes is very good and is a significant strength.
- The monitoring of the subject has improved since the last inspection.
- The use of target sheets is not well established across the school.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school.

## **COMMENTARY**

75. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining above-average standards in mathematics. They achieve well. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Early indications from the national tests in 2004 indicate that the standards of the pupils involved were in line with the national average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average at the end of Year 6. Standards achieved by the higher-attaining pupils at age seven and eleven also improved in 2004. Inspection evidence shows that these more able pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are now attaining standards above the national average in every aspect of mathematics. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. There is a continuing trend of improving standards in mathematics.
76. Challenging targets have been set for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2005. Inspection evidence suggests that with continued good teaching, these pupils should meet or come close to achieving these targets.

77. Standards in Year 2 are above average, with most pupils on course to reach expectations for seven-year-olds and many likely to exceed them. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of work completed in mathematics show that pupils are making good progress in number and shape, space and measures. Most pupils are able to recognise odd and even numbers and use a ruler accurately to measure and draw lines. By Year 4, most pupils can measure and calculate the perimeter of simple shapes. They can add and subtract numbers up to twenty and the higher-attaining pupils are able to do this mentally when solving problems. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 for all groups of pupils.
78. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are achieving well. They are able to round numbers to the nearest thousand and can use the four rules to solve problems. They can multiply two-digit numbers by one digit in their heads. They are learning to change improper fractions to proper fractions and vice versa and are making good progress in this aspect of their learning, even though many find the concept hard. Standards achieved by the Year 5 pupils are above national expectations and most pupils in Year 6 are also exceeding national expectations because the teachers are ambitious for the pupils and expect them to do well.
79. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well across the school because they have good attitudes to learning and are well supported by skilled teaching assistants in lessons.

#### *Teaching, learning and assessment*

80. The quality of teaching is good overall, but there are some inconsistencies. In Year 5/6 classes it is very good and in Years 1 and 2 it is good. The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and, occasionally, is unsatisfactory.
81. The quality of teaching in the Year 5/6 classes is very good overall and is a significant strength. Teachers use assessment in lessons well to establish what the pupils know and can do, and teach accordingly. Work is planned well to meet the needs of the higher-attaining pupils and pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they felt they were being stretched.
82. The most significant features of the good and very good teaching are:
- Effective use of Smartboards as a visual aid.
  - Lively teaching which engages pupils' interest and makes learning fun.
  - Planning which takes account of the needs of a wide range of pupils and sets out a good sequence of teaching, ensuring that the learning is broken down into manageable steps.
  - Good deployment of teaching assistants and special educational needs staff to support the lower-attaining pupils.
  - Very good management of pupils' behaviour.
  - Teachers' good knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, mathematics.
  - Very good use of small discussion groups to ensure that all pupils are involved.
83. Where teaching is only satisfactory, it is less successful in promoting high standards in mathematics. This is because the pace of learning is slower and, while tasks are designed to meet the differing needs of pupils, they are not always explained well. This results in time being wasted and sometimes the attention of pupils wanders because they

are not clear about what they have to do. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the tasks set are not appropriate for the differing levels of ability and consequently pupils are not engaged in their learning and progress in the lesson is slow.

84. The consistency of marking has improved since the last inspection. All teachers mark work regularly and offer pupils feedback about what they have done well. In the best examples, teachers also offer pupils suggestions as to how they could improve. The use of target sheets is not yet firmly established, but has the potential to raise standards if they are used consistently to involve pupils in assessing their own progress in relation to National Curriculum targets.
85. Mathematics is co-ordinated effectively. The curriculum is well organised and the use of nationally produced medium-term plans ensures coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the National Numeracy Strategy objectives. Teachers adapt these plans effectively to meet the needs of their classes. The subject leader has found the support of the LEA mathematics team invaluable. They have helped her set up a programme of monitoring and provided training in how to use this to improve teaching.

#### *Mathematics across the curriculum*

86. There was only limited evidence of mathematics being used across the curriculum during the inspection.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory** and there have been some satisfactory improvements since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- At the ages of seven and eleven, overall, pupils achieve as well as in similar schools.
- There is good coverage of the National Curriculum Programme of Study and pupils are given ample opportunities to undertake investigative work and to solve problems.
- Lessons are planned thoroughly, but often the tasks are not differentiated to ensure that the more able pupils are challenged in their work.
- Work is carefully marked by teachers, with guidance on how pupils can improve.
- There is no consistent framework for pupils to describe their investigations, and they do not always record the outcomes fully.
- Pupils generally do not take sufficient care over the quality of the presentation of their findings.
- More able pupils do not attain the standards of which they are capable.

