

INSPECTION REPORT

THOMAS WILLINGALE SCHOOL

Loughton, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115309

Headteacher: Mrs M Smith

Lead inspector: Mrs H Ranger

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 January 2005

Inspection number: 268108

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	473
School address:	The Broadway Loughton Essex
Postcode:	IG10 3SR
Telephone number:	020 8508 7287
Fax number:	020 8508 5364
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Merritt
Date of previous inspection:	28 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large foundation school. It has 473 pupils on its roll, between the ages of three and 11, including 90 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The school is situated in the Debden area of Loughton and most pupils come from the immediate area. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds that are below average overall. Five per cent come from a variety of minority ethnic groups and almost all of these pupils speak English as their first or main language. When children are admitted to the nursery, their attainment is below average, especially in important social and language skills. The proportion of pupils in the school identified with special educational needs is 17 per cent. This is in line with the national average and includes four pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. Pupil mobility is low and a smaller than average proportion of pupils moved into or out of the school last year, other than at the usual transfer times.

The school has found the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff difficult over recent years. It has addressed this by appointing a higher than usual number of unqualified staff, many of whom are training as teachers while working in the school. The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22223	Mrs H Ranger	Lead inspector	English as an additional language English French Music
14214	Mrs G Smith	Lay inspector	
23009	Mrs A Hogbin	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Citizenship Physical education
13805	Mrs L Lowery	Team inspector	Science Geography History Art and design Design and technology
23482	Mrs D Mackie	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Limited

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides an effective education for its pupils. Pupils learn well as a result of good teaching. Although their attainment on admission is often below average, they achieve well and reach standards that are at least in line with the national average in most subjects. The leadership and management of the school are good and its governance is satisfactory. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Effective teaching ensures that pupils achieve well in the nursery and Reception, and in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but not as strong as in the other age groups.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and overall personal development are good.
- A good senior management team, led by the energetic and committed headteacher, promotes effective teamwork among the staff.
- The curriculum is good and enriched very well by a wide range of extra activities.
- Attendance is well below the national average.
- Several subjects are not assessed rigorously enough to raise standards further.
- The governors do not ensure that rigorous risk assessments are completed and recorded.

The school has improved well since its last inspection. Pupils' performance in national tests is better, especially in Year 6 where results have improved faster than the national trend. The many good features noted in the previous report have been maintained, although attendance has fallen. The weaknesses in religious education, spiritual development, the monitoring of teaching, and communication with parents have been dealt with effectively. However, the school development plan still does not reflect in writing the good quality of strategic planning that takes place.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good. Although many start school with limited attainment in important language and social skills, pupils from all backgrounds make good progress. These include those with special educational needs and the small number whose first language is not English. By Year 6, pupils attain standards in the tested subjects that are at least in line with the national average and are often better than similar schools, as shown in the table above. The youngest children achieve well and are on course to meet the levels that are expected nationally by the end of the Reception year in all areas of learning, including their personal, social, language and mathematical development. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The current group of pupils in Year 2 attain average standards in mathematics but below average standards in reading and writing. This is because this year's group of pupils has a significant proportion with special learning needs. In Year 6, attainment is average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. In the school as a whole, standards are average in religious education and above average in information and communication technology (ICT) and in art. The inspection did not focus on other subjects.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. However, attendance is well below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are effective. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching is best in the nursery and Reception classes and in Years 3 to 6. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but teachers' expectations are not as high as in the other age groups and work is not as closely tailored to pupils' needs. Across the school, lessons are interesting and varied. Pupils' behaviour is managed well, ensuring that lessons are orderly and efficient. The teaching assistants give valuable support in all age groups, especially for pupils with special learning needs. Marking is regular but varies in quality between classes in how effectively it informs pupils of how well they have done. The overall tracking of pupils' progress is good in English, mathematics and science but is not structured enough in other subjects to provide teachers with useful information to plan as effectively as they could.

The curriculum is good and is enriched very well by a wide range of extra activities, such as clubs and visits, that contribute very effectively to pupils' overall development. Staff care for pupils well, but the systems to record risk assessments are not rigorous enough. There is a satisfactory partnership with parents, although many do not take full advantage of the opportunities offered to work more closely with the school in supporting their children's learning. Links with the local community are good and contribute to the quality of education for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives a strong lead to the school and is supported well by the senior staff. They monitor practice well, ensure good teamwork among the staff as a whole and have ensured that standards have risen well over recent years. They increasingly analyse many aspects of performance to enable the school to continue to move forward, although the lack of assessment procedures limits this in some subjects. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and monitor the budget well but need to increase their knowledge of the school to influence its continuing development more effectively. The school is a safe place to work in, but the governors need to ensure that their risk assessments are completed and recorded more formally.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are mainly very satisfied with the school. They feel that their children achieve well in a caring atmosphere, although a minority would like the school to consult them more. Pupils' views are mostly positive. They enjoy school, like their teachers and make good friends.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently high across the school;
- develop manageable ways of assessing and monitoring progress in the full range of subjects;
- improve attendance rates;
- develop more rigorous procedures for risk assessment.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage¹ and in Years 3 to 6. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Standards of attainment are average overall by Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their levels of attainment on admission to the school.
- Progress is best in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 because of effective teaching and learning.
- Attainment in mathematics, ICT and art is above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

Commentary

1. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils achieve well. Effective leadership and monitoring across the school are promoting the good provision and rising standards.
2. Children are catered for well in the Foundation Stage, settle quickly and make good progress. Achievement in personal, social and emotional development is very good. It is good in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. By the time they are in Reception, children are on course to meet the nationally expected goals in all areas of learning.
3. In the 2004 assessments of pupils in Year 2, compared both with schools nationally and with schools with similar intakes, results were above the national average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. The improvement in results over the past five years has been in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (15.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.7 (15.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.5 (17.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Inspection findings are that the pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily. Their progress is not as rapid as in other age groups because teachers do not cater as well for the full range of abilities. This is especially the case for the more capable pupils who need more challenge in some lessons. Attainment by Year 2 is below average in reading and writing. This is mainly because a high proportion of pupils in the year group have special educational needs and find learning difficult. Attainment is average in mathematics.
5. In 2004, the school's results in the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science, although the school did not meet the challenging targets it set in English and mathematics. Compared with schools whose pupils

