

INSPECTION REPORT

HEATHLANDS CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

West Bergholt, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115083

Headteacher: Mr J D Watts

Lead inspector: Mr G R Logan

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 July 2005

Inspection number: 271081

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: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 5 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 359

School address: New Church Road
West Bergholt
Colchester
Essex
Postcode: CO6 3JF

Telephone number: 01206 240288
Fax number: 01205 241945

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs A F Spinlove

Date of previous inspection: March 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Heathlands Church of England Controlled Primary School occupies a semi-rural site in the village of West Bergholt, near Colchester. A high proportion of the housing is owner-occupied and expensive. With 359 pupils, Heathlands is larger than many primary schools across the country. A below average proportion of pupils is identified as having special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties. One of these has a statement of special educational need. The school is routinely oversubscribed and experiences a low level of pupil mobility - around six per cent last year. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, just under three per cent, is far below the national average. However, this is not necessarily an accurate reflection of need, as there is no cooked meal provision in the school. When they enter Reception, most children have language and mathematical skills that are above average. Almost all pupils are from White European backgrounds, with around two per cent of mixed-race and one per cent of Indian/Asian heritage. Almost all pupils have English as their primary and sole language. The school has been considerably extended and refurbished in a series of building projects over recent years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr G R Logan	Lead inspector	Mathematics Physical education
9457	Mrs G Bindoff	Lay inspector	
18709	Mrs N Bee	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Religious education The Foundation Stage
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	Science Geography History English as an additional language
11901	Dr D P Lowe	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school, with many very good features. It has a very positive ethos. It is well regarded by its parents and achieves a very high level of commitment from its pupils. Pupils achieve very well, particularly in Years 3 to 6. They benefit from a broad curriculum and access to a wide range of clubs and enrichment activities. The school is very well led by the headteacher and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by Year 6; older pupils achieve very well. Foundation Stage provision is good.
- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave very well. Relationships are very good. Attendance is well above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well.
- The curriculum is good; the range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is very good.
- The partnership with parents is good.
- There are too few opportunities for leaders of the foundation subjects to monitor teaching and learning, so contributing to the further raising of standards.
- Although assessment has improved, there is still work to do to implement manageable structures in several subjects. Marking is variable in quality.
- There are some administrative omissions relating to health and safety.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards, already high, have continued to improve by Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly, with the strongest teaching now in the juniors. All the key areas for development have been tackled and those relating to ICT and homework have been fully resolved. There are still aspects of strategic planning that remain much as described in 2000, but they are not having a detrimental effect on the development of the school. There is further work to do to ensure that subject leaders have sufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects.

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	C
Mathematics	A*	B	A	A
Science	A	C	A	B

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

Pupils achieve very well over time. Most children enter Reception with above average attainment. They achieve well from the start and many exceed the standards expected by the end of that year, particularly in personal and social development. Standards in Year 2 in 2004 were high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Current standards in Year 2, because there are more pupils than usual with special educational needs and because of some weaker features in the teaching, show a slight decline on previous years, but still reflect good progress over time. Teaching is strongest at present in Years 3 to 6 and pupils' achievement is best in that phase. Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English (particularly writing, a recent focus), mathematics and science. Pupils' reading and speaking skills are used very well across the curriculum, but further opportunities for writing could be developed. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average at Years 2 and 6. Pupils' ICT skills are used well to

support learning in other subjects. Standards in history and geography in Years 3 to 6 exceed those normally found, but overall the strengths seen in the core subjects are not evident to the same extent in most foundation subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well by Year 6 because of the very good support they receive. The very few pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good; this contributes significantly to their learning. **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Relationships and behaviour are very good. Attendance is well above average; punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall in the school, primarily because they are very effective in Years 3 to 6. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners. Planning, particularly in English and mathematics, is thorough and pupils are challenged constantly. This is contributing to the high standards in the upper school. Overall, assessment is used well in Reception and in the main school to support the planning of pupils' work. However, the quality of marking is variable across the school and not all subjects yet have effective systems for assessing how well pupils are doing. Pupils are increasingly expected to evaluate the quality of their work. This is a strength in mathematics, but weaker in physical education. Learning support staff are well trained and very effective in supporting pupils with particular needs. The curriculum has been well developed and is now good, with effective links between subjects. Pupils have access to a very good extra-curricular programme. Accommodation has developed and improved as the school has grown and is now good. Pupils receive satisfactory care and support. Some aspects of health and safety await action by governors. Systems for monitoring pupils' development are good. Good induction procedures in Reception help new children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school has a good partnership with parents and a very good partnership with the community and with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, well supported by the senior management team, provides very good leadership. The school's monitoring systems are good overall. While most subject leaders are effective, they have few planned opportunities to judge the quality of teaching and learning across the school and this is a constraint on the raising of standards in the areas concerned. The school's evaluation of its work is good. The governing body provides good support for the school and is influential in shaping a vision for its future, but a number of administrative matters need to be tackled. Financial management is very good. Most statutory requirements are met. School administration is very efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the leadership of the school, with standards and with teaching. They are well informed about the curriculum and about the progress that their children are making. Parental involvement is good. Pupils enjoy school very much. They work hard and participate eagerly in activities. They relate very well to teachers; relationships are a significant strength.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide better opportunities for subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning, with, in particular, a view to raising standards further in the foundation subjects;
- Extend assessment arrangements to enable pupils' progress to be monitored across the curriculum;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the Governing Body attends to administrative issues relating to health and safety.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achieve very well over time. Standards in Year 6 are well above average; pupils make very good progress over time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in writing have improved significantly as a result of recent initiatives.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- At present, standards in Year 2 are not as high as in most recent years.
- Standards overall are higher in English, mathematics and science than in the foundation subjects.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is above average. Consistent teaching and secure planning and assessment procedures enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. In personal and social development their progress is very good. Children benefit from good induction procedures and settle well into school routines. Those with special educational needs achieve well because support staff are carefully focused on their needs. Most children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.
2. Standards in the national tests at Year 2 have, overall, been high in recent years and in reading, writing, mathematics and science in three of the last four years were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In 2004 standards in writing were high, standards in reading were well above average and in mathematics they were above average in relation to similar schools. A very high proportion of pupils in all subjects achieved the higher Level 3 in 2004.
3. Projections for the current Year 2 indicate that overall performance in the Year 2 tests is likely to be lower than in 2004, largely because there is a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs or behavioural issues in the year group. In addition, some aspects of the teaching in that year at present are not as secure as in most other year groups. Even so, standards are likely to be well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing and science. Underlying literacy skills are good and these are used regularly in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils have average skills in ICT by the end of Year 2, but these skills are being used well in other subjects of the curriculum. Standards are similar to those expected in the remaining subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.6 (18.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	18.0 (16.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.9 (18.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Overall, primarily because of the high standards in the core subjects of the National Curriculum, achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good. That said, there has been some variability in pupils' performance from year to year. In 2003, pupils did less well overall

because of a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. That year apart, standards in English and science have been well above average in two years out of three. Performance in mathematics has been the strongest of all, being either well above average or high in all three years. Currently, standards in all three subjects are well above average in relation to those in schools nationally. Standards in Year 6 in 2004 were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English in relation to schools with a similar level of free school meals. The rate of improvement made between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was above average overall in 2004. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 did very well in 2004, with a well above average proportion of the year group achieving the higher Level 5 across the subjects. The high standards reported in 2000, the year of the previous inspection, have been successfully sustained, with ever higher proportions of pupils achieving the expected level, even though in ICT and religious education in Year 6 standards are not yet better than average. Standards in history and geography are above expectations. However, overall, raising standards in the foundation subjects has not had the priority accorded to maintaining high standards in English, mathematics and science. In consequence, the school has not yet built fully on its success in those key areas

