

INSPECTION REPORT

HAZELMERE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114745

Headteacher: Mr N Hookway

Lead inspector: Mr N Sherman

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th September 2003

Inspection number: 256374

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	211
School address:	Hawthorn Avenue Colchester
Postcode:	CO4 3JP
Telephone number:	01206 862691
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Mrs S Rawlings
Date of previous inspection:	28 th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hazelmere Junior School is an average sized junior school situated in the town of Colchester in Essex. The number of pupils who claim free school meals is above average. There are 211 pupils on roll and there is a fairly even number of boys and girls. The school has an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is low and a small number of pupils at the school are members of the Travelling community. Pupils enter full-time education with well below average levels of attainment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16493	Mr N Sherman	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education Religious education English as an additional language.
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
22556	Mr E Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology History Geography Music. Special educational needs.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES –	
What is the effectiveness of the school's links with the community?	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS	20
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides the pupils with a **good quality of education**, and is managed very well. The headteacher provides the school with excellent and inspired leadership. Pupils think very highly of the school and participate fully in the many and varied activities that are provided for them. Teaching is good, and pupils achieve well in mathematics and science, where standards are in line with national expectations. Achievement in English is satisfactory. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is very well led and managed and the headteacher provides excellent leadership.
- Teaching is good, resulting in pupils achieving well in mathematics and science.
- Standards in art and design and music are above national expectations.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum is very well planned and significantly enhanced by the extensive range of activities provided for pupils both prior to and after the school day.
- Pupils' presentation of their work could be improved.
- Greater use could be made of information and communication technology to support pupils in their everyday learning.
- There are good procedures to assess pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, but further work needs to be done to monitor pupils' progress in other subjects.
- There are very positive links with the community that add much to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Pupils are very well cared for in a warm, attractive and supportive learning environment.
- Pupils behave well and greatly value the creative ways in which the school seeks to involve them in the work of the school.

The school has made **good progress** since its previous inspection in 1999, and **very good progress** since the appointment of the headteacher in January 2001. Pupils' achievements in National Curriculum tests when compared with similar schools have improved greatly. Effective action has been taken on the areas for development highlighted in the previous report. Teaching has improved, and the measures introduced by the school to enhance pupils' behaviour have proved successful.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The level of pupils' achievements is good. Pupils reach standards that are in line with expectations in mathematics and science. In English, standards are below expectations. From a very low starting point, pupils make good progress as they move through the school.

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	E	E	E	C

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.

Pupils start in Year 3 with well below average levels of attainment, and their language and literacy skills are particularly low. The 2003 National Curriculum test results show good improvement over those for 2002, reflecting the continued attention paid by the school to improving pupils' performance in the tests. Inspection findings indicate that by the end of Year 6, pupils reach the standards expected for 11-year-olds in **mathematics** and **science**. When compared with similar schools, pupils **achieve well** in these subjects. Pupils' overall achievement in **English** is satisfactory, although how pupils present their work not only in English but in many other subjects, could be improved.

Pupils reach standards in **art and design** and **music** that are above those found nationally for 11-year-olds. This reflects the strong emphasis within the school on developing the pupils' understanding of how the arts can contribute much to their learning. Pupils' achievement in these subjects is good. Standards in **information and communication technology** are in line with expectations, and the pace of pupils' progress in this subject is rapidly improving following recent development in the subject. However, teachers do not make enough of classroom-based equipment to support their everyday teaching and pupils do not build on what they learn when they are taught information and communication technology as a full class. Standards in **religious education** are in line with the expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils with **special educational needs** make **very good progress** as they move through the school, reflecting the high quality support they receive by the leading teacher assistants and their team and the school's strong commitment to supporting the pupils concerned. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in terms of the standards they reach. The school has a few pupils with English as an additional language and they too make **good progress** in using English to support their learning.

Pupils' **personal development** is very good, characterised by the highly positive way in which the pupils are involved in making decisions about the school. Pupils' **spiritual, social, moral and cultural development** is **good**, with particular strengths in their moral and social development. Pupils have **very good** attitudes to learning and the vast majority of pupils behave well. **Attendance is below average**, although the school works extremely hard to emphasise the importance of full attendance in the minds of the parents.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is good overall resulting in pupils making good gains in their learning, although there is a need to raise teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work. The teaching of English is satisfactory, and that for mathematics and science is good. The teaching of art and design, geography and music is good. Pupils enter the school with very limited skills in many areas of learning. They make good progress, particularly in acquiring the confidence to tackle and work through the tasks

that are set for them. Teachers make effective use of the good arrangements in place to track how pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science. However, this good practice needs to be extended so that teachers can gain a clearer profile of how well the pupils are achieving in other subjects.

The **curriculum is very good** and has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. All subjects are well planned and great care is taken by the school to ensure that the pupils' learning in subjects is enhanced through a regular programme of educational visits and visitors to the school and through the use of 'theme' weeks where the pupils explore a subject in more depth. The excellent range of activities offered both before and after the school day further enhances pupils' learning. Despite the school's concern over the open access to the school site, the pupils are **very well cared for**, and the staff know them well as individuals. The school has worked very hard to involve the **parents** in both their children's learning and in the day-to-day life of the school. Links with the **community are very good**, and have a strong impact on pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides the school with **excellent leadership**, and since the previous inspection has proved instrumental in leading the many developments that have taken place. A key feature of the leadership is the school's commitment to including all pupils in the life of the school and in developing their sense of personal worth and self-esteem. The deputy headteacher and the senior management team supports him very well, and all staff are strongly committed to ensuring that the school's aims are effectively met. Procedures to monitor the work of the school are very well developed and contribute greatly to the **very good management**. The school budget is used very well to support developments. The **governors** have been effectively led by the headteacher in developing their understanding of how to best support the school. As a result, they have a good understanding of its strengths and what still needs to be improved, and hold the school to account for the quality of education provided.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the many developments that have taken place at the school since the last inspection and have every confidence that their children are well cared for and supported. **Pupils** talk very positively about the school and greatly enjoy the many activities that are provided for them before, during and after the school day. They equally value the scope they are given to 'have a say' in the school and they feel that their views are very much listened to.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards of presentation in pupils' work.
- Further develop the use of the library in supporting pupils' literacy development.
- Develop assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Make greater use of classroom-based computers to support pupils' day-to-day learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well below average in English. In **mathematics and science**, pupils attain the standards expected for eleven-year-olds. In art and design and music, standards are above expectations. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations. Considering pupils' very low attainment on entry, they **achieve well** as they move through the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved well since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science.
- Achievement in art and design and music is high, reflecting the school's approach to promoting pupils' learning through the arts.
- Although standards in English are well below average, pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
- Standards of presentation and handwriting need to be improved.
- Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations. Pupils are making more rapid gains in their learning following recent developments.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well across the curriculum, but more could be done to develop their information and communication technology skills in their daily lessons.