¹ The Foundation Stage includes the nursery and Reception classes.

achieved similar scores when they were aged seven, the results were above average in all three subjects. Over the past five years, the school's results for this age group have improved at a faster rate than the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (28.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.6 (26.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.2 (29.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Inspection findings are that pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because they are taught well. The pupils currently in Year 6 achieve average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. This represents good progress in relation to their attainment when they were admitted to the school.
7. The school caters equally well for pupils from all backgrounds. Boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils with special educational needs do well because the teachers and teaching assistants plan work which meets these needs. The small proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make similar progress to other pupils in their classes. The very small number whose first language is not English have their learning needs supported well. In a few lessons, the most capable pupils are not challenged as much as they could be because teachers' expectations of them are not high enough.
8. In the other subjects that were inspected in detail, achievement is good in ICT and in art. Standards in religious education were a key issue for improvement from the last inspection; achievement is now satisfactory and pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There was insufficient evidence to judge overall attainment in other subjects. Samples of evidence indicate that pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory. In music and physical education in particular, the school offers pupils a wide range of additional activities that enhance their overall achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is well below average but their punctuality is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well during the school day. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond by being sensible and polite.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and enjoy taking part in the many activities provided.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are rigorous but some parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly.
- Pupils' social development is very good and relationships between pupils and with adults are warm and mutually supportive.
- Pupils' spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.

Commentary

9. The previous inspection found that pupils' behaviour and attitudes were good and this positive picture has been maintained. Teachers establish high standards of behaviour and pupils respond well to these. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy their time at school and they work

hard during lessons. Pupils are keen to make the most of the many opportunities provided and extra-curricular clubs are especially popular. Children in the Foundation Stage soon adapt to routines and gain appropriate social skills and confidence, so that they interact very well with one another and with adults.

10. Attendance was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, but it has since fallen and is now well below average. Although the school regularly reminds parents about the importance of regular attendance, the number of absences is relatively high. Most of the absences are the result of illness but some arise because parents book family holidays during the term. The school strongly discourages parents from doing this but a minority continue to do so. Monitoring procedures, however, are rigorous and any unexplained absences are always followed up on the first day. Pupils who have outstanding attendance receive congratulatory certificates at the end of each term.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.4	School data:	0.3
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

11. Pupils' social and moral development are promoted very well. The school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere and pupils share a strong sense of community. They are sensitive to each other's feelings and quick to provide support for those who are experiencing particular difficulty. Analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaire, however, shows that over half the pupils have concerns about the general standard of behaviour. In addition, a few parents expressed concern about the level of bullying. Inspectors followed up these issues with pupils who said that these responses do not accurately reflect everyday school life. Inspectors agree; bullying or harassment of any kind is not tolerated and teachers deal with any such incidents very promptly.

Exclusions

There was one permanent and two short-term exclusions during the most recent school year.

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	312	2	1
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0

Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	145	0	0

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

12. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, including multicultural aspects, is good and there has been effective action on the key issue from the last inspection. The school is keen to boost pupils' confidence and to broaden their horizons. For example, during the annual themed activities fortnight, Year 6 pupils visit places of interest such as York, Tower Bridge and a sea life centre in northern France. During assemblies and in religious education, pupils develop an appreciation of non-material values such as the importance of friendship and the family unit. They empathise with those who are less fortunate and generously support local and national charities. For example, the inspection took place just after the Indian Ocean tsunami and pupils contributed very significant sums of money to help those affected rebuild their lives.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory. There is an effective curriculum. The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. There is a satisfactory partnership with parents and good links with the wider community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The quality of the assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching promotes efficient learning in most age groups.
- Teachers do not plan as effectively in Years 1 and 2 as in other age groups to meet the needs of the full range of pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well throughout the school.
- The effectiveness of marking and target-setting with pupils varies too much between classes.
- Teaching assistants play a valuable role in pupils' learning.
- Progress in the core subjects² is assessed more effectively than in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	4 (11%)	19 (51%)	13 (35%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. Overall, the school has maintained the good quality of teaching identified by its previous inspection. However, while teaching and learning are good in the nursery and Reception classes and in Years 3 to 6, they are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The main reason for the difference is that the teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not have such consistently high expectations of their pupils. While they generally plan well for lower attaining pupils with special educational needs, they do not plan as effectively for the full range of attainments in

² The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

their class or set³. The impact of this is seen mostly among the more capable pupils in English and mathematics who are not challenged as much in their work as in other age groups.

³ The school groups pupils into 'sets' by attainment in the core subjects in Years 3-6.

14. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the Foundation Stage. Staff work together very well as a team to provide a carefully planned programme of stimulating activities that extends and enhances children's learning at a good rate. All staff have a secure understanding of the needs of young children, and they ensure that learning is a happy experience so that children are constantly interested and engaged. In Years 3 to 6, teachers use the setting arrangements well to cater for pupils of all attainments in English, mathematics and science. Effective use is made of specialist staff, especially in physical education, music and French. The ICT co-ordinator also supports teachers well in these age groups.
15. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers plan well for this group. The adaptation of lesson material, use of well-chosen computer programs and good support by teaching assistants enable these pupils to learn as well as their peers. However, the quality of ongoing observations and recording of how well pupils are doing in relation to the individual targets is inconsistent between classes.
16. Across the school as a whole, there are strengths in how the staff encourage and engage the pupils and in how positive relationships are formed. These ensure that pupils enjoy learning and are ready for new work. Behaviour is managed well so that pupils learn in an orderly atmosphere. The teaching assistants work closely alongside teachers to support the organisation and conduct of lessons and to give pupils extra adult attention. Teachers make effective use of cross-curricular links to ensure that learning is relevant and meaningful for pupils. This is seen particularly in the way that pupils combine their work in English, history and geography. Homework provision is good. As pupils move up the school, homework increases so that the older pupils extend their learning well at home.
17. In the report of the last inspection, the school was criticised for inconsistencies in the quality of its assessment procedures, including marking. While there have been improvements, provision is still too patchy. Pupils' work is marked regularly and there is a manageable system to provide more intensive marking periodically for individuals. The quality of marking and of teachers' oral and written comments are still variable. There are examples of very good practice that tell pupils how well they have done in relation to the main objective of a lesson or unit of work and what they need to do next, but this is not widespread enough to raise standards across the school. In the Foundation Stage, assessment is used very well. Effective procedures, based on national guidance and well linked to the stages of the nationally required curriculum, ensure that activities are well planned for all children, including those with special educational needs. In Years 1 to 6, teachers set targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy and carry out systematic assessments of National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science. However, in other subjects, there are no structured assessment procedures to help teachers to check what pupils have achieved and to inform short-term or longer-term planning.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils well. Enrichment of the curriculum is very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of learning opportunities significantly enriches pupils' learning and supports their personal development very well.
- A high proportion of pupils participates in the very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as their first language.
- The school is well staffed and resourced; well-maintained accommodation provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment, although the hall places constraints on teaching.