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (27.5)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.8 (27.9)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.5 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

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

5. There are some variations in pupils' achievement. Overall, consistency of achievement is best for pupils in Years 3 to 6, where teachers' expectations are particularly high at present. In the lower part of the school the pace and challenge in the teaching, and teachers' expectations, are more variable and, consequently, achievement is, currently, less robust. There are no significant differences in achievement between girls and boys, even though boys presently form the predominant group within the higher attaining mathematics set. The school came very close to reaching its very challenging targets in English and mathematics in 2004.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. Due to the quality of the support that they receive, these pupils make good progress towards their individual learning targets and in relation to their prior attainment. A significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieve the national expectations in a range of subjects. The very few pupils who learn English as an additional language achieve very well because of the good support provided by the school. On the limited evidence available, these pupils reach standards similar to those expected for their age. Teachers use the individual work programme very effectively to record achievement and plan the next steps in language development. The school has chosen not to establish a register of gifted and talented pupils, given the significant number of able pupils in the school. However, such pupils have good opportunities to access extension activities in academic subjects, sport and the creative arts through secondary school and local authority initiatives.
7. Pupils' language skills are promoted very well across the curriculum. There are very good opportunities to read and communicate orally in other subjects. Speaking skills are promoted very well. However, there is further scope for the development of writing skills across the curriculum. The application of numeracy skills is satisfactory. There is an increasing emphasis on practical and investigative activities in science, a recent area for development. Information and communication technology skills are used well in most areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' very good attendance, attitudes and behaviour are strengths of the school and contribute very well to the school's very good environment for learning. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is well above the national average, reflecting the commitment of parents to their child's education.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, which contribute significantly to their very good achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good overall because the school has consistently high expectations about discipline.
- Very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults result in a friendly environment where pupils gain self-esteem.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop as good citizens.
- Too many pupils arrive at school a few minutes late, so delaying the start of the school day.
- The registration of pupils who arrive late does not always comply with requirements.

Commentary

8. Pupils' attendance is high compared to most schools and reflects parents' and pupils' positive views of the school. Parents are not so good at bringing their children to school promptly in the morning and several families are still arriving when the school day has officially started. This has an effect on the first session in the morning and delays the start of lessons by a few minutes. The school is successful in promoting good attendance but is not rigorous enough in ensuring that registration procedures are always fully met.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.1
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.

9. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning continue to be very good and contribute to the high standards they achieve. They are very motivated in lessons where they work hard, concentrate and strive to achieve very well. They take a pride in their work and this was very evident in a lesson in Year 5 where pupils created portraits of themselves in the style of Picasso. Children in Reception also enjoy learning and are fully engaged in all activities provided for them.
10. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good overall. Pupils are committed to high standards of behaviour as a result of the class charters they agree at the beginning of each year and the consistent expectations of staff. Pupils are polite and friendly: for instance, the behaviour of pupils in Year 6 was exemplary when they met some local residents who came to talk about their experiences during World War II. Good support is given to pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour and this reflects the school's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils. The temporary exclusion of pupils is very rare. No pupils were excluded during the last school year. Some parents expressed concerns about incidents of bullying, but inspectors found that there is not a culture of bullying and that the school deals well with incidents when they arise.

11. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop moral values and social responsibility. The very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults reflect the school's underlying Christian values. Children in Reception have good opportunities for personal, social and emotional development and develop a good level of independence by the time they transfer to Year 1. The school is successful in meeting its aim to help pupils become self-assured and older pupils are able to act on their own initiative and take responsibilities within the school. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of values and beliefs and to develop their own self-awareness in lessons and in visits out of school. They also ensure (although not all parents feel that this is the case) that pupils have good understanding of a diversity of cultures. Pupils are interested to learn about world faiths and show considerable respect for people from cultures different from their own.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The curriculum is good, with very good enrichment activities. Pupils are cared for satisfactorily. The partnership with parents is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good overall, though stronger in Years 3 to 6 than elsewhere. Older pupils are challenged particularly well and learn very well as a result. Assessment procedures are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is particularly good in Years 3 to 6. Expectations are very high in these years.
- Teachers' planning is thorough.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well.
- Assessment procedures are good overall, although there is further work to do in several subjects. The quality and rigour of teachers' marking are of variable quality.
- In Year 2 teachers' expectations of pupils' work are not always high enough.

Commentary

12. At the last inspection, teaching was judged to be good overall, although ten per cent was unsatisfactory. Since then, there have been some staff changes and the school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching. The current inspection findings indicate that these efforts have been successful, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The proportion of good or better teaching has increased by one third and the unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. However, the most significant improvement has been in the proportion of very good or excellent teaching, which has more than doubled, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (8%)	23 (45%)	18 (35%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

13. Children are taught well in the Foundation Stage. Achievement is good. All of the teaching seen was good, with some very good lessons. Teachers encourage children and engage their interest well. Planning is effective and is based on careful assessment of children's progress. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to provide a stimulating learning environment. Overall, pupils are motivated well by interesting practical activities and, in consequence, learn successfully.

14. Teaching and learning are very good overall in the main school. However, they are stronger and more consistent in Years 3 to 6, where they are very good, than in Years 1 and 2 where they are good. The teaching in nine-tenths of lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 was good or better. Two-thirds of the lessons were very good or excellent. The proportion of very good or excellent teaching in Years 1 and 2 was lower than in the junior years. The shortfall was more marked in Year 2 than in Year 1, where over half the teaching was very good. The inspection team does not share the concerns of a few parents about the quality of the provision made to cover staff absence in Year 1.
15. The high expectations of staff have a very positive effect on pupils' learning. In Years 3 to 6, staff focus rigorously on supporting and extending pupils' basic skills and work very effectively to promote very good learning. Pupils are well motivated by the teaching, have close relationships with their teachers, and these factors underpin the very good progress that most pupils are making. Staff plan together closely, use expertise effectively and support each other well. Teachers in Year 2, however, are less rigorous in their expectations of the organisation and quality of pupils' recorded work. Even so, these teachers, like their colleagues, benefit from the very positive attitudes of pupils. Pupils across the school show a very good capacity to work collaboratively and independently.
16. Planning is good overall, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and is well focused on individual needs. Clear objectives are set for learning and explicitly shared with pupils. There is a very good focus on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Good use is made of ICT to support learning across subjects. Teachers' methods are very well chosen to enable pupils to gain knowledge and develop understanding. Currently, for example, staff have developed considerable expertise in the use of interactive whiteboards and these significantly enhance the quality of some lessons. In addition, strategies such as the use of relevant visitors to school are often very well planned to promote particularly good learning. The use of homework to support pupils' achievement is good overall.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. The contribution of trained support staff is very good, enabling pupils to access the curriculum fully. Individual education plans are very well written and provide specific targets that are reviewed regularly. Pupils' individual needs are met through carefully planned work and effective support, sometimes in short withdrawal sessions, but mainly in normal lessons.
18. None of the very small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English was in school during the inspection. It was, therefore, not possible to judge directly the quality of the teaching they receive. However, the school has a good level of awareness of the needs of these pupils and good access to expertise when necessary. On the very limited evidence available, the school provides good support, enabling these pupils to make good progress.
19. Assessment procedures are good in the Foundation Stage. They are also good overall in English, mathematics and music in the main school, where progress is tracked carefully and information is used well to support planning. Systems are good in ICT, but the information needs to be used more effectively in the planning of future lessons. In several other subjects, there is more work to do to develop effective systems and the school recognises this. There is, for example, no analysis of pupils' performance in national tests in science. Subject leaders mostly undertake analysis of pupils' work and there has been a recent focus on pupils' writing. Some progress has been made on developing individual pupil targets, and this has been a focus in writing, where it is working particularly well. It is planned to extend this initiative to mathematics. The introductions to lessons and the closing sessions are often used well by teachers to judge how much pupils have learned. In addition, pupils are being trained to evaluate their own learning and this is a regular element in lessons such as mathematics, but less evident in, for example, physical education. A weaker feature generally is the quality of marking of pupils' work. This varies considerably between teachers and pupils are not always given clear guidance as to what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum, including the breadth of curricular opportunities, is good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum and a very good range of opportunities for learning outside the school day.
- Adjustments to the curriculum in response to data analysis in English have been instrumental in raising achievement.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is very good.

