

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITE COURT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Braintree, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114988

Headteacher: Mrs S Spittlehouse

Lead inspector: Mr D B Evans

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 May 2005

Inspection number: 268247

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:	591
School address:	Ennerdale Avenue Great Notley Braintree Essex
Postcode:	CM77 7UE
Telephone number:	01376 331801
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Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Reilly
Date of previous inspection:	16 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

White Court primary school is much larger than other primary schools and educates boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven. There are 591 pupils on roll, which represents a significant increase (120) since the last inspection. Most pupils come from the White Court estate, an area of mixed housing in the south west of Braintree, Essex. The school has changed significantly since the last inspection because it has had to adapt to demographic changes, which have created a more diverse cultural and social mix within the area, and because of the increasing pressure on teaching and play areas as the school roll rises. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also below average and the majority of these are pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and there are currently no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. When pupils join the school, their overall attainment is average. The school has the Healthy Schools Award and Investor in People accreditation.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

OVERALL EVALUATION

White Court is a good and effective school with a number of very good features. Very good relationships between adults and pupils result in pupils having very good attitudes and working hard. Nearly all pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and the very positive environment for learning. The school is well led and managed, with a great emphasis on giving pupils an all-round education. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and, in partnership with governors and senior staff, is successfully leading the school during a period of change.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps most pupils to achieve well.
- Good practice in meeting the needs of the above-average pupils is not consistent across the school.
- Pupils have very good information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- The curriculum is very good and is significantly enriched by a range of very good additional activities.
- The care and welfare of pupils is very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Assessment and target-setting procedures are at an early stage of development.

Significant changes in the school roll and intake patterns since it was last inspected in 1998 make comparisons difficult. Nevertheless, in relation to the key issues identified in 1998, improvement has been good, overall. Child protection procedures are fully in place. The governing body has rigorous systems for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of its spending decisions. Good progress has been made in improving the end-of-year reports to parents. Individual pupil target-setting procedures have been introduced. Among the minor issues noted, very good progress has been made in pupils' and teachers' use of ICT and in developing pupils' art skills. The school has ensured that statutory requirements are fully met in all areas, except that not all children attend the daily act of worship provided.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' achievement is good. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, overall, with very good provision for children in the Early Years classes. Standards are generally above average by the end of reception and children achieve well.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics, science, and art and design, and well above average in ICT. Pupils' achievements are good, overall. Pupils' achievements continue to be good in Years 3 to 6 and standards, by the time pupils transfer to secondary school, are above average in English, mathematics, science and art and design and well above average in ICT.

Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Time did not allow for firm judgements to be made about standards in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered well. The school is particularly effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and promoting a mature approach to school. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to work and are very well behaved. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils are very caring towards one another throughout the school day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good, with some very good features. In the Early Years classes, activities are stimulating and, as a result, children are eager to learn. Throughout the rest of the school, lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge and questioning skills. Teachers create a very positive environment and, as a result, pupils learn confidently and quickly in most lessons. Where teaching is very good, the tasks are particularly well-matched to pupils' needs, are challenging, and taught at a very good pace, which ensures that the pupils remain attentive and learn a lot. Teachers use resources, including new technology, very well to motivate pupils to enjoy learning through a good range of practical work. In a few lessons, although teaching was satisfactory, the pace of work was slow. The introduction of new assessment and target-setting procedures is developing more consistent approaches in matching pupils' work to pupils' needs, but is not yet fully implemented by all teachers. Teaching assistants are effective and ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The curriculum makes effective links between subjects and, as a result, pupils' learning in one subject is reinforced in another. ICT makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning. French is taught very well once a week to all year groups from reception classes to Year 6. A very wide range of after-school activities provides very good enrichment of the curriculum, helping pupils to extend what they learn in lessons. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils, and has created a good partnership with its parents and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The strong staff team and governors are all focused on seeking improvement to raise standards still further. The school evaluates its performance well but its improvement plan does not clearly reflect the priorities for action and how their success is to be measured. The leadership of subjects is very good. Governors have considerable expertise, and provide the right balance of support and challenge at a time of growth and change in the school roll. However, overall governance is judged as satisfactory because a statutory requirement has not been fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school and the great majority feel that their children are doing well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel valued because the school seeks their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to raise achievement further by implementing fully the assessment and target-setting procedures identified in the school's development plan;
- to ensure that good practice in meeting the needs of above-average attainers is spread throughout all years;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are generally above average throughout the school and achievement is good, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Early Years classes experience a very good start to their schooling.
- The achievement of all pupils is good in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT and art and design.
- Above-average attainers do not consistently achieve as well as they can.

Commentary

1. Assessment of Year 2 pupils' performance in the 2004 national tests in writing was above-average and was average in reading. Mathematics test results were average. Over the past three years results have been broadly average. In comparison with similar schools in 2004, reading was below average, writing was above average and mathematics was well below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.4 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.0 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 83 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Results in Year 6 in show the overall trend between 2002 and 2004 as being broadly in line with that nationally. Performance in the 2004 tests taken by Year 6 pupils showed that standards varied between English, mathematics and science and were, overall, at the national average. Teachers have addressed this unevenness and, currently, standards in all three subjects are above average. In comparison with similar schools in 2004, results in English were above average and in mathematics and science were average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 (27.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.4 (28.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.9 (29.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 79 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and standards are above average in all areas of learning. A well-organised and well-resourced environment, coupled with good teaching, ensures that children have many good opportunities to develop a variety of skills across all areas of learning. The strong emphasis placed upon their personal and social development and very good support from adults give all children confidence and helps them make good progress. As a result they make a good start to school and are well prepared for Year 1.

4. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 achieve well and standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and art and design and well above average in ICT. Good opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking skills help them to express themselves confidently in English and in other subjects. Reading is taught systematically and pupils have a positive attitude towards it. As a result they read well. In mathematics, pupils have a good grasp of number, shape and measurement and make good progress. Achievement is good in science because learning how to conduct scientific investigations is emphasised and pupils learn well through practical tasks. Pupils achieve particularly well in art and design because they build and practise their skills through a wide range of media and styles.
5. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well and standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, and art and design and well above average in ICT. In English, initiatives to improve writing are having a noticeably positive effect on the quality of work. The recent focus on solving word problems and applying mathematics in practical tasks, supported by good teaching methods, has been effective in raising achievement levels. Talented pupils are given good support through extension work and in small group teaching. However, on occasions, in all years, above-average attainers do not consistently achieve as much as they could in English, mathematics and science. In art and design, pupils capitalise on earlier skills using sketch-books well to collect ideas. Good quality work is displayed around the school, celebrating their good achievement and encouraging them to improve still further.
6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, attain standards in line with their capabilities. They achieve well in accordance with the targets on their individual education plans. These are becoming increasingly specific and challenging as a result of changes being introduced by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Pupils make good progress because of good teaching and involvement in support groups that are well-matched to their needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes towards school and behaviour are very good. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. Attendance is above average and punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships amongst pupils and between them and most adults in the school are very good.
- There is very little harassment at the school and incidents are dealt with well.
- Pupils respond well to the school's very good provision for their moral and social development.

Commentary

7. Pupils enjoy school and this is confirmed by their enthusiastic participation in extra-curricular activities and their prompt arrival every day. Consistent application of the school's behaviour management procedures ensures that behaviour generally is very good. Pupils are very clear about what is expected of them and they respond confidently and well to the classroom rules and routines set by teachers. The needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are met well. As a result, they rarely cause difficulties that prevent others from learning. These very good attitudes and behaviour ensure that most lessons are purposeful and orderly, and this has a positive impact on the pupils' progress.
8. The strong moral code and policy of fairness and equality promoted by the school are strengths. Pupils learn about right and wrong and other moral concepts through discussions about issues, such as the recycling of waste and 'why have rules?' That pupils understand the difference between right and wrong is apparent in the way they take care of equipment and the lack of graffiti and litter in all parts of the school.

9. Relationships amongst the pupils are very good because they learn about the importance of friendship and the feelings and needs of others. At break times children play together harmoniously and care for one another. This was manifest when a girl spontaneously held up her arms to help another off the climbing-frame. Teamwork and co-operation were also very evident at a very well attended family assembly organised by a class in Year 2.
10. Parents and pupils feel that bullying, and other forms of harassment are rare. Pupils respond positively to the trust placed in them to act responsibly. They happily volunteer for monitoring and messenger duties and perform them conscientiously. Older pupils willingly take on greater responsibilities, which contributes to their development as appropriately mature and confident young people.
11. Many parents take pupils for holidays during term-time. Despite this, overall attendance is above the national median for primary schools and the school is successful in persuading most parents not to exceed 10 days.
12. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, have good attitudes to learning and behave well. This is because activities are very well planned to interest them and to meet their specific needs. Often they are taught in small groups where they have individual adult attention and all the help they require.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.0
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.

Exclusions

The school is successful in promoting very good behaviour and there have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum and opportunities for enrichment are very good. There are good partnerships with parents and good links with the village community. Pupils are very well cared for and work and play in a safe and stimulating environment.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan interesting activities so pupils are well motivated to learn, although provision for above-average attainers is not challenging enough on occasions.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed to support pupils' learning.
- Teachers forge very good relationships with pupils, which helps them to manage learning and behaviour very effectively. Because of this pupils have very good attitudes, work hard and achieve well.
- Information about how well pupils are doing is not always used consistently well to help pupils to take the next steps in their learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (8%)	14 (29%)	21 (43%)	10 (20%)	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. Teachers generally make lessons interesting and practical. Where teaching is at its best these activities motivate pupils and encourage all of them to participate fully in the learning. Lessons have a good pace, moving swiftly and holding pupils' interest. Tasks are correctly matched to pupils' abilities so that they are all challenged in their learning and achieve well. However, in a minority of lessons, although teaching is satisfactory and activities are interesting, the match of work to pupils' abilities is not correct. They do not learn as much as they might because the work, especially for the more able pupils, is mainly useful practice of what they can already do and for them the pace of the lesson is slow.
14. A significant and successful feature of many lessons is teachers' good subject knowledge. This helps them to plan very good introductions to lessons, which form good links to previous learning and sets the scene for pupils' new learning. Skilful questioning means that pupils are aware of what it is they are to learn and how they are to carry out their tasks safely. For example, in Year 1 science lessons based on a series of visits to the school's wild life pond, pupils were very well prepared for their observations. Informed guidance from the teacher and teaching assistants together with high expectations and excellent first-hand experience enabled these pupils to make very good progress in their learning. They discussed their findings enthusiastically, using the appropriate vocabulary because they had been reminded of this at the outset of the lesson.
15. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are well taught. Experienced learning support teachers take groups of pupils for English and mathematics and provide specialist help for individuals. In class, learning support assistants work effectively with small groups or individuals. The work is always very well planned and takes account of pupils' targets on their individual education plans. Good assessment procedures are carried out and progress is monitored carefully. The special needs co-ordinator also teaches groups well, such as the speech and language group, making effective use of the resources suggested by outside professionals.
16. Behaviour in lessons is almost always impeccable because teachers have very good relationships with pupils, respecting their contributions in lessons and listening to them carefully. They manage behaviour positively and pupils are praised regularly throughout lessons. This in turn, encourages them to want to behave well and work hard and, consequently, they have very good attitudes to their work. Their very positive attitude and good behaviour make a significant contribution to the consistently good achievement throughout the school.
17. Constraints of time within the inspection process did not allow for all subjects to be looked at in the same depth. However, art and design was inspected in more depth and the teaching and learning are very good. Evidence of the high quality of children's art is seen around the school and in classrooms. As a result of this very good teaching, pupils learn and achieve well and pupils' standards are above those normally expected for their age. The lessons were characterised by very good subject knowledge, exciting tasks and good pace and challenge. In a very good Year 6 art lesson on Van Gogh's work, a lively, confident introduction from the very knowledgeable teacher led pupils to being thoroughly engrossed and excited by the challenge of painting in his style. All pupils wanted to carry on their work beyond the allocated time.