### **Commentary**

87. Standards have improved since the last inspection at the end of Years 2 and 6 and are now average. The results from the 2004 tests indicate that most pupils achieved well, although the results at the higher levels remained below those of similar schools. The results of lesson observations, discussions with pupils, the subject leader and scrutiny of work during the inspection confirm that although most pupils are making at least the expected progress, the achievement of the most able pupils is unsatisfactory.

88. Pupils are developing scientific knowledge and understanding well and are acquiring and using scientific vocabulary appropriately. For instance, Year 2 pupils know the names and functions of the different parts of plants and flowers, and Year 6 pupils know that a test must be undertaken fairly and can describe the features of such a test.
89. Lessons are well planned, with a clear structure. The learning objectives are made explicit and pupils are asked to evaluate outcomes at the end of the session. Teaching is generally interesting and lively and engages the pupils. In a Year 3 lesson on plants, for example, the class was investigating how water is transported through a plant and one pupil said, 'The stem is a kind of motorway for the plant. The water travels up to make the flower grow to form the seeds.' In Year 2, the class was comparing the differences between plants and animals. The teacher used a recent visit to Colchester Zoo effectively to bring the activity to life by promoting discussion and deepening pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were testing how the number of layers affect the translucent properties of materials using torches and light meters. They used appropriate scientific language such as 'opaque', 'light source', 'shadow formation' and 'reflection' well.
90. There is a wide range of work in pupils' books and there are good opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Work is carefully marked and pupils are given useful feedback on the quality of their work and what would improve it. Teachers are using this to inform the next steps in teaching. Pupils are given the opportunity to write an evaluation of the science work undertaken during each term, but their comments tend to be superficial, such as, 'I think I've done well.' Such statements do not effectively evaluate the delivery of the activities or the understanding of the pupils.
91. Evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of work shows that the same science investigation tends to be presented to the whole class and therefore more able pupils are not challenged further or given more open-ended tasks. The result is that quite often there is little variation in the quality or depth of work produced by pupils of differing abilities and this leads to the underachievement of the most able pupils.
92. Pupils present their findings from investigations in a variety of ways in written, tabular and diagrammatic form. At present, pupils value the opportunity to undertake practical investigations, but they are not enthusiastic about having to record their work in a written form. They do not appreciate the importance of presenting their experiments and results with accuracy and clarity. The presentation of written work, drawings and diagrams are below what the pupils are capable of and do not reflect the quality of the practical work that is carried out.
93. When writing up experiments, there is variation between classes and year groups as to how an investigation should be recorded. Currently, while pupils describe the equipment they used, predict what might happen and describe what they did, there are too few examples of pupils explaining what happened in an investigation and why. The subject leader has recognised that this is an issue and has produced draft guidance which, if implemented, will ensure progression and consistency in the way recording is undertaken.
94. The subject leader is enthusiastic and committed to raising standards in science, and provision has improved. There are regular meetings with the link governor for science.

Scrutiny of work and monitoring of teaching take place (jointly with the governor wherever practical) and the outcomes are discussed with staff to ensure that any areas identified for improvement become embedded in practice. Pupils' work is assessed twice yearly to help indicate which level the individual pupil is at, but this information is not always used well to plan future work for the more able pupils. The subject leader has identified the areas where pupils perform less well in national tests and has produced a set of targets for teachers to follow to improve standards further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average for older pupils.
- Facilities for teaching and learning are good.
- Staff are confident in the use of ICT and have been appropriately trained.
- During the week of the inspection there was limited evidence of computers being used to support learning in classrooms in other subjects.
- Although steps are in hand to ensure that more able pupils are appropriately challenged in lessons where ICT is used, this is not always the case at present.
- The newly appointed subject leader has a clear vision for consolidation and improvement.
- More able pupils in some year groups do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.

### **Commentary**

95. The standards of Year 2 pupils are average and those of Years 5 and 6 pupils are above. More able pupils do not always reach the levels of which they are capable, especially in the younger classes.
96. In the lessons observed, standards are broadly in line with national expectations and from work seen and discussion with pupils and the subject leader, it is evident that pupils are making satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The achievement of older pupils is good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. By Year 2, pupils can use a mouse and printer when word processing or drawing pictures. They can highlight text and enlarge it and most pupils can, with support, save their work. Progress is sometimes slow for more able pupils. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, more able pupils had to wait for others to complete tasks and similarly in a Year 3 lesson, there was no additional challenge for the higher achievers. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are offered a wide range of experiences, and by Year 6, they can use scanners and import images from the digital camera to put in their work. They use control technology well, and prepare 'Powerpoint' media presentations confidently. They know how to resize and import pictures and cut and paste. They have the opportunity to use email and the Internet. Pupils are using skills learnt at school well to improve their use of computers at home.
97. Teachers are confident in the use of ICT and their enthusiasm for the subject is appreciated by pupils. The use of interactive whiteboards takes place in most lessons and the equipment is used appropriately to enhance teaching and learning. Light meters and electronic microscopes are also used effectively in lessons. The availability of an

ICT suite, with a teaching assistant allocated to support learning, ensures that the pupils are taught skills which can be used and developed further in the classroom. Currently not all teachers differentiate work so that it meets the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able.