Commentary

20. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. It meets all statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship. Adjustments to the curriculum in response to analyses of standards have led to the recent introduction of a daily guided writing session, which is proving very successful in raising standards. Carefully planned assessment targets are clearly displayed and made known to pupils and parents. Pupils are encouraged to accept more responsibility for their own learning. Planned opportunities to develop the use of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum help to maintain the high standards in English.
21. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in sport outside school hours and the school competes very successfully in local tournaments, including local football leagues, district sports and swimming galas. Extra-curricular activities include football, netball, swimming, athletics, art, choir, recorders and French. Instrumental tuition is available in flute, clarinet, violin and recorders. Year 6 pupils experience a wide variety of outdoor pursuits during a week's residential visit. The wide range of day visits extends pupils' knowledge. The school also has regular theme days, such as science and book days.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language is very good. It is organised to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. The two co-ordinators for special educational needs liaise closely with class teachers to ensure that pupils have full access to the curriculum. Guided writing sessions are particularly successful in developing pupils' basic skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. They are involved in self-evaluation and the setting and review of their targets.
23. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship and, where appropriate, sex and drugs awareness education, is good. Its effect is evident in all aspects of school life. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the opportunities that it provides. Responsible attitudes, co-operation and respect are encouraged. Pupils are keen to represent their class on the school councils, carry out daily tasks and gain awards for good achievement. Preparation for pupils' transfer from the Reception class to Year 1 and from one year group to another is good. Pupils are very well prepared for later stages of education. Transfer to secondary school is accomplished well. There are two-way links between primary and secondary staff, and pupils undertake bridging units and taster days.
24. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good in Reception and very good in Years 1 to 6. Teachers have a broad range of knowledge and experience, enabling all aspects of the curriculum to be covered securely. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in helping pupils who experience difficulties to access the curriculum. Accommodation is good and is well maintained by the caretaker and his staff. This contributes positively to the ethos of the school. Resources are satisfactory in the Reception class and

good in Years 1 to 6. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Information and communication technology provision has been strengthened and, as a result, standards have improved. The policy on, and use of, homework has been clarified.

Care, guidance and support

The school's provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is satisfactory overall. The support and guidance for pupils is good and helps them to achieve very well. Pupils have good opportunities to introduce their own ideas and to contribute to the improvement of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors do not meet the statutory requirements for assessing risks.
- Very trusting relationships between pupils and adults ensure that pupils seek help when they need it.
- The school council provides a very effective forum for pupils to express their ideas.

Commentary

25. The provision for the care and welfare of pupils is good. Parents say that their children are very happy at school and are well cared for and these views were confirmed by the inspection. Adults in the school have very caring attitudes towards pupils and give good support when pupils have problems. The very trusting relationships between pupils and adults ensure that pupils can share their concerns and know that staff will do everything they can to help. Provision for health and safety in the school is unsatisfactory because risk assessments are not yet fully in place. The previous inspection also found that risk assessments were not formally documented and this situation has not improved. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory and are in line with local requirements. However, the school does not contact parents to make sure a pupil is safe if an explanation has not been received from home on the first day of a pupil's absence from school.
26. Pupils have good guidance about what they need to do in order to improve in their work. The school has been very successful in helping pupils to improve their writing skills because pupils have had very clear learning targets and the marking of their writing indicates what they do well and what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils achieve high standards in their writing. Similar guidance is not yet evident in subjects other than English, mathematics and music because subject leaders do not have consistent procedures for monitoring pupils' achievement and standards. The quality of marking is variable between subjects. Pupils with special educational needs have very good support and are very well cared for. Their achievement is very good because their learning needs are clearly identified and their progress is carefully monitored.
27. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that children make a good start in the Reception year. They settle in well because good links are quickly established between home and school and the children have very good support. Because their progress is assessed effectively teachers are able to help the children make good progress, including progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Procedures for the assessment of the pupils' personal development from Years 1 to 6 are not as thorough.
28. The infant and junior school councils provide good opportunities for pupils to raise and discuss issues that concern them about school. They value the councils as a means of contributing to school life and of initiating their own ideas. Pupils have been encouraged to develop the role of the junior council to gain experience of democratic processes and the councillors are responding by taking responsible decisions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between home and school is good and parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning. Links with the community are very good and enrich pupils' experience. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because their parents are committed to helping them learn at home and at school.
- Parents have very good information about how to help their children improve their writing skills and this has helped pupils to achieve high standards.
- Very effective links between the school and higher education colleges contribute well to the professional development of staff.
- Visitors to the school inspire pupils' interest and extend the boundaries of their learning.
- Governors do not give parents an annual report on their monitoring of the effectiveness of their policy for racial equality.