Commentary

18. There has been good improvement to the curriculum since the previous inspection. The key issue raised about provision for religious education has been addressed. Minor issues relating to the curriculum in history, geography and ICT have also been resolved. The structure and content of the curriculum are based upon national guidance and the school ensures that all subjects receive an appropriate allocation of time and emphasis. The activities result in a school where pupils make good progress and behave well. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is effective and closely follows national guidance and promotes the 'stepping stones' of learning outlined in the guidance. Staff focus appropriately on pupils' social and language development. The curriculum is enhanced very well through good use of the school grounds and a well-organised programme of visits and visitors.
19. As pupils move from Years 1 to 6, they are progressively placed in ability sets for English, mathematics and science. This system works well and has helped the school to improve significantly the standards of attainment. While pupils with special educational needs follow a similar curriculum to other pupils, teachers and their assistants carefully adapt the work they set other groups to ensure it meets individual needs. There is good attention to the needs of the small number of pupils who need extra help to learn English. They receive individual support from teachers and teaching assistants. The curriculum for personal, social, health education and citizenship is good and includes a programme of sex and relationships education for older pupils.
20. There is a stimulating range of enrichment activities during the school day. Weekly French lessons are provided for all pupils in Years 3 to 6. Activities, such as 'Superstudy' sessions help Year 6 to prepare for the national tests. Regular sessions of 'brain gym'⁴ prepare pupils mentally for learning; a themed activities fortnight for Year 6 and a wide range of extra-curricular activities engage pupils very effectively. There are also many well-planned educational visits, as well as visitors to the school, and these add enjoyment and depth to learning. This very good range of new experiences is effective in increasing pupils' self-confidence and their motivation to learn. From Year 3, about half the pupils regularly participate in extra-curricular sport and learn to play a musical instrument; these figures are high and reflect pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Singing and dance are also popular and the school ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to take part in the activities available. The curriculum ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
21. The accommodation, staffing and provision of learning resources of the school are all good overall, although the furniture in the nursery is old and drab. Classrooms are spacious and enhanced by attractive displays. Accommodation includes a purpose-built computer suite, music room and impressive library which are used well. Teaching is hampered by the school hall. This is too small and its use as a dining room means that not enough time is available to use it fully for physical education. The spacious grounds have been imaginatively developed to provide a valuable curricular resource and attractive play areas. The school is strongly committed to teacher training and several members of staff are currently being trained to become qualified class teachers. Specialist teachers are employed for gymnastics and physical education; their expertise contributes well to staff development and helps pupils to make good progress in these subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good, although not all are recorded satisfactorily. The school provides satisfactory support, advice and guidance and involves pupils well in its work and development.

⁴ 'Brain gym' is a series of short exercises aimed at ensuring pupils are mentally attentive and ready for lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils are well looked after during the school day, formal risk assessment procedures are inadequate.
- Pupils trust the adults in the school and say they would be able to confide in them, should any difficulties arise.
- Children entering the nursery and Reception classes are sensitively introduced to the school's routines.
- The school encourages pupils to voice their opinions and acts upon them whenever it can.

Commentary

22. Many of the strengths in care, support and guidance noted in the previous inspection report have been maintained. First aid procedures are comprehensive and pupils who feel ill during the school day are well looked after. The previous inspection commented on the lack of a child protection policy and the inadequacy of risk assessment procedures. A child protection policy has since been introduced and all members of staff receive regular training. Risk assessment procedures, however, continue to be limited in scope and lack formality. Pupils and staff work safely but the school does not conduct wide-ranging audits of all potential hazards. Activities in physical education and science need more attention.
23. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic achievements. During discussions, pupils say that they feel well looked after at school. These positive views are echoed by the pre-inspection questionnaire and nine out of ten pupils say they would feel able to go to an adult if they had a problem. There is a good awareness of the needs of pupils who have specific medical conditions and all members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.
24. There is a good induction programme for children and parents throughout the Foundation Stage, so that they feel welcome and the settling-in process is smooth and enjoyable. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Children from minority ethnic heritages are soon integrated into the life of the school, and support is good for children with special educational needs.
25. Four out of five of the pupils who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire were pleased with the extent to which teachers listen to their ideas. Inspectors agree; the school is keen to involve pupils in its development and acts upon their views whenever it can. A formal questionnaire is circulated each year and a school council has recently been established. These initiatives are proving to be effective in enabling pupils to discuss and share their suggestions and views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and other schools are satisfactory. Links with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong links with the community promote pupils' personal development very well.
- Procedures to deal with parents' concerns are effective.
- Most of the parents provide good support for their children's learning, but a minority do not work closely with the school.
- Pupils' annual reports contain insufficient information about their progress and their targets for improvement.

Commentary

26. The school has maintained the overall quality of its links with parents and the wider community since its previous inspection. A wide range of visitors contributes to school life and representatives from community groups visit to tell the pupils about their roles in society. Links with local churches are also strong; members of the clergy regularly visit and older pupils attend church services at Harvest Festival and Christmas. The school, the pupils and their parents provide generous and wholehearted support for numerous local and international charities. This very good awareness of the needs of others reflects pupils' good moral and social development.
27. The school encourages parents to be open and frank about voicing their suggestions or concerns. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that teachers are approachable and say that the school tries to accommodate any reasonable request. A quarter, however, felt that the school does not do enough to seek parents' views. Inspectors disagree; a questionnaire is circulated each year and parents' views are incorporated into the school development plan whenever possible. Parents are invited to a range of meetings to contribute their ideas.
28. Most of the parents encourage their children to work hard and to complete their homework on time. They are very loyal to the school and several work as volunteers during the school day. Despite the school's good efforts, however, too many parents condone their children's intermittent or poor attendance. These interruptions have a major impact upon their children's education as they miss out on the work undertaken during their absence.
29. There are two formal opportunities each year for parents to meet their child's teacher and these meetings are well attended. Pupils' written annual reports, however, do not give parents a clear idea of how their children are progressing and how the standard of their work compares with the national average. Reports also give parents too little information about attendance or what the children need to do in the future in order to improve.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is satisfactory but some statutory requirements are not fully met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear vision for the school.
- The headteacher has established a stable staff whose members work together very well as a team.
- Good management leads to a positive ethos and pupils' good achievement.
- Governors do not ask enough questions to inform themselves better of the school's work and do not meet some details of their statutory requirements.