18. The school has considerable information about pupils' progress, especially in national tests, and has taken steps to have this analysed to help them use it to plan for improvement. However, other than for pupils with special educational needs, it is not used consistently enough to set targets for pupils to help them to improve their work nor are the targets referred to frequently enough in lessons or used consistently by all teachers. This is a priority that has been clearly identified as such in the school's development plan. Pupils' work is marked supportively on a regular basis and in some work there were explicit comments as to what they should do to improve, especially for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

The curriculum

The school provides a very broad and rich curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities provided is very good. Resources are good. Accommodation is satisfactory and space is at a premium because of the rise in the school roll.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for enrichment are very good.
- There is a very good range of clubs for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- ICT and art are strengths of the school.
- Pupils of all ages learn French very well.
- The learning environment is bright, stimulating and very well maintained.
- Assemblies are good and well planned, although a number of pupils are withdrawn for other activities from time to time.

Commentary

19. The school has a very broad curriculum and allocates appropriate amounts of time to each subject. Unusually it includes French, which is taught very well throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, and in reception. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Cross-curricular links are well developed. ICT is an important and integral part of pupils' learning. In addition to meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum, the school actively promotes the development of pupils' thinking skills' and awareness of citizenship.
20. The school provides very good opportunities for enrichment. There is a very good range of very well attended clubs, which cater for the interests of most pupils in Years 3 to 6. These include golf, football and netball, yoga, dance and cheer leading, Spanish, sewing, gardening, ICT and drama. Visits to museums and places of historic interest, for example, Colchester Castle and the Houses of Parliament, are an integral part of the school year. In addition, pupils benefit from a broad range of visitors, including the police, health services, the local councillor, a dog warden and the 'waste buster' bus. They enjoy visits from drama companies and have the chance to take part in Tudor and Greek days. Pupils' social development benefits from the chance to take part in two residential visits. Year 5 visit Flatford Mill and Year 6 stay in a Derbyshire Youth Hostel. The school also organises 'themed weeks'. These allow pupils to focus on areas such as science, PSHE and design and technology in more depth.
21. Pupils benefit from good accommodation, which is extremely well maintained. Teachers work very hard to overcome the difficulties of working in small, open-plan classrooms. High quality displays create a very stimulating learning environment. There is an ICT suite, which although small, is very well used, a library and two halls. There is no medical room. The outside environment is very attractive. Pupils have lots of space to play games, quiet areas to relax in, adventurous play areas and a beautiful wildlife area, which gives them the chance to learn about nature from first-hand experience. Pupils benefit from well-qualified teachers and

teaching assistants. A good range of resources is well used to support learning. Interactive whiteboards are very effectively and imaginatively used to make learning more interesting and enjoyable.

22. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, generally take a full part in the curriculum and are well involved. They are well supported by experienced and well-briefed teaching assistants. Teachers take into account the needs of gifted and talented pupils and they are given additional opportunities to extend their learning, for example, by joining other Braintree schools in Years 4 and 6 ICT and maths days. Occasionally, however, they may miss an assembly because of a support group taking place at the same time. Overall, the curriculum is carefully planned to meet the pupils' needs and teachers and assistants provide good quality learning experiences that enable them to achieve well.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for the pupils' care, health and welfare are very good. Pupils' personal development is monitored well and they receive good academic support and guidance. Good account is taken of the pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well supported on a personal level by all staff.
- Induction arrangements for pupils entering the Foundation Stage are very good.
- Pupils with special medical needs are looked after very well.
- There is no dedicated medical/first aid room.

Commentary

23. The level of personal support for pupils is very good and there is a real community feeling at the school. Staff know all the children well and take careful account of their individual needs. Pupils feel happy and secure, and this is reflected in the confidence with which they approach staff and their positive attitudes towards school. Several pupils said that teachers were what they liked best about the school and most agreed that adults will always help when they are in difficulty. The high quality of the environment is evidence that the school cares about the pupils' well-being, and values them. Site managers take great care to ensure that the school is attractively and safely maintained and that the standard of cleanliness is high.
24. Child protection procedures are applied appropriately and governors have ensured that the school complies with recent legislation. There are systems to ensure that pupils have access only to approved Internet sites. Arrangements for first aid are generally satisfactory, though there is nowhere a sick or injured child can lie quietly and in private, and causes of injuries are not routinely logged. Provision for sex, relationships and drugs education is good.
25. Parents have positive views about the school's procedures for helping new pupils settle into the Foundation Stage. They are fully consulted and each child's needs carefully considered in planning their induction programme. This enables them to settle quickly and make early progress. Good curriculum links and teacher exchanges with the receiving secondary school ensure a smooth and happy transfer for pupils in Year 6.
26. There is no school council, but pupils are extensively consulted about wider aspects of school life, such as the layout of the school grounds, play equipment and lunch menus through discussions, competitions, questionnaires and suggestion boxes. This good practice helps boost pupils' self-esteem and gives them a feeling of belonging and of 'ownership' of the school.

