

INSPECTION REPORT

THE MAYFLOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harwich, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114747

Headteacher: Mrs M North

Lead inspector: Mr Andrew Matthews

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 January 2005

Inspection number: 268077

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:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	282
School address:	Main Road Dovercourt Harwich Essex
Postcode:	CO12 4AJ
Telephone number:	01255 502444
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Jones
Date of previous inspection:	7 April 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Mayflower Primary is larger than most other primary schools with 282 pupils (153 full time boys, 113 full time girls and 17 part-time pupils). The majority of the pupils come from the local area. The pupils' mobility rate of 19 per cent is double the national average. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. A very small minority of pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds and an equally small minority speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the reception year is below average. There are ten classes, with the reception children being taught separately. The school received the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003 and the Healthy Schools award in 2004. From January 2005 it will be part of an 'excellence cluster' and working with Edison UK to raise standards further and develop leadership and management through the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19410	Andrew Matthews	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Personal, social and health education
9499	Phiroze Daruwala	Lay inspector	
34532	Robert Cooke	Team inspector	Special educational needs English History Music Religious education
33124	Bridget Trim	Team inspector	Foundation stage Science Art and design Geography

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school, which has improved in many ways since the last inspection. While standards are average, overall, pupils achieve well and the quality of education provided by the school is good. Pupils' personal development is well provided for. Under the very able leadership of the headteacher, the school reaches out successfully into the local and wider community to enrich pupils' lives as much as possible. Governors know the school well and give good support. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very effective and she is well supported by hardworking staff and governors.
- The school is a harmonious community and its ethos is strong.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils behave well, work hard and are rightly proud of their school.
- Standards in writing are improving but are not yet high enough.
- Higher-achieving pupils in Year 2 are not consistently challenged.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. Standards in the national test results have risen and pupils are now achieving well, overall. Significant improvements to the accommodation and well-directed training for all staff have benefited management, teaching and learning. Governors are now much more involved in the work of the school and give good support to the school's leadership. The key issues of the last inspection have been addressed well, overall.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Overall, pupils achieve well in the school. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. At the end of Year 2, although pupils achieve well, their attainment is below average in mathematics and writing. However, in reading, science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education and physical education their attainment is average. The present group of Year 6 pupils, have made some significant improvements since they were in Year 2 and their attainment in reading, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education is now average. In all other subjects, standards are now in line with national expectations. However, despite making good progress since Year 2, standards in writing are still not high enough. Higher-attaining pupils generally achieve well, but in Year 2 they do not always make sufficient progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are well supported and achieve well.

Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. Pupils trust staff, are well supported and relationships are strong. Attendance is now average and pupils arrive punctually for the start of school. **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education is good**. Throughout the school, the **quality of teaching and learning is good** and often very good and leads to pupils achieving well as they move through the school. The particularly good support from the experienced teaching assistants plays an important part in the progress pupils make. There have been improvements in the way pupils are assessed and this information is used particularly well in the Years 5 and 6 classes, to track pupils' progress towards their targets. The majority of teachers mark pupils' work carefully and inform pupils how they can improve their work. However, the quality of marking is not consistent in all classes.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements, is satisfactory, overall, and good in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum for ICT and physical education is good. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits, extra-curricular activities and French conversation lessons for all pupils. The school's provision for pupils' with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good and contributes significantly to these pupils' good achievement and self-esteem. The school's accommodation is now good, with spacious outside areas and opportunities to share the facilities of the adult learning centre. The school has a good number of computers, but many of these need replacing to enable the school to make more effective use of the good range of programs that the school has built up. There are good links with the community and the school has built effective links with local schools. A good level of care is provided for pupils and the school makes good use of outside agencies to support pupils with specific behavioural and learning difficulties.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the leadership and management of other key staff are good. The headteacher has been instrumental in taking advantage of the resources offered through the Education Action Zone initiative to improve the school's provision since the last inspection. She has the highest aspirations for the school and a very clear vision of what needs to be done. She leads by example, inspires her staff and has a very strong determination to ensure that all pupils are fully included in the school's activities. Well-focused in-service training has been used to develop the role of subject co-ordinators and the expertise of teachers and teaching assistants so that key objectives in the school's development plan can be met. The school's commitment to constant evaluation of its practice and the development of staff expertise is ensuring that the school has a good capacity to continue its recent improvements. Governance is now good. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and meet all statutory requirements. They have a good range of experience and work closely with the school in planning developments. They have worked very effectively with the school in managing the budget whilst the school roll has been falling.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school's partnership with parents is good and has been developed well since the last inspection. Pupils have positive views of school and enjoy lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- Raise standards of writing through the school.
- Ensure the more able pupils in Year 2 are fully challenged and achieve their full potential.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupil's achievement is good, overall, and there is very little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Children in the Foundation Stage also achieve well. At the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are average in reading and science but below average in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards are average in reading, mathematics and science but below average in writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities work hard and achieve well.
- The present Year 6 pupils have made significant progress since they started in Year 3.
- Standards in writing are still weak.
- Too few pupils are reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 2.

Commentary

1. When children enter the school, the detailed assessments made show that their attainment is below average and low in their personal, social and emotional development and in their language and literacy development. The good overall provision enables the children to make a positive start to their schooling and they make good overall progress in the majority of the areas of learning. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical development because of the very effective way in which these areas are planned and taught. As a result, standards at the end of the Reception year will be above national expectations in these two areas and in line with expectations in all other areas of learning¹.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (14.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.2 (12.6)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.4 (15.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection and standards are rising as a result of the school's improved provision. Standards are now average in reading and speaking and listening in Year 2, but below average in writing and mathematics. In science, ICT, religious education and physical education, standards are average, with pupils achieving well in ICT and physical education. The present standards of reading and writing show an improvement over the previous year and reflect the impact of the extra support pupils are receiving in literacy lessons and the impact of the Early Reading Research. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science is still too low and this is having the effect of depressing overall standards. Standards in recent National Curriculum tests have been consistently below average and the trend of improvement has been below the national average for the last three years. However, results for 2004 showed

¹ There are six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage, these are: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

an improvement on the previous year in reading and mathematics, where attainment compared with similar schools was average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (26.7)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.7 (25.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.1 (27.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In Year 6 there has been good improvement in standards and achievement since the last inspection because teaching and learning have both improved. As a result of the improvements in provision, pupils are now reaching average standards in all subjects, except for English, where writing lowers the overall standard to below average. In English, mathematics, science, ICT and physical education all pupils, including the higher-achievers, are achieving well. Pupils have above average skills in some aspects of ICT, although technical problems are preventing pupils using these skills regularly to support their learning in other curriculum areas. Higher-achieving pupils are making particularly good progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 because of the grouping of pupils by ability in these two years, coupled with consistently good teaching. Although results at the end of Year 6 over the last three years have been well below average, overall, the improvement trend for these subjects is higher than other schools. Results for 2004 showed very good improvement in mathematics, good improvement in science but low standards in English, where writing was the major weakness. Whilst the proportion of higher Level 5s was above average in mathematics, it was very low in English being in the bottom five per cent in the country. Despite the improvements in some subjects, pupils' overall progress in the three above subjects since they were in Year 2, was below average. Over the last four years, girls have outperformed boys in English and boys outperformed girls in mathematics.
- The well-focused support and training for teachers and teaching assistants, has successfully raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensures that all pupils are fully included in the school's provision. This is particularly applicable to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. These pupils are achieving consistently well because of the good provision and careful planning for their needs. In lessons, teachers and teaching assistants interact very well with these pupils. They ensure that they are fully integrated into the work of the class and that extra support provided is focused clearly on challenging pupils to do their very best. Similarly, higher-achieving pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from intensive support in such areas as numeracy. The school clearly identifies gifted and talented pupils and, apart from Year 2, these pupils' needs are well met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have positive attitudes and their behaviour is good, overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is increasingly effective in promoting positive attitudes and good relationships.
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage show very good attitudes and their behaviour is good.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, overall, but not as positive in lessons that lack challenge.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school has established effective procedures for monitoring attendance.