Commentary

1. The overall picture of pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests (SATs) is one of good improvement over the past three years. It reflects the good attention paid by the school to improving pupils' confidence in taking the tests and to strengthening teaching, the curriculum and assessment. The most recent 2003 results continue this improving trend, and the school achieves well compared to similar schools. However, raising the pupils' performance in English continues to be a key focus for the school. Data from the National Curriculum tests indicates that pupils achieve less well in this subject than they do in mathematics and science. Overall, however, the pupils' achievements, considering their low level of attainment when they first enter the school, are good.
2. In English, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The school recognises the fact that a significant number of the pupils enter the school with very poor literacy and speaking and listening skills. Teachers place strong emphasis on improving the pupils' ability to discuss ideas and to develop their confidence in speaking aloud to a wider audience. Pupils make good progress in this aspect of their English work, although by the time they leave the school, attainment in speaking and listening skills is still below average. Pupils are developing healthy attitudes towards reading, and they are making satisfactory progress in this aspect. The school's recent efforts to encourage all pupils to take books home to read have helped to improve the pupils' understanding that reading is both for pleasure and to foster their learning. While the school has recently

refurbished the school library and has plans to make this more of a focal point for the pupils' learning, few pupils currently have sufficiently developed skills to locate, retrieve and synthesise the library resources to support their learning.

3. It is in the third aspect of English, writing, that the pupils experience the most difficulty. The school has placed strong emphasis on developing the pupils' understanding of how writing is for different purposes. As a result, pupils appreciate how writing may be in the form of letters, notes, stories, arguments or writing in the form of flyers or newspapers, for example. Few pupils use language expressively or are sufficiently creative with their vocabulary so that the attention of the reader is held from start to finish. Pupils make too little progress in the presentation of their work or in the development of a clear and legible handwriting style. While the school does give the pupils regular opportunities in the form of short sessions to develop these skills, they are not always transferred by the pupils to their day-to-day writing in many subjects. As a result, the presentation of their work is often untidy and detracts from their overall efforts.
4. The pupils' achievements in mathematics and science are good and they make good progress in acquiring new mathematical and scientific knowledge as they move through the school. In mathematics, good attention is paid by the teachers to developing the pupils' mental skills. Equally good attention is paid to ensuring that the pupils develop their confidence in solving mathematical problems and are aware of how mathematics is to be seen in many aspects of their daily lives. Good attention is paid to developing links with subjects such as science, and pupils learn to present their mathematical findings in the form of tables and charts. As they move through the school, pupils make good progress in science and teaching ensures that they have good scope to develop their understanding of science through investigation work, although higher-attaining pupils do not always communicate their findings as well as they could.
5. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations and the pace of pupils' learning is improving rapidly following the introduction of a suite of laptop computers. The wireless technology in these allows pupils in all classes to be taught discrete skills. However, the lack of opportunities provided for the pupils to use computers as part of their daily lessons limits their progress.
6. Standards in art and design and music are above expectations and pupils achieve well in these two subjects. A key feature of the school is way in which pupils' learning is developed by exploring the arts. This focus impacts well on their learning and on their positive enthusiasm for art and design and music generally. Pupils reach standards in religious education, history and geography in line with expectations. Insufficient evidence was to hand during the inspection to make a secure judgement on standards in physical education and design and technology. However, evaluation of part of a swimming session seen during the inspection indicates that pupils reach standards in swimming in line with expectations.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make very good gains in their learning as they move through the school. Their learning needs are quickly identified on entry to the school and the pupils' progress is monitored very closely to ensure that they are on track to achieve the targets that they are set in their individual education plans.
8. Although National Curriculum data indicates that the boys slightly outperform the girls in English, mathematics and science, inspection findings could find no difference in attainment.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.0 (23.7)	27 (27)
mathematics	24.8 (24.3)	26.6 (26.7)
science	27.2 (26.5)	28.3 (28.3)
There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.		

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to school and work hard. They **behave well** and form good relationships with staff and each other. Pupils’ **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to work and activities although this is dependent on the quality of teaching and the content of the lesson.
- Pupils have a real voice and make a strong contribution to the organisation of the school.
- Behaviour is good, but the number of exclusions is high owing to the challenging behaviour displayed by some pupils.
- Staff have high expectations of good conduct and work hard to achieve them.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and below the national average.
- Relationships are good and promoted very well throughout the whole school community.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good owing to the care and dedication with which these are promoted.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)				
Authorised absence			Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.7		School data :	0.5
National data:	5.9		National data:	0.5
The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.				

Although the school works hard to monitor and promote attendance, this remains unsatisfactory and below the national average.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British (To be checked on feedback)	156	14	0
White – any other White background	1		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Black or Black British - African	3		
Chinese	1		
No ethnic group recorded	46		

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

9. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and they are very interested and enthusiastic about the range of activities provided. Through the skill and dedication of the headteacher and staff, challenging behaviour is dealt with very effectively. Where teaching is of good quality, pupils concentrate well during lessons, but when teaching is less effective a few pupils can become inattentive and restless. Pupils have a real voice in the organisation of the school. This is characterised by the vibrant School Council which helps to make decisions about such areas as use of extra finance, choice of décor and the organisation of the library. It works closely with the governing body and governors listen to the ideas put forward by Council members and often act on their views. Pupils attend the Curriculum Committee and contribute to decision-making about the work of the school.
10. Pupils' behaviour is good during lessons, although this is dependent on the quality of teaching. They behave extremely well in assemblies and are respectful to visitors, extending to them the normal social courtesies the school and parents would expect. Owing to the high quality of care and support provided, pupils behave well at lunchtime and in the playground. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour. The pupils' personal development is very good as a result of the school's very strong commitment to good relationships and the promotion of pupils' social and moral development.
11. Pupils generally enjoy school and take a full part in all activities. They believe that their views are heard. They consider that the amount of homework is fair and reasonable and they appreciate that their work is marked and commented upon. They believe that the teachers push them hard in terms of what they are capable of achieving. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the range of extra-curricular activities, and participation rates in many of these are very high, including those that are organised before the start of the school day. They feel that although some pupils behave badly, the headteacher has 'made behaviour better'. There are still a few incidences of bullying; however, the pupils have every confidence in the staff tackling such issues swiftly and fairly. Pupils think that the staff at Hazelmere look after them well and expect them to work hard. They would like to see an improvement in the courtyard area and the eradication of the regular vandalism.

12. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Assemblies are used well to support pupils' learning and these are seen as a focal point of the day where the pupils, staff and parents come together as a school community. Different subjects of the curriculum such as English, art and design, music and physical education are used well to develop the pupils' understanding of the world in which they live. Good opportunities are provided through the school's personal, social and health education programme for the pupils to discuss issues of a moral nature.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The **quality of education is good**, with particular strengths evident in curriculum planning. Teaching is good, as is the assessment of the pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Very good use is made of the arts to support learning and there is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is satisfactory, although there is under-use of the school library to support learning. Pupils are very well cared for. The school has forged very positive links with parents and the local community that impact well on the quality of education provided.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, enabling the pupils to achieve well in a number of subjects. Assessment is effective in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The school has yet to develop effective ways to monitor and track the pupils' progress in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinators' skills and interest in the subjects they teach are effectively managed and deployed.
- Pupils are very well managed. All teachers have high expectations of the pupils in terms of their behaviour and attitudes to work.
- Good use is made of homework to reinforce learning.
- Teachers offer good guidance to learning support assistants and together they provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Insufficient use is made of computers in daily lessons to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching is good, and much improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is particularly effective in mathematics, science, art and design, geography and music where the pace of pupils' learning and their positive attitudes are very evident. Pupils are taught well as a class for information and communication technology, but the impact of this teaching is reduced as insufficient use is made of computers in daily lessons.
14. A strong feature of the teaching is the manner in which pupils are managed. Teachers make very clear to the pupils the impact of good behaviour on their learning and pupils try hard as a result. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, and the school's management ensures that teachers' individual skills are put to good use by enabling them to teach the subjects they co-ordinate to other classes. The teaching of basic skills is good, although teachers do not expect enough of the pupils in terms of how

they present their work. Good attention is paid by teachers and learning support assistants to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and this helps to boost the pupils' confidence in discussing ideas and in speaking aloud to a wider audience.

15. The higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs are supported and guided well in lessons. The school's two special educational needs co-ordinators oversee pupils' work, taking care to ensure that the work set for the pupils is closely matched to their individual education plans. All staff show due sensitivity to the pupils with particular behaviour needs, thereby minimising disruption and the disturbance of others. Higher-attaining pupils are generally well challenged.
16. Arrangements for checking pupils' progress are good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Teachers make good use of the information that is drawn together from these procedures to plan pupils' future learning. The pupils themselves are very much involved in setting their own targets for improvement and this gives them goals to strive towards. Assessment procedures in other subjects are not as well developed, restricting the teachers' knowledge and understanding of where best to pitch pupils' subsequent work in order to extend their learning.

Summary of teaching in the 26 lessons observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	12	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The quality of the **curriculum is very good** and makes a positive contribution to the level of pupils' achievements. **Extra-curricular provision is excellent.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum fully takes into account the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.
- The school's arrangements for the teaching of personal and social education and citizenship are very good.
- The curriculum is well planned to develop the pupils' understanding of the arts.
- The pupils have well-planned opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects.
- Classroom-based computers are underused to support pupils' learning.
- The school's library is currently underused as a means of supporting pupils' learning.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, the few pupils who have English as an additional language and the members of the Travelling community, have equal access to the curriculum. The curriculum is well managed and all subjects have suitably devised materials to help teachers plan the pupils' learning. All subjects have sufficient time allocated to them, and teachers are creative in how they plan learning in one subject that reinforces pupils' learning in another. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology

are promoted through other subjects, but too little use is made of computers in daily lessons and this hinders the overall pace of pupils' learning.

18. A key feature of the curriculum is the manner in which teachers plan pupils' learning through the arts. This has a beneficial impact on their achievement in art and design, geography and music. The school's programme to develop the pupils' understanding of citizenship is very good. The increased prominence of the School Council in the day-to-day life of the school plays an important role in this respect. Many pupils participate fully in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, some of which take place before the beginning of the school day.
19. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school makes effective use of the facilities and the opportunities provided by the local secondary school to extend the curriculum. The accommodation is sufficient to enable the National Curriculum to be taught. However, while the school has usefully extended the resources in the school's library, opportunities for pupils to use them are currently too few. As a result, pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to extend their research skills.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is **very good**. Staff are extremely caring and supportive. Pupils enjoy exceptional involvement in decision-making about the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very happy and sensitive environment where all are equally valued.
- Pupils play a major role in decision-making and shaping the school environment.
- Pupils are well cared for at lunchtime despite the fact that the site is very open.
- Detailed records of all pupils are kept and these are very well used to monitor progress and individual needs.
- Very good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs.
- The arrangements for child protection are very good.
- Pupils benefit from the very good induction and transfer arrangements.

Commentary

20. Pupils are very well supported by the good and trusting relationships that exist. There is an effective policy for health and safety but the school is acutely aware of the openness of the school site and has plans to improve security. Child protection issues are closely monitored with the support of a range of outside agencies. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported with effective individual education plans and annual reviews.
21. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. The Leading Teaching Assistants play a key role in monitoring playtime and lunchtime behaviour. Clear guidelines are given about unacceptable behaviour and pupils understand the school's expectations well. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and well implemented. As a result of the very strong partnership with the secondary school, older pupils are exceptionally well prepared prior to transfer.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links are very good overall. There are good and improving links with parents who now think highly of the school. Links with the community and other schools are very good. Parents are provided with very good information about the work of the school and their children's progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents think that links with the school have become stronger and feel encouraged to be involved.
- The Hazelmere Association supports the school well.
- Many parents are confident that pupils' behaviour is much improved.
- Most parents understand the importance of good attendance through regular reminders.
- Parents appreciate the way the school develops pupils' confidence and pride in what they do.
- Parents are satisfied with the amount of information they receive.
- The school has developed an attractive and very informative web-site.
- Some parents feel that the high-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- Parents think the school is very well managed and speak highly of the headteacher.
- There are exceptionally strong links with Sir Charles Lucas Arts College, the local secondary school, but links with the infant school are not yet as well developed.
- Very good links with the community add to the richness of the curriculum and encourage parental involvement.
- Pupils benefit greatly from a range of extended services and educational support programmes.

