

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Witham, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115199

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Kelliher

Lead inspector: Mrs T Chakraborti

Dates of inspection: 23 – 25 May 2005

Inspection number: 272559

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	205
School address:	Maltings Lane Witham, Essex
Postcode:	CM8 1DX
Telephone number:	01376 513418
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Philip Tucker
Date of previous inspection:	6 December 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Family is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School. It serves the Parish of Holy Family and All Saints and this means that pupils attending the school come from the town of Witham and surrounding villages. It is about the same size as other primary schools and currently, there are 203 full-time children on roll aged five to eleven. The children come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and the majority are White British. There are no refugee or traveller children. The school has very few children who speak English as an additional language and only one is at the early stage of learning English. The number of pupils starting and leaving the school at other than the usual times is low. The percentage of children identified as having special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below the national average. The range of special educational needs is wide. The percentage of children known to be eligible for free school meals is also below the national average. Children's attainment on entry into the Reception is below average. The school has received the Investors In People Certificate and the Intermediate Healthy Schools Award. It has strong links with the Parish and is part of a local consortium of schools. It has experienced several changes in staff, especially at senior leadership level during the past two years. A new senior management team was established in November 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12603	Tusha Chakraborti	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language Geography History Personal, social and health Education
9519	Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector	
19774	Maura Docherty	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology
25787	Edmond Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Holy Family Catholic Primary is a **satisfactory** school with some noteworthy strengths. It has been through a difficult period with many staff changes, especially at senior management level. This has impacted the school's performance over time. Under the good leadership of the new headteacher, appointed in November 2004, determined action is being taken to enhance achievement. Standards are similar to those found in most schools nationally. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall. The school has a strong Christian ethos and involves pupils from different backgrounds and abilities well in all aspects of its work. It provides sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher gives a good clear educational direction to the school's development and is supported effectively by the recently appointed deputy headteacher.
- Standards in information and communication technology are good in Year 6.
- Good provision in the Foundation Stage gives the youngest children a good start to their education. As a result, by the end of the Reception year, they reach the national goals in all areas of learning, with a significant percentage attaining beyond this level.
- Induction arrangements are planned very effectively to ensure new pupils, especially children in Reception, settle down quickly and enjoy learning.
- Very good behaviour and relationships mean there is a really positive atmosphere in which pupils learn.
- Good attendance, punctuality and attitudes to school enable pupils to learn with little interruption.
- The school's arrangements for the care, health and safety of pupils are very effective and ensure that they all feel secure.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always suggest strategies for improvement, especially with regard to presentation.
- Parents do not receive sufficient information about the curriculum taught in order to support their children's learning at home.

The school has made satisfactory progress overall in addressing most of the key issues from the last inspection six years ago. Significant staff turnover in the past two years has interrupted developments. Since the last inspection, steps taken have resulted in good curriculum planning for the Foundation Stage. Teaching in information and communication technology continues to be good. The provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils, and pupils' behaviour, are now very good. The quality of teachers' short-term planning is better, but there is still work to do in improving the way in which pupils' work is marked. The school improvement plan has identified accurately the key areas where improvements must be made to raise standards further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. The table shows that national test results in 2004 for pupils in Year 6 were average in English and science. They were good in mathematics, a significant improvement on the previous year. However, the results were not as good when compared to pupils' prior attainment. These results need to be viewed with caution as the number of pupils taking them is small. Few pupils reached the higher Level 5. Interruptions to their learning caused by staff changes mean some pupils did not achieve at fast enough rates. As a result, the trend in improvement in results over time has been slower than in most schools, but there are now signs of improving rates of achievement. Inspection evidence shows that standards are now average in English and science and above average in mathematics in Year 6. In Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, standards have risen within the past year in Year 2 and are now average because of the actions taken to raise them. Standards in information and communication technology are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Children enter school with below average levels of attainment and achieve well. As a result, by the end of Reception, most children are likely to reach the early learning goals set for them nationally in each area of learning. Some are exceeding them. Boys and girls achieve satisfactorily as do pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve satisfactorily for their capabilities. However, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged as well as they should be.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social and cultural developments is **good**. They behave very well and develop good attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils and adults and amongst pupils themselves are very good and help them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is also **satisfactory** overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Children in the Reception class are assessed very effectively to ensure that they achieve well. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is satisfactory overall: in some lessons teaching is good. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and plan their lessons appropriately. Teaching in mathematics is effective in developing good numeracy skills throughout the school. Good teaching in information and communication technology is leading to higher standards in that subject. Good assessment systems in mathematics are used effectively to evaluate and track pupils' progress. Staff support pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language well and ensure that all have equal opportunities to learn. Teaching assistants are trained well and they are fully aware of the learning needs of the pupils they support. However, in some lessons, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to achieve the standards of which they are capable. Marking of pupils' work could be better and give clearer guidance on what pupils need to do to improve, including its presentation. Curriculum provision is good in Years 1 to 6 and very good in the Foundation Stage. Its breadth, balance and enrichment through the provision of a good range of extra-curricular activities motivate pupils to want to learn more. Pupils are cared for very well and feel confident to ask for help when necessary. The good partnership with parents makes an effective link between home and school. Links with the local community, other schools and colleges are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **satisfactory**. Several changes in staffing over the past two years have had an adverse effect on the school's performance and overall effectiveness. Clear direction and good leadership has improved standards of behaviour. Together with the deputy, the headteacher has drawn up and begun to implement a comprehensive plan that identifies the key areas for improvement. Indications are that this is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Sound management and financial systems ensure that the school runs smoothly and makes appropriate use of its funds. The governing body is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they support the management team well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in high regard and report that their children are very happy to attend. Most appreciate the commitment of the headteacher and the staff and what the school seeks to achieve for their children. Many parents would like more information about the curriculum that is taught so that they can support their children's learning more effectively. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the trusting relationships they have with the adults there. They know that their opinions are sought and valued, giving them opportunities to be involved in school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the proportion of good teaching in Years 1 to 6 to enhance the achievement of all pupils, but especially that of the more able.
- Ensure that marking of pupils' work is consistent and that it guides them effectively to improve their work and to present it well.
- Make sure that parents receive sufficient information about the curriculum that is taught so that they can support their children's learning more effectively.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage. It is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found in most schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Standards in mathematics are rising in Year 6 and they are now above average.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged in their work.