Commentary

5. When interviewed, pupils clearly stated that they liked school, an opinion echoed by parents. Enrichment of the curriculum is much appreciated by pupils, particularly in the areas of sport, art and music. A residential trip for Year 5 also contributes to their social, cultural and moral development.
6. Pupils behave well around the school and at playtimes, and both pupils and parents are confident that any minor incidents of bullying are quickly sorted out. The provision of a stimulating playground environment helps to promote positive behaviour and encourages good relationships through opportunities to play and share together. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour in class. Classroom rules are discussed in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, agreed and generally observed. Pupils listen carefully, follow instructions well and are quick to settle to tasks, working well in small groups, particularly when supervised by a teaching assistant. Teachers praise good behaviour, are quick to correct minor infringements and pupils respond well. However, a small minority of pupils have very challenging behaviour and, despite the very best efforts of teachers and teaching assistants, their behaviour does, from time to time, interfere with learning.
7. The much improved school ethos has made a significant difference to the way pupils approach school. Pupils now show good attitudes to learning and enjoy lessons. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Good rapport and collaboration between the teachers and teaching assistants engender a positive learning environment in classrooms. A strong emphasis is placed on inclusion and ensuring that all pupils are valued and can succeed. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have good self-esteem, contribute well to lessons and show a good interest in what they are doing.
8. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as it is integrated with sensitivity in all aspects of the daily life of the school community. All staff consistently show respect and concern for one another and for individual pupils. They work ceaselessly to help pupils of all ages to develop a strong understanding of what is right and wrong, and to promote racial tolerance and harmony. The whole ethos of the school sets a good pattern for social behaviour and participation in its varied activities. This is augmented by group activities, such as school choir, team sports, and the public performances at Christmas.
9. The school's daily act of worship is high quality and provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop values based on respect for Christianity and other world faiths. Music, at the start and at the end of assemblies, is used very effectively to strengthen spirituality. Opportunities for pupils to experience multicultural society through outside visits and visitors coming into the school are not yet developed well enough. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to know and understand the culture of minority ethnic groups that form part of modern Britain.
10. The PSHE and citizenship curriculum makes a strong and effective contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers monitor it informally and include it in pupils' annual reports. The school has a school council that functions effectively and allows pupils to play an active part in the life of the school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3	School data	0.2
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.

11. Attendance was below the national average in 2004, but it is improving. Indications are that it is likely to match the national average for the present academic year. Most pupils have good attendance because the school promotes and monitors it very effectively. The introduction of attendance awards has been particularly successful in improving attendance since 2003. Much authorised absence relates to poor health suffered by two pupils last year. Pupils' punctuality is good. Parents make good efforts to ensure that their children arrive at the school in good time. As a result, pupils settle into the morning school routine quickly and have few disruptions to their learning. The school uses fixed-term exclusions as a last resort as part of its good behaviour policy. The number of exclusions in the table below relate to one pupil. The school and governors carefully follow the set guidelines when a pupil is excluded.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	272	6	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and satisfactory for Years 1 to 6. The enrichment of the statutory curriculum is good. Accommodation and resources are good. Pupils' care is good, and links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory, overall, but good in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Careful monitoring by the headteacher and good support of the Education Action Zone (EAZ) have combined to improve the quality of teaching.
- Teachers' expectations of good behaviour and hard work ensure a good pace to pupils' learning.
- The effective deployment of the teaching assistants makes a very good contribution to teaching and learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs.
- End of lesson sessions provide good opportunities for pupils to revise and assess their learning.
- There are weaknesses in the way computers are used to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- The needs of the higher-achieving pupils in Year 2 are not being consistently met.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11 (31.4)	16 (45.7)	8 (22.9)	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.

12. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly in the proportion of good and very good lessons. This is because of rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and well-focused support from the school and outside agencies, particularly the teaching mentors from the EAZ. As a result, pupils' learning and achievement are now both good and pupils are more enthusiastic about their work. The good quality teaching in the Foundation Stage enables children of all abilities to achieve well and particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development. The teacher and teaching assistant work very well as a team and have a good understanding of how young children learn. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's speaking and listening, and early reading, writing and mathematical skills. The teacher uses a good range of resources to help children develop a real enthusiasm for learning. Assessment is good and informs children's future learning effectively. The Foundation Stage class is taking part in research into early literacy and numeracy development at present. This requires strict adherence to a specially designed programme of rote learning. At present, some of the children with weaker literacy and numeracy skills are not benefiting from this teaching style.
13. In Years 1 to 6, the great majority of pupils are well challenged and achieving well, particularly in literacy and numeracy, where the quality of teaching is good and often very good. Teachers' planning is now good and is becoming far better informed by assessments and evaluations of lessons. Good use is made of individual teachers' strengths within each teaching team in the planning process. As a result, strengths are carefully built on and weaknesses addressed in future planning and by focused support for individuals and small groups. Whilst assessment is satisfactory, overall, it is particularly good in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' progress is regularly tracked to ensure they are on course to meet their end of year targets. This effective model is to be extended through the rest of the school after it has been evaluated.
14. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons are now far more effective than at the time of the last inspection. In these sessions, teachers refer regularly to the lesson objectives and pupils are encouraged to review their own learning against these objectives. This extra information gives teachers invaluable insights into how well pupils are learning so that future planning can build effectively on pupils' previous learning and understanding. There is some high quality marking from a majority of teachers, where pupils are clearly informed what they need to do to improve their work and to move towards their personal targets. However, there is a lack of consistency in marking, some of which is superficial and unhelpful. Personal targets are used particularly well in Years 5 and 6. In Years 1 to 4, pupils have a clear understanding of their class and group targets and these are referred to regularly in lessons.
15. Teachers make good use of pupils' speaking and listening skills in lesson introductions and in the way they develop pupils' learning through careful questioning. The effective use of 'talking partners' ensures that all pupils are fully engaged in the teaching session. This was used particularly effectively in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lessons on the use of brackets. The grouping of Year 3 and 4 pupils by ability for mathematics is helping teachers to raise attainment in this subject. As these groups now have a significantly narrower range of ability in them, teachers are successfully challenging all the pupils within this range. In the current Years 1 and 2 classes, the wide spread of ability is resulting in too few of these pupils reaching the standards of which they are capable.