Commentary

29. Parents have positive views of the school and are very supportive of their children's education. They want to be active partners with the school in their child's learning and the help they give contributes very well to pupils' very good achievement. The school provides parents with some good information about their child's or children's targets for learning in English, mathematics and science and end of year written reports give good information about progress and the standards reached in these subjects. Information is not consistent in all subjects but there is very good practice in the school with regard to learning targets in writing. Parents use this information well to help their children at home but do not have enough information about learning targets in some other subjects to help as effectively as they would like.
30. Parents contribute very well to pupils' learning at school. Several parents and members of the community come into school regularly to hear pupils read and parents share their expertise with pupils. They also give excellent support to school productions by helping with music, dance and costumes. Parents value the open, welcoming nature of the school and say that it is easy to see class teachers on an informal basis. Ninety per cent of those who responded to the inspection questionnaire say that they feel comfortable in approaching the school. They are consulted about their views of the school and their views are acted on, but they do not have an opportunity to contribute to planning for school improvement. Overall, they receive good information from governors in the prospectus and annual report although they are not properly informed about the impact of the school's policy for racial equality.
31. The school has very good links with the community, which involve pupils very effectively with local people, the local environment and the wider world. Many visitors come to share their knowledge and interests with the pupils and, as a result, pupils gain experience of their own community through contact with local clergy, police, allotment holders, the school nurse and local artists. Pupils make visits to places of interest and have the opportunity of a residential visit to a field study centre, which extends their experience very well. The children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have gained an insight into life in another country. The link with a school in Kenya has given pupils an opportunity to find some things out about life in an African country and to contribute to the life of that community by sending letters and gifts.
32. The school has very good links with colleges of higher education through its contribution to the initial training of teachers. The school supports student teachers very effectively and values the opportunities for the professional development of its own staff through mentoring of students and the exchange of ideas about teaching and learning. Very good links also exist between the Reception class and the local playgroup and these facilitate the transfer of pupils into school very well. Pupils enjoy the shared activities and sports tournaments arranged with

schools in the local consortium. These provide very good opportunities for pupils to gain self-confidence and good sporting attitudes. Pupils are also able to visit local secondary schools for varied activities including drama performances and science days, which familiarise them with the secondary environment before they transfer into Year 7. Parents say that their children make a very smooth transfer to secondary school, settle in quickly and flourish there as a result of their very good preparation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. Governors carry out most of their responsibilities well. Finances are managed very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher motivates and supports staff and pupils very well.
- The senior management team work very effectively with the headteacher.
- Governors monitor the school's performance well.
- The skills of some subject leaders need further development.
- Some administrative issues in relation to risk assessment have not been completed.

Commentary

33. The headteacher's leadership is very good and provides clear direction for the school within a very strong supportive ethos. He has brought about very effective teamwork with improved teaching, resulting in the high standards and achievement seen in the school. The headteacher is highly respected by parents and pupils for the way in which he maintains a happy and successful learning environment.
34. A particularly strong feature of his leadership is the way in which he has secured very good quality teaching. Performance management is very well established and the senior management team play a crucial role in monitoring and supporting colleagues.
35. The school has a clear picture of each child's progress and achievement in English, mathematics and science because of the detailed tracking systems introduced. As a result, the next steps in learning are clearly identified. There has been considerable review of the curriculum in the light of national subject guidance and pupils' learning is strengthened by the way skills are applied across a range of subjects. This is most effective in the use of literacy and ICT skills.
36. Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science have a significant effect on school development. They lead their subjects well and contribute to the consistency seen in standards. In other subjects, however, leadership and management are weaker overall because subject leaders have not been enabled to develop the skills of incisive monitoring and evaluation, which are needed for effective planning of further developments.
37. The headteacher manages the recruitment and retention of staff very skilfully. The school's contribution to initial teacher training is outstanding, and has led to the appointment of highly valued staff. Training opportunities for teaching assistants are also managed very well. As a result, a highly skilled and competent team makes a very significant contribution to pupils' progress and achievement.
38. Governors work very closely with the headteacher in setting a clear direction for the school. They have a clear view of the school's successes and areas for development because of the way they monitor the effectiveness of the school's work. Committees meet regularly under clear terms of reference and their range and depth of expertise ensure that decisions are well focused on school improvement. Governors provide a very good 'critical friend' and effectively

challenge proposals over spending. However, there are some omissions relating to the governors' responsibilities, mostly in health and safety matters, which mean that statutory requirements are not fully met.

39. Systems of self-evaluation are good and generally effective. The quality of school development planning is much as described at the previous inspection and in the last finance audit, and continues to have a very large number of targets, which are difficult to monitor. The overview remains primarily focused on the current year. However, this is not having any significant effect on the progress that the school is making.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	876,894	Balance from previous year	116,096
Total expenditure	848,401	Balance carried forward to the next	144,589
Expenditure per pupil	2,383		

40. The finance committee is fully involved in the strategic financial planning that ensures the school achieves its educational priorities. Financial management is very good. Best value principles are applied well. Although the current carry-forward is considerably above the recommended level, the school has clear plans for expenditure on premises and resources that will reduce the level of 'underspend' significantly. School administration is effective. The school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and the school has maintained this high standard since the last inspection. The current Reception children entered school with levels of attainment above those expected for their ages. Induction procedures are good. There are very good links between the school and the local playgroup from which many of the children transfer. As a result, the children quickly settle into school and develop very positive attitudes to learning. Achievement is good because exciting activities are very well planned to develop learning in all areas. Children are supported well by the teaching assistants. Assessment procedures are very good and enable the adults to collect information on the children and use this when they plan lessons. This information then feeds into individual profiles, which track how well each child is doing. Resources are satisfactory and are used well to support learning in all areas. The outside area is used very well to enable the children to develop knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. Provision for the very few children with special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language, is very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and this aspect is very well promoted in many other activities.
- Children's behaviour is very good.
- Children's achievement is very good.
- Children develop very good relationships with each other and with adults.

Commentary

41. Most children are on course to exceed the levels expected of them by the end of their time in Reception. Behaviour is very good because all adults have high expectations of how children should relate to one another. As a result, children work very amicably on activities that have been selected for them. In addition, they choose activities sensibly and maturely and develop the skills necessary to work independently. Teaching is very good because all aspects of this area of development are well promoted in everything the children do. All adults develop very good relationships with the children and interesting activities are planned each day, which suit children's individual needs. As a result, the children develop very positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and inquisitive and confidently ask questions to find out more. Personal independence is well promoted in all activities. As a result, children confidently 'have a go' or maturely ask for help from another child or an adult, if they need it. Achievement is very good. The children have many opportunities to listen to stories from other countries and focus on celebrations, such as the Chinese New Year and Easter. As a result, they begin to develop awareness that people have different views, cultures and beliefs.

COMMUNICATION, LITERACY AND LANGUAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Vocabulary is developed well in all activities.
- Children are well supported as they develop speaking and listening, reading and writing skills and achieve well.
- All children respond very positively to lessons.

Commentary

42. All adults value what children say and have high expectations regarding listening carefully. As a result most children speak out confidently, concentrate well and listen attentively, in particular during class discussions. Reading books are sent home each day and reading diaries are used well as a link between home and school. Parents support learning effectively and contribute well to the children's good achievement. Most children are keen to read and they handle books sensibly and maturely. Reading skills are developed effectively which results in the lower attaining children beginning to recognise at least a few familiar words in the simple texts they are given. Most children accurately read their books, showing great enjoyment. Higher attaining children correctly use their phonological knowledge and sound out words such as 'majesty' and 'trident' as they write about King Neptune. All children achieve well. There are well-planned opportunities for children to develop the correct way to write letters and all learn how to write their names. Consequently, all children confidently pick up pencils and have a go at writing, for example, about a picture they have drawn or a story they have listened to. Higher attaining children understand the need to use a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence and a full stop at the end. Most children have a clear idea that they need to put spaces between words as they write. Children have many interesting opportunities to develop writing skills as they write in a number of different ways. For example, children were seen confidently and maturely using clipboards and sound sheets as they wrote down the names of things that they would take on a trip to the seaside. The teacher interacted effectively with individuals during this activity, enabling all children to achieve well. As a result of the good teaching, most children are on course to exceed the expected levels by the end of their time in Reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Activities are very well planned and promote the vocabulary associated with this area well.
- Children work very hard at all activities they are given.