Commentary

1. Children enter the Reception class with below average levels of attainment and achieve well during their stay in this class because of good teaching. As a result, by the time they leave the Reception year, most reach the early learning goals in all the areas of learning, with a significant number exceeding them.
2. In the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 2, results were above average nationally in reading and writing and average in mathematics and this shows an improvement on the previous year. Results were not as good in comparison to similar schools because the higher attaining pupils were not challenged as well as they should have been. Inspection findings show that standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The reason for the difference is the turnover of staff in the past two years.
3. The 2004 national test results for Year 6 were average in English and science and above average in mathematics which shows a significant improvement on the previous year. However, results were not as good when compared to pupils' prior attainment. In Year 6 now, standards in mathematics are good, while those in English and science are average. The newly appointed headteacher recognised quickly that the school's performance compared to those with pupils from similar backgrounds was not high enough. Her analysis of the situation recognised that the results need to be treated with caution because of the small number of pupils taking the tests, pupils' learning in the infants and juniors had been interrupted by staff changes and also the higher attaining pupils were not achieving as well as they should be. This is reflected by the trend in improvement in results over time that is slower than in most schools. Determined action is being taken to enable pupils to achieve more. This is proving successful as seen in the rising standards, especially in mathematics.
4. In information and communication technology, standards are good because pupils are taught well and they are enthusiastic about the subject. Good leadership and management means pupils are knowledgeable about the use of information and communication technology in the wider world. In addition, assessment procedures enable teachers to plan work that enhances achievement.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Indeed, many of them reach the nationally expected level in English and mathematics by the time they leave. They receive good support from effective teaching assistants and class teachers who usually plan work for them that is at an appropriate level. Individual education plans are well written by the class teachers with the support of the special educational needs co-ordinator. The targets set are measurable and are regularly reviewed.

6. Boys and girls reach similar standards as do those pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are achieving satisfactorily.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.7 (14.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.5 (16.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (26.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.1 (26.2)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.1 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and personal development are good. Their behaviour is very good. The school provides well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments. Attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour is very good at all times. Pupils form very warm relationships with each other and adults.
- Pupils have a good level of interest in all the activities provided for them both in and out of the classroom.
- Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social developments are good.
- Levels of attendance and punctuality are good.

Commentary

7. Pupils' good attitudes, very good behaviour and their eagerness to learn make for a positive atmosphere throughout the school. They work together well in class and show respect and thoughtfulness for others. Pupils are motivated by their teachers and other adults to do their best at all times. They listen carefully in lessons and are keen to ask and answer questions. In the playgrounds they share equipment sensibly and show good levels of care and support for each other. Older pupils often take responsibility by working with younger pupils to help them learn and to build strong relationships throughout the school. The Year 5 project with the Reception children involving control technology is a good recent example of this in action. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and are obviously proud of their school, its work and achievements.

8. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities they are given to visit places of interest and always behave well when out of school. They are also interested in the work they are given in class and are proud of their efforts. Year 6 pupils talk with great animation about the work they have completed in information and communication technology lessons, particularly the current work with the secondary school to which most of the pupils transfer. A great many pupils take the opportunity to join one or more of the many extra-curricular activities provided by the school. They are so keen that they will turn up at eight o'clock in the morning to participate in country dance sessions or sing in the choir.

9. Pupils with special educational needs who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are well managed in class and during breaks. They are assisted by their teachers, teaching assistants and midday supervisors to become valued members of the school community. Such pupils respond well to this positive approach and are fully included in all activities. As their behaviour is managed well it has no adverse effect on their own learning or that of others. They are also helped to behave appropriately by their classmates who are sensitive to their difficulties and act as good role models. No child has been excluded in the last eight years.

10. Pupils' spiritual development is good and is supported through assemblies, the strong Christian ethos and the times in class when pupils are able to reflect on their own worth and their place in the wider world. The school mission statement is prominently displayed in all classrooms and underpins the work of all members of school. Pupils' moral and social development are very good and pupils are fully aware of the impact of their actions on others and the responsibilities of living in a community. The school council, older pupils supporting younger ones and the very harmonious relationships make for a school community that is caring and supportive. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about other lands in geography and other faiths in religious education.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/04(%) 95.8 (national-94.5)				
Authorised absence			Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1		School data	0.1
National data	5.1		National data	0.4
<i>The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.</i>				

11. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was judged to be poor. It is now good and above the national average. Punctuality is also good with very few pupils arriving late despite many living quite a distance from the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the school provides good opportunities to enrich and enliven pupils' learning. The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The partnerships with parents and the community are also good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils' progress is assessed satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the Reception class and children are assessed very effectively. As a result children are achieving well.
- Classroom management is good and enables pupils to learn in a positive working atmosphere.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils so they are fully included in lessons.
- The assessment system for mathematics is good and it is developing in other subjects.
- Pupils, including the higher attainers, are not challenged sufficiently in some lessons.
- Marking of pupils' work does not consistently suggest how pupils could improve their work and presentation.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (3%)	15 (50%)	14 (47%)	0	0	0

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

12. The quality of teaching currently is satisfactory when during the last inspection it was good. This is due in part to the recent turnover of staff, including the senior managers. However, the new headteacher is developing a rigorous system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning that is beginning to have a positive effect, increasing the number of good lessons.

13. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and promotes good levels of achievement. As a result, many children reach or exceed the expected levels for their age in all areas of learning. The assessment procedures for monitoring children's progress are very good and enable staff to plan very effectively, activities that help children to learn. Relationships are very good and this helps children to have fun while they are learning. Resources are used well to make the meaning of tasks clear and to help children to learn a range of skills across the areas of learning. Support staff are deployed effectively and make a valuable contribution to children's achievements.

14. In Years 1 to 6, teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. They create a calm working atmosphere in which pupils learn without interruption. The relationships between the staff and pupils are good and a positive ethos for learning has been established. As a result, pupils behave very well and become more confident learners. Staff value pupils' contributions and promote good attitudes to learning.

15. Teachers use teaching assistants very well and fully brief them about their role in each lesson. The teaching assistants have been trained well and the teachers deploy them effectively. They give good support to pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. They often make careful notes of their work with individuals or groups of pupils and they record the achievements of the pupils to help the teachers plan the next stage in their learning. The individual education plans match the work effectively to these pupils' learning needs and they are fully included in all class activities. The teaching assistants also provide good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language in small groups.

16. The school's assessment procedures are good in mathematics and these are used well to plan work closely matched to individual needs. Individual targets are set for each pupil and they are encouraged to evaluate their own progress against the set targets. Assessment in English is satisfactory but is not used effectively enough to raise achievement further. The new management is in the process of developing assessment procedures in other subjects to enhance achievement.

17. In some lessons, activities are not well structured, interesting and challenging enough to help pupils, especially the higher attainers to achieve standards of which they are capable. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and not rigorous in most cases. Presentation of pupils' work is often unsatisfactory. Teachers' marking does not suggest to pupils how they can improve their work and presentation. There is a marking policy but it is not followed consistently. These factors have an adverse effect on pupils' learning and, as a result, they do not always achieve as fast as they should. Homework is not always used consistently to support pupils' learning.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and a very good curriculum in Reception class. It enriches learning through a good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good. The curriculum benefits from good use of the gardens and wildlife area to enhance learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and has been recently reviewed in the light of national guidance from the Primary Strategy "Excellence and Enjoyment".
- Good provision in Foundation Stage allows pupils to achieve well and good support is provided for these children.
- Outdoor facilities are used well, particularly in science and the knowledge and understanding strand in the Foundation Stage curriculum in Reception.

Commentary

18. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6, including personal, social, and health education, is well planned and meets statutory requirements fully. Provision for religious education is reported according to a separate inspection schedule. Planning provides an interesting and worthwhile range of learning opportunities and is carefully organised, using nationally approved schemes of work so there is an orderly acquisition of knowledge and skills over time. The curriculum has recently been reviewed in the light of the Primary Strategy, and opportunities are provided for pupils to transfer skills across the range of subjects taught. For example, in Year 1 the study of materials in science is developed further in art and design, where pupils explore a range of materials to achieve different artistic effects.

19. The general curriculum is enriched by a range of additional opportunities, including an interesting choice of clubs which support learning outside the school day. Some pupils have an opportunity to play a musical instrument, supported by the local authority's peripatetic tuition service. Visits are planned to match topics pupils are studying in class, and visitors are invited to share their expertise during particular units of work. For example, in the week of inspection the Essex Wildlife Trust introduced the pupils to the recycling phenomenon of a wormery as part of their work on natural cycles. Good links are made with the local secondary school through technology projects.

20. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and resourced to teach all areas of learning. Provision in communication, language and learning, and knowledge and understanding is particularly well developed. Planning is effective and evaluated and to meet the identified needs of children in the light of their responses to activities. This ensures that tasks are well matched to those children who are less experienced and work at a slower pace and those who are currently attaining highly.

21. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Where appropriate, the work they are given by their teachers is linked to the targets in their individual education plans and is designed to help them progress in their learning. Pupils are given full access to the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, and receive very good quality help from a strong team of skilled teaching assistants who make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Individual education plans are well written and all members of staff work hard to help pupils achieve personal targets. The overall provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English is satisfactory.

22. Accommodation is good overall. The school has also developed the use of the gardens and wildlife area to develop the outdoor curriculum in line with the recommendation of the "Excellence and Enjoyment" guidelines. This was well demonstrated in the week of inspection when

pupils went outside to investigate air as a force, animals and their habitats, the amazing ecology of a wormery, and to check the development of tadpoles in the pond.

Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures to ensure the children's welfare, health and safety are very effective. The pastoral care of children is a strength of the school and relationships with all adults are very supportive. The pupils have a voice in determining improvements to the school through the effective school council.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well thought-out arrangements for the care, health and safety of children ensure that they all feel secure and that the school day runs smoothly.
- Induction arrangements are very good and ensure new pupils quickly feel part of the school community.
- The school council is effective in giving pupils a role in running the school.
- The achievements of pupils with special educational needs are tracked well.

Commentary

23. A health and safety policy, with appropriate risk assessments has been implemented fully and a health and safety audit has been carried out recently to maintain high quality provision. The school site is maintained to a high standard and any repairs attended to promptly. There is good coverage for first aid and detailed records of accidents are kept. The headteacher has undertaken training for child protection, as the designated person for this area, and has ensured procedures are clear to all staff.

24. Adults working in the school have close and trusting relationships with the pupils and provide caring pastoral support. All pupils are supervised well throughout the school day. Lunchtime arrangements enhance pupils' social development. On some days pupils sit with their peers and on others older pupils sit with younger ones and serve them their food. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Intermediate Award.

25. Induction procedures are very well planned and relationships with parents are established early, usually through home visits before children start in the Reception class. A very good feature of this is the pairing of Reception children with Year 6 pupils so that they walk to church together, sit together in some assemblies and the older pupils help the younger ones as they learn to read.

26. Pupils are listened to carefully both in lessons and in discussions about how to improve the school. A school council, consisting of pupils elected by their classmates, meets every month. They have discussed playground improvements and devised games rotas. They have held bring and buy sales to pay for outdoor equipment. Year 5 council members represent their school on the Witham Youth council. They have organised a suggestion box so that all pupils can have an input into the development of the local community.