16. The management of pupils' behaviour is particularly good and is a principal reason why pupils' achievement has improved. Pupils now concentrate for good lengths of time and are encouraged by the very effective teaching assistants who show insight and understanding in their work with the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given good support and some pupils with particularly challenging behavioural problems are very well managed to minimise disruption to a class's learning. Whilst teachers plan some very effective links with ICT in subjects such as art and music, the unreliability of the present computers means that ICT is not used consistently to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. However, teachers of Year 6 pupils are making good use of a commercial mathematics program to challenge the higher-achieving pupils. Weaknesses in teachers' planning for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects has rightly been identified by the school as an area for development. At present, some worthwhile opportunities are being missed to integrate the development of these skills in other subjects. Homework has been successfully used by the headteacher to involve parents more in their children's learning. The joint design and technology projects, which are set each term, have generated great interest from pupils and parents. The school plans to build on the success of this initiative and to develop the use of homework further.

The curriculum

The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum. The accommodation and resources are good and give good support to the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An emphasis on personal and social education ensures good behaviour and attitudes and has a positive impact on the delivery of the curriculum.
- A strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills helps pupils to access other aspects of the curriculum.
- Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting the delivery of the curriculum.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- There are good opportunities for all pupils to participate in many interesting and stimulating activities in school time and after school. Participation in competitive sport and art projects is a particular strength.
- Technical difficulties are preventing pupils from using their ICT skills regularly to support their learning in other subjects.

Commentary

17. There has been good improvement to the curriculum since the school was in special measures and all statutory requirements are met. There is a well planned overview of the curriculum by senior staff and staff expertise is used effectively in planning for the different age groups. The school has made good use of the expertise of the local Education Action Zone (EAZ) to develop the curriculum. Further planned support will come from the Edison UK project, which will support the school in its planning for the development of pupils' skills through the curriculum.
18. The curriculum in English and mathematics is based on national strategies that are now established and have been modified appropriately. A good emphasis is given to developing pupils' speaking, listening and social skills and this has improved their attitudes to learning and helped to raise standards. Planning is now stronger and pupils needs are more effectively met. The curriculum is supplemented by Early Reading Research (ERR) and Early Numeracy Research (ENR), and this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2. However, this very formal approach is not as effective for the less mature children in the reception class. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are

taught in three sets that are grouped by ability. This organisation for numeracy lessons is helping to improve pupils' progress. The school is rightly considering extending this organisation into the other year groups.

19. Schemes of work and policies for the effective delivery of all curriculum subjects are in place and are subject to regular review. A useful partnership with the National Health Service and support from EAZ funding has resulted in the development of sex education and drug education policies that are common to a group of local schools. The delivery of the resulting schemes is supported by visits by the school nurse and by visits to local support centres. The planning for pupils to use their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects has not been fully thought through and as a result there are limited examples of pupils developing these skills in other subjects. The school is aware of the need to address this. However, this limitation is sometimes offset by a focus being given to a particular activity, such as an educational visit or a whole-school focus, which incorporate many different subjects in meaningful ways. There are some good examples of ICT being used to support pupils' learning in other subjects. However, technical problems are at present restricting the way pupils use computers to help their learning.
20. Pupils with special educational needs receive their full entitlement to the curriculum and have full access to all extra-curricular activities. The ERR programme is having a positive impact on pupils' spelling, vocabulary and reading and is of particular benefit to lower attainers. Pupils with special educational needs normally work alongside other pupils in the classroom but occasionally are withdrawn for short periods. Pupils' targets are clearly identified in their individual education plans and teaching assistants work closely with class teachers to ensure that these are addressed. There is careful planning for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English.
21. The curriculum is enhanced by regular French lessons and a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly involving sport and the arts. After-school arts clubs, pre-school recorder groups, a school choir and guitar tuition are significant features of the school's provision. The school participates in a range of sporting activities with considerable success and has good links with Colchester United Football Club and the Essex County Cricket Club. Educational visits to Colchester and Ipswich, a residential visit for Year 5 pupils and involvement with local events contribute significantly to the enrichment of the curriculum and to pupils' personal development.
22. The school's accommodation is good and offers a range of opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities. A well-equipped community hall to which the school has access is very useful. Resources, overall, are satisfactory, but good in the Foundation Stage. The school makes very effective use of its recording equipment to link ICT and the arts and to make recordings of pupils' own music. Recruitment of new teachers is a problem for the school, but some really well-focused training has helped the school to develop a most effective group of teaching assistants who make a considerable contribution to the pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of provision for the pupils' care is good. The school has established good and effective procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Teachers provide good support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school involves pupils well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very conscientious in its child protection.
- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their pupils' individual needs. The day-to-day care and concern, which the headteacher and the staff show for all their pupils, are good.

- Support for pupils with behavioural problems is good.
- Individual pupils are well cared for and supported in their personal development.
- Induction arrangements for Foundation Stage children are very good.

Commentary

23. The school is a happy, harmonious and caring community, providing a safe, secure and caring environment for its pupils. The culture of care and service to the community has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. This is confirmed by positive comments from the parents. A strong ethos of care and consideration for others permeates the whole school community.
24. Staff pay meticulous attention to protecting pupils from any harm and promoting their health, safety and well-being to a high standard. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and respond to their needs. All staff provide good role models by demonstrating ways of working co-operatively in classrooms and about the school, welcoming visitors, and being consistently courteous in their personal relationships. Good rapport exists amongst the pupils. The school ethos instils a sense of fairness and justice, trust and friendship between teachers and pupils.
25. The school has established good links with all the support agencies involved with child protection. The headteacher envisages that one of the members of the senior management team will be trained in child protection procedures in the near future to act as a substitute during her absence. The programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship, makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, which teachers monitor informally but effectively. An evaluation of pupils' attitudes and the rigour with which they pursue their academic work are included in the annual reports to parents. The school makes effective use of strategies to instil compassion for other less fortunate people both within the United Kingdom and overseas.
26. There are very good induction procedures for pupils' entry into the reception class. Every effort is made to ensure the welcome and induction of pupils entering the school at times other than the normal point of entry. There are sound procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress, with some very effective procedures in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Support for pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is good, with the school working successfully to ensure that these pupils are well integrated into the school community. The school's support for pupils with disruptive behaviour is rigorous and effective. Pupils make a positive contribution to the work of the school and its development through the school council. The school diligently considers pupils' suggestions and, at times, implements them; for example, representatives helped in the formulation of a questionnaire for pupils. This extends pupils' understanding of different points of view and broadens their understanding of citizenship.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of school's links with parents is good. The quality of links with the local community and other schools is good and help to enrich the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have expressed very positive views about the school.
- The school's purposeful links with parents and the community serve the pupils well.
- The school consults with and involves parents increasingly in its work, and provides good information about the school community, and their children's achievement.
- Parents encourage their children's full participation in extra-curricular activities, especially sports, music and arts.
- Positive links ease the transfer of pupils to secondary schools.

- Very few parents help in classroom.