27. Support for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is good. Effective systems are in place to identify pupils early. Individual education plans contain all the necessary information and clearly show pupils how to improve. Pupils are increasingly involved in monitoring their own progress through interviews and attending review meetings. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) keeps meticulous records and knows the needs of the pupils on the special needs register very well. All adults include pupils as much as possible and are caring and respectful towards them, so that pupils are confident about seeking help and relationships are good.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are happy with most aspects of the school and find teachers approachable and willing to 'listen'.
- Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Good links with the local and wider community have a beneficial impact on the pupils' attainment and personal development.
- A small minority of parents perceive that communications and reports need to be more effective.

Commentary

28. Most parents are satisfied with the school. They like the fact that their children are expected to work hard and feel they are making good progress. They think the school is well managed and that the teaching is good. They say their children are happy at the school because they are made to feel welcome and are treated fairly. Inspection evidence generally supports parents' positive opinions.
29. Most parents feel reasonably well informed about how their children are getting on, but some would like more information. Consultation meetings are held each term and most parents feel able to approach teachers at any time to share concerns about their children's education. Inspectors agree that comments on the pupils' annual reports are sometimes too general to be of value and that there is little information about the pupil's progress. However, they do not agree that parents are given insufficient information about how their child's performance compares with others of the same age. Clear details of the pupil's test results are appended to the report together with an explanation of nationally expected standards. However, the school does need to respond to the perception by a small minority of parents that the school does not have formal mechanisms for seeking parents' views and that reports are not personal enough.
30. Parents are kept well informed about general matters through a range of written communications and an attractive and easy-to-negotiate web site. Information about the curriculum is also satisfactory. In addition to details in the prospectus, parents are sent information about the topics being taught each term. Clear descriptions on the web site of some of the work being done by each year group provides parents with more information about what and how their children learn. Some parents would like more information about how they might help support their children's learning at home. Inspectors agree that the curriculum newsletters do not contain suggestions for home activities and that there are few curriculum workshops for parents.
31. Most parents listen to their children reading at home and monitor homework. Many enjoy attending special events such as class assemblies, but relatively few are actively involved in the wider life of the school. A few help in classrooms on a regular basis and others assist with swimming, on trips, with 'residential' and special event weeks. A small band of volunteers

'The Friends of White Court School' provide valuable support by raising funds for such things as improvements to the grounds and the purchase of equipment for the benefit of all the pupils. Members also contribute by organising events such as treasure hunts and drama productions for the pupils, and a monthly afternoon tea meeting for parents.

32. The school's good links with many local schools and other organisations are used effectively to enhance the pupils' learning. The school uses many outside resources, such as visiting artists, police officers, museums, theatre groups and residential centres in Suffolk and Derbyshire, to support a range of subjects and the pupils' personal development. This exemplifies the well-rounded approach the school takes towards achievement and the good leadership in allowing these activities to take place. The school's commitment to the community is illustrated by the work experience it provides for a wide range of students from local secondary schools and colleges. Several clubs and societies also use the school premises on a 'regular basis and the school runs Saturday mathematics and ICT Workshops for the Most Able Initiative.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good, overall. Leadership of the headteacher is very good. Leadership of other key staff is very good. Governance is good. Management is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has given the school clear direction during a period of rapid growth and development.
- Other leaders provide very effective support and ensure that the school runs very smoothly.
- Subject leaders have energy and enthusiasm and monitor and assess their subject areas very well.
- Governors provide an effective level of support and challenge, monitor the work of the school regularly, and are well involved in its strategic development.
- Innovation is present in international links and the development of the school grounds.
- Statutory requirements are not met for a daily collective act of worship for all pupils.

Commentary

33. Numbers of pupils attending the school have continued to rise since the time of the last inspection and there have been further extensions to the school building. Despite this sustained period of growth, the school has managed to retain its distinctive ethos and continued to raise standards, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. This is because the headteacher provides very good leadership and communicates very clearly her vision for the school, which is very well supported by senior leaders and other members of staff. The consistency with which policies and procedures are applied across the whole school is a considerable strength. It ensures that pupils receive high quality provision wherever they happen to be based. The two deputy heads manage their responsibilities very well. Together with the headteacher they have a very good overview of the school and its development needs, rooted in rigorous and systematic monitoring. Recruitment and retention of staff is particularly well managed, with an intensive programme used to select the best teachers from an often large number of applicants. The team leaders give year groups stability and manage the professional development of the staff very well. Performance Management of all staff contributes well to school improvement, as highlighted in the recent Investors in People report.
34. The emphasis on the development of the school grounds as a diverse and rich learning resource reinforces the school's inclusive ethos. All pupils benefit from the well-cared for environment and contribute to its upkeep through gardening activities and recycling.

Leadership has brought an international dimension to the school with exchange visits by senior staff to countries such as China, Hungary and Sweden. French is taught by a specialist teacher throughout the school.

35. Subject leaders often have considerable expertise (many to degree level) and manage their areas of responsibility with flair and passion. This is especially true of the leaders of English, science, ICT, art, design and technology and personal, social and health education. Leadership in the Foundation Stage is very good. The curriculum for the youngest children has been creatively developed to maximise learning opportunities.
36. Leadership of special educational needs is effective, with several improvements introduced since the special educational needs co-ordinator took on the role last September. In particular, careful attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils on the special needs register are receiving appropriate support, and that individual education plans are well written. Tracking of pupils' progress is carried out regularly and support is deployed where it is most needed. All paperwork is kept up to date, including that for pupils with statements. Learning support teachers and assistants play a valuable role and receive good guidance and advice. The provision fully meets all statutory requirements.
37. Governors regularly come into school to monitor its work and are kept very well informed by the headteacher and senior staff. The governing body is committed to maintaining the school's very good reputation in the local area, and takes a close interest in results and the effectiveness of spending decisions. In this way, it challenges as well as supports, and carries out most of its duties effectively. The statutory requirement for a daily collective act of worship for all pupils is not met, however: a significant minority of pupils are withdrawn from assemblies to take part in group activities. On one occasion, 27 pupils were involved in groups while the assembly was taking place. Although many aspects of governance are good, this is a clear breach of statutory obligations, and one which was identified as a key issue at the last inspection. As a result, governance has to be judged as satisfactory, overall.
38. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a comprehensive document dealing with the current academic year. It contains too many priorities and mixes up new initiatives with ongoing ones, not making it clear which the school considers to be the most important. The accompanying action plans clearly identify the people involved and set a time-scale and costings, with success criteria to show how they will know what has been achieved. The management structure, which ensures consistency across the whole school, is an aid to raising achievement. The inadequate accommodation, often cramped and not providing sufficient sound insulation, is a barrier to learning.