Commentary

22. The school works hard to strengthen its links with parents and to encourage them to work in partnership with their children's learning. The majority of parents are very supportive, although there are a significant minority who find it difficult to maintain a partnership with the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given good opportunities to be involved with their child's assessment and teaching.
23. Very good links with the community extend pupils' learning and the work of the school. A range of regular visitors enriches assemblies and the curriculum. A large number of pupils benefit from the weekly visit of a group of enthusiastic volunteers from Linklaters, a national company, who share books and listen to reading. Boys and girls are involved very well in a range of activities provided by the Colchester United Community Sports Trust, which are especially focused on raising the achievement of girls. Essex University also supports the school with reading partners and a very successful Frisbee club. A number of parents are currently attending Outreach courses in school organised by the Grey Friars Adult Community College and are successfully developing additional skills in areas of learning such as information and communication technology and numeracy. The school is regularly very well supported through the sharing of resources and facilities at the adjacent Arts College.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very effective. The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent and management by other key staff is good. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- The headteacher has a clear vision and high aspirations for the school and is highly effective in ensuring that the school's aims are well met.
 - The deputy headteacher and the staff support the headteacher very well.
 - The governing body is well informed, plays a full and active part in the school's management and is very supportive of the school.
 - The role of the curriculum co-ordinators is well established in the core subjects but less so for the foundation subjects.
 - There is very good management of the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs.
 - Planning for the school's improvement has been successfully undertaken. Future plans are well established and provide a clear focus for the school's continued development.
 - The school's finances are managed effectively and are used well to support the school's development.
24. The headteacher provides the school with inspirational leadership and his influence pervades all aspects of the life of the school. This has resulted in a much improved school since his appointment. The reputation of the school has improved markedly and it is increasingly highly regarded in the local community. A key feature of how the school is led is the value that the headteacher places on seeking the views of all those associated with the school before taking a particular course of action. This includes the views of the pupils. This helps pupils to develop a strong sense of loyalty to the school as they know that their views are treated seriously. The deputy headteacher and all staff, including teaching assistants and non-teaching staff, support the headteacher very well. All are dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. The school's aims, which include ensuring that all associated with the school are included in all aspects of school life, are very well met. Leadership development is supported and encouraged and all staff play an active part in strategic planning for improvement.
25. Effective management procedures are in place, which enable the school to work towards its stated aims. Such procedures are known to all and set high priorities on staff development and developing new initiatives. The school's self-critical culture and open management style has enabled it to improve rapidly and to learn from best practice seen elsewhere. A notable feature is the way in which the school provides for pupils who do not respond well to school and those who have difficulty in learning. It is inventive in using resources to reward performance. The management style has created a culture of continued ambition and one that seeks to improve the quality of pupils' learning.
26. The steady improvement in standards in the core subjects is the result of effective monitoring of the school's provision by the senior management team and the core subject curriculum co-ordinators and the very effective support of pupils identified with special educational needs. The provision for these pupils is very good and a significant feature of the school. Foundation subject co-ordinators have yet to develop fully their role and their understanding of the impact of teaching on learning is less well developed.

27. The governing body is very supportive of the school and is kept well informed of developments. It has a regular programme of visits to the school to measure the impact of its decisions on the quality of education provided. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are influential in strategic planning for improvement. The governing body recognises the growing reputation of the school in the community, to which its own work has contributed much.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003			
Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£587 494	Balance from previous year	£40 784
Total expenditure	£595 982	Balance carried forward to the next	£32 296
Expenditure per pupil	£2 825		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

How effective are the school's links with the community?

There is **very good provision** for developing the school's links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior management team are proactive in promoting the part that the local community can play in enhancing the pupils' quality of education.
- Strong links with the local secondary school promote pupils' learning well.
- Effective links with a local office of a national law firm support pupils' well both socially and academically.
- The school welcomes the part that the local community college plays in providing adult education courses based at the school.
- The expertise and enthusiasm of local sports groups and organisations add greatly to the pupils' quality of education.

Commentary

28. The school is very outward looking and has very good links with the community and external organisations that support and extend its work very well. Parents and pupils benefit from a broad and well-managed programme of additional support and learning activities.
29. As a member of the community steering group 'Health for Greenstead', the headteacher works closely with a wide range of members of the community, including the University of Essex Students Union, Home Start and Sure Start.
30. The reading scheme provided by a group of volunteers from a national law firm and the IT Data Centre is highly successful in supporting a large group of pupils both socially and academically. Although the initiative has been in operation for a relatively short time, it is expanding rapidly. A large group of pupils from Years 4 to 6 spend time

each week sharing books, reading together and building good relationships with qualified and experienced information and communication and technology operators. Their quality input is making a significant contribution to the work of the school and to pupils' confidence and experience. This partnership is seen as an important area for development and plans are already afoot to extend services to include information and communication technology and the library.

31. The Grey Friars Adult Community College provides a number of short Outreach family courses for parents. These have included the successful 'Computers Don't Bite' course, which proved so popular that two more courses were organised and well attended. Some parents have moved on to a more advanced course, 'Improve your IT', leading to 2 units towards the City and Guilds 'Start IT' qualification. Although the school has no designated information and communication technology suite, lap top computers are made available to parents attending the course. A significant number of parents have also attended the successful Indian head massage and nail art courses in school. A small group of parents are currently attending a mathematics course that includes a range of mathematics games that they are learning in order to play with their children. The school is very keen for parents to be involved and recognises and values the contribution that the family courses are making to pupils' learning and achievements.