Commentary

27. The school's partnership with parents is good and has improved since the last inspection. Parents' questionnaire responses show that they believe that their children enjoy school, behave well and make good progress. They also indicate that the school is approachable and has high expectations. They feel that the headteacher takes every opportunity to involve them in the life of the school. Some parents' concerns about the quality of information about children's progress and bullying were fully investigated by the inspectors who felt there was not a problem in either area.
28. Most parents value the consultation meetings with teachers, where targets are set, and the attendance at these meetings is usually high. Parents appreciate that they can approach individual teachers or the headteacher and the issues and concerns are resolved promptly with care and sensitivity. The school office staff contribute well to this accessibility. Parents provide practical support for their children's homework, especially in the construction of three-dimensional models and mosaics. A small group of dedicated parents helps to raise funds through the Mayflower Association for the benefits of the pupils.
29. A good quality and range of information is provided in a monthly newsletter to parents, including administrative and pastoral arrangements and curriculum guidance. Parents are well informed about their children's achievements and school activities. Detailed and comprehensive reports inform parents about their children's academic achievements and provide comments about attitudes and personal development. The school organises family learning workshops in reading, literacy and numeracy for the benefit of parents and their children in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. The school has established good procedures for involving and informing parents whose children have special educational needs. Parents are invited to all review meetings. They are well informed of progress and can speak informally at any time to the teacher or the special needs co-ordinator. They are alerted when problems occur.
30. Most pupils transfer to a local secondary school, and a few to schools further afield. All these pupils are well prepared for their next phase of education as they attend induction and 'taster' days. The school and community work in harmony and enjoy good links; for example, parents and the community jointly attended the Mayflower Art Gallery, organised by the school in the summer. The school's increased involvement, with both the local church and in the community, led to the school choir to singing at the Christmas Carol Service, and participating in the British Legion Concert and 'Rhyme against Crime'. The local pre-school group also uses the school premises once a week.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the leadership of other key staff is good. Governance and management are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads very effectively and, with the help of a united staff team, manages the ongoing development of the school very well.
- Governors know the school very well and have strong links with staff.
- School has improved its self-evaluation procedures and there is particularly good tracking of pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6.
- The leadership and management in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and ICT are good.
- There are very good systems to support new staff and ensure the ongoing professional development of existing staff.
- The monitoring role of the subject co-ordinator needs further development.

Commentary

31. This is an improving school due to the very good and effective leadership of the headteacher. She is well supported by staff and governors. Standards are rising and are now average in all subjects, except English throughout the school and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Appropriate strategies are in place to raise standards in English and evidence during the inspection suggests that these are beginning to bear fruit. Pupils are making good progress in most subjects and achievement is generally good. The headteacher has the highest aspirations and ambitions for the school and is rightly recognised as the leading light in the school's improvements since the last inspection. Very regular monitoring of pupils' work and classroom practice has gained her a very good and accurate perception of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Her 'walk the talk' management style has resulted in clearly-focused changes, which have resulted in a balance of teaching strengths through the school and improvements to the pupils' achievements. The headteacher is very effective in the way she involves all staff and governors in the decision-making process.
32. The headteacher worked very closely with her deputy, who recently left the school. He has instigated computer assessment and tracking procedures which are giving the school much clearer information about how well pupils are achieving. This program is also highlighting the groups where focused support is needed for pupils to reach their full potential. At present this work is particularly well developed in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' progress is being tracked very carefully towards their end-of-year targets. The school has made particularly good use of its membership of an Education Action Zone in improving its all round provision.
33. The management of the school is good and is being continually developed alongside focused training. The role of the co-ordinator has been well developed, with most of the co-ordinators of the main subjects showing good leadership and management skills. At present, most of co-ordinators' monitoring is of teachers' planning and pupils' work and this is giving them some clear insight into the subjects' strengths and weaknesses. It is recognised that co-ordinators need to develop their classroom monitoring skills. A new school management structure has very recently been put in to place and will be supported and developed with the help of commercial management and curriculum specialists. Particular emphasis will be placed on the further development of the role of subject co-ordinator in the area of monitoring teaching and learning. Good improvements in management since the last inspection have given staff a much more secure understanding of how the school is expected to run, and this policy is carried out in a consistent fashion. This is particularly so in the area of behaviour management, which is now a strength of the school.
34. The governance of the school is now good and significant improvements have been made in recent years. Governors bring a good range of skills to their role and provide good support for the work of the school. They have worked closely with the headteacher in the many developments that have taken place in recent years. Governors now have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they visit on a regular basis. They observe lessons and share their findings with the governing body. Future plans to develop the effectiveness of their monitoring include carrying out joint lesson observations with subject co-ordinators. Governors make good use of both parent and pupil questionnaires when taking decisions and working with the school on its development planning. Governors have been particularly proactive in helping the school manage its budget during a time of falling rolls and staff turnover. They have a very good understanding of the value for money principles and have applied these most effectively in improving the school's learning environment.
35. The school has developed good self-evaluation procedures and uses these most effectively to draw up the improvement plan priorities. The views of governors, staff and parents are carefully considered and, together with information from the school's monitoring systems, enable the school to set specific targets for its developments. These have a direct impact on the school's provision and ultimately pupils' achievement. The close and effective teamwork

that the school has developed is reflected in the very good arrangements for the support of newly-qualified teachers and the ongoing development of other staff. Performance management is well implemented and linked effectively to priorities in the school's development plan. The government's initiative on workforce reform has been particularly well implemented and the high quality training of the school's teaching assistants has enabled teachers to be released from their classes for planning future work and monitoring pupils' progress.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	803,656	Balance from previous year	63,411
Total expenditure	816,616	Balance carried forward to the next	50,451
Expenditure per pupil	2,970		

36. The headteacher and experienced office manager, together with the governors' finance committee, manage the budget very carefully to ensure that sufficient money is available to finance developments. Much of the higher than average carry forward into the present year was earmarked to maintain the staffing structure during a time of falling rolls.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage has remained good since the last inspection. The atmosphere is one of warmth and welcome. Attainment on entry is below average. A significant number of children start the Foundation Stage with poor language and personal and social skills. A portfolio of photographs demonstrated the wide range of learning opportunities that the children experience. Due to the good standard of teaching, the majority of pupils are expected to achieve their early learning goals² by the end of the reception year, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and also physical development, where many will exceed them.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is planned in detail to ensure that not only the adult directed sessions are focused on the learning, but also that the carefully planned and appropriately resourced child-initiated activities give children sufficient time and scope to develop their own lines of enquiry. There is a comprehensive assessment record-keeping system. This includes observational evidence to monitor the children's progress, which is used to highlight any gaps in the children's experiences so that these can be addressed.

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Until recently the school has been part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ). One of the EAZ initiatives has been to introduce Early Reading Research (ERR) and Early Numeracy Research (ERR) into the Foundation Stage in local schools. Lessons observed during the inspection showed that a significant minority of the less mature children did not respond well to this particular method of rote learning, resulting in limited achievement. However, the skilful teacher worked her way through these set programmes with pace and vigour using good strategies, working very hard so that all children had every chance of making an appropriate response. The project is the subject of careful monitoring and evaluation. There are good links with the on-site pre-school, which makes for a smooth transition from one setting to the next. Teachers make home visits that parents appreciate greatly. Many come into school to the weekly book sharing sessions and then continue their interest in supporting children's learning by becoming parent helpers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good. Staff act as very good role models.
- Good routines are in place so that children know what is expected of them.
- Staff work consistently so that children learn to behave well and are supportive of one another.