Commentary

30. There has been good improvement in leadership and management and satisfactory improvement in governance since the last inspection. The headteacher provides leadership of good quality, with some very good features. Her commitment to building a high performing team is reflected in the very good quality of staff training and the improved standards over the past four years. Management is good. The headteacher works closely with the strong senior management team and other staff to ensure that her clear vision is translated into effective action, to the benefit of all the pupils. The Foundation Stage and core subjects are managed well and are promoting higher standards. There is good leadership and management of special educational needs. Teamwork is central to the success of the school, and all staff are committed to continuing pupils' good achievement. Throughout the school, pupils, including

gifted and talented pupils and pupils from ethnic minority families, achieve well because of the well-organised provision. The spirit of teamwork extends effectively to all staff, including the lunchtime supervisors and the efficient cleaning and maintenance team.

31. A culture of openness enables members of staff to express their ideas and concerns and contribute effectively to the school development plan. The written plan is satisfactory, but it does not fully reflect the good work that is being done, nor does it indicate how it will be evaluated. In practice, however, thorough annual whole-school evaluation by the governors and all members of staff, including administrative, lunchtime and caretaking staff, ensures that there is a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Surveys of pupils' and parents' views and analysis of the school's performance in national and school tests contribute to the overall picture that is discussed before priorities are set for the new year. Longer-term plans are monitored termly so that milestones are met and projects, such as the extensive programme for developing pupils' learning skills, are kept on track. This is an improvement on the unsatisfactory strategic planning reported at the last inspection.
32. Senior staff play a major role in the co-ordination of the curriculum and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher, whose delegation was criticised at the last inspection, maintains control of a number of subjects, but she shares aspects of these with other members of staff so that they develop professionally. Good performance management arrangements ensure that staff training needs are identified and followed up. Problems with the recruitment and retention of staff in recent years have been a constraint that has been dealt with innovatively. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants are encouraged to train as teachers. They benefit from their experience at the school and from the professional information and expertise gained through a variety of training establishments. Five of them are as yet unqualified, but the quality of their teaching during the inspection was often good. There is now a stable staff who know the pupils well and who contribute significantly to the good performance of the school.
33. Governance of the school is satisfactory, with very good monitoring of the school's finances. The chair of governors is bringing a livelier approach to the work of the governing body, with a clearer picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a more informed approach to dealing with them. Governors recognise that they need to ask more questions, to challenge the school and strengthen their own knowledge of what is going on. As at the last inspection, there are omissions in some statutory documents, such as the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus. While the school is a safe place to work, the governors need to ensure that their risk assessments are recorded more formally. Other statutory requirements are met. An identified and well-trained governor regularly monitors the school's financial arrangements and records. She reports back to the full governing body, which looks for value for money and best value in the school's expenditure. The school's financial administrator deals very effectively with the regular management of the school's budget. Administrative staff manage the day-to day affairs very well so that clerical matters are dealt with efficiently; teachers are very well supported as a result.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,205,942
Total expenditure	1,212,044
Expenditure per pupil	2,459

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	44,269
Balance carried forward to the next year	38,168

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall provision is good, and children achieve well.

Children achieve well in the six nationally agreed areas of learning for young children and most are on course to reach the expected Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Although standards are not as high as those reported at the last inspection, achievement remains good, based on children's progress since they started school. Staff use effective strategies to ensure that all children, including those from ethnic minorities or who have special educational needs, are actively involved in all activities. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well and effective teamwork is promoted among the staff. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants play a valuable role in the teaching programme. The classrooms are bright and well organised, but much of the furniture in the nursery is old and unattractive. Assessment procedures are good and early identification of pupils with special educational needs ensures that they have appropriate support as soon as possible.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children soon settle into school routines and achieve very well.
- Consistently good teaching helps children to become confident learners.
- Relationships are very good.

Commentary

34. In both the nursery and the Reception year, children achieve very well because of the consistently good teaching. They are on course to meet the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Staff have a good knowledge of the needs of young children. They encourage children to be independent and they value each child. In the nursery, well organised induction arrangements, with good involvement of parents, help children to settle quickly into school routines and show increasing levels of independence. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children behave very well and gradually develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. They concentrate for increasing lengths of time and make very good relationships with one another and with staff. When they join the Reception year, children adapt well to the brisker pace of lessons. Their well-developed self-esteem and well-nurtured curiosity help them to become confident learners. Staff work as an effective team and all staff are very good role models.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the consistently good effective teaching.
- Language and literacy are promoted well throughout the school day, so that children acquire a love of literature.
- Letter sounds and shapes are taught systematically and well.
- Teachers do not always draw on the skills of the support staff during the initial part of lessons.

Commentary

35. Children achieve well from a below average start, and most are likely to meet national expectations by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and staff use every opportunity to develop children's language and encourage them to write. In the initial part of lessons, nursery nurses and teaching assistants are not always deployed as effectively as they could be; for example, to record children's progress. In the nursery, children extend their speaking and listening through interesting experiences, interaction and discussion. Children talk to one another in role play and enjoy listening to stories. They develop a love of literature, which makes them want to learn to read. They tell stories from books by 'reading' the pictures to one another and to adults.
36. By the time they leave the nursery, most children communicate effectively and the more able children write their names. In the Reception year, the teachers introduce the literacy hour very well. Stories are used very effectively to extend language skills; for example, when children made tape recordings and predicted the end of a story. Children gradually extend their vocabulary in a widening range of situations and use specific words, particularly in mathematics and literacy lessons. Good, systematic teaching of letter sounds and shapes begins as soon as children start in the nursery. Children with special educational needs benefit particularly from this structured approach. By the end of the Reception class, the more able children blend sounds confidently to form simple words and begin to write simple stories with a clear sense of narrative. Children handle books confidently and enjoy reading; the more able children read repetitive, simple stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic teaching brings fun into children's learning.
- ICT is used effectively.
- Children are well prepared for the National Numeracy Strategy.