32. Colchester United Community Sports Trust has close links with the school and is currently working with an identified group of mainly Year 6 girls on raising their self-esteem through sport. This includes a range of out-of-hours learning in dance, self-defence, basketball and tennis and provides a very good opportunity for pupils to attend all or a choice of activities. Pupils are responding very well, which is confirmed by their evaluation questionnaires and the progress they are making. In addition, through 'Football in the Community', boys have the opportunity for weekly sessions with professionals during curriculum time. The course input includes health education and lifestyles and very effectively supports pupils with particular difficulties.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis is placed by teachers on developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers are effective in promoting the pupils' understanding that reading is both for pleasure and a tool for researching information.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how writing can be varied according to the reader but standards in presentation and handwriting are too low.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology in daily lessons.
- Assessment procedures are used well to monitor pupils' progress.
- The school library has recently been refurbished; however, at present pupils do not have the confidence to use the library effectively to research information.
- Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the pupils' growing confidence in using language.
- There is effective management of the subject.

Commentary

33. The school has striven hard to lift the level of pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests in English since the last inspection. Overall progress has been good. As a result, the number of pupils reaching the expected levels in the tests has improved greatly over the past three years and the results are now in line with the targets set by the school for improvement. When pupils enter the school they have low levels of ability in language and literacy. Boosting pupils' confidence and developing their skills in using literacy to support their learning continue to be a main focus for the school. Given the pupils' starting point, they achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Those who have special educational needs are identified early and they are given effective support, which is overseen well by the school's two special educational needs coordinators.
34. The school pays good attention to developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills as they move through the school. Nonetheless, these skills remain below average by the time they leave the school at the age of eleven. Teachers have to work hard in lessons to draw out from pupils their ideas in more depth, and many of the pupils find it difficult to give additional detail in their oral work. In many lessons, pupils are given scope to voice their opinions in both small group and full class discussions, and this proves successful in developing most pupils' understanding of the need to listen carefully to the views of others. Teachers make good use of teaching strategies such as 'hot seating' and 'acting in role' and these help to develop the pupils' ability to think and speak quickly in response to a given situation. Assemblies, 'Circle Time' sessions, and the opportunities provided for pupils to participate in school productions such as the 'Wizard of Oz', 'Westside Story' and 'Annie' all assist well in enabling the pupils to make good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills. Achievement in speaking and listening is good.

35. When pupils enter the school, standards in reading are well below average. The school has worked hard to encourage parents to play a more important part in supporting their children in their reading at home. This is proving successful in improving pupils' attitudes to reading. In addition, the school has taken the decision to move the guided reading sessions out of the literacy hour and use these as specific teaching sessions in their own right. The development of the school library has further raised the status and profile of reading in the school. Such developments are proving successful in raising reading standards, and pupils make good progress in reading, although standards remain below average by the time they leave the school. Only those pupils whom the school has identified as higher-attaining pupils are reading at the expected level and read with a fair degree of fluency and expression. Most pupils need support in order to understand what they have read and few have developed the skills of intonation to bring their reading alive. Pupils' understanding of how to use the school library to seek out information is weak. The school does have plans to tackle this shortcoming once the refurbishment of the library is finally complete. Overall achievement in reading, given the low starting point when pupils enter the school, is good.
36. It is in writing, where standards are well below average by the end of Year 6, that the pupils experience the most difficulty. Overall progress is satisfactory. The school has made writing a key feature of its development work in recent times. The school gives pupils additional time both in English and other subjects to complete work and write more extended pieces. Such efforts have been rewarded with pupils having a secure understanding of how writing is varied according to the audience for whom it is intended. Few pupils, however, write with vocabulary that is used in an interesting, creative or expressive way. The quality of presentation and handwriting, are also well below average, and this lowers further the overall picture of standards in English. Pupils are given scope to practise their handwriting skills in specific sessions designed for this purpose but too little emphasis is placed by teachers on encouraging pupils to use these developing skills in their everyday writing. In addition, too little use is made of classroom-based computers as a means of encouraging pupils to develop their understanding of drafting with a view to producing work that is of a high quality and well presented. Overall achievement in writing is satisfactory.
37. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and some good teaching was seen during the inspection. Key strengths in teaching lie in how the pupils are managed, in the support those with special educational needs receive and in the opportunities pupils are given to develop their confidence in and ability to use speaking and listening to support their learning. Teachers make effective use of assessment information to map out what pupils need to do next in order to improve. This information is broken down into specific targets that are then shared with the pupils and are proving useful as a means of encouraging pupils to improve. Good use is made of homework to support learning. Shortcomings in teaching lie in the expectations of teachers of how pupils present their work, which are not always high enough, and in the insufficient use made of computers to support pupils' overall literacy development.
38. There is good leadership and management of the subject. Teaching is regularly monitored by the senior management team and the co-ordinator and good attention has been paid by the school to developing ways to promote pupils' literacy skills through other subjects since the previous inspection. Good attention has been paid by the management of the school to encourage the parents to take a larger role in supporting their children in their learning. The school improvement plan provides a clear framework for further improvements to be made.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Teachers are aware of the importance of promoting pupils' literacy skills through subjects other than English. Occasionally, however, there is an over-use of worksheets that do not always contribute sufficiently to the development of the pupils' literacy.

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen consistently recently and the 2003 SATs results show continued improvement.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress.
- Teaching is good and better in some lessons.
- Ongoing assessment is well used to identify strengths and weaknesses and to inform planning.
- The subject is well co-ordinated and managed, and there is a positive commitment to raising standards.

Commentary

40. Inspection findings indicate that standards in mathematics are now in line with national expectations and this is the result of steady but consistent improvement over the last few years and since the last inspection. This represents good progress and pupils achieve well.
41. Pupils acquire good numerical skills and apply these well in problem solving activities. Most pupils by the end of Year 6 are competent in using the four mathematical operations, and higher-attaining pupils check their solutions, applying inverse operations and by using strategies such as approximating what the answer to a problem might be. Most pupils in Year 6 calculate fractional and percentage parts of quantities and are competent when using decimals to two places. Pupils' mental ability is satisfactory and most pupils enjoy the challenges set by their teacher. Older pupils have a good understanding of two-dimensional shapes, and can name regular shapes and their properties. Their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes is less well developed. The older and higher-attaining pupils draw and measure accurately and calculate the area and perimeter of different shapes correctly, representing their results in appropriate units. Pupils can draw and measure angles. Pupils are familiar with data handling and illustrate it graphically, using their information and communication technology skills where appropriate.
42. The teaching of mathematics is good across the school and very good or excellent in some classes. Teachers make good use of questioning to reinforce previous learning and use short mental sessions at the beginning of lessons very effectively to develop pupils' mental strategies and their interest in what they are to learn. A notable feature of the teaching is the clear identification of learning objectives that are specific to the lesson. These are often shared with the pupils thereby keeping them focused on what they are to learn. Time at the end of lessons is also well used to consolidate learning. These strategies have been the key factors in raising standards in mathematics. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and most are keen to answer their teacher's questions. They

work for extended periods on tasks and co-operate well in small groups, which makes a substantial contribution to their social development.