Commentary

37. The combination of very good teaching and relationships and high priority given to personal and emotional development ensures that children achieve very well and make very good gains in their learning in this area. Most children are expected to achieve beyond the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. Children know what is expected of them and respond very well to the good organisation in the classroom. Daily routines are made clear and expectations in regard to behaviour are consistent. Therefore, children are polite and behave well. They have learnt to take turns, and share with others, to listen and interact with adults and with other children pleasantly and kindly. For example, when two pupils were using

² Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the six areas of learning. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

building blocks to construct beds for the *three bears*, they co-operated well, comparing their achievements in a positive and friendly way. Children change for physical activities on their own and manage their personal hygiene. They follow instructions carefully, organise themselves for their activities and clear away sensibly.

COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High priority is given to promoting speaking and listening in all areas of learning.
- Children are given good experiences from a wide range of books in order to develop their imagination, their knowledge and their motivation to both read and write.
- Some children regularly lose concentration during the whole-class ERR sessions.

Commentary

38. Children achieve well in this area and their communication skills are improving steadily due to careful planning of a wide range of activities and the good role modelling from all adults in reception. When their interest is engaged, the children listen attentively, responding well to what they have heard by relevant questions or observations. Most respond in phrases, but an increasing number use sentences. Well-planned independent activities extend children's vocabulary further through role-play and talk. Teaching is good, with good questioning skills by the teacher helping children recall stories in the correct sequence, understand the role of characters and develop their vocabulary as they are introduced to unfamiliar words. The children's knowledge of letter sounds and key words are taught through the ERR programme of two 15 minutes sessions every day. The learning of the less mature children, is diminished as they lose concentration after a short while. However, the teacher models writing effectively, showing children how to create sentences and form their letters, with many children able to write their own names. Higher ability children use their phonic skills effectively to write regular words. Some are even successful at building more complex words as they link sounds and letters together. Carefully planned experiences for developing confidence and skills in early writing are part of the daily routine. Most children make good gains in their learning and will reach the early learning goals by the time they move on to Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good gains in their learning, with most successfully counting to ten.
- Opportunities for the development of thinking and problem-solving skills are planned and resourced well.

Commentary

39. Mathematical development is promoted well through puzzles, number and shape recognition activities. The role-play area presents many opportunities for children to play with measurement, size and shape in the very well equipped house for the *three bears*. During the inspection, this area was supported effectively by the teaching assistant who, through her skilful questioning, was able to draw out the mathematical language and learning from children of all abilities in the class. Most children achieve well and will reach the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of their reception year. The quality of teaching is good, with the teacher leading whole-class sessions through the ENR rote learning programme. This introduces children to new concepts and teaches the vocabulary particular to that

programme. There are also planned opportunities for the development of thinking and problem-solving skills. Many children can count to ten and more, some have learnt to record their numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many good opportunities for children to learn to grow and develop their knowledge and understanding of their world.
- Good resources support this area of learning well.

Commentary

40. Teaching is good in this area and the whole learning environment provides many exciting opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result children achieve well and make good gains in their learning. The courtyard space is used very well by the staff to develop the children's learning out of doors. It provides ample space for children to set up imaginative environments in the sand while the extra classroom indoors is used effectively for cooking activities, such as making porridge for the *three bears*. During the inspection, the cooking session was particularly well led by the teaching assistant who led the children in a scientific investigation of change brought about through mixing ingredients, heating the mixture and finally tasting the porridge. Children added sugar, salt and finally honey to small samples of their porridge; they recorded their results on a simple chart using smiley or sad faces depending on how each sample made them feel. Children understand how things work as they build from a good range of large and small construction toys. They are very interested in the large globe and picture atlas, and are encouraged to talk freely about their families, where they live, and about their holiday experiences. As a result of the good range of experiences, the great majority of pupils will reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and physical development is a positive strength.
- Resources for both physical and imaginative play out of doors are very good.

Commentary

41. Children make very good progress in their physical development and achieve very well in all areas. Children move with good control as they balance on stilts, throw and catch balls and other small equipment. The good quality resources, including the many wheeled vehicles, allow them to use aerobic energy pedalling, pushing and pulling one another along. The street furniture allows children to set up environments, such as routes with ramps, petrol stations, traffic lights and road crossings. They respect each other and are aware of the space around them. For example, one little boy concentrated hard as he backed his "train", a three-wheeled tricycle, "into the sidings to couple up with my carriages", while other children took a cycle route that avoided bumping into him. Fine motor skills are developed well through a wide range of activities where children can practise the formation of their letters, cut, glue, trace, and complete puzzles. At the end of the reception year, children will have made particularly good gains in their learning, because of the very well planned provision, and standards are higher than average.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- Opportunities for imaginative role-play are particularly good and children achieve very well in this area.
- Children have access to a wide range of resources to develop their creativity

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are good, resulting in the great majority of children meeting the early learning goals by the end of reception. The children are enthusiastic and enjoy their work. They take a pride in what they can do and are keen to talk about it to others. Activities are planned carefully in order that children can express themselves through drawing using a variety of media such as felt pens on white boards or crayons on paper and card. They enjoy using malleable materials such as playdough. The children are given opportunities to explore colour, texture and work with a wide range of materials and techniques. For example, the display of animal pictures in the woods, using painting and natural materials for collage, is most effective. Imaginative well-planned and resourced role-play is particularly well developed, both inside in the *three bears*' house and also outside through the use of hats and dressing-up kits, prams and trolleys.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan lessons well, have high expectations of pupil behaviour and are enthusiastic about pupils' learning.
- There are very good opportunities for speaking and listening.
- There is good support for pupils' learning during lessons.
- Standards of written work, including presentation, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary, are unsatisfactory.
- There are inconsistencies in standards of marking.
- There is insufficient frequency and regularity in the setting of extended writing across the curriculum.

Commentary

43. This is an improving school where English is concerned, because effective strategies have been put into place to raise standards. Throughout the school, pupils are now achieving well, although coming from a low starting point, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. Although, over the years, results have been consistently well below average throughout the school, standards have risen in Years 1 and 2 and are now average in reading and speaking and listening but below average in writing. The strategies the school has put into place have not yet had time to impact fully on Year 2 pupils' standards since they left the reception class. National test results have been consistently well below the national average in writing and below the national average in reading. However, the results for Year 2 pupils in 2004 showed an improvement and, when compared with similar schools, were average in reading but below average in writing. Standards for the present Year 6 have

shown a good improvement since the last inspection although they are still below average, overall. Pupils are achieving well and have made good gains in both their reading and writing since they took national tests at the end of Year 2. Overall standards in English have been consistently well below the national average at the end of Year 6, with the 2004 results showing a particularly low proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels. However, there is now a good increase in the proportion of the present Year 6 pupils working at the higher levels.