Commentary

37. Children achieve well because teaching is good and staff use an appropriate mix of direct teaching, questioning and relevant, stimulating practical activities to promote children's learning. Staff are enthusiastic in simple counting activities, encouraging children to recognise that mathematics can be fun. In the nursery, children investigate volume, and develop mathematical vocabulary such as 'more' and 'less' as they play with water and sand. They join in number rhymes and songs and learn simple sequences of actions. In the Reception year, the more able children count objects to 20 confidently and develop an awareness of simple number operations, such as addition and subtraction. Most children are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are introduced sensitively so that children are well prepared for work in Year 1. Effective teaching in small groups helps children to learn at a good rate, and mental strategies are developed well as children are encouraged to think hard before they answer questions. They learn through well-planned practical work and by talking with adults. ICT is used well to extend children's learning. The school has simple programs for children to practise matching, counting and ordering numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a good range of relevant activities.
- The school grounds and local area are used well to stimulate children's learning.
- ICT is taught and used effectively.

Commentary

38. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children achieve well and most are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. They extend their scientific vocabulary, express their ideas with increasing confidence and learn at a good rate. Knowledge and understanding are broadened as children move through the nursery and the Reception year. Staff make learning relevant for the children, so that they gain a broader knowledge of the world in a good range of exciting and interesting ways. Their knowledge of plant growth develops well as they plant seeds and monitor growth. They become more familiar with the local area as they are taken for walks, and they make trips to places further away, such as a farm, to extend their understanding of the world. In all classes, children gain increasing skills in fixing components together and making models of everyday objects as they play with a good variety of construction kits and train sets. Children go to the computers with increasing confidence and use the mouse and keys effectively. In the Reception year, children used a simple drawing package to draw pictures of themselves and, with help, used digital cameras effectively to make instant records of their walk in the school grounds. Teachers' planning shows suitable attention to the early stages of the curriculum for religious education.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have plenty of exercise and fresh air.
- Good teaching helps children to acquire appropriate manipulative control for writing.

Commentary

39. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. In all classes, staff ensure that children have regular outside play, and that activities are planned well for children to improve their co-ordination and control. There is a good range of activities each day, and staff interact well with children and help them to improve skills such as climbing, riding, jumping and throwing. Children benefit from well-structured sessions in the school hall. Staff take the children for walks in the grounds as part of learning in other lessons. Children in the nursery have appropriate control of their movements as they play outside and ride and push wheeled toys confidently. No physical education lessons were seen in the Reception classes, but planning shows that children are encouraged to work collaboratively and acquire skills systematically. Children in all classes develop increasing control of pencils, brushes and scissors as they create pictures and collages. In cooking activities, most children manipulate simple cooking tools effectively, but a significant proportion have weak manipulative skills when they join the nursery. Good, patient teaching helps these children to make very good progress so that they are able to write effectively. Overall, children are likely to meet the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have many opportunities to develop their imagination and express their feelings.
- Art and design is linked well with other subjects.

Commentary

40. The well-planned programme of creative activities throughout the Foundation Stage extends children's artistic skills and helps them to express their feelings confidently. In the nursery, children's paintings are bold and colourful and skills are practised as children gain experience with malleable materials, such as dough. Children use a wide range of media, including natural and man-made materials, paint, crayons and pastels, to make pictures on a variety of scales with a range of textures. In all classes, children's imagination is developed well. They pretend to be grown-ups in the role-play areas, and they acquire a good repertoire of songs and rhymes. In the Reception year, children illustrate their written work with lively drawings and extend their experiences in art and design; for example, when they explore colour, shape and tools in computer drawing packages. Children's performance in singing improves as they join in enthusiastically with older pupils to sing in assemblies. Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well and are on course to meet the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Staff provide a good range of outdoor experiences for children to explore their senses and enjoy the feel, smell and appearance of a wide range of materials. Creative activities are linked effectively to other areas of the curriculum; for example, when children paint and draw self-portraits as part of learning about 'ourselves'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership and management have raised standards in recent years.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils generally achieve well for their capabilities, although the most able pupils could be stretched more at times.
- The curriculum is supported well by initiatives to improve the quality of pupils' learning.
- Pupils practise their literacy skills well in most other subjects.
- Pupils' overall progress is assessed well but the quality of marking and target-setting with pupils varies between classes.

Commentary

41. The school has maintained the good provision that was identified by its last inspection. In 2004, the results of the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were in line with the national average. Performance was good when compared with the schools that achieved similar results when the pupils were tested at the age of seven. The 2004 assessments of pupils in Year 2 were above the national average for reading and average for writing. The school analyses pupils' performance in tests well to raise standards. All members of the senior management team monitor teaching, the curriculum and pupils' achievements and contribute

to initiatives for further development. The leadership and management of the subject, currently steered by the headteacher, are good.