27. All pupils with special educational needs are tracked to monitor their progress and to ensure that they are achieving as well as possible. Their individual education plans are written well, set appropriate and achievable targets and are reviewed each term. Liaison with outside agencies is good and the school ensures that pupils receive appropriate and regular support from a variety of sources. The seven pupils with a statement of special educational need in the school receive their full entitlement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed an effective relationship with parents. Links with other schools and the community are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are fully involved in the work of the school and are well informed about school routines and their child's progress but receive limited information about the curriculum that is taught.
- Links with other schools and the community support children's personal development and academic achievement well.

Commentary

28. Parents receive good information about the life of the school through newsletters and a detailed prospectus. Termly consultation evenings, the home school record book and a detailed annual report give parents a good understanding of the progress their children make. However, parents have indicated that they receive limited written information about the curriculum that is taught and the school has plans to improve the situation. The school consults parents about its development. Links with parents are good, and many contribute to children's learning in the Reception class. During the week of inspection one parent volunteer was introducing over-stitching as they embroidered felt butterflies as part of their record of work on mini-beasts. The home school reading record is an excellent initiative allowing parents and staff to communicate on a daily basis the progress children are making and to share observations which parents or staff have made.

29. The school involves parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs from the moment their child is identified as being in need of additional help. They are always invited to meetings to review individual education plans and the majority do so. Those unable to attend are sent a copy of the individual education plan to make them aware of the targets set for their child so that they can further support their learning at home.

30. Parents ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive punctually and many support their children well in ensuring that homework is completed. A significant number of parents help regularly in school, for example, in class or by running clubs such as the gardening club. The parents and teachers' association is very active both in fundraising and in arranging social events such as karaoke or treasure hunts, and organising school events such as sports day and the Leavers Mass.

31. Links with the local community are good; the local parish priest supports the school well and is known to all pupils through his regular visits to the classrooms and to take assemblies. Pupils are involved in carol singing in the town and community music and sporting events.

32. There are good links with other schools through local networks which support the work of the school. For example, all schools in Witham have produced a common code for behaviour for children which has been issued to parents. Year 6 pupils' skills in information and communication technology are being improved as a result of the link with the secondary school where most of the pupils transfer to. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 visit secondary schools for 'taster days' and the school provides good support for them as they apply and transfer to their secondary school in Year 6.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership by the headteacher is good. Management systems are sound. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is an effective leader who guides her staff well.
- Senior staff are good role models for pupils and other staff to follow.
- Strategic plans indicate a clear educational direction and determination to raise standards.
- There is a strong commitment towards inclusion.
- The provision for special educational needs is well managed.

Commentary

33. The newly appointed headteacher guides the school's work strongly. There is a positive team spirit in the school that includes all who work there and is now in a good position to implement new initiatives. The actions taken by the headteacher to enhance achievement indicate that the school now has a good capacity for improvement. This is reflected in the rising standards in mathematics and the Foundation Stage. The headteacher has put in place a rigorous system for monitoring teaching and learning and this is beginning to impact pupils' achievement. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are now good and, as a result, its provision has improved. Senior staff provide good leadership and are fully committed to improving the school. They are good role models for staff and pupils alike as they show great respect for the views of others and are consistently diligent in their work. They create effective teams that work together closely with a good sense of purpose.

34. Strategic planning reflects the school's commitment to improve levels of achievement in the core subjects, particularly English. The school development plan is in the process of being completely rewritten to reflect the push to raise standards and enhance pupils' achievement so that it is as high as possible. It is a well-focused document with a strong thrust towards improving teaching and learning. It clearly identifies appropriate priorities for improvement and these are appropriately linked to the performance management of staff.

35. The school is fully committed towards inclusion. All members of the school community are highly valued and respected and are encouraged to become involved in all activities. The headteacher and her staff take a keen interest in the welfare and progress of all pupils. They ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to benefit from the many educational and social events planned.

36. The provision for special educational needs is well managed. Pupils are tracked to ensure they are achieving well. All paperwork is kept up-to-date and liaison with outside agencies is effective. They are immediately contacted and involved in the provision when required. Training for teachers and support staff is arranged to help them understand how best to support pupils with specific difficulties such as speech and language. The regular meetings held by the special needs co-ordinator and the support staff are useful for keeping them informed of any new developments. The provision fully meets statutory requirements.

37. Governors meet regularly and are very supportive of the school. They evaluate and monitor information from the headteacher and staff, from whom they receive verbal and written reports, for example about curriculum areas. Individual governors have taken on the role of supporting particular curriculum areas. Many of them visit the school during the working day to see it in action and then report back their findings to the governing body. Through such close links they are able to assess the impact of any new initiatives. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. Governors' specific skills in such areas as building, music and landscaping are much appreciated and utilised well by the school to improve the environment and provision. Professional

development of staff, performance management and appraisal are all in place and the school gives good support to its teachers and other staff.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005			
Income and expenditure	£	Balances	£
Total income	642,735	Balance from previous year	41,425
Total expenditure	600,584	Balance carried forward to next year	42,151
Expenditure per pupil	2,930		

38. Financial management is secure. The governors and the headteacher are working to ensure that the budget reflects the new educational priorities. Sound financial procedures are in place and there is regular monitoring of the financial position during the year. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in Foundation Stage is **good**.

39. The quality of teaching is consistently good and children achieve well. Good planning and very good assessment ensure that tasks are well matched to the maturity and abilities of the children, including those with special educational needs. This is an improved picture from the last inspection.