44. The school has placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. The use of 'talk partners' is particularly effective in Years 1 and 2 and gives pupils opportunities in most lessons to develop these skills. Similarly, the use of drama to support learning is particularly effective in Years 3 to 6. These initiatives have resulted in good improvements in the pupils' speaking and listening skills, with pupils now achieving well through the school and attaining standards in speaking and listening that are in line with the national average.
45. The consistently good teaching of reading is leading to good gains in pupils' learning. Standards throughout the school are in line with the national average. The use of individual reading books is supervised effectively by experienced teaching assistants, who support teachers in keeping a regular check on pupils' attainment and progress. Reading records that go home daily offer clear advice to parents about how they can help at home and the support of parents is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils generally enjoy reading, but their knowledge of books and authors is limited. Many older pupils make good use of local libraries for additional material to read at home.
46. Teaching throughout the school is good and often very good. In Years 1 and 2 teachers plan lessons well, maintain a very good pace in their teaching and provide stimulating and interesting lessons. Pupil behaviour is very well managed and pupils are well supported by the class teacher and teaching assistants. As a result, pupils remain focused, are interested in what they are doing and learn well. The use of an Early Reading Research scheme is having a positive impact on pupils' spelling, vocabulary and reading.
47. In Years 3 to 6, lessons are well planned and most have good pace. Pupil behaviour is generally very well managed and teaching is enthusiastic. Teachers are good role models and have high expectations. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and achieve well. Careful thought is given to the arrangement for working groups to enable pupils of differing skills, gender and attainment to benefit from working together. This is good inclusive practice and has a positive impact on pupils' personal and social development. Good opportunities for pupils to comment on their own learning and that of their peers at the end of lessons successfully reinforces learning. It is also used effectively by teachers to assess the pupils' progress in a lesson and the effectiveness of their own teaching. Throughout the school there are some examples of very good marking where teachers' comments are clearly related to pupils' personal and class targets and give clear guidance on how pupils can improve. This good practice is, however, not consistent in all class, resulting in groups of pupils being unclear about what aspect of their work they should focus on next.
48. Examples of writing of a high standard are on display throughout the school, but these standards are not reflected in pupils' books. Standards of presentation are often unsatisfactory, including a frequent lack of joined writing by average and higher attainers in Years 3 to 6. Standards of spelling and vocabulary are variable through the school. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. Higher-achieving pupils are not being consistently challenged and too few are reaching the higher levels.
49. The leadership and management by the co-ordinator are good. There are some good processes in place for the monitoring of teaching and learning. Whilst assessment is satisfactory, overall, a good process for assessing and tracking pupils' progress has been established in Years 5 and 6 and is now being extended throughout the school. The half-termly monitoring of writing samples is very good practice and information from these

assessments is being used by teachers to modify their future planning. There is good planning across year groups, where effective use is made of individual teachers' expertise in the different phases. Display throughout the school is well used to support pupils' learning, with exemplars of good work to which pupils can aspire and which celebrate pupils' achievements. Word banks and interactive displays also support learning well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. While there are a number of examples of the use of English across the curriculum the use of extended writing is limited in frequency and regularity. Much writing in other subjects is limited to labelling charts and diagrams and opportunities for extended writing are sometimes missed by the inappropriate use of photocopied material that offers little challenge. Older pupils have used ICT for some editing of text and producing poems, but there is little display of word-processed materials around the school and little evidence in books and folders.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and this is enabling the great majority of pupils to achieve well.
- Subject leadership and management are good and have improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching assistants are very well qualified and provide very good support for pupils.
- The more able pupils in Year 2 are not sufficiently well challenged and older pupils' knowledge of tables is not secure.

Commentary

51. The great majority of pupils achieve well by the end of both Years 2 and 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now below average in Year 2, but average in Year 6. Higher-achieving pupils in Year 6 are achieving well, but those in Year 2 should be doing better. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards were average compared with schools nationally, with an above average proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. However, the progress made by that year group since Year 2 was below average. In the tests for Year 2 pupils, standards were below average, but were average compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was well below average. The 2004 results for both Years 2 and 6 showed a good improvement over the previous year. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are making consistently good progress with the exception of the more able Year 2 pupils, who are not reaching their full potential. Evidence from the inspection shows that Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their end-of-year targets and that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. However, the presentation of pupils' work is often untidy, with too much being done on pieces of paper rather than in books.
52. Throughout the school, teachers have been successful in their efforts to improve pupils' number skills, with pupils showing good confidence in the way they use numbers. This confidence has been helped by the school's 'maths detective' approach to problem-solving, which has given pupils increased confidence to tackle maths problems. Although they are making good progress, Year 2 pupils' basic numeracy skills are still below average. Year 1 pupils are taught in three mixed ability Years 1 and 2 classes. The Year 1 higher-achieving pupils benefit from these arrangements and are making noticeable progress in their work. However, the wide spread of ability in the Years 1 and 2 classes results in the higher-achieving Year 2 pupils not being consistently challenged in lessons. As a result, too few are reaching the higher levels. The school is rightly considering the introduction of grouping pupils by ability in these three classes to address this weakness.

53. By Year 6, the pupils solve mental calculations involving all four number operations reasonably accurately but are slowed by their insecure knowledge of multiplication tables. They recognise equivalent fractions and understand their relationship with percentages and decimals. Lower-attaining pupils have good knowledge of coordinates but have difficulties with multiplication and division processes. The early morning mental maths sessions are effective in reinforcing and revising pupils' previous knowledge. The pupils assess their own work using traffic light colours and this enables teachers to focus more accurately in their follow-up work. Pupils' progress is enhanced by some high quality marking, which not only informs the pupils how well they have understood the work of the lesson, but also what they need to do to improve their work. However, not all the teachers' marking is of the same standard, resulting in some pupils not being clear how they can improve. Higher-achieving pupils are making good progress and are also benefiting from regular access to a challenging computer program.
54. Pupils enjoy lessons because teaching is good and enables them to build effectively on their previous learning. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school has received very good support from the teaching mentors from the Education Action Zone and this has had a significant impact on the teachers' confidence and subject knowledge. A notable proportion of teaching observed was very good and enabled pupils to make considerable progress in these lessons. Assessment is satisfactory, overall, but the results of assessments are being used particularly well in Years 5 and 6 to track pupils' progress towards their end-of-year targets. This detailed tracking enables the teachers to identify groups of pupils who are in need of extra support. Well-focused support from the very experienced teaching assistants is then used to help these pupils address their weaknesses. A significant minority of pupils has been identified through this process and have benefited from this extra teaching.
55. Teachers plan well from the satisfactory curriculum and give a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' mental strategies and their problem-solving skills. They share the lesson's learning objectives with the pupils, so that they are well aware of what is expected of them. Teachers and the teaching assistants work very effectively together in managing the pupils' behaviour, leading to very few interruptions in lessons. Where pupils are grouped by ability in Years 3 and 4, mental mathematics sessions move along at a brisk pace. The narrower ability range in these classes enables the teachers to challenge all the pupils successfully and particularly the most able, whose number skills are above average. In a very good lesson, pupils were confidently multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100 in their heads and working confidently to two decimal places. Most lessons have good pace, with the best having clear time limits for activities. In the very best lessons, teaching is really dynamic and this ensures a very positive response from the pupils. The teachers make good use of practical resources to enhance the learning of younger pupils but little use is at present made of computers to reinforce learning because of technical problems.
56. Subject leadership and management are good and have improved since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has some clear ideas as to how standards and achievement can be raised further. She checks the quality of planning and does some monitoring of teaching with the headteacher. A new management training initiative has been put into place to develop her skills further to enable her to monitor teaching and learning independently. A careful analysis of national test results is made to help the school judge its present strengths and weaknesses and adjust the curriculum accordingly. There is a clear action plan, which seeks to raise standards further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. The pupils make some good use of their mathematical skills such as in design and technology and ICT. However, the school rightly accepts that teachers need to plan more formally to ensure that pupils are given more opportunities to consolidate and develop their numeracy skills in a wider range of contexts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Achievement by the end of Year 6 is improving steadily.
- Tracking of individual pupil's progress is not sufficiently rigorous in Years 1 to 4.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic, with a clear vision for the future of science in the school.