43. Mathematics is well led and managed by the co-ordinator and there is a shared commitment amongst staff to raising standards further. There has been a structured programme for lesson observation involving the co-ordinator and the school's local education authority adviser, focusing in on specific teaching issues. Such work has enabled the co-ordinator to feed back to her colleagues on what has worked well in teaching and what strategies could be used to extend pupils' learning even further. Pupils' workbooks are also carefully evaluated, and assessment is used consistently to plan further school development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

44. The basic skills of numeracy are well taught in all classes. Pupils use their mathematical skills in their work across the curriculum, for example measuring in science and collecting data in geography. Pupils also illustrate their results graphically and draw realistic conclusions based on their data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have continued to rise and the 2003 SATs results reflect this improvement.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Ongoing assessment is well used to identify strengths and weaknesses and to inform planning.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' presentation skills, particularly in reporting their experimental work. This particularly affects higher-attaining pupils.
- The subject is well managed.

Commentary

45. Standards in science are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6 and this represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they undertake a good range of practical activities including observational and experimental work. Pupils have a satisfactory grasp of the principle of fair testing and of predicting the outcome of an experiment. However, the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, and insufficient use is made by teachers of investigative work to develop pupils' individual thinking skills. In addition, pupils' written work, particularly their records of practical work, is untidy in terms of how it is presented. Good use is made of pupils' numeracy skills, for example to measure distance, and information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support their learning. Discussion with pupils indicates that they have a good understanding of life processes, materials and their properties, and physical processes. Their knowledge and understanding of living things in their environment are less well developed.

46. Overall, the teaching is good. Good subject knowledge enables teachers to respond effectively to pupils' questions, and, overall, teachers use questions well to reinforce previous learning and to encourage pupils to think ahead. Lesson objectives are clear and shared with the pupils. This enables them to have a good understanding of what they are expected to achieve in lessons. In the better lessons, time at the end of the lesson is used well to explore how well pupils have understood what they have been taught, helping to consolidate learning. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of science; they co-operate well and share resources fairly and equitably. The subject makes a valuable contribution to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers focus appropriately on pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they understand the work. These pupils are very well supported by teaching assistants, who make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
47. The co-ordinator has a good overview of science and overall leadership and management of the subject is good. The school's scheme of work offers a broad and balanced curriculum helping to ensure that the pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Monitoring of the teaching is well organised and has been effective in raising standards. Assessment is well used to identify strengths and weaknesses and is very effectively used to support planning. Links with, and visits to outside organisations have been effective in raising standards and developing pupils' interest in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving because staff knowledge and understanding of how to use computers have been successfully raised since the previous inspection.
- The subject is well led by an eager and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- Good use is made of the school's bank of wireless computers, and teaching in the sessions where these are used is good.
- Pupils very much enjoy their learning, have a great enthusiasm for the subject and treat the school's newly purchased resources with respect.
- Teachers make insufficient use of computers in daily lessons.
- There are good procedures in place to monitor and track pupils' progress.

Commentary

48. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. Although standards are at the same level noted at the time of the school's previous inspection, recent developments are starting to impact well on the pupils' progress. Whilst achievement is currently satisfactory, pupils are now making more rapid progress in terms of their understanding of how information and communication technology can be used to support their learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
49. As they move through the school, pupils successfully develop their confidence and understanding of how to use a range of software and computer-related equipment to support their learning. Year 6 pupils successfully combine text, graphics, music and short animations to present a multimedia slide presentation. In addition, they critically evaluate similar pages and appreciate the impact that background colour, font size and placement

have on the reader of their work. Pupils have a good understanding of how the Internet can be used to extend their learning and to research information on topics they explore. The effective use that the teachers make of the school's bank of wireless computers successfully extends the pupils' insight into how computers are becoming increasingly mobile. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to use spreadsheets and the various facilities found within such software in order to present numerical information in the form of tables and charts. Weaker features in attainment include pupils' understanding of control technology.

50. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and when the pupils are taught particular skills as a whole class, the pace of learning is often good. The teaching of classes within the Year 6 cohort is often undertaken by the co-ordinator. He has very good subject knowledge and understanding and has a clear understanding of how to ensure that pupils' use of information and communication technology can support their learning in other subjects. Challenging work is often presented to the pupils with this in mind. They are asked to work in pairs when solving problems and this has a positive impact on their social development. Good use is made of equipment such as video cameras and the resulting work is often displayed on the school's very attractive web-site. The pupils themselves help to construct this by participating in the extra-curricular club that has been set up for this purpose. Such work has proved successful in developing the pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject. The impact of teaching is, however, lessened as a result of insufficient opportunities provided for the pupils to develop the skills that they acquire when being taught as a class, in their day-to-day lessons. This reduces the overall pace of their learning.
51. The leadership and management of the subject are good, and the co-ordinator has had a strong influence on moving forward developments in the subject. He is given good support by the senior management team and governors have responded positively by ensuring that the subject has had sufficient money in order to fund developments. The school's use of the local education authority's assessment package has provided the co-ordinator with a good idea of the sort of work that pupils are producing and their level of achievement and enables him to monitor the standards the pupils reach as they move through the school. Resources are satisfactory, although some of the equipment used in classrooms is starting to look dated.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. Some teachers make effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects. In Year 6, for example, the pupils are provided with good opportunities to use multimedia software to devise presentations on mountains as part of their work in geography. Such work has a positive impact on the pupils' achievement and enthusiasm for the subject. However, in the main, such work is the exception rather than the norm and this is an area for development for the school.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education **is satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Good provision is made for pupils to develop their understanding of the customs and traditions of different faiths.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss how famous stories and parables from different religions can relate to their daily lives.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education work and enjoy exploring how other people practise their beliefs.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Some scope is given through religious education lessons for pupils to develop their literacy skills, although in some classes an over-use of worksheets hinders this development. In some classes, poor presentation is accepted.
- Assessment arrangements are insufficiently developed.