98. The newly appointed ICT leader has made a positive start. The subject leader is enthusiastic, has good subject knowledge and supports staff well. There is a clear vision for moving the subject forward and this includes ensuring that teachers' planning meets the needs of pupils of different ability. In addition, assessment is being updated. Currently, teachers pass on a child's overall level to the next teacher, but this is being refined to ensure that a pupil's strengths and areas for further support within the elements of ICT will be clearly identified. The subject leader is actively seeking to strengthen ICT links with the secondary school. The school has achieved the national 'NAACE' mark for ICT. This award confirms that the school has strengths in many areas of the subject.

#### *Information and communication technology across the curriculum*

99. During the week of the inspection, there was limited evidence of computers being used in classrooms to support learning across the curriculum, although it is evident from talking to pupils that they are used for this purpose.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

100. In humanities, the work sampled in **history** and **geography** included only three lessons in history, all of which were in Years 5 and 6, and none in geography. Standards in history for Year 6 pupils are above average. It was not possible to form an overall judgement about provision or standards in geography. Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work in history but there was little available in geography as most pupils are studying history at this time of year.
101. The quality of teaching in the history lessons seen was good. Teachers effectively use a range of strategies to engage pupils' attention and make their learning interesting. Their expectations are high and pupils respond well. Lively teaching results in pupils having a good understanding of the aspects of history they are studying.
102. Teachers bring the work to life by arranging relevant visits out of school and using local experts. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have recently enjoyed a day at Kentwell Hall where they learned what life was like in Tudor England. The impact of this visit was apparent during lessons when pupils were encouraged to speculate why people in Tudor England had the urge to explore unknown lands. Pupils in Year 2 were able to use their knowledge about the significance of Remembrance Day to begin to understand the impact of World War Two and how it affected people's lives.
103. Teachers make good links with other areas of the curriculum and plan plenty of opportunities for pupils to apply skills learned in English lessons. Speaking and listening skills are well developed in history lessons, with opportunities for pupils to discuss in pairs and small groups how historical maps have changed over time and why. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively so that pupils can see several large, colourful, old maps and easily compare them with modern versions. Pupils communicate their historical

understanding in a variety of ways, through maps, diagrams and descriptions. Older pupils are helped to reflect on their growing understanding in history by using concept maps to record their knowledge at the beginning of a topic.

104. Teachers have a broad view of how well pupils have achieved in history and often involve them in assessment by asking them to reflect on their learning at the end of lessons. However, current arrangements are not used in a systematic way to improve learning and planning in the future. The recently appointed subject leader has clear plans for necessary developments in the subject but as yet no clear idea of overall standards achieved across the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

105. Only one lesson in religious education was observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement about overall provision. Standards in the Year 5/6 lesson seen were in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The quality of teaching was good. The lesson was well planned and included strong links with English and made effective use of ICT.
106. It is clear from discussions with the subject leader that religious education has been the subject of a significant amount of development since the last inspection. A new scheme of work has been adopted for Key Stage 1 which meets the syllabus requirements, and new resources have been purchased. The limited time to teach the subject in depth identified at the last inspection has now been addressed.
107. Some rigorous monitoring by the subject leader has taken place which has helped to identify current strengths and weaknesses. An analysis of the work undertaken during the inspection endorses the school's finding that planning for differentiation could be improved. The outcomes of these monitoring activities need to be included in the development plan for the subject.

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

### **ART AND DESIGN**

108. No lessons were observed during the inspection. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. Work seen on display around the school and evidence in the subject leader's file indicate that standards are at least in line with national expectations. This shows good improvement from the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average.
109. Much of the work in art and design is linked to topic work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, have produced some attractive work using pastels, linked to their work on water. They have used this medium well to draw and create a sense of atmosphere through the use of subtle textures. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 have experimented with different materials to create their own collage pictures representing some of the animals they saw at a recent visit to the zoo. Pupils are beginning to use sketchbooks well to draft their ideas, for observational drawings and colour mixing.
110. The role of the subject leader has improved since the last inspection. Through monitoring and agreement trialling she has successfully ensured that planning covers all aspects of

the art curriculum and that teachers are aware of progressive levels of attainment. She has a good understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has been very successful in raising the profile of art across the school. She is aware of the need to further develop assessment procedures.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

Only one lesson was observed, so it is not possible to make a judgement on standards overall.