Commentary

43. Most children are on course to exceed the expected levels by the start of Year 1. Children confidently attempt to count to ten and beyond. No opportunities are missed to promote basic number skills and the development of simple addition and subtraction skills. As a result all children manage to use basic workbooks, which enable them to work through simple tasks, involving numbers up to ten. Many children become familiar with numbers over ten. All children develop their knowledge of the vocabulary related to this area such as *shorter than* and *taller than*. They are given good opportunities to learn the names of basic shapes. For example, children were seen accurately counting and naming different shaped beads, as they made necklaces for King Neptune's Queen. Higher attaining children begin to use the names of three-dimensional shapes such as *cube* and *sphere* accurately. The learning support assistants consistently support the children well. A good example of this was seen as one assistant worked with a group of higher attaining children looking for repeating patterns on their 'beach hut' frieze. Learning was good because the children were questioned well and were encouraged to explain what they were thinking. Achievement is good overall because children are consistently taught well. In addition, they work very amicably together, concentrate well and listen attentively to instructions. Computers are used very well to reinforce and develop mathematical skills. For example, children were seen following instructions independently and very accurately as they developed block graphs of their

favourite fruit, using the computers in the ICT suite. The learning support assistant who taught the lesson gave clear instructions and questioned the children well to extend their knowledge. As a result, all children worked very confidently showing good independence.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Activities are interesting and very well planned.
- Teaching is good, and at times very good.
- Children work very enthusiastically in the ICT suite.

Commentary

44. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Very good teaching was seen as children used the computers to receive and reply to an e-mail message from King Neptune. The lesson was very well planned and as a result, learning was very good as the children learnt the difference between receiving an electronic letter and receiving a letter through the post. They responded excitedly and maturely as they used the computers to retrieve their personal e-mail. The teacher was well supported by a learning support assistant. Children have very good opportunities to develop computer skills. Cultural development is promoted well as children learn about the world we live in during activities linked to both language and literacy and to knowledge of the world. For example, children tasted fruits from Kenya after listening to the story of *Handa's Surprise*. Teaching was very good, as a result of very good planning, with individual needs successfully met. Resources were used well to develop vocabulary and the children's sense of taste and smell. Children's previous work shows that they have used wood and nails to make boats that float. During the inspection they decorated these boats using a range of different materials. One child said 'We used copper nails'. Children's previous work is well presented and indicates that adults expect them to do their best when they write things down. Activities are interesting and neatly presented work shows that children have learnt about what plants need to grow. In the outside area, the children look after flower and vegetable beds. They look at objects such as a garlic press and think about how they work. Good opportunities to cook enable them to mix ingredients and see how cooking changes the appearance of mixtures, as when they made Easter biscuits. By the end of Reception, most children are on course to exceed the expected levels. Achievement is never less than good.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and activities are well managed.
- Children enthusiastically respond to all activities they are offered.
- The accommodation supports this element of the curriculum very well.

Commentary

45. Teaching is good and children receive regular opportunities to develop physically in the hall, the secure outside area and on the grass area. No lessons were seen in the hall but children were seen playing 'beach games' outside. This well planned lesson was cleverly linked to their seaside theme. A good range of activities using small apparatus was on offer and children developed jumping, running and balancing skills well because they were effectively supported by the learning support assistant and the teacher. Children's good attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour contributed greatly to the good learning that took place. Children in

both classes have regular opportunities to take part in child-initiated activities in the secure outside area. All children ride wheeled vehicles confidently showing good control. They learn to use all equipment safely and sensibly. As a result, most children handle scissors, paintbrushes and pencils with good control. They play imaginatively and confidently with construction toys and have good opportunities to use soft materials such as play dough. Children were developing good rolling and cutting skills as they used tools safely and confidently. Children achieve well in this area and most children are on course to exceed the expected levels.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- The children enjoy all aspects of this area of learning and work very well together.
- Creative activities reinforce personal and social development well.

Commentary

46. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. In a very good lesson, closely linked to the seaside topic, children achieved very well as they matched feelings to sounds. The teacher managed the class very well and there were good opportunities for children to use musical instruments. Most children used the percussion instruments with very good control and enjoyment as they created music together. Interestingly designed and very stimulating areas are provided for children to use their imagination as they play. For example, one of these areas is related to King Neptune and is linked to the seaside topic. Children were using this area very excitedly as they worked very well together. All children use tools such as glue sticks, scissors and paintbrushes with good control. Good quality displays enhance the learning environment because all children have many opportunities to develop artwork using a variety of media. Adults value their achievements. For example, previous work shows that the children have used watercolours and painted a 'blaze of bluebells'. In addition, they have used pastels to colour in sketches of apple blossom. Achievement is good and sometimes very good. Most of the children are on course to exceed the expected levels by the end of Reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good use of speaking, listening and reading skills across the curriculum has a positive effect upon standards.
- The focus on guided writing is proving very successful in raising individual achievement.
- There is scope for the continued development of opportunities for writing across the curriculum.

Commentary

47. At the end of Year 2 standards in reading are well above average and in writing are above average. This represents a slight decline on the last inspection, when standards were high in both areas. Standards in English at the end of Year 6 are well above the national average, as they were in the national tests in 2004, and at the last inspection. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.

48. Standards in speaking and listening are well above those normally expected in Years 2 and 6, because there are planned opportunities for pupils to develop spoken language skills in every area of the curriculum. Most pupils listen attentively for sustained periods of time. They contribute well to class discussions and respect the contribution of their peers. The majority of pupils speak in full, often complex, sentences and adapt their speech to different circumstances and contexts. Excellent discussion about patterns of relationships, social customs, attitudes and beliefs took place in Year 5, in preparation for the writing of a new scene between Grandpa Chatterji and Grandpa Leicester from the book of that title. Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrated a high level of insight into what children in World War Two might be thinking, feeling and saying when they were evacuated. Pupils in Year 6 asked thoughtful and sensitive questions of a group of people from the community who had had first-hand experience of the war.
49. Standards in reading are well above those expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers. The library is used well and pupils are introduced to a range of books and authors. They enjoy the responsibility of borrowing books freely from the library and most use their reading skills well to find information from a variety of sources. The school benefits from the commitment of regular voluntary helpers in hearing pupils read. Assessment procedures are very good and the results of assessment are used very well to meet individual needs. Most older pupils have a very good understanding of what National Curriculum level they have reached and what they need to do to improve further.
50. Standards in writing in Year 2 are above those expected of pupils and in Year 6 are well above those reached nationally. The school identified the need to raise standards through adjustments in the curriculum, especially for the least able pupils. With the support of the Local Education Authority, they introduced a daily guided writing session for every class. Indications are that, after six months, this initiative is having a significant effect. All groups of pupils, including the more able, are challenged in their work through carefully structured assessment targets. They are encouraged to assess their own progress towards these targets. Pupils in Year 4 were proud of their success in a session when, in a series of complex sentences, they grouped their ideas about a visit to Hatfield Forest.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Strengths of teaching, particularly in the junior years, are teachers' good subject knowledge, their ability to encourage and engage pupils, high expectations and challenge, insistence on high standards of behaviour and the very good support given by teaching assistants. Strengths of learning are pupils' motivation and application to their work. Most pupils work very well, both independently and in groups. The results of very good assessment procedures are used very well to respond to individual needs.
52. Leadership and management are very good. The experienced subject leader has a very clear vision for future development. She is a very good role model for staff and pupils. She has created a very effective team and has put in place a number of initiatives that have successfully raised standards. Very good resources support learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Teaching and leadership and management have improved. The curriculum is more varied and interesting. Homework is used well to support and extend learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. There are very good opportunities for the promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum. Pupils use their reading skills well to find information from reference books and the Internet. They use ICT effectively to record their original writing. Speaking and listening skills are developed very well in all areas of the curriculum. There is some good use of different forms of writing, but this aspect of English teaching is not as well developed as it should be across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average; older pupils achieve particularly well. Higher attainers are well supported.
- Teaching and learning are very good. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented effectively, with very good use of practical activities.
- Assessment is used well to support the planning of future work. However, the quality of marking is variable and often lacks rigour.
- Presentation of pupils' work is not always given sufficient priority. There is over-dependence on worksheets and little independent recording in Years 1 and 2.
- While teachers use ICT well in lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT to support learning in mathematics.