Financial Information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,292,856	Balance from previous year	84,895
Total expenditure	1,264,221	Balance carried forward to the next	113,530
Expenditure per pupil	2,202		

39. The day-to-day running of the school is very well managed, with efficient financial systems in place and 'best value' principles applied to all spending decisions. The school's reserves are to be spent on replacing the relocatable (mobile) classrooms and purchasing interactive whiteboards for every classroom.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, overall, with very good provision for children in the Early Years classes.
41. Children enter the Early Years and Reception classes in September, January and April, so at the time of the inspection some children had not been in class long. Standards are broadly average in all areas of learning on entry to the school. Children achieve well, and the vast majority of Reception children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in each area, with a greater than average proportion exceeding them. This is because of good teaching, overall, and consistently very good teaching in the Early Years classes. At times, in some Reception classes, teachers do not make their expectations clear enough and this leaves some children confused. Activities occasionally lack sufficient challenge. In general, a very well-planned curriculum enables children to thrive, with very good use made of the outdoor areas. Assessment procedures are very thorough and consistently applied across all classes. Innovative use of digital photography records children taking part in activities such as role-play and scientific investigation. The Foundation Stage is very well led and the curriculum now takes greater account of the learning needs of young children. The very good practice going on in the Early Years classes now needs to be shared with other Reception classes to ensure standards are consistent across the Foundation Stage. The accommodation is unsatisfactory because in Reception classes the semi open-plan layout causes noise to travel between them, which disturbs learning. There are no covered areas for children to use the outside when the weather is not so good, which restricts their access. Improvement has been good since the last inspection because of the developments in the curriculum and assessment, and because the outside activity area is now used more often.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Routines are well established for organising the day.
- Snack times are very well planned as a social occasion to teach manners.

Commentary

42. Adults provide very good role models for children in treating them with respect, and structure the day well, so that children know what is happening next. Independence is encouraged, with children taking responsibility for daily routines. There is a wide variety of child-initiated activities for them to do, covering all the areas of learning both inside and outside of the classroom. Snack times are particularly well organised, with children seated at tables and being taught good manners, as well as being led in conversation. Each day the snack is something different. As in all the areas of learning, children achieve well because of the good teaching, which is especially good in the Early Years classes. Consequently, the youngest children settle into school life very quickly.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early reading skills are well taught, with daily practice in phonics.
- Good questioning and intervention by adults help children's language to develop well.

Commentary

43. Children enjoy the many books available to them, including the "book of the week", which is used to develop other areas of learning. A systematic approach to teaching phonics gives them a good grounding in early reading skills and enables them to progress well. There are many opportunities to practise writing, including office areas and blank books for them to fill. Handwriting is carefully taught in small groups to ensure correct forming of letters. Many of the children can write their own sentences phonetically. As in all areas of learning, standards are above average and many are on course to exceed the early learning goals. Their language skills are honed through sensitive and careful questioning by adults during many different activities. Stimulating role-play areas, such as "Under the Sea" in one Reception class, feed their imaginations and help them to conjure up magical worlds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have many opportunities for learning about shape, space and measures.
- Children's counting and calculating skills are progressing well.

Commentary

44. The rich curriculum ensures there is a wide variety of activity to promote children's understanding. In a good lesson, children compared the weight of different objects and were able to put them in order, using the terms "lighter" and "heavier". They are comfortable with the names of two-dimensional shapes and have regular access to sand and water for experimenting. In number, most children can count to ten and combine two sets of objects. In one lesson, this was well linked to the "book of the week" as the central character was counting friends to invite to her party. The more able children can add numbers to twenty. Child-initiated activities, such as counting beans or threading beads often develop their skills further.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is very well planned around the main topic.
- Good use is made of the outside area and grounds.

Commentary

45. Children enjoy a rich variety of learning experiences based around the topic. For example, in the Early Years classes, children learned about the parts of the plant through observing carnations and thinking why some white flowers had turned blue. They planted up tubs for the

garden area and examined seeds under the microscope. They had a walk around the school grounds to look at different plants. Good use is made of snack times to introduce children to unusual foods and new tastes, and they are encouraged to consider the countries they have come from. There is regular access to a range of computer programs. As in all the areas of learning, teaching is good, overall, and very good in the Early Years classes.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's physical skills are developed well in a variety of exciting ways.
- The outdoor areas lack canopies for use in bad weather.

Commentary

46. A good range of toys, games and construction kits encourages children to develop their fine motor control. They use modelling clay and have careful individual instruction in forming their letters. Outside they use wheeled toys and in the hall they have movement sessions. They also have access to the more demanding school adventure playground. The outdoor areas are very well used during fine weather, but lack of any covering means in wet conditions it is not possible to take advantage of the facilities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are introduced to a good variety of media and techniques.
- Children's imaginations are fired through high quality role-play settings.
- Teaching in some Reception classes sometimes does not have sufficient challenge.