40. Achievement is good in all areas of learning. Attainment on entry is generally below average, but rises quickly because of the effective teaching children receive. At the end of the Reception year, standards are broadly similar to those found in most schools. The curriculum is planned imaginatively and ensures that strong links are made between different subject areas to make learning more purposeful. For example, in their current topic on mini-beasts children are learning about the life-cycle of frogs and butterflies, by reading stories about life-cycle, making observations in the wildlife garden and the snail aquarium, embroidering felt butterflies, and producing a range of booklets to record information. The school has very good procedures for monitoring children's progress. Regular assessments contribute to the children's early years' profile and enable staff to plan activities to help pupils make progress. Resources are good and used well to enhance children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Children form very good relationships with adults and each other.

Commentary

41. Most children make good progress and become confident learners with a well developed curiosity in the world around them. Many meet the early learning goals set for them nationally. They have very good attitudes and behaviour and staff work hard to help them appreciate each other's efforts and needs. For example, for a new "art gallery" set up in the week of inspection, children decided which work went up with positive appreciation of each other's efforts. Children with special educational needs are given very good support and the whole class is encouraged to be positive about each other's needs and abilities. The positive responses of adults to children's ideas are highly motivating and encourage them to greater efforts.

42. Children work well together and have very good relationships with each other. This was evident in the way they prepared and presented their class assembly. This helped them to understand the importance of teamwork, and each child took special responsibility for different parts of the presentation. Consideration for each other was demonstrated in "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" party, where children shared out the fruit salad they had made, with good understanding of fairness and the need for good table manners. Children in this group talked together with great curiosity about why the yellow jelly turned red when placed in an orange dish. They listened to each other's ideas carefully and raised questions with the adult in attendance. Such curiosity was displayed many times during the day.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching puts a strong emphasis on early reading and writing skills.
- Children are working to their capabilities and make good progress because teaching is consistently good.
- Good opportunities for speaking and listening are provided for all areas of learning.
- Information and communication technology is used well to improve listening and early literacy skills.

Commentary

43. Good teaching places emphasis on the development of early literacy skills so that children reach the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year. Planning includes a strong focus on stories which are carefully chosen to develop understanding of key ideas, to extend story vocabulary and to help children understand literary language. A good range of visual resources is used well to help children recall the detail of the story and to support early reading skills. Children recognise sounds and are beginning to use this knowledge to write simple words and sentences to record their ideas. They enjoy making books and attempt writing for a range of purposes, including stories, lists, and life-cycles. Progress is good. Children with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who keep a record of children's achievement so that planning can take account of "next step" needs.

44. Throughout the day speaking and listening skills are developed well through a wide range of well chosen activities which are well led, guided, or supported by adults, who encourage children to talk and extend their language skills. Such intervention, provided by all members of staff, is helping children grow in confidence. This was well demonstrated in a "mini-beast" assembly presented by the children to the rest of the school. Children talk together in small groups and during plenary sessions with confidence. They can describe what they have been doing and collaborate well in small group activities. For example, a group of children played together with a tray of play-mobile figures, negotiating roles and suggesting ideas for a small-world drama, making positive responses to each other's suggestions. Children benefit from a range of opportunities to use information and communication technology resources to enhance their learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Good opportunities are provided to develop mathematical skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

45. Children enter the Reception class with mathematical skills below average but achieve well because of the consistently good teaching they experience. As a result, they reach the national goals for learning by the time they transfer to Year 1. Children receive good support to help them count, recognise numbers, and develop an understanding of shape, size, and measures. Teaching assistants work well with children with special educational needs to help them make the progress they are capable of and to make progress at their own pace. The practical and visual activities help children understand new learning.

46. Children are given a broad range of opportunities across all areas of learning to develop their mathematical skills. The number lines, displays, puppets, pictures, books, and good quality counting objects are all used to extend children's understanding of number to 20 and beyond. Number songs and rhymes reinforce counting skills, as do stories like "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" which help them to sequence days of the week and to count the pieces of fruit the caterpillar devoured each day. There is a good balance between focused mathematics teaching and opportunities for children to apply their knowledge in activities. For example, children classified a collection of mini-beasts by numbers of attributes – legs, antennae, wings and spots. Teaching is very practical and visual and helps children understand new concepts. For example, seven balloons were used to show that seven can be described mathematically by using different number sentences – $3 + 4 = 7$ or $5 + 2 = 7$. The children could see that they could separate the collection of balloons in different ways without changing the total and describe this relationship in a number sentence. Children are learning to use correct mathematical vocabulary to solve problems of size, shape, and position as they play with two- and three-dimensional shapes and small-world toys. They use their knowledge and direction to move a programmable toy, thus developing their information and communication technology skills along with their mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Curriculum planning is very effective in developing children's curiosity and investigative skills.
- The quality of teaching is good and results in good achievement.

Commentary

47. Consistently good teaching results in children reaching the early learning goals by the end of their time in this class. Planning indicates a good range of activities to develop children's curiosity and investigative skills and to increase their knowledge of the environment. Currently there is a focus on mini-beasts and their habitats. Good scientific skills are promoted as children observe changes which occur, for example, as seeds grow and frogspawn becomes tadpoles. Children are developing good observational skills and use a wide range of resources to record their discoveries, including digital photography, drawings and paintings, and self-made booklets in a variety of styles. Care for the class snails and tadpoles is helping children develop an awareness of their responsibility to living creatures and supports their personal and social skills well. Role-play activities, for example shopping, cooking, and caring for babies, are routinely planned to help children understand the importance of family life. Through the celebration of festivals of their own and different faiths children are beginning to understand how members of the community conduct their lives according to different religious beliefs.

48. Staff are deployed well and are involved with the children in the range of practical work planned for this area of learning. They encourage the use of appropriate vocabulary to help children explain ideas or record their investigations. Children are developing their cutting and joining skills through a good range of construction activities. They are keen users of technology, operating tape recorders and cameras, and programmable toys and computer programmes to support their learning confidently.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Resources and the provision for children to learn through physical activities are generally good.

- Children do not have sufficient opportunities to use large apparatus in the outdoor play area to support the development of co-ordination skills.