Commentary

58. Lesson observations show that standards have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with national averages throughout the school. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 but progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6, where pupils achieve well. Teacher assessment for last year's Year 2 pupils showed that whilst most pupils reached the expected standards, no pupils gained the higher levels. The national tests for last year's Year 6 pupils showed an improvement over previous years, particularly in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels. However, overall standards were still below average.
59. Teaching is good, overall. Teachers plan carefully and their lessons use a good range of strategies to develop pupils' understanding and knowledge. Lessons have pace and encourage children to stay focused. Pupils learn well because particular attention is paid to skilful questioning as part of the school's policy for developing thinking skills. Teachers ensure that pupils understand that science is part of their world, clearly seen when pupils in a Years 1 and 2 class learnt about movement and forces related to a variety of toys such as string puppets, a clockwork music box and a marble run. In this particular lesson, the teacher and teaching assistant used effective strategies to promote pupils' thinking, encouraging the pupils to use the appropriate scientific language, which had been taught earlier. Investigative work is at the heart of most pupils' work. Teachers plan this work carefully and present it in a variety of ways to make the pupils' learning interesting and fun. In a particularly effective Years 3 and 4 lesson, pupils were fascinated by a high quality *power point* presentation on the subject of how light travels. The subject matter was brought alive not only through slides of disco lights on the interactive whiteboard, but also through the use of electronic equipment taken from the performing arts resources. The school makes good use of its *critical skills strategy*, whereby pupils work together to reason and find out why certain things happen. This technique is popular with pupils, encourages good debate, reinforces pupils' use of correct technical vocabulary and makes a good contribution to the development of their social development. However, a downside of the use of this strategy is that pupils record insufficient personal work and relevant opportunities for using writing and ICT in science are missed. This is particularly the case for the older pupils.
60. Assessment is satisfactory, overall. Whilst teachers' marking is also satisfactory it lacks consistency. Marking is largely by means of ticks and positive encouragement. However, in some books, pupils are told when they have achieved the lesson's objective and advice is given as to how they can improve their work further. Occasionally, relevant questions are posed by teachers but are not always answered by pupils and opportunities for further learning are lost. In the school's overall drive to raise standards, work samples have been scrutinised and assessment tests in Years 5 and 6 have been analysed. This good practice is not yet in place throughout the whole school.
61. Although she has only recently taken up this post, the subject leader provides good leadership and management and has a clear vision for taking the subject forward. There is a good subject action plan, with clear plans as to how the tracking of individual pupils' progress in science is to be improved through regular assessments for all years, building on the good practice currently found in the Foundation Stage. She monitors teachers' medium-term plans

regularly and produces a termly report on strengths and areas for development, which is shared with the headteacher and governors.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good** and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- There are high standards in Year 4.
- There is innovative use of computers in real-life situations.
- The present computers are no longer powerful enough to access the school's wide range of programs.

Commentary

62. Standards, which have been maintained since the last inspection, are generally average throughout the school and all pupils, including those with special education needs and those with English as an additional language, are achieving well. Pupils' word processing and communication skills are above expectations at the end of Year 6. Whilst there are some very good links with other subjects, the technical specifications of the computers is restricting pupils' ability to access the wide range of programs to support their learning.
63. By the end of Year 2, pupils show good skills in their word processing and confidently change the font, size and colour of their work. They show a good understanding of a paint program, clearly seen in their Christmas card designs. They use the Internet confidently to support their work in subjects such as science and geography. Teachers and teaching assistants in Years 1 and 2 have benefited from good quality training and are now confident to teach all aspects of the curriculum. Standards are above average at the end of Year 4 and very high in areas such as graphics and control. These pupils use computers in highly innovative ways, including superimposing digital images of themselves on patterns they have designed in art and taking part in the recording of a CD. Year 6 pupils have good communication skills, satisfactory data-handling skills and above average skills in graphic modelling. They understand how to make PowerPoint presentations and make good use of the Internet to find information, such as that for their Victorian topic.
64. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils enjoy lessons, behave well and have a clear understanding of how computers aid their learning. They enjoy the collaborative aspect of the subject, which makes a good contribution to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Most teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in a group situation. The school has developed a good curriculum, which, wherever possible, enables pupils to use their ICT skills for practical purposes in school, as when pupils in the drama club program the computer to operate the stage lighting system. The curriculum is enhanced for the older pupils by an annual residential visit where ICT is a main feature. The school is fortunate to have a co-ordinator with excellent subject knowledge. He has led the subject well in the short time he has been in post. He has rightly identified the need to simplify the assessment and recording systems used to track pupils' progress and the need for upgrading the school computers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. There is some excellent use of computers to support pupils' learning, particularly in art and in music. However, the school is experiencing technical difficulties at the moment and frequent system crashes are undermining teachers' confidence to make the best use of the good range of cross-curricular programs the school has built up. As a result, pupils are not using computers to aid their learning in other subjects nor having regular opportunities to consolidate and extend their computer skills.

HUMANITIES

66. No lessons were seen in history and only one in geography and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on provision in these subjects. Standards in history and geography have improved since the last inspection.
67. In **geography**, samples of pupils' work indicate that standards are in line with national expectations. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of field trips, both local and residential. Leadership and management of the subject are good, and the co-ordinator's good subject monitoring ensures that pupils are taught the full range of the National Curriculum requirements. Her portfolio contains a comprehensive record of the work covered and the various field trips that have been organised. She has drawn up a good action plan, which correctly includes a focus on developing mapping skills further.
68. Standards are in line at the end of Year 6 in **history**. Discussions with older pupils and scrutiny of their work indicate they have studied a range of major civilisations, including Greeks, Romans and Vikings, and the Tudor and Victorian periods. Pupils' recall of historical facts is limited and there is only a limited amount of history on display. However, there are good links with design and technology, resulting in some high quality models of Tudor houses and Victorian theatres, a result of homework projects in which parents and pupils are successfully encouraged to work together. Some good links with art were seen when pupils made and decorated Greek vases. Educational visits are used well, with visits to the local town of Colchester providing a good focus to reinforce pupils' learning. Written work in history is limited, apart from some extended writing about the Victorians. However, this should improve as the school has now identified the need to develop writing across the curriculum as a point for development. Pupils make good use of the Internet for historical research on the Tudors and Victorians.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**, but there are a number of areas for improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give careful thought to the planning of lessons.
- Pupils are well supported during lessons.
- The few displays of religious education work around the school do not adequately reflect the diversity of a multi-faith society.
- The school's recent focus on developing oracy skills and the use of drama has resulted in limited written work in the subject.
- Pupils have limited recall of what they have studied.