Commentary

47. Children are encouraged to develop their observational skills through drawing flowers from life, using pastels. They have also created artificial flowers with pipe cleaners and tissue paper and made pictures of garden tools out of seeds and beans. They have experienced weaving, collage and colour mixing. They use musical instruments and record their compositions to play back to the class. In some reception classes, expectations are not always high enough. For example, one class used instruments at the same time with no attempt to distinguish between the different sounds they were making. This just produced a cacophony, which was distracting for the neighbouring class in the semi open-plan rooms. Children also learn to sing songs in French as well as English and have imaginative role-play areas to enjoy. These include 'Under the Sea', 'Giantland' and a 'Garden Shop'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is good, with some excellent teaching.
- Pupils are very interested in their work and are encouraged very effectively.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning and behave very well.
- The use of targets to improve standards is applied inconsistently between classes.
- Higher-attaining pupils could achieve more.

Commentary

48. By the end of Year 2, standards are above national expectations, and pupils achieve well in English. There has been a strong emphasis on improving writing skills, and the results of the Year 2 assessment show that there has been good progress in this area. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average and pupils continue to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs receive a high level of support from teachers and teaching assistants, and make good progress. There is insufficient challenge in some lessons and higher-attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could. There is no significant difference between boys and girls.
49. There is a strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills across the school. Opportunities for paired discussion in lessons are used very effectively to improve these skills. Generally, pupils are confident in expressing and exchanging their thoughts and ideas, for example, when discussing the features of persuasive writing. Younger pupils use their good phonic knowledge confidently to build and read new words. They enjoy reading a wide range of books and generally read with fluency and expression. They use non-fiction books correctly and have a good knowledge of features such as contents, glossary, and index. Older pupils are knowledgeable about different genres and are able to discuss styles of different authors. They can analyse scripts for meaning and use their skills at inference. Pupils can write for a range of purposes. Year 2 pupils show good, clear understanding of how to write information and facts while producing their own books about mini-beasts. By the end of Year 6, pupils can apply their skills to linked activities, for example, using their knowledge of letter writing and persuasive writing to write supporting the London Olympic bid.
50. Teaching is good, with some excellent teaching in the younger classes. Lessons are well planned and resourced, which results in pupils learning well. Teachers encourage pupils very effectively and use a very good range of teaching styles and activities to engage pupils and to stimulate learning. Teaching is imaginative and pupils feel that teachers make learning interesting and fun. The good quality of teaching results in pupils developing very good attitudes to their learning and behaving consistently well. Lessons are planned to link to other subjects, so that literacy skills are applied across the curriculum. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support learning and make a significant contribution to raising standards. Generally, teachers and teaching assistants have good questioning skills, which promote learning. The new interactive whiteboards are used well to encourage and stimulate learning. Pupils think the boards have made lessons more exciting.
51. All older pupils have targets for English. When these are used in lessons as part of learning, it helps pupils to understand how they can improve. However, the use and reviewing of these targets is inconsistent across classes. Target books show a wide variety of practice, and, while some pupils report that teachers remind them about their targets in lessons, others say this happens very infrequently.

52. The leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinators have very good subject knowledge and a determination to raise standards. They monitor planning and ensure that the objectives from the National Literacy Strategy meet the needs of pupils. They oversee the moderation of work in all year groups and assessment procedures are improving. Achievement patterns have been maintained at a high level since the last inspection, despite changes in the ability profile and a significant increase in the number of pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Good, planned links between subjects provides very good opportunities for pupils to apply their language and literacy skills well across the curriculum. They use the skills they have learnt in writing, for example, to produce work in science, history, ICT and maths.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy their work and achieve well because the quality of teaching is good.
- Good leadership and management identify aspects of pupils' mathematical skills that need to improve.
- Assessment to support pupils' learning has made progress, but its impact on individual pupils and on target-setting is at an early stage.

Commentary

54. Standards are not as high as at the last inspection because the ability profile of the intake has changed. Over the past few years, and including 2004, results in national tests have generally been in line with the national average in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. In 2004, the Year 2 results were well below those gained by schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. Data comparing the Year 6 results with those of schools whose pupils reached a similar standard in the 2000 Year 2 tests suggest their overall progress was as expected. However, a closer analysis of the statistics shows that a small change in the benchmark would have placed mathematics in the average or above average category.
55. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are above average and higher than that indicated by last year's national tests. This is because good teaching has focused on weaknesses identified in the 2004 tests and these are being addressed effectively. Elements include teaching and learning that is much more directed at problem-solving word problems and better provision for high attainers through more challenging resources being available. For example, an intensive session with a small group of able Year 6 mathematicians extended and applied their mathematical skills in an investigative approach to algebraic functions. In Year 2, most pupils have a good grasp of calculations with numbers to 100, adding and subtracting accurately and beginning simple multiplication and division. They also have a good understanding of a range of work about shapes and measuring. In Year 6, most have a good understanding of fractions and decimals and they can draw and interpret different types of graphs.
56. When pupils join Year 1, standards are average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achievement is good through all years. Teachers ensure that pupils achieve well in many lessons by giving appropriate tasks to pupils of different abilities and providing good support for the less able, including those who have special educational needs. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson on capacity, the teacher and support assistant enabled lower attainers to enjoy mathematics' because of their clear explanations and by work that was matched well to individual attainment levels. As a result, all pupils made good progress. In a few lessons seen, the teacher planned activities at varying levels of difficulty, but did not allow the pupils

enough time to work on them independently, reducing the challenge of the tasks by leading the pupils through them. In these lessons some pupils did not achieve as well as they might have. In pupils' past work, there were also examples where pupils of all abilities have completed the same worksheet, with varying degrees of success, rather than being given tasks that would have extended their existing skills more effectively. Thus, the needs of the above-average attainer, as opposed to gifted pupils, in mathematics are not always addressed.

57. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and includes a number of strong features. Lessons are generally planned well to build upon pupils' existing skills, and pupils' very good attitudes to their work support learning very effectively. A very good feature of most lessons is the quick-fire session at the beginning that tests and extends pupils' mental mathematics skills. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed a practical approach to sequencing two-digit numbers from smallest to largest at the start of the lesson. The teacher emphasis on pupils' explaining their reasons enhanced their understanding and enabled them to make very good progress in the main activity on measuring capacity. Pupils in all years thoroughly enjoy these sessions and are eager to provide their answers. Most lessons include a good range of teaching methods and have a good variety of activities, which keep the lesson moving at a good pace and ensure that pupils have plenty of fresh challenges. Good teamwork ensures that teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to supporting pupils' learning.
58. Management of the subject is good, with a clear understanding of what is done well and what needs to improve, based on analysis of pupils' work and the quality of teaching. For example, the school identified the need for more activities that require pupils to solve word problems and provided staff training. The school has introduced good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and setting targets based on data analyses but these are not yet fully implemented.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The impact of pupils' use of mathematics in other subjects on the consolidation and development of their mathematical skills is good. There are examples in pupils' science work of measuring and of recording in graphs and tables. Work in geography and history touches on mathematical skills when working with maps and time-lines. In other subjects, teachers take opportunities for pupils to count and measure.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average standards at the age of 11 have been maintained since the last inspection.
- Very good resources make learning interesting, so pupils try hard to do well.
- Teaching is good and ensures that pupils enjoy their learning.
- Assessment does not always tell pupils how to improve or inform teachers' planning.

Commentary

60. Standards in the 2004 teacher assessments were well below average and, consequently, achievement was unsatisfactory. However, the scrutiny of work and observation of lessons during the inspection indicates that, currently, the number of Year 2 pupils attaining the nationally expected level is above average.

61. Attainment at the age of 11 has been consistently above the national average since the last inspection. In the 2004 national tests, standards were above the national average. This represents good achievement, as pupils' attainment on entry to the school was average. Current Year 6 pupils' are achieving well and standards are above average.
62. Pupils' work indicates that they do a satisfactory amount of work in the time available. They have a good depth of knowledge across all aspects of the subject. Frequent opportunities to carry out experimental work mean that investigative skills are well developed, although opportunities for the oldest pupils to plan their own investigations are limited. Compared with schools of a similar type nationally, too few pupils attain above the nationally expected level. This is because teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils. There is good support for lower-attaining pupils and, consequently, they achieve well for their ability. Science contributes positively to pupils' literacy, numeracy and spiritual development. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject. They find the work interesting and enjoy their learning. As a result, they behave well, listen carefully to teachers and to one another and are keen to ask and answer questions. They show good levels of responsibility and work very co-operatively in pairs and small groups. Pupils of all ages take care to present their work neatly and attractively.
63. Overall, teaching and learning are good. A significant amount of very good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge. They plan work together, which ensures that pupils in parallel classes enjoy the same learning experience. Activities are interesting and pupils enjoy them. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the quality of work done by the pupils. They use questioning effectively to find out what pupils already know and to get them to apply their knowledge in new situations. ICT is used very well to support learning whenever possible. Teaching assistants are very well briefed and have a positive impact on pupils' learning and behaviour. The quality of marking is variable. Some is very good and useful comments tell pupils what they have done well and how to improve. However, some work is unmarked and uncorrected, so pupils are unaware that they have misunderstood information. The assessment of pupils against National Curriculum levels is still in the early stages of development and has yet to have a full impact on planning and the standards attained.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinators have high aspirations and a very good knowledge of the subject. They monitor teachers' planning, pupils' work and lessons effectively. They provide useful feedback to staff. They have developed good links with the local high school, which ensure a smooth transition at the end of Year 6.
65. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained at Year 6. Monitoring systems are now in place. Resources are better and they are now easily accessible and well used. The grounds have been developed and pupils' learning now benefits from the excellent wildlife area. ICT is now used regularly to support learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above average.
- Teaching is very good and ensures that pupils enjoy learning and achieve high standards.
- Pupils benefit from very good ICT resources and enthusiastic teachers.
- Leadership and management of ICT are very good and ensure that teachers are confident and using ICT across a wide range of subjects.
- Assessment does not tell pupils what they are doing well and how to improve.

Commentary

66. Pupils enjoy their ICT lessons and achieve very well throughout the school. Standards in Year 6 are well above average. Pupils work enthusiastically, both independently and in pairs. They share ideas and information and are quick to help each other. Year 6 pupils confidently produce multi-media presentations about themselves. They combine text and graphics from a range of sources, use formulae to make calculations on spreadsheets and regularly use the Internet to carry out research. Standards in Year 2 are also well above average; pupils word-process their work competently, changing font, colour, size and layout. They combine text and graphics to make their work look more interesting. Pupils use an art program effectively to draw pictures and produce symmetrical patterns, changing the colours and methods of applying them. They give instructions to floor turtles to make them move in different directions. Pupils confidently enter information on a database to produce pictograms of the most popular houses in the class.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, enabling them to teach lessons confidently and clearly. Their planning is detailed and takes into account the needs of pupils of different abilities. Behaviour management is very good. Pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and respond well, despite the fact that they work in cramped conditions in the ICT suite. Teaching assistants are very well briefed by teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers plan a broad range of interesting activities, which are often linked to ongoing work in other subjects.
68. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and conscientious. They regularly attend in-service training and provide frequent staff development sessions for colleagues. This has enabled them to ensure that the interactive whiteboards are used frequently and imaginatively, thus making pupils' learning more interesting and effective. They have monitored teaching, planning and pupils' work carefully and are fully aware of the strengths and minor weaknesses in the subject. They have written a sensible action plan, which identifies appropriate areas for development. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. The co-ordinators have improved the range of hardware and software and ensured that teachers have the confidence to use it. Standards have risen and ICT is more extensively used to support learning. An effective assessment strategy has recently been introduced, but it has not yet had time to improve standards further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Pupils use their ICT skills very well across a wide range of subjects and this has a significant impact on the progress they make in developing their ICT skills, knowledge and understanding. They use databases and spreadsheets to support work in maths. They practise their literacy skills as they produce leaflets and posters, write stories and poems and make PowerPoint presentations. They carry out Internet research to support work in science, history, music, art and geography. Pupils produce some interesting artwork on the computers and use the programs to improve the presentation of work in other subjects. From Year 3 onwards they send e-mails to pupils in other schools, which strengthen the schools' international links. Opportunities to develop control technology skills contribute to their learning in design and technology.