Commentary

53. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Achievement is good, and pupils make good progress in their understanding of the main features of different religions as they move through the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress in their insight to other religions. The school has made good progress in raising the profile that the subject has in promoting the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The school has maintained standards in the subject since the previous inspection.
54. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the major religions of the world. They know that different religions have a number of sacred books and texts, and that these are seen as being special because of the messages and stories they often contain. Pupils explain why a Bar Mitzvah is important to the Jewish community and the significance this has as a means of 'coming of age.' Pupils understand why a synagogue, a church and a temple are places of worship and know, for example, that baptisms and weddings are often held in church because of their religious significance. The generally low literacy skills which pupils possess make it difficult for them to explain in detail the meanings behind the parables they explore as part of their learning of the Christian faith, but good scope is given for them to develop a basic understanding that Jesus often used parables as a means of putting across a moral message that has a direct relevance to daily life.
55. The quality of teaching and the pace of pupils' learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a secure understanding of the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and pupils' learning is planned well using the guidance materials the syllabus contains. A key feature of the teaching is the scope that is given for pupils to discuss particular points and this helps to boost their confidence in listening to the views of others and sharing their views with a wider audience. Some teaching allows pupils to develop their literacy skills in a creative way. For example, through writing 'in role', pupils can write about the story of the Good Samaritan as though they were a participant. However, the work some pupils are

asked to undertake merely requires them to answer basic questions on a worksheet and such work adds little to the development of their literacy skills. In addition, some presentation of work is untidy and teachers do not always sufficiently stress to pupils the importance of presenting their work to the best of their ability. Some good use is made by teachers of information communication and technology by allowing pupils to use the Internet to research information, but such work is not always followed through in daily lessons because pupils do not use the classroom-based computers frequently enough.

56. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator has recently been appointed to the role and has therefore had few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning directly. She is aware, however, of the need to enhance the way that the school monitors the pupils' progress as they move through the school to gain a clearer view of what they are doing well and what needs to be improved. Good use is made of assemblies to share and explore with the pupils the particular days different faith groups celebrate and this makes a positive contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

Geography

Provision in geography **is satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is good, and pupils have good attitudes to the subject.
- Insufficient use is made of pupils' information and communication technology skills in daily lessons to reinforce their learning and to extend their enquiry skills.
- There are too few visits planned to support pupils' learning of geography.
- The school has yet to develop effective ways to assess pupils' progress in the subject.
- The presentation of pupils' work lacks attention to detail.

Commentary

57. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations. The previous report does not clearly identify the standards at that time. Given that the pupils enter the school with well below average levels of attainment, they achieve well.
58. By Year 6, pupils have studied a broad geographical curriculum. They are familiar with the local area and how different features can be represented on a large-scale map of the locality. They are aware of how the area has changed over time and of their likes and dislikes but are unable to compare and contrast in any detail their own locality with another contrasting locality they had studied. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of life in a less economically developed country, and describe some of the physical features, including weather and climatic conditions, and compare the lifestyle of children in such a country with their own. Pupils' knowledge of world geography is good and they can identify major countries, continents and mountain ranges. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of environmental issues and how change can affect the life of individuals.
59. The teaching is good, and geographical skills are developed progressively as the pupils move through the school. The curriculum is organised effectively and this ensures that geographical topics are included in each year. Lessons are well planned and learning intentions clear. Good geographical vocabulary is used, and pupils are becoming increasingly competent at describing their work. In discussion, pupils commented on field

visits they had attended. Pupils would benefit from further opportunities to make visits, for example, to study the geographical nature of a contrasting locality. Pupils' developing information and communication technology skills are not sufficiently used to reinforce learning or to challenge the more able pupils. The subject introduces pupils to a range of world localities, peoples and customs and makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

60. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. A clear scheme of work is in place and it is envisaged that the curriculum co-ordinator will have designated time to monitor the subject as the emphasis in terms of monitoring teaching and learning shifts to the foundation subjects. Assessment relies on evaluation of pupils' work and this is insufficient to inform curriculum planning and to track adequately pupils' progress. This aspect is unsatisfactory.

History

Provision in history is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is good.
- Pupils' understanding of how information is obtained about life in the past is well developed.
- Pupils' work lacks attention to detail and it is not well presented.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology and higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

61. Standards in history are in line with expectations and pupils' achievement is good. Scrutiny of pupils' history workbooks and discussion indicates that pupils have a good chronological understanding of different periods in the past. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically of how we know about life long ago, of the work of archaeologists and some of the artefacts they had seen. They are able to talk vividly about the lives of ordinary people in the past and how they compared with their own. Pupils have a good knowledge of famous people in history and of the concept of change, such as in fashion since the Victorian period. This helps to develop pupils' understanding of cultural change.
62. Pupils would benefit from further opportunities to visit sites of historical interest. Written work is very variable in quality. Much of it is of an unsatisfactory standard and does not help sufficiently with developing pupils' literacy skills. Examination of pupils' books also indicates that too little use is made of information and communication technology to support learning and to challenge the higher attaining pupils. No teaching was seen during the inspection.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work ensures a broad curriculum and resources are used appropriately. Monitoring of the teaching is envisaged over the next year as the focus moves to the foundation subjects. Assessment is by examining pupils' work and this is insufficient to inform planning and to track pupils' progress. This is unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. Inspection judgements focused on evaluating provision in art and design and music. There was insufficient work seen in design and technology and physical education to make judgements on standards and provision. However, pupils enjoy their physical education work and good scope is given for pupils to participate in competitive sports. In addition, the school makes good use of the swimming facilities at the local secondary school and all pupils have opportunities to develop their swimming skills at some point during the academic year. As a result, pupils reach standards in line with expectations in swimming by the end of Year 6.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach standards above those expected for eleven-year-olds.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Teaching is good, and reflects the high status the subject holds in the school.
- Pupils greatly enjoy the subject and work hard to produce work that reflects their capabilities.
- Good use is made of 'theme' days to reinforce learning.
- Too little use is made of information and communication and technology to support pupils' learning.
- The school has yet to develop effective ways to monitor pupils' progress in the subject.