42. Inspection findings are that pupils achieve well overall. This includes both boys and girls, the more able pupils, those with special educational needs and the small number whose first language is not English. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is average in listening, speaking, reading and writing and they are making good progress. Pupils are effective listeners and confident speakers. They read and understand a wide range of texts at the levels expected for their age. Their writing skills show a sound grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar and satisfactory use of vocabulary. Handwriting and presentation are good.
43. Attainment is below average in Year 2 in all aspects of the subject. While these pupils are making satisfactory progress for their capabilities, there is a significant proportion who have special learning needs and this has an impact on their attainment. While teachers encourage careful listening and give many opportunities for pupils to speak and practise their vocabulary, not all pupils are as attentive or articulate as is usually seen at this age. Pupils enjoy books and stories and are systematically acquiring a grasp of sounds and word building skills. The school gives good encouragement to pupils who are not supported at home with their reading and ensures that these pupils have regular opportunities to read with an adult. Pupils are introduced to all the skills needed for basic writing, but their spelling and ability to structure sentences are below average.
44. Teaching and learning are good. They are better overall in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2, because there is a closer match of activities to pupils' needs in the older classes. Lessons are organised well and benefit from the setting arrangements in all year groups. Teachers use their assessments of individuals to plan lessons. In particular this ensures that low and average attaining pupils are supported well. The rest of the pupils mostly receive work that is suited to their needs, although, in a few lessons, there is scope for the highest attainers to be challenged even more, especially in Years 1 and 2. Teaching assistants are used well to help with the organisation of lessons, to support individuals and small groups and to help teachers to assess how well the pupils are doing. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are given targets to aim for to improve their performance. However, teachers vary in how well they communicate to pupils what has been achieved and what needs to be done next. These inconsistencies were identified by the previous inspection and have not been fully remedied.
45. The school acts well on its tracking of pupils to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. It employs a range of innovative initiatives to improve the quality of provision. For example, pupils currently benefit from regular speaking and listening sessions, from 'brain gym' exercises and from a very structured phonics programme. Booster classes are organised carefully to ensure they have most impact. There are good plans to introduce a whole-school project aimed at the further improvement of handwriting, reading and spelling when staff have been suitably trained.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Pupils apply their English skills well to other subjects. The development of speaking and listening is encouraged widely across the curriculum and there is a good emphasis on pupils learning to use the correct vocabulary for each subject. In its previous report, the school was criticised for not extending pupils' literacy skills in the humanities subjects. This is largely no longer the case. Lessons are organised to ensure that pupils complete regular written work in history and geography. However, the use of literacy to support and record work in religious education continues to be too limited. Pupils increasingly combine their language and ICT skills, using computers well to record and enhance their writing.

Modern foreign language

47. A small sample of the school's **French** provision was inspected. Pupils are taught French in Years 3 to 6 by a native French speaker. In the limited amount of teaching seen, pupils' learning was satisfactory. They listen to the good model of spoken French that is offered by their teacher and are starting to form short sentences to describe themselves or aspects of their daily lives such as their families and pets. Most are keen to contribute orally to lessons. The oldest pupils begin to experience written French. The school has established profitable links with one of the main secondary schools to which the pupils transfer to encourage continuity in the pupils' learning. The activity weeks for the oldest pupils have included a trip to France and these give pupils a chance to practise the language and experience a taste of French life. The provision enhances the breadth of the curriculum for pupils and promotes their social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recent test results are above those in similar schools by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' progress.
- The strong link with ICT motivates pupils and raises standards.
- Tracking systems are not yet fully developed to monitor achievement and to set targets.

Commentary

48. In recent years, the performance of the pupils in Year 6 in the National Curriculum tests has been in line with the national average. In 2004, the results were above those of similar schools. Inspection findings are that the pupils currently in Year 6 achieve well and attain above average standards. Their knowledge and understanding of mathematics as shown in lessons and in their books are better than their test results suggest. This is because, in the tests, they have difficulty in interpreting written questions as their comprehension skills lag behind their mathematical ability. Current standards in Year 2 are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory; this reflects the school's performance in the 2004 assessments.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 3 to 6, where work is better matched to pupils' needs. In the best lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, the pace and methods motivated and challenged pupils, which resulted in high levels of achievement in money work and using a protractor accurately. In general, teachers use innovative methods for encouraging speedy mental calculation, such as computer games and 'brain gym' exercises, which have raised standards considerably. All teachers place strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to explain the processes they have used to solve problems. Very good relationships help pupils feel secure in answering, even when they are not sure. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to help lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, to participate and complete tasks. The good teaching results in pupils that are keen to learn and their enthusiasm for the subject helps them make good progress. The teaching assistants liaise well with the class teachers.
50. Pupils' books show a spread of work in all areas of the subject and evidence of regular testing. There is an emphasis on number work and calculations, reflecting the current school focus. There is less investigational work and problem solving and the co-ordinator has rightly highlighted this as an area to improve so pupils have more

confidence in applying their knowledge. Regular homework and a strong revision programme in Year 6 underpin effectively what has been learned in class and raise levels of achievement. 'Setting' arrangements work well.

51. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The coordinator's analysis of test results and monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms enable her to identify strengths and areas to develop to raise standards. Decisions such as employing teaching assistants throughout the year rather than for seasonal booster groups have effectively raised standards of the lower attaining pupils. However, methods for tracking progress and setting targets are not yet sufficiently refined to identify which average pupils could do even better. The good provision identified in the previous inspection report has been maintained.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. There are very good links between mathematics and ICT. For example, pupils develop a very good knowledge of angles when writing programs to make a train move between stations. Teachers use their weekly class numeracy session in the computer suite very well to practise mental arithmetic using interesting software. There are good links with science as pupils take measurements for experiments, which they record in tables and charts. There are satisfactory links with other subjects such as geography and design and technology, enabling pupils to use their mathematical skills in practical situations and deepen their understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures pupils make good progress.
- Activities are interesting, so pupils enjoy their learning.
- Pupils develop good investigative skills from an early age.
- Marking is frequent, but it does not always tell pupils how to improve.
- Frequent and relevant homework helps the oldest pupils achieve well in national tests.
- Opportunities to use ICT are limited.

Commentary

53. Although the school has not maintained the above average standards of attainment identified in its last report, pupils continue to make good progress. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils reached average standards compared with schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, performance was above average because of the good proportion who reached Level 5. Given their attainment at the end of Year 2, pupils of all abilities achieved well. An examination of pupils' work during the inspection showed that the vast majority are currently achieving average standards. However, effective revision and well planned homework are contributing very effectively to Year 6 pupils' learning. Consequently, it is likely that the school will reach its target that the number achieving Level 5 will be similar again to the national figure. The teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2004 indicated that pupils' attainment was average compared with schools nationally. These pupils' attainment on entry to the school was below average, and they achieved well during their time in the school. Lesson observations and an examination of pupils work during the inspection show that attainment continues to be average in this age group. Evidence also indicates that pupils' knowledge and understanding are much better than their written work suggests. When given the chance to talk about what they have observed, pupils show good levels of understanding.