111. In the lesson observed, standards were in line with national expectations and the quality of teaching was good. The good use of resources ensured that pupils were fully engaged in their learning.
112. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to the subject and many of the activities undertaken in design and technology link appropriately to other areas of the curriculum. The subject leader monitors planning and has photographic evidence of the outcomes of pupils' work, but the direct observation of teaching has not yet taken place.
113. At present, teachers assess pupils' achievements at the end of each year by giving an overall National Curriculum level for the subject. The subject leader is looking at ways to improve assessment, so that the individual elements of the subject are assessed to highlight pupils' strengths as well as areas where support is needed. The leader is also aware of the need to develop stronger links with ICT through the use of construction kits and control technology.
114. Discussions with pupils reveal their enthusiasm for the subject and the pupils in Year 2 are able to describe how they have selected for themselves materials to make models and are keen to point out that they know how to use tools safely. Older pupils describe how they plan their designs, choose materials, tools and equipment and appraise what they have made through discussions with their teachers and other pupils. They enjoy describing the topic in Year 5 entitled, 'From junk to gems', where a range of clothes, hats and other items were fashioned from recycled materials.

## **MUSIC**

Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and, therefore, no judgement can be made on overall provision. However, the lesson observed was good and pupils achieved well. Pupils controlled untuned percussion instruments well, showing a good sense of rhythm. The teacher ensured that all pupils took a full part in the lesson and encouraged them all to think carefully before choosing an instrument to represent an animal. Consequently, pupils' choices were considered and they were very successful in assessing what they had learned by the end of the lesson.

The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments and a good proportion of pupils take advantage of this provision. A school choir has recently been formed and membership is open to all pupils, illustrating the school's commitment to inclusion. The subject leader has only recently taken on this responsibility but she has carried out a useful audit of resources and identified where there are gaps. She has clear and appropriate plans for the further development of this subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Only two lessons were observed in physical education and, therefore, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. Standards in the lessons seen were in line with national expectations in Year 3 and above average in Year 6. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and good for the older pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive.

115. The school is strongly focused on offering a broad range of opportunities for pupils both within lessons and outside of the school day and this is enhanced by using expertise from the secondary school and outside providers such as the local professional football club and county cricket association. There are competitive matches against other schools in football, netball, cricket, rugby, rounders and athletics.
116. Pupils can describe a wide range of skills and activities that they have experienced in dance, gymnastics, games and swimming. They are enthusiastic about the subject and acknowledge the part played by teachers, who they describe as providing a wide variety of opportunities for competitive games and extra-curricular activities, as well as offering guidance, encouragement and tips for improvement. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and committed to improving provision and has developed a varied and stimulating curriculum for physical education. She has attended a wide range of courses and this has contributed to the wide range of skills and activities that is available. The school has undertaken an assessment of its provision by 'Sport England' and as a result has been awarded 'Activemark Gold'.

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

Only one lesson and one whole-school assembly were seen in this area of the school's work, so no judgement can be made about overall provision.

117. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal development. A good number of opportunities are planned across the curriculum to foster this aspect of their education. These include the chance to work in groups or teams and time to talk about feelings and relationships. Other opportunities planned to develop citizenship include the school recycling scheme, the school council and the Fiveways Friends. Younger pupils are learning social skills such as sharing and taking turns in lessons. Older pupils learn about making informed decisions about their health and the environment.
118. In addition to this, the school has introduced 'circle time' and 'bubble time' in order to promote the development of citizenship. Themes are planned each half term which are reinforced in assemblies and 'circle time'. At the time of the inspection, the theme was 'listening'. In a 'circle time' led by a teaching assistant in Year 5/6, the teaching and reinforcement of listening skills were very good. Pupils know and can list good listening behaviours. They made very good progress during the lesson and most pupils can remember their classmates' favourite foods, numbers and colours. Pupils with special educational needs took a full and active part in the session and made gains in confidence as a result of their success.
119. In a school assembly, pupils were introduced to the idea of a community jigsaw. The headteacher's clear explanation reinforced the pupils' understanding of the concept of interdependence. They listened attentively throughout and many pupils were able to

answer questions about the meaning of the words 'care', 'respect', 'tolerance' and 'kindness'.

120. The subject leader is enthusiastic and has conducted a comprehensive audit of the views of both pupils and staff. This has enabled her to identify the aspects of citizenship which need further development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

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

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).*