Commentary

49. Children achieve well and meet the early learning goals. Provision includes good opportunities through planned lessons, topic work, and daily routines to practise activities which develop dexterity and hand and eye co-ordination. Activities include, for example, cutting, sticking, sewing, construction toys and puzzles. In the week of inspection children worked with a parent, practising over-stitching to attach two sides of a felt butterfly wings. Most of them demonstrate careful and accurate needlework skills. They cut up soft fruits to make a fruit salad, taking great care and with good regard for safety and hygiene. Malleable materials, simple tools, and construction materials are readily available to help children develop small movements.

50. Children have time-tabled physical education lessons which develop their physical skills well. Children do not have sufficient opportunities, however, to develop their strength and stamina through more adventurous play in the outdoor playground. The climbing resources are not adequate for the more controlled activities of swinging, balancing, and climbing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Planning includes a broad range of enjoyable activities to help children develop creative skills.

Commentary

51. Children reach the early learning goals and achieve well because of the broad range of activities designed to rouse their interest and curiosity and invite creative play. Much of the work seen focuses on the mini-beast topic and includes the making of paper caterpillars, achieving symmetrical butterfly wings by paint and paper-folding, drawing and painting insects and snails with good observational skills. Children develop their creative skills across the six areas of learning. For example, having observed and drawn the spiral patterns of the shells of classroom snails, they took great care to cut along the spiral to create mobiles which spun around with the movement of air. Much creative work derives from the stories children hear, for example, the collage and design work from "Elmer the Elephant" and a broad range of activities inspired by "The Very Hungry Caterpillar". However, while children enjoy the broad range of teacher-directed activities which are imaginative and well linked to the half-termly topics, there is less evidence of children initiating personal responses to their own life experiences and observations in this area of development. Singing skills are developed through a range of songs and rhymes, and children accompany their singing with untuned percussion instruments with great confidence and accomplishment.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills in literacy are taught well.
- Resources are used well to involve pupils in their learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Marking of pupils' work is not rigorous enough to guide pupils in how to improve their work.

Commentary

52. The results in the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6 were average in relation to all schools and well below average in comparison to similar schools. This is because the number of pupils in the group taking the tests was small and few reached the higher Level 5. Pupils currently in Year 6 are likely to achieve similar results. The national test results in 2004 taken by the Year 2 pupils were above the national average in both reading and writing. In comparison to similar schools, they were average. However, standards in the current Year 2 are now average. This is due to unexpected changes in staff in this class over the past year and this has had an adverse effect on pupils' learning. However, indications are that the steps taken by staff are beginning to improve standards.

53. Throughout the school the basic literacy skills are taught well. In most lessons, teachers provide many opportunities for whole-class and paired discussions and make activities interesting. As a result, pupils are keen to answer, explaining their ideas in full. They speak confidently and clearly and are happy to perform for a large audience. Reading of a wide range of texts and poetry is used effectively to develop an awareness of the different genre and reflect various uses of language in narratives and poems. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils listened to a story written by a Caribbean author. They discussed confidently how he used a regional dialogue to build up mood and atmosphere in the story and evaluated it successfully in terms of language and images. Teachers encourage an enjoyment of books and stories from an early age. As a result of good teaching of basic skills, pupils use a good range of strategies to work out words they do not recognise. By the end of Year 6, pupils read regularly. They undertake a wide range of reading genres and have a good knowledge of their favourite authors. Teachers lead perceptive discussions about books read in groups and pupils confidently voice their thoughts and opinions. Pupils listen well and are keen to learn.

54. Teachers use resources well to ensure that pupils are involved in whole-class or group discussions and gain appropriate knowledge and understanding of a range of texts from various authors and their style. Interactive whiteboards are used well to enable pupils to present their work to the whole class. As a result, pupils acquire good information and communication technology skills and use them effectively to enhance their learning in English. For example, pupils in a Year 6 lesson, while discussing the characters in 'Goodnight Mr Tom', used the interactive whiteboards well to make notes and to plan and draft a letter.

55. In some lessons, however, pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils, are not challenged sufficiently to ensure that they reach the standards of which they are capable. Pupils' work is not marked consistently. There is little opportunity for pupils to draft or redraft their work to improve its quality and presentation. Where it is marked, comments do not suggest how the work can be improved. Handwriting is taught but pupils are not encouraged to apply good handwriting skills into their daily work. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but they are not always used effectively enough to track pupils' progress and raise standards. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. There are satisfactory links with other subjects, especially in geography, history and design and technology. Some sound examples of pupils' writing for a range of purposes across the curriculum were seen, including the use of information and communication technology in planning and presenting their work. In history, pupils in Year 5 use their language skills to discuss and write about the Tudor explorers and the impact of their exploration on people's lives today.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are above the national average.
- Teaching assistants give effective support to pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- Marking of pupils' work gives little guidance for future improvement.
- There are good assessment procedures in place. However, these are not always used effectively to raise levels of achievement.

Commentary

57. The standards attained in the 2004 tests were in line with the national average at the end of Year 2. They were above the national average at the end of Year 6, showing an improvement over the 2003 results. They were, however, well below those found in similar schools in Year 2 and in comparison to prior attainment in Year 6. This is because higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to reach the higher than expected levels. The school recognises this and is beginning to implement a more rigorous system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards. Pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining similar standards in their work and pupils currently in Year 6 are set to attain standards above those expected nationally by the time they leave. As these pupils attained only average standards in Year 2, their achievement is good. Their understanding of number and their mental arithmetic skills are strong and enable them to complete work accurately, quickly and confidently. Investigational work is the weaker aspect of mathematics and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities provided to help them develop their skills in this area. This hinders the achievement of the more able pupils.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use support staff well to help their pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, learn more effectively. They plan the role of learning support staff in each lesson carefully to maximise their impact. Teaching assistants have a positive impact on learning when working with individual pupils or small groups. It means that any problems that pupils have are dealt with swiftly and enables them to move on to the next part of their learning. They know the pupils well and, in many lessons, help with behaviour management to enable the teachers to concentrate on teaching.

59. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons. They are keen to learn and are proud of their many achievements. The majority successfully complete work in lessons and assignments set as homework. In the best lessons, where the teachers have good pupil management skills, behaviour is very good and this leads to a calm and peaceful working atmosphere in which pupils can produce good quality work. Pupils also learn at a greater rate when the lesson is challenging and fun. This was clearly seen in a good Year 1 lesson about odd and even numbers. Sorting sets of numbers and sticking them on 'Ollie' and 'Olga' the odd and even octopuses created a real buzz of excitement and gave a good focus to the learning.

60. Pupils' work is marked regularly, sometimes by the pupils, and usually accurately. There are few encouraging and supportive comments added. Marking also does not help pupils to know

exactly what they need to do to improve further and attain a higher level. Pupils' work is also often presented untidily and this makes for mistakes and inaccuracies in mathematics. Teachers do not encourage their pupils sufficiently and show them how to improve presentation and accuracy and this slows their learning.

61. The subject is managed satisfactorily. There are good procedures in place for assessing pupils and tracking their progress through regular testing. The data collected identifies any groups or individuals who are not achieving well. The results of national and other tests are also analysed to highlight any areas of strength or concern. All this useful data helps teachers when grouping pupils by ability in the classroom. However, not all teachers are using this information as well as they should to enhance achievement of the higher attaining pupils.

62. There has been a satisfactory improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained and pupils' attitudes remain good. Marking is still an area for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. The pupils' skills in mathematics are often used in other subjects of the curriculum and their inclusion is planned. Such links prove useful; making learning more relevant and helping pupils reinforce their skills and understanding in mathematics. For example, pupils often measure in science lessons and draw tables and graphs of their findings. Mathematical skills are also developed through art when pupils use different shapes, make symmetrical patterns and then rotate them.

SCIENCE

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils have good opportunities for scientific enquiry.
- Teaching is generally satisfactory.
- Marking in pupils' books is not critical enough to help them make progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to science are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

64. In the national tests in 2004 the percentage of children who achieved expected levels was average when compared with schools nationally but below when compared with similar schools. This is because not enough pupils reached the higher than expected Level 5. Standards of work seen are currently average in Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Some improvement is evident because of recent action to build more investigative work into the curriculum. Scrutiny of work suggests that this intervention has helped pupils gain a better understanding of the importance of scientific enquiry and the crucial skills of observing, predicting, constructing a fair test, and controlling variables. Pupils are encouraged to compare the results of investigations with their original predictions. For example, in Year 2 pupils investigated how quickly a number of cars would travel down a ramp. They predicted which of the cars would go furthest, giving reasons for their choice and reviewing the results after the investigation. In Year 6 pupils investigated elasticity to see which objects with different mass would stretch the elastic band furthest. Such work helped them understand the importance of identifying and reducing variables and using their data to test an original hypothesis. Pupils' misunderstandings, evident in the work seen, were not identified through marking, which reduced the impact of the work covered and did not help pupils make progress.

65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Planning is satisfactory, with a good emphasis on scientific enquiry. Work in pupils' books suggests that the curriculum meets statutory

requirements fully. Good links are made with mathematics through measuring, ordering data, and making graphs, but not enough care is taken to ensure that pupils transfer their mathematical skills accurately. Teachers' marking does not identify points for improvement. As a result, pupils do not always achieve higher standards. Planning does not always provide for the broad range of needs in classrooms and work in books indicates that most pupils are working at the same level. Higher attaining pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to achieve the standards they are capable of.

66. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They are curious and enthusiastic scientists, using their subject knowledge to reflect on new learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 talked about how they had established with confidence that magnets attract metals and not other materials. They then discovered that their teacher's metal spectacles were not attracted by the magnet. They talked about this, realising that their earlier results were not precise enough and that more investigation was needed to establish which metals were attracted.

67. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the visual and practical nature of the work involved. They are involved fully in group activities and achieve well, particularly when supported by teaching assistants. In this way the school is establishing a fully inclusive curriculum in science.

68. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The school is aware of what needs to be done to raise standards further. It has produced a good action plan to make sure identified shortcomings are addressed. The school has analysed results in national tests to identify weak strands in teaching and learning, and this has led to a review of the science curriculum and a greater focus on investigative work, which has already had a positive impact on the curriculum. The science action plan rightly indicates the need for more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good at the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have a good attitude to their work and behave very well.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- There are well thought-out links to other subjects.

Commentary

69. By the time the pupils leave the school they reach standards that are above those found nationally. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. All aspects of the subject are taught to a good depth. This is a result of the regular use of the school's equipment and the strong links with a local secondary school that enable pupils to use extra resources and receive good quality specialist teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they are well supported by both adults and their classmates.

70. The quality of teaching is good. Few lessons were seen during the inspection but from looking at completed work and talking to teachers and pupils it is clear that pupils achieve well throughout the school. Teachers manage their pupils very well and create a good working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and produce high quality work. Work is well planned at a level designed to help pupils of all abilities learn effectively. It is often imaginative and interesting. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson seen the pupils were accessing and sending emails to their teacher and her daughter who had been travelling in South America. They were totally absorbed with the tasks and learned a lot of new skills as well as improving their geographical knowledge. As

a result of the consistently good teaching, the pupils achieve well and have a good understanding of all the aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum.

71. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and are very proud of their efforts, particularly the Year 6 pupils who talked animatedly about their work in control technology. During the inspection they were working on a challenge set by teachers from the secondary school, to which most pupils transfer, program a buggy to complete a course successfully. The pupils worked extremely hard to be the most successful group and the collaboration was of the highest standard. It was a highly enjoyable afternoon and a great deal of learning took place. Pupils treat all equipment sensibly and are often allowed to use digital cameras to record work and events. They are confident users of a wide range of information and communication technology equipment and have a very thorough understanding of how it is used in the wider world.