54. Pupils enjoy their work in science. Teachers plan activities which encourage them to be curious and they have lots of opportunities to try things out for themselves. During the inspection, Year 1 and 2 pupils thoroughly enjoyed experimenting with a wide variety of historical toys to find out which forces were needed to make them move. Year 6 pupils were investigating changes over time and beginning to decide for themselves the best ways to carry out fair tests in a range of circumstances.
55. Teaching is good and ensures that pupils achieve well. Teachers plan lessons carefully, linking pupils' learning to work in other subjects whenever possible. This makes the lessons more interesting and relevant. Pupils also benefit from a very good range of visits and visitors. They make very good use of the carefully created environmental areas within the school grounds. All pupils have the chance to grow fruit and vegetables and to eat their produce. Teachers ensure pupils have regular opportunities to carry out investigations. They have a secure understanding of the subject, which results in clear explanations and demonstrations. Pupils' work is marked frequently and is generally positive. However, teachers rarely tell pupils what in particular they have done well or how they could improve. Recently introduced end-of-unit tests enable teachers to assess accurately how pupils are performing. However, this information is not used as well as it could be to provide extension work for the most able pupils and more structured work for lower attaining pupils. When teaching assistants are present in lessons, they have a positive impact and generally ensure that lower attainers are able to access the work and achieve orally or by having their answers recorded for them.
56. Leadership and management of the subject are good. This results in consistency of practice across parallel classes and has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Performance in national tests is carefully analysed and the information is used to improve the curriculum in order to achieve higher standards. More opportunities to use ICT have been identified, but this aspect is still limited and requires further development, particularly for the older pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has moved the subject forward substantially in the last two years.
- Resources are very good and enhance pupils' learning.
- Weekly ICT lessons lead to a high standard of skills and pupil motivation.
- Pupils need more opportunities to use ICT as a learning tool across the curriculum.
- The assessment system is not developed well enough to support teachers' planning.

Commentary

57. Pupils achieve well and their attainment exceeds national expectations by Years 2 and 6. Pupils' attitudes are very positive and they behave well in lessons. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. This is partly the result of very good budget planning to provide the resources to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the good teaching.
58. Pupils learn well because they are well taught, have a laptop computer each in lessons and use a range of modern and stimulating programs that engage their interest. The co-ordinator teaches all classes once a week and makes very good use of an interactive whiteboard for demonstrations. Teaching is good overall, but ranges from satisfactory to very good. It is best in Years 3 to 6. In a very good lesson in Year 4, the teacher used a whiteboard very effectively to ensure all pupils knew how to set about devising a program to draw squares. Pupils were then able to work independently and learned at an optimum pace. Where

teaching is satisfactory rather than good it is because, despite very good subject knowledge, the teacher is inexperienced in organising group activities that enable all pupils to participate fully. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution by answering pupils' questions and working with small groups.

59. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The good quality curriculum is well planned by the co-ordinator and made possible by the extensive range of high quality hardware and software. However, the current assessment system, which records how well pupils have learned within individual units of work, does not allow the school to monitor overall achievement or standards attained. The computer suite is very well used. In addition to specific ICT lessons, all classes are timetabled weekly to use it to extend literacy and numeracy skills, which is helping to raise standards. Many older pupils attend the lunchtime club to learn typing skills. The co-ordinator also arranges regular computer clubs for parents, to improve their skills and raise their understanding of what their children are learning. The main weakness in the curriculum is in learning about the Internet. Pupils do not send email or select their own Internet sites for research. There are too few safety discussions about chat rooms or visiting unsuitable sites.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. The use of computer programs in most subjects is limited, although many older pupils use home computers well for research and presenting their topic work. There is a strong link with work in mathematics and literacy and this is well used to enable special educational needs pupils reach their targets. The co-ordinator plans to increase cross-curricular use of ICT and she has already led staff training. However, not all teachers are yet fully confident in integrating ICT as an automatic learning tool across the curriculum and, tellingly, no classroom computers were seen in use during the inspection. The use of interactive whiteboards by teachers of older pupils is improving the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

61. **History** and **geography** were not a focus for inspection as neither was taught during the inspection period. Consequently, no judgements can be made on overall provision or the quality of teaching. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with the co-ordinator indicate that these subjects are taught regularly and that the activities planned are interesting. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has monitored teachers' planning to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study are taught. The long-term planning shows that pupils have the chance to study an interesting range of topics and that they are often linked to ongoing work in other subjects.
62. The school provides a rich curriculum, which includes many visits and visitors, which bring the subjects to life for the pupils. For example, last year the oldest pupils visited London, York and France and were able to study transport changes over time. They also had the chance to visit Tower Bridge to see how it had been built and how it worked. This linked very well with their work on structures in design and technology and culminated in a day of activities which involved designing and making a suspension bridge and a tower. Younger pupils receive a visitor from the Epping Museum, which enables them to see and handle a wide range of Victorian artefacts. Teachers have taken the opportunity to link their work on volcanoes and mountains to the Asian tsunami which happened recently and this has made the subject more relevant and interesting for the pupils.
63. The co-ordinator has recognised the need to develop the use of ICT in both subjects and plans are in place to enable her to train staff to use the new software that has recently been purchased. There is no formal assessment of attainment in history or geography and this aspect needs to be addressed for standards to rise further as currently the teachers do not have a full picture of how well the pupils are doing.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is linked effectively to personal, social and emotional education, so that it is relevant to pupils' own experiences.
- Pupils do not record enough work in writing.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and want to know more.
- There are no arrangements for assessing pupils' progress.