Commentary

54. Standards in mathematics are well above average in Years 2 and 6. Standards in the national tests in Year 2 have been consistently high for several years. Similarly, standards in the Year 6 national tests have been well above average, or better, in all recent years other than 2003, and it is very likely that this positive picture will be maintained in the 2005 tests. The school has, therefore, been very effective in sustaining, and frequently improving upon, the well above average performance reported at the last inspection. A very high proportion of pupils in 2004 achieved, respectively, the challenging Level 3 at Year 2, and Level 5 at Year 6, in the national tests. Support for higher attaining pupils is very effective, with setting by prior attainment across the school, mostly within year groups.
55. Even given that pupils enter school with above average aptitude for the subject, their achievement is at least good. In 2004, the amount of progress made by Year 6 pupils during their time at the school was very good. The current Year 6 pupils have also achieved very well. However, achievement is more uneven in Year 2 at present, because teachers' expectations are less consistent. In general, however, pupils of all abilities do well. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, and, on the very limited evidence available, of the very few pupils at an early stage of learning English in the infants, is similar to that of the others. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Although a majority of the pupils in the top set in Year 6 at present are high-attaining boys, this reflects a long-standing pattern of higher achievement by this group.
56. There is a good focus on teaching basic numeracy skills. The school follows the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy and this reinforces well pupils' secure mathematical skills. Pupils experience a broad range of work. Opportunities for independent recording are good overall in Years 3 to 6, even though the emphasis on the rigour and quality of recording and presentation is variable. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have limited opportunities to develop their skills in independent recording, and the use of worksheets is excessive. These are often undated and poorly stored and it is difficult to track how pupils' learning progresses. There were several good examples of the use of practical activities to reinforce understanding of basic principles. Lower-attaining Year 3 pupils, for example, were much engaged by a practical task on data handling which involved them in collecting and collating information about shoe sizes in the class. Higher-attaining Year 5 and 6 pupils were similarly engaged by the considerable challenge of transforming shapes on a grid, combining rotations, translations, vector movements and, finally, enlargements from a basic position.

57. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2, but very good overall in the school because of the significant strength of the teaching in the majority of lessons in Years 3 to 6. In the best lessons, teachers place an emphasis on the development of pupils' thinking skills. Lessons are brisk and stimulating. Teachers question pupils carefully and constantly to ensure that their learning is secure. This was particularly strong in a lower-set lesson in Years 5 and 6 and an upper set lesson in Year 4. There is constant assessment to test pupils' understanding. This was seen across the school. Particularly in Years 3 to 6, pupils are asked to evaluate the quality of their own work, sometimes discussing the challenge of a task with their partner. Teachers use whiteboard technology well to enhance their lessons. However, there is limited evidence of pupils using ICT to support their learning in mathematics. Crucial factors in supporting pupils' learning are the very positive attitudes and the high level of commitment and concentration that they bring to their work.
58. Teachers use some aspects of assessment well to guide their planning of future work, but there are weaker features in assessment, for example in the marking of pupils' work. Discussion sessions at the beginning and end of lessons are used well to evaluate pupils' understanding. While there is no systematic programme of target setting for individual pupils, this has not had a significant effect on achievement across the school. Pupils are trained to evaluate whether they have met the objectives for a particular lesson. Marking is of a broadly satisfactory quality across the school, but it is often superficial, with few evaluative comments and little guidance as to how pupils might improve their performance. Homework arrangements are good.
59. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a good overview of performance and standards across the school, although she has had limited opportunities for formal monitoring. She has a good awareness of current priorities for improvement, particularly in problem solving. She has been supportive of parents in arranging sessions to ensure that they are familiar with current teaching methods. These sessions have been well attended.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Pupils use mathematics satisfactorily to support their work in other subjects, primarily in science, geography and in ICT. The school is effective overall in identifying opportunities for such cross-curricular links, but is keen to develop this aspect further.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are high. Pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is a strength.
- Pupils develop very good attitudes to work.
- Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

61. National test data shows that in 2004 standards at the end of Year 6 were well above the average for all schools and above the average for schools with a similar level of free school meals. At the end of Year 2 standards were very high in relation both to the national expectations and similar schools. Current standards in Year 6 are well above average. In the current Year 2, standards are likely to be above average, with fewer reaching the highest level than in 2004. This is largely because of the increased proportion of pupils with additional learning needs, and a significant number of pupils who are at the younger end of the age

group. Nevertheless, because of the consistently strong teaching and a challenging curriculum, pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are planned very well to provide sufficient challenge and encourage independent investigation. Teachers' expectations are high; consequently, pupils achieve well.
63. All teachers have good subject knowledge that they use well to plan interesting activities. For example, there was a high level of excitement when pupils in Year 3 investigated the favourite habitats of woodlice. Learning about the basic conditions needed for living things to thrive was more meaningful to Year 2 pupils because the teacher invited a mother and her baby into the lesson to answer some questions. Very good relationships are a feature of all lessons. Teachers value pupils' contributions and this encourages them to show more interest in their work. As a result, behaviour is very good and contributes well to pupils' capacity to learn. Teachers promote literacy skills very well through science by encouraging correct scientific vocabulary in discussion. Year 1 pupils, for example, correctly used terms such as push, pull, force, speed and direction, when describing the effect of speed on moving objects. Opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics and ICT skills to record their findings are also planned well. Teachers mark pupils' work very well. Written comments are evaluative and generally inform pupils about their achievements and how they can improve. Occasionally lessons are too ambitious with too many objectives for pupils to focus on, making it difficult for them to sustain their early motivation.
64. The subject leaders are both relatively new to their posts. Nevertheless, some headway has been made in restructuring curriculum planning and enhancing resources and this has a positive effect on achievement. A whole school science day has also helped to raise the subject's profile and generate interest. Both subject leaders share the monitoring of work for their respective age groups to gain an overview of standards. As yet, they are not involved in the formal evaluation of teaching or of pupils' performance in national tests, so they have a limited overview of standards across the whole school. A system for tracking whole school progress is currently being developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Procedures for monitoring what is taught are good.
- The ICT suite is used well by all classes.
- All pupils work enthusiastically and enjoy working in the suite.
- The ICT suite lacks appropriate ventilation and as a result gets too hot.