Commentary

69. Discussions with pupils and analysis of their books, indicate that standards are in line with the locally agreed syllabus, although pupils' recall of different faiths other than Christianity and the one they are currently studying is limited. However, some progress has been made since the last inspection, when standards were below average. Although pupils achieved satisfactorily,

overall, in one of the two lessons seen, pupils achieved well and made good progress in their learning. Achievement for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is satisfactory.

70. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. Whilst teachers plan appropriate links to other areas of learning, the essential focus of a lesson is occasionally obscured by trying to incorporate too many related elements, such as happened in a Years 1 and 2 lesson on Noah. In the other lesson, although the social aspects of the group work were important, there were times when these became the focus of the lesson. However, despite these weaknesses, these pupils showed enthusiasm for the task they had been set and a developing understanding of aspects of the Hindu faith.
71. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very well managed and the pupils are well supported in their learning. Pupils show interest in what they are doing and are well motivated by the teachers, who are good role models. There is very limited display of religious education around the school and limited work in pupils' books, particularly the multi-faith aspects. A lack of written work in religious education contributes to pupils' weakness in being able to recall what they have learnt. Some tasks and worksheets provide too little challenge and opportunities are missed for pupils to use their writing skills. However, the work that is displayed is of a satisfactory standard.
72. Although there are limited opportunities to visit a variety of places of worship in the area, good links have been established with the local church. Whilst these are at an early stage of development, they should provide opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. The subject leader left the school at the end of last term and the leadership and management of the temporary co-ordinator is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. No lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology, and only one lesson in music. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement on provision in these subjects.
74. In **art and design**, work was sampled and a scrutiny made of the many displays around the school. Evidence indicates that pupils have a good range of artistic experiences and activities and that standards are in line with national expectations. Displays are carefully set out to arouse pupils' interest and curiosity. For example, work such as that based on Aboriginal art used paint and sand and was accompanied by pupils' writing describing their own imaginative journeys. The beautiful and moving mosaic created in memory of a pupil who died last year is the result of representatives from the whole school community coming together to express their feelings at the loss of this child. This project was supported by a local artist from the adjacent adult centre. The subject is led very enthusiastically by the headteacher who provides training every term based on a picture from the National Gallery collection. The whole school puts this training into practice by studying in detail the agreed picture and by trying out various techniques with different media to produce their own two- and three-dimensional work. Recently, they have been studying Rousseau's 'Tiger in a Tropical Storm'. There are some particularly good links with ICT clearly shown in some dramatic portraits created by the merging of pupils' patterns with digital photographs.
75. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of work, indicate that standards are in line with national expectations in **design and technology**. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and enjoy its practical nature. The school uses a national scheme of work but has identified that it needs to integrate the subject further with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils use a satisfactory range of materials. They understand the importance of designing before making and realise that honest evaluations of their finished product will help in future work. The most innovative aspect of the subject is the termly homework projects, which are completed jointly by pupils and their parents. The quality of the Victorian puppet theatres, complete with characters, and the Tudor houses, is very high and pupils are rightly proud of their efforts. One of the highlights of this work is when parents show off their finished products with their children in a

special assembly. The co-ordinator is very new to the subject but has identified that the present policy needs updating and assessment criteria need to be put in place to measure both pupils' progress and the standards of their work.

76. The observation of one lesson, listening to pupils sing in assembly and conversations with pupils, indicate that standards in **music** are in line with those normally expected by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a good sense of rhythm, pitch and pulse. Pupils enjoy singing; they are tuneful and show a clear understanding of dynamics. A small school choir sings in assemblies and takes part in annual concerts and community activities, such as visits to an old people's home. There is some good extra-curricular provision, including four recorder groups, the school choir, a performing arts club and a small amount of peripatetic tuition on guitar. Links with ICT are very good. The school has its own recording equipment and uses it effectively. The school wrote, recorded and sold its own CD following the death of a pupil in the previous year. This project established a close link with the local British Legion Band. A nativity play by Years 1 and 2, a pantomime by Years 3 and 4, and a concert by Years 5 and 6, have involved musical performance by pupils throughout the school. There is a good level of musical expertise on the staff. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has correctly identified multicultural aspects of music as an area for further development.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn well from one another.
- The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities and inter-school competitions.

Commentary

77. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve well and standards are in line with national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards in swimming are average. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. Boys and girls work hard, are enthusiastic and achieve equally. They work well together with the subject making a good contribution to their social and moral development. By Year 2, pupils show good balancing skills when using different body parts to travel across the floor. Good use of demonstration and further practices enable pupils to improve the quality of their work. Higher-achieving pupils show particularly good skills and work to a high standard.
78. By Year 6, pupils understand the importance of physical exercise on their bodies. They work hard in lessons and enjoy practising skills to improve their personal performance. Pupils pass and catch large balls using a variety of techniques. They use space effectively and have a clear understanding of how small practices can be integrated into larger team games.
79. Teaching is good and enables all groups of pupils to achieve well. The teachers ensure that pupils are fully aware of the need for good discipline and awareness of safety. Teachers demonstrate techniques effectively and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Good use is also made of pupil exemplars to show how to improve. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were able to improve their shoulder passing, having observed a class member demonstrating this new technique. All groups of pupils are fully included in learning.
80. The school makes good use of its extensive facilities, having a large playground and playing fields and also access to a community hall, which is adjacent to the school. The well-planned curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of after-school clubs and by an extensive range of competitive matches against other local schools. The leadership role of the co-ordinator is

now good and has improved since the last inspection. He has built extensive links with local cricket, hockey, football and rugby clubs. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are given every encouragement to join the training offered by these clubs. The co-ordinator has identified the need to introduce a skills' assessment profile, which will enable teachers to record pupils' attainment and progress more formally through a year. This should enable teachers to build even more effectively on pupils' previous learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

81. Only two lessons were seen in **PSHCE** and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision. However, the available evidence about the way that the school integrates the subject into aspects of the school's work, indicates that the provision is good and has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and the way they treat one another. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and pupils have a very clear understanding of the need for rules and the importance of maintaining them. There are well-planned opportunities for them to take part in discussions and to develop social skills, such as learning to take turns, share, work and play together, and help each other. The older pupils are sensitive and caring in their support of the youngest pupils. The school has recently been awarded a 'Healthy School' status, highlighting aspects of its work in all aspects of PSHCE, with pupils having a very good knowledge about the importance of personal hygiene, diet and exercise. Sex education is dealt with sensitively in science lessons. Awareness of drug and alcohol abuse is carefully planned and taught in PSHCE lessons. Pupils have regular circle time to discuss issues that are important to them, and representatives from Year 2 onwards take part in a school council, which pupils rightly feel helps them play an active role in the life of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).