Commentary

64. Sampling of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and observation of lessons confirmed that there has been satisfactory improvement in provision and standards since the last inspection, when it was a key issue for improvement. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils are interested in the subject; they have a satisfactory understanding of the spiritual dimension of life and the importance of religious faith in many people's lives. Staff training has improved, but there are still no whole-school arrangements for assessing pupils' progress. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing skills, and too many worksheets are still used. Pupils record relatively little of their discussions and research in their books. As a result they have too few chances to practise subject vocabulary and structure their ideas.
65. A wide range of world faiths, including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, as well as Christianity, is now taught in a systematic way. There is a whole-school plan and regular weekly lessons, augmented by links with other subjects, ensure that pupils build effectively on what they already know. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the beliefs of others and how these relate to their own lives. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 explained how rules are necessary for groups of people to live harmoniously together, and that faith groups have guidelines, such as the Ten Commandments to help them to lead better lives. The self-esteem of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is raised as their cultures and faiths are celebrated in the school.
66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions, engage in discussions and tease out their thoughts. The co-ordinator for religious education has made a good start in bringing more life into the subject, and her leadership and management are satisfactory. The local vicar who is a governor gives additional support. Teachers' planning and coverage of the curriculum are monitored. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall. Pupils handle religious objects and are aware of their relevance, but there are not enough artefacts to enhance the teaching of Buddhism. Understanding of the Christian faith is enhanced during visits to the local church to celebrate Harvest Festival and Christmas, but there are few visits to places of worship in other faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. The inspection did not focus on **design and technology, music** or **physical education**. A few lessons were sampled in these subjects and pupils' work was examined where possible. Judgements cannot be made on overall standards or provision. Interviews with the co-ordinators and an examination of the school's documents show that the curriculum is planned to meet national requirements. However, teachers' assessments of how well pupils achieve are mostly informal. Attainment and teaching are not monitored sufficiently to enable the teachers and senior managers to have a full range of secure information on which to base the further development of these subjects.
68. In **design and technology**, pupils enjoy their work and find the activities interesting. They have the chance to work with the full range of materials specified in the National Curriculum.

Pupils' making skills consistently improve as they move through the school and meet expected standards. Their designs show more limited signs of improvement and their evaluation skills are relatively underdeveloped. Teachers often link work to ongoing activities in other subjects, for example in art, geography, history and science. This adds interest and makes learning more relevant. Teachers' planning follows recent national guidance and ensures that pupils progressively develop new skills. Pupils' reports fail to comment on their attainment in the subject. This is an issue which needs to be addressed.

69. In **music**, it was not possible to see complete lessons but a range of shorter activities was observed. All classes have regular lessons; the school's director of music helps the class teachers with these and good quality commercial resources are used. From Year 3, all pupils sing in large choirs. A good choral session was seen with all the pupils in Years 5 and 6 learning songs for a whole-school performance of 'The Wizard of Oz'. The school organises a large production annually and parents and pupils speak highly of these. There is an impressive programme of instrumental tuition. All pupils learn the basics of recorder playing from Year 1 upwards. Specialist tutors teach a wide range of instruments to most of the pupils in Years 3 to 6. These include keyboards, brass, strings, woodwind and drumming. The most able musicians play in the school band. There are useful links with local secondary schools whose pupils visit to perform and to accompany performances. The school's range of activities supplements the basic curriculum well and enhances the provision for pupils' cultural and social development.
70. In **physical education**, a very small sample of activities was observed as most took place outside the period of the inspection. In the only full lesson observed, younger pupils achieved well in finding different ways to move round the hall. The curriculum provides a very wide range of sporting experiences made possible by the extensive grounds, although the indoor provision for older pupils is limited by the small hall. There are very good opportunities for extra-curricular sporting activities and clubs which are regularly supported by about half the pupils. Very good use is made of the secondary school pool for swimming which takes place before school. However, a few families choose not to attend and so those children do not all meet the National Curriculum requirements by Year 6. The school successfully competes against other local schools in a variety of sports. The co-ordinator has fully addressed the issues in the previous report by introducing a systematic programme of work and ensuring that most pupils do not miss lessons. While pupils worked safely during the inspection, risk assessments are not formally undertaken for all activities and this aspect needs to be improved.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have the opportunity to work with a broad range of materials.
- Art is linked well to ongoing work in other subjects, which makes it more relevant.
- Teachers plan interesting activities which the pupils enjoy.
- There is no formal assessment or reporting of attainment in art.

Commentary

71. The school has improved its provision in art since the last inspection. By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils achieve well and attain above the nationally expected standards overall, as illustrated by the examples of some very good work around the school. Pupils acquire skills across a broad range of materials. From an early age they learn to observe closely in order to represent what they see using different materials. Good examples of this are poinsettias drawn by the Year 2 pupils and the very good paintings of the insides of fruits produced by Year 6. Pupils learn to mix colours competently using pastels and paint. They learn to use

different types of pencil to create a variety of effects. Pupils have the opportunity to work individually and in small groups. They produce two and three dimensional work on a large and small scale. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to weave using different materials. They produce batik and wax resist pictures. Work is frequently linked to ongoing work in other subjects. Year 3 pupils have made *diva* lamps out of clay as part of their understanding of other religions; Year 5 pupils have painted Greek Gods and Year 6 have made good quality Greek masks from *papier mache*. Pupils of all abilities achieve at least satisfactory standards, partly due to the extra support individuals receive from effective teaching assistants.

72. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and teach new techniques and skills competently. Planning is based on recent national guidance and ensures that pupils consistently acquire new skills and refine others as they move through the school. Teachers ensure pupils have regular opportunities to study art. They link the teaching very closely to ongoing work in other subjects. Organisation in lessons is good and pupils are well managed. Teachers circulate effectively throughout the lessons, providing advice and support where needed. Consequently, pupils make good progress and enjoy their work. Opportunities to use ICT to carry out research and produce work are limited. There is no system of formally assessing pupils' work and annual reports do not tell parents what their children know, understand and can do. This aspect needs to be addressed. Throughout the school, there are good quality displays of pupils' work, which contribute to the stimulating learning environment and show that pupils' work is valued.
73. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides a good role model for the teachers. She has a clear view of the progression of pupils' learning through effective monitoring.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

74. This area of the curriculum was sampled. Regular lessons take place, although it was not possible to observe any during the inspection. The school's caring ethos supports pupils' personal development well. Sensitive issues such as bereavement are discussed and the pupils affected are supported well. The democratically elected school council plays an important part in decisions made by the management of the school. For example, the council suggested providing a 'friendship bench' in the playground, manned by its members, to provide a refuge for lonely or unhappy children. Teaching about drug awareness, sex and relationships is dealt with at a suitable level for each year group. There is a close relationship with the community police officer who regularly gives talks on personal safety and wider behavioural issues. The school is a central focus for the local community and hosts the annual Debden Day where all sectors of the community come together. Pupils are particularly involved with charities and caring for the less fortunate. For example, they held a sponsored blindfolded obstacle race to raise money for the blind and have close links with two homes for the elderly and the homeless of Tower Hamlets.

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	3
Attendance	6
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

poor (6); very poor (7).