HUMANITIES

70. Only one lesson of **religious education** was seen during the inspection, so no provision judgement can be made. There was insufficient work to make any judgements about standards. The co-ordinators are developing assessment of the subject and have started to moderate work. They monitor planning and have opportunities to observe lessons. The school follows the Essex Agreed Syllabus.

71. In **geography** and **history** insufficient teaching was seen to enable judgments to be made. Pupils' past work suggests that standards are average, with variations where it is better. Both subjects are well planned, cover the National Curriculum requirements and are led well by enthusiastic co-ordinators relatively new to their posts. Very good illustrations of pupils' work are displayed in the classrooms and around the school. Younger pupils learn well through using the school and local environment and make story maps of their walks. Older pupils have well-planned fieldwork, including opportunities for residential fieldwork, as, for example, in Flatford. They are successful in providing creative practical ways of combining and making sense of humanities topics. Literacy and numeracy skills are integrated well into the Programmes of Study.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. One **design and technology** lesson was taught during the inspection and it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. Some judgements were possible, based on an examination of pupils' design and technology books, the practical work on display around the school and by looking at schemes of work and talking to the subject co-ordinators.
73. Pupils clearly enjoy this subject and are encouraged to show creativity and independence. Standards are average at the ages of 7 and 11. Pupils use the design process from an early age. They progressively develop designing skills, so that they produce carefully annotated designs from different viewpoints by the time they are in Year 6. In Year 2, their designs for monsters closely resemble their final products. Pupils evaluate their work as a matter of course, saying what is good about their artefact and suggesting how it could be improved. They respond sensibly when asked to evaluate one another's work.
74. Teachers plan interesting activities, many of which link well with ongoing work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 designed and made decision boards, incorporating electrical circuits, which reinforced their work in science. Pupils have the chance to work with all the materials specified in the National Curriculum, although work with wood remains limited. All pupils took part in the very interesting range of activities planned for them during the design and technology week. Assessment is not yet secure and is currently being developed to make it more effective. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable, keen, and provide good support for teachers. They keep up to date by attending and arranging useful in-service training. Effective monitoring procedures are in place, which have led to a sensible future development plan for the subject.
75. Only one **music** lesson was seen during the inspection and no judgement is made about provision. Pupils sing enthusiastically, and with enjoyment, in assemblies. During an assembly for younger pupils to celebrate music, a group of older boys played guitars, which really engaged the audience. A wide range of music is played when pupils enter and leave the halls. Music teachers from the local Music Service visit the school to teach woodwind, guitar and keyboards to some pupils. During the autumn and spring terms, there is a variety of music clubs, including choir and recorder. Pupils in these clubs perform in a play or concert at the end of the autumn term. The co-ordinators have very good subject knowledge and both play a variety of instruments. They are very enthusiastic and have a clear idea about how to improve standards in music across the school.
76. National Curriculum Requirements are met for **physical education**. Insufficient teaching was seen to enable a judgement to be made about provision. Teachers are well supported by co-ordinators, who are eager to benefit from new initiatives for primary schools in sport. Opportunities for learning are further enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities that is provided by school staff and visiting specialist teachers. The school successfully enters teams in local inter-school competitions and leagues.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Standards of attainment are above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have a very positive attitude to learning.
- Teaching is good.
- Assessment of pupils' work is not yet fully developed.

Commentary

77. Pupils achieve well in art and standards are good. Pupils enjoy art and good use is made of sketch-books to test out ideas and new techniques. Work on display in classrooms and around the school is stimulating, exciting and provides a good support for learning. Visiting artists and visits to galleries enrich the curriculum.
78. At the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in exploring different ideas and media. They talk enthusiastically about their work. They know how to mix colours and can discuss confidently changes in colour, for example, brighter, deeper, and gentler. They can complete a sketch and use simple shading for effect.
79. Older pupils have a very good range of experiences, with a wide range of techniques and media. They make accurate and astute comments about the work of well-known artists and have a very good attitude to learning. One class experimented with impasto for the first time, inspired by the work of Van Gogh, and they made very good progress in developing this skill.
80. Teaching and learning are good, with examples of very good teaching seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they have very high expectations of pupils, who respond well. They engage pupils very well and encourage them to experiment. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they work sensibly and safely. Artwork is planned to link with other subjects across the curriculum, for example, a mini-beast topic links art, science, English and other areas. These links help learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support learning, particularly that of pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress.
81. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinators are very knowledgeable and are very committed to raising standards. They monitor both planning and teaching, and are developing assessment procedures. They are very aware of the need to identify gifted and talented pupils and to ensure that the work meets their needs. They are very enthusiastic and have clear aims and objectives to improve art across the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. It was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching and learning in **PSHE**. There is a well-researched PSHE Programme of Study and the carefully planned assemblies. As a result, pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility as they move through the school. The school has also achieved status as a 'Health Promoting School'. The PSHE programme is used very effectively to promote healthy life styles, and lunch menus reflect the school's long-term commitment to healthy eating.

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)	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	2
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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