72. The subject is led and managed well. There is a clear vision of exactly how the subject can be taught successfully throughout the school. Some of the resources are now old and the school is drawing up plans to improve them. The computer suite can also occasionally be hot and uncomfortable as there is no air conditioning. The assessment of pupils' completed work is an area for further development so that the teachers can more accurately plan future work designed to help pupils achieve even better.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The school has worked hard to find useful and profitable links with other subjects to make learning more relevant and fun as well as using learning time more effectively. A good example of this is the super work by the Year 5 pupils in collaboration with the Reception children as part of their science work. They recorded the children outlining the various stages of a frog's life cycle and successfully matched the recording to a series of lights on a flow diagram showing the stages visually. Information and communication technology is used well in other subjects such as mathematics when producing charts and graphs and for measuring temperature and sound with sensors in science experiments.

HUMANITIES

74. One lesson each of history and geography was observed, and pupils' work and displays around the school were scrutinised. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. The school is a Voluntary Aided church school and, therefore, religious education is inspected and reported on separately by the church.

75. In **geography**, staff make good use of visits to the local area to enhance pupils' knowledge. Appropriate links are made with other subjects, particularly science, when pupils explore where various natural materials are found in the world. Younger pupils learn to make simple plans of their classroom and of the school and investigate weather and its effects on people. They develop sound mapping skills in identifying different countries. They study how mountains are formed and identify physical features in different countries.

76. The curriculum for **history** and geography ensures that pupils cover a satisfactory range of topics. Pupils in Year 6 show a good understanding of the issues facing an evacuee during World War 2. Good links were made with literacy, as pupils were involved in gathering and writing down information from local speakers who survived the Second World War. Pupils enjoy their work in history and are developing sound enquiry skills through the examination of evidence, such as photographs of the Second World War. In Year 1, pupils explore old toys from Victorian times, and compare them with new toys. Year 5 pupils learn about Tudors and visit the National Portrait Gallery to learn more about important people from that period. Year 2 pupils study the life of famous people in the past and gain an understanding of their achievements. In Year 3, pupils explore the ways of life of the ancient Greeks.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. Art and design, and design and technology, were not included in the focus for this inspection and no lessons were observed. From curriculum documentation and limited examples of work around the school, it is evident that provision in both subjects complies with statutory requirements. Two lessons were observed in music and one in physical education during the inspection. A visiting dance teacher was seen and teachers' plans in both subjects were looked at.

78. In **art and design**, pupils are familiar with the work of different artists. They can work in a range of styles and carry out critical appraisals of the artists' work. Pupils' appraisal of the work of Van Gogh, for example, included an emotional response to his picture "Starry Night" and a dispassionate approach to his painting technique in "Bedroom at Arles" and his sunflower studies. In Year 4, pupils studied the work of the Surrealist painter Rene Magritte, exploring how he painted ordinary objects in extraordinary ways. Pupils emulated the artist in their own work to very good effect. A whole-school art and design project on "pattern" was displayed in the hall, with pupils producing a range of ideas for patterns in each year group. These included repeated sequence printing, wax resist, an animal print as camouflage and geometric design.

79. The **design and technology** work on "moving toys", on display in the corridor during the inspection, provided good evidence of pupils' ability to work with tools and a range of materials to achieve the desired movement. Pupils made appropriate evaluations of the processes they used and the quality of the finished product against the original design criteria. The recent curriculum review draws together subjects to help pupils transfer their skills from one area of learning to another. Pupils use their understanding of materials to design and make products and write up evaluations correctly.

80. Evidence shows that all aspects of **music** are taught. All of the teaching is by the class teachers who follow a useful scheme of work. Pupils always listen to music as they come in to assemblies but are not always told about the piece, the composer and the instruments being played. As a useful addition to the provision there is tuition in recorders, clarinet, cornet, flute and saxophone. Pupils learn to play these instruments using standard notation and reach a good standard in their performing. Both of the music lessons seen were good and the teachers were well supported in their teaching by a visiting pianist. In both lessons the pupils sang tunefully and with good diction. There is also a school orchestra and a choir that meets before school. There are good opportunities for pupils to perform outside school in local music festivals and concerts. There are few opportunities for pupils to listen to and appreciate music from other lands. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to listen to and perform music and are keen and eager to participate in activities.

81. All aspects of the **physical education** curriculum is covered over the year. The one lesson seen was a very good Year 4 dance lesson led by a volunteer visiting specialist dance teacher. The pupils were kept extremely active throughout and enjoyed learning the new steps for an Indian dance that they are to perform in a local secondary school concert. Pupils learn to swim from Year 3 to Year 6 and many are able to swim at least 25 metres confidently by the time they leave the school. Pupils are also able to take part in competitive football, netball, athletics and cross-country running against other local schools. To add to the provision there is also a football club, a country dance club and cricket coaching in the summer. The annual residential school journey for Year 6 pupils to a water centre gives them good opportunities to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities such as raft building and mountain biking. It also helps their personal development by having to learn to live and work together in an environment away from home. At playtimes the pupils are able to further hone their games skills and co-ordination by using the equipment provided for them. The school holds an annual sports day that is reported to be great fun and attended well by parents and carers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. Only one lesson was seen and, therefore, no judgements could be made about the overall provision. The school has developed a comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education. This programme includes, raising awareness of the use and abuse of drugs, sex and relationships education, as well as helping pupils to learn how to stay safe in and out of school. Assemblies promote good personal development and personal, social and health education lessons provide opportunities for pupils to discuss and raise issues that concern them. The school council activities enhance pupils' learning in this curriculum area as they involve them effectively in decision making. Pupils take on responsible roles in the school community and this helps them to understand the importance of their contribution to it. The religious and ethical teaching in assemblies enables pupils to consider moral issues and prepares them for a life as citizens in society as a whole.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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