Commentary

65. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are similar to those expected nationally and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
66. All issues identified in the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. Teachers' planning is now related to the national guidance. Assessment procedures have been introduced to show how well individual pupils are achieving, and these are good. However, there is a need to develop more effective ways to use this valuable information to move individuals onto the next stage of learning. Resources are satisfactory. The school has recently invested heavily in a new computer suite, which includes an interactive whiteboard. In addition, multimedia projectors have been installed in five classrooms. The subject leader has

identified the need to develop the software for the new computers. Learning support assistants have been given training in the subject and the quality of teaching generally has improved significantly.

67. Teaching and learning are good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. However, this good quality teaching has not been in place long enough to have a significant effect on standards at the top of the school. It is clear that standards lower down the school, in particular in Year 1, are above those expected for pupils' ages. In the mixed Year 1 and Reception class, a learning support assistant was observed teaching a good lesson in the suite. She has good subject knowledge and gave very good instructions, which enabled the entire group to develop a block graph of their favourite fruit. All pupils, some of whom were in Reception, worked confidently and enthusiastically, following instructions accurately and using the computers maturely. These youngest pupils are achieving well as they develop computer skills. All teachers are confident and show secure subject knowledge. Lessons are interestingly planned and, as a result, pupils work very enthusiastically at the activities they are given.
68. All pupils have regular opportunities to develop ICT skills. The subject leader is offering satisfactory leadership. He has a satisfactory idea of standards in the school and a good idea of the quality of teaching. He is aware of the need to develop the use of the information held on individuals so that all teachers can identify what pupils need to do to improve. For example, at times a few lower attaining pupils have difficulty following the instructions given in class because they do not fully understand what they are expected to do. The ICT suite, although new, is an uncomfortable place to learn in because it lacks ventilation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The ICT suite is used well for all classes to develop ICT skills and to promote computer skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 develop multimedia presentations to support their history topic. Pupils in Year 1 link mathematics with ICT as they transfer information that they have collected about their favourite fruits and make it into a block graph. Skills and knowledge taught in ICT are used well in literacy lessons across the school. For example, pupils in Year 4 inserted a photograph in a text, which they then 'faded'; they then superimposed a letter. ICT skills are promoted well across the curriculum in all classes.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well across the school.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- The quality of the presentation of work is not consistent through the school.

Commentary

70. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above those normally found. By the end of Year 2, standards are similar to those normally found. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, and the most able, achieve well overall, developing good geographical knowledge and skills as they progress through the school. The curriculum is planned well to ensure skills are built up systematically and pupils' learning is further enriched by visits to farms, woodland areas and, in Year 6, through a residential visit to an outdoor centre in Norfolk.
71. The overall quality of teaching is very good, but stronger in Years 3 to 6 where lessons are more sharply focused and there is a greater expectation that pupils will present their work well. Teachers plan thoroughly to make lessons interesting and relevant. In Year 2, for example, the

focus during the inspection was on environmental issues, to coincide with the G8 Summit. Pupils were deeply interested in a video about rainforests and showed great empathy during discussions relating to the problems surrounding the destruction of forests. To balance pupils' views, a survey of the school grounds showed that change could also bring about some improvements. Skills were taught very well in the upper junior classes. Year 6 pupils learned about landscape features by tracing the contour lines on maps onto polystyrene tiles before cutting the tiles out and building them into the shape of a hill. This gave a clear three-dimensional perspective and helped pupils to interpret ordnance survey maps more clearly. The subject knowledge and clarity of teaching from both teacher and teaching assistant were impressive. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson learned to locate features on an ordnance survey map by using four-digit grid references. The teacher injected great pace into this short lesson on map reading skills, and generated some exciting competition as pupils collaborated fervently to identify map features. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed pupils' interest and very good attitudes in Years 3 to 6 in the way their work is presented. Work is very neatly set out and good links with literacy and art, for example, are evident. In Years 1 and 2, presentation is not given the same priority and pieces of work tend to be submerged in topic books and folders. Overall, ICT is used satisfactorily, mainly for research purposes.

72. The leadership and management of geography are satisfactory overall. The subject leader oversees the curriculum well and monitors standards through reviews of pupils' work. Assessment systems are being revised in order to supply more specific information about individual pupils' achievements. However, these developments are not yet fully in place and there is no formal evaluation overall of standards and teaching quality.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall.
- Visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum very well.
- Pupils achieve well across the school.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of presentation of pupils' work.

Commentary

73. Standards in history are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and are above expectations at the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress and, overall, they achieve well. The curriculum is planned well and provides sufficient challenge for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to find out about the past from important events, the lives of famous people and past life as portrayed in traditional tales and non-fiction books. From the earliest moment, pupils are made aware of how things change over time. Pupils in Year 1, for example, came to grips with the idea of chronology by constructing their family tree, learning about different generations. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn about significant periods of history from the Ancient Greeks to the 1950s and 60s in Britain. There is work of good quality about Viking settlements, the Tudors and Victorians, as well as ancient civilisations, and events surrounding World War II. Pupils' learning is enriched by the use of ICT for research purposes, through visits to places of historical interest such as the Globe Theatre and by visitors in school who help pupils simulate life in Roman or Victorian times. During the inspection a group of elderly people were invited by Year 6 pupils to share their knowledge and experiences of the war, especially their memories of the evacuees who came to West Bergholt. This resulted in an exceptional learning experience for those pupils because the visitors brought in personal mementoes and artefacts, adding a 'real life' touch to their memories. The visit also coincided with the school's engaging production of *The Evacuees*.

74. Teaching is very good. Good subject knowledge means that lessons are planned well so there is very good depth to pupils' learning. History is often linked to literacy. Pupils practise writing and note taking skills, for example by constructing paragraphs about the first Olympic Games, or writing the diaries of the characters in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Teachers make lessons interesting so that pupils are motivated and enjoy their work. The use of special books in Years 3 to 6 encourages pupils to present work very well. Written work is neat and legible and illustrations carefully finished. This contrasts with work in Years 1 and 2, where presentation is more inconsistent. Relationships are very good. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils who in return behave very well and try their best.
75. The subject is led and managed effectively. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made in resources and curriculum planning. The policy for history has been updated. The topic-based approach gives history a high profile in the school. The subject leader scrutinises pupils' work in order to gain an overview of standards but evaluation of standards and teaching quality lacks the rigour that is needed to support further improvements.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources to support learning are good.
- There are no consistent assessment procedures that clearly show how well pupils are doing.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not as effective as it should be.

Commentary

76. At the end of both Years 2 and 6, standards are as expected nationally. The quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school.
77. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 show satisfactory levels of understanding as they talk about Christianity. Pupils speak enthusiastically about visiting a church and sketching items that they saw. Their understanding of different religions is developing satisfactorily. They spoke enthusiastically about Hinduism as being different to Christianity. Previous recorded work is limited but it indicates that the subject is not a high priority in Years 1 and 2. For example, pupils do not have religious education books but place any recorded work in a 'topic' book mixed with material from science, geography and history. As a result many pupils are confused as to precisely what has been taught in the subject.
78. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, though satisfactory overall, is variable. In a Year 2 lesson, the story recounted by the teacher was appropriate and linked satisfactorily with the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Relationships between the teacher and the pupils were good and expectations were high with regard to pupils' listening. Although the teacher told the story well, discussions with pupils highlighted the fact that many of them did not realise that this was a religious education lesson. Pupils were not told precisely enough what they were supposed to learn, which was to see how humans can misuse the planet. Nor were they helped sufficiently to understand the relationship between this topic and religious education. The lesson ended too abruptly and this added to pupils' confusion.
79. In the best lesson seen, in Year 5, the teacher worked hard at promoting the fact that symbolism is incorporated into the architecture, decorations and furnishings of Christian places of worship. Learning was very good, mainly because of the teacher's very good subject knowledge as he explained the significance of the objects seen inside the church, used pictures to develop understanding and the white board to indicate how to spell words such as *altar* and *lectern*. There were very good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding through the teacher's probing use of questions in this lesson. Pupils were interested and thought hard as they answered the teacher's challenging questions, and they showed mature

and positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils in Year 6 spoke satisfactorily about the work they had done on different religions, such as Hinduism and Christianity. They were able to recall facts they had learned and all spoke respectfully as they talked about the differences between the two religions. Pupils' previous work shows that in Years 3 to 6, religious education books are well presented and clearly demonstrate the various topics pupils have been working on.

80. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has completed some monitoring of planning and looked at work produced in some classes. As a result, she has a clear idea of standards and recognises that the quality of teaching is variable. She is currently developing assessment procedures, but at present there is little information to show how well pupils are doing. In addition, the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not as effective as they should be. Pupils' previous work indicates that some classes do not complete as much work as others. In most classes in the juniors, pupils have good opportunities to use their developing literacy skills in religious education lessons. Resources for the subject are good and are well organised to support learning. There is some, though limited, use of ICT for research purposes.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. In **music**, it was not possible to form an overall judgement on provision, standards, achievement, teaching or improvement since the last inspection, as only one lesson was observed. Teaching in this Year 2 lesson was very good and pupils achieved very well, as they added dynamics to a created rhythm and beat. The curriculum, based on a published scheme of work, provides a strong basis for pupils' ongoing development. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. By the end of Year 2, pupils have explored sounds, rhythm, pulse, duration, pitch, timbre, tempo and dynamics. They are able to recognise and play a variety of percussion instruments. They explore how sounds can be used expressively. Pupils in Year 6 are able to set words to rhythm patterns and add percussion or keyboard accompaniments. They enjoy music and sing tunefully, with good expression. Visiting musicians extend pupils' learning and introduce them to a variety of orchestral and other instruments. All pupils are involved in performances throughout the year. The choir sings to elderly people in the village at Christmas. Pupils sing and perform at a family service in the church, each term. They have the opportunity to learn the recorder, flute, clarinet, violin, guitar and keyboard. Assessment is good and is used well to inform planning and meet individual needs. Resources are good and are used well. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader provides good support for staff and pupils. She has a clear vision for future development, but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor classroom practice.
82. Although a few lessons were seen in **art and design** there is too little evidence to make judgements as to the quality of provision, teaching or learning. Pupils' previous work around the school suggests that standards are broadly as expected. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have had good opportunities to become familiar with the work of famous artists such as Paul Clee and Pablo Picasso. In addition, pupils in Year 2 have worked on a class picture of *Adele* after studying a picture painted by Gustav Klimt. All pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop an idea of three-dimensional art. Pupils in Year 4 used clay very confidently to make mini beasts. The art and design curriculum was linked very well to religious education as pupils in Year 3 made a model of Ganesha, the Hindu God of Wisdom. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Visiting artists and well-planned visits out of school enrich the subject very well. Pupils have many opportunities to visit local galleries as well as the National Gallery and the Portrait Gallery. However, there are no formal assessment procedures or effective overview of the standards pupils reach or the progress they make.
83. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**. It is not possible to make a firm judgement on the quality of provision or teaching. The subject leader has not been in post long enough to judge her overview of the subject. However, she is enthusiastic and is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures so that there is a clear picture of the standards pupils reach and how well they are doing. Teachers plan around the national guidance and the limited

amount of pupils' previous work available suggests that standards are likely to be broadly as expected. There are no procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

84. Too few lessons were observed in **physical education**, and too few activities, to allow a judgement to be made on standards, achievement, teaching or overall provision. However, evidence suggests that this is a well-established element of the curriculum. In the lessons observed, in Years 1 and 2, pupils were learning a range of field athletics skills, principally those of throwing. Both sessions were tightly managed, sustaining a good pace throughout. Warm-up activities were rigorous, the coaching input demonstrated a good level of expertise and the overall management of both lessons was good. This good teaching enabled pupils to make good progress, so that, by the end of the session, the standard of throwing was approaching the expected level for the age group. The two lessons seen suggested that teachers are less effective in promoting self-evaluation in lessons, and that opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their skills could be improved. Cross-curricular links, for example with science, are identified in planning.
85. Over time, pupils experience the full breadth of the physical education curriculum. The great majority of pupils achieve the expected standard in swimming. However, this judgement is based on performance in the school's small pool. No opportunity is provided for pupils to work in a full size facility. The school feels that standards in gymnastics are now a strength, following recent training input for staff. Games activities are supported well through extra-curricular activities and opportunities to participate in leagues and inter-school competitions. Outdoor and adventurous activities are provided through the residential trip for the upper juniors, and also through an orienteering course for Year 3 and 4 pupils in the school grounds. Assessment is limited, mainly based on assessment structures integral to the award programmes that the school uses. Physical education is satisfactorily led and managed and continues to build on its recent progress. There are clear and realistic plans for future developments.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. The programme for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) has a high profile in the school. There are strong links with the carefully planned daily assembly themes, which make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development. A detailed scheme of work is in place and weekly lessons are timetabled for each class. There is a well-planned programme of topics, many of which are dealt with progressively. To judge from the lessons seen whole-class discussions are productive and pupils are supportive of one another when difficulties arise. Emphasis is placed on values, self-esteem, responsibility, choices, friendship, respect for others, and personal standards. Pupils are encouraged to develop self-discipline and to contribute to the life of the school and the community. They are given responsibilities appropriate to their age. The school encourages pupils to adopt safe and healthy life styles.
87. The teaching of citizenship is established as part of the PSHCE programme. The focus on citizenship has led to the creation of two elected school councils, one for Years 1 and 2 and one for Years 3 to 6. Representatives have taken part in a training day at Colchester Town Hall, organised by the consortium of local schools. This provided an excellent opportunity for them to understand democratic procedures. Pupils' views are sought by the representatives of the councils. Members have been proactive in representing pupils' concerns about the playground. They initiated *Playground Patrols* and used their budget to provide more playground equipment. The subject leader is very effective in empowering the pupils whilst, at the same time, giving the necessary support. Pupils are taught about the responsibilities of living in a community, and the need to recognise and appreciate the values and beliefs of other people. Older pupils learn about democracy by debating issues about which they feel strongly. Citizenship in the community is fostered through very good links with local schools, colleges and wider partnerships, the community, and support for a number of charities.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
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	4
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).