Commentary

65. Standards are above average by the time the pupils leave the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The high status the subject holds in the school promotes a healthy interest in it, which contributes well to the pupils' good achievement.
66. Pupils are given good scope to explore the work of different artists. This is often followed by good opportunities for pupils to experiment with a range of different materials to produce work of a similar style and technique to those artist, yet at the same time expressing their own individuality. Pupils explain how Van Gogh used thick paint and that the colours he used often depicted a particular mood he may have been experiencing. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore colour and this enables them to make good progress in understanding of how different colours can be combined to generate others. Pupils are given good scope to practise their drawing skills, and their sketches and initial drawings show a developing eye for detail. Pupils understand well how art and design can be created from a range of different media and their three-dimensional work is of good quality. Weaker features in attainment include the pupils' understanding of how information and communication technology can be used to create and manipulate images. While some scope is given for pupils to use simple art packages, at present insufficient use is made of digital equipment to explore, produce and then manipulate images.

67. There is much good teaching of the subject and the pace of pupils' learning as a result of the teaching is often good. Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard in lessons to produce work that is of a good quality. The school makes good use of the expertise of the co-ordinator by enabling her to teach the subject to the two classes in the year group where she is placed. Her high level of knowledge and interest in the subject impact well on the pupils' achievement. Good use is made of the potential in other subjects to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils do use sketchbooks to make initial designs and sketches, although the potential of these as a means of undertaking more detailed preparatory work is missed by the teachers. Teachers make good use of display to enhance learning. Pupils' art work is attractively displayed in and around the school, and this helps to maintain the high profile of the subject.
68. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to seek imaginative ways to develop the pupils' strong interest in the subject. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Resources are good and staff support pupils' learning further through the good use of 'theme' days where the pupils look at and explore the art and media produced by artists from other cultures. An art club further complements the overall provision, and the school has experienced some success in putting forward the pupils' work for local competitions designed to make use of their artistic efforts to enhance local buildings. The school is aware of the need to boost the way it assesses the pupils' progress in art and design as they move through the school in order to strengthen the way in which pupils' progress in the subject is monitored.

Music

Provision in music **is good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Standards are above national expectations across the key stage.
- Music has a high profile and status in the school and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
- The teaching overall is good and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils of all ages sing well and good opportunities are provided for pupils to compose, perform and to evaluate music.
- There is a full programme of extra-curricular activities that add to pupils' personal development.
- The subject is well managed and benefits from a highly capable and experienced co-ordinator.
- The school has yet to develop effective ways to ensure that a clear picture of pupils' progress in music is shown as they move through the school.

Commentary

69. Pupils make good progress across the key stage and attain good standards that are above national expectations. Standards have been maintained at this high level since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress and are fully integrated into all of the school's musical provision. Pupils' achievement is good.
70. Pupils have a good sense of rhythm and pitch and a good understanding of the notion of composition. They use musical instruments to accompany songs and have good

opportunities to take part in class compositions, to evaluate their work and to suggest ways it might be improved. All pupils have opportunities to listen to music, for example during morning assemblies, and to relate to its particular context, for example, African music and lyrics expressing friendship. The standard of singing is high throughout the school and this is an aspect of their learning that pupils thoroughly enjoy. They sing tunefully with a good sense of rhythm and pitch and groups of pupils can maintain their own melodic line.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some very good teaching. Lessons are well planned and well resourced and learning outcomes are shared with pupils. Opportunities are provided for pupils to perform and to evaluate their efforts. This successfully combines the elements of performing, appraising and composing and enables pupils to develop their creativity and imaginations. Pupils of all abilities take part in a very good range of extra-curricular activities. They learn to take responsibility and to work together and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
72. The subject is very well led and effectively managed and the school benefits substantially from the expertise provided by the co-ordinator and the enthusiasm of other staff. The co-ordinator supports and advises her colleagues and her expertise is used, at times, in classes other than her own. Assessment is based on teachers' knowledge of individual competence and what the class has achieved. However, there is no comprehensive whole school procedure for assessment in place. This makes it difficult for the school to monitor and track pupils' progress in the subject. The school is well resourced and resources are well used to support pupils' learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and their understanding of citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum area of personal, social and health education features highly in the school.
- Very good provision is made for developing the pupils' understanding of the ways in which they can contribute to the local community.
- Frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss issues about drugs awareness and sex education.
- The School Council is used well to develop the pupils' understanding of listening, debating and acting on the views of others.
- The school's programme for personal, social and health education makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Commentary

73. The school has made good progress in raising the profile that personal, social and health education and citizenship has on the school's curriculum. The co-ordinator has a very strong interest in the subject and has successfully raised the awareness of this area of learning in the minds of pupils, staff, governors and parents. As a result, all pupils make good progress in their understanding of issues that have a direct bearing on their personal, social and health development.

74. All pupils follow a programme of work in a weekly timetabled session. These lessons give scope for the pupils to explore notions of how they can care for others in the school, at home and in the local community. Pupils understand the importance of caring for the local environment and how, by contributing to the care of this, the benefits impact on all who reside and work there. Issues pertaining to the dangers of drug misuse are explored with the pupils yet at the same time they are taught well to realise that some drugs have great benefits. The school's programme for personal, social and health education allows pupils to explore in a sensible way issues relating to sex education. Members of the school community, for example the school's nurse, contribute well to the programme that is taught.
75. The School Council is seen by the school as an important way of allowing pupils to develop their understanding of how groups of people come together to discuss and decide matters of common interest. The council meets regularly and is chaired by a pupil. Minutes are noted and votes are taken to make decisions which are then implemented. Pupils are voted onto the council by each class and those concerned are expected to report back to their class on the matters that the council has discussed. Discussions with the pupils indicate that they very much appreciate the chance to have a 'voice' in discussing issues that have a direct bearing on the time they spend in the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
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	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
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	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2
<i>Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).</i>	

EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

The school makes excellent provision for allowing pupils to have a voice in how the school is organised.

The school has a very strong philosophy towards involving and allowing the pupils to express their opinions about the school, and the pupils value greatly the creative ways in which the school involves and encourages them to express these. The School Council plays a vital part in this process. It meets regularly, and discusses various issues. Minutes are kept and fed back to each class in the school. Such is the status of this group that its members are invited to the governors' curriculum committee and the parents' association to present an argument about where certain funds should be best spent. In addition, they present their views on what further aspects of provision they would like to see improved. Pupils themselves collect funds for various school projects and the headteacher and staff have full confidence in the School Council that the decisions they take about how to spend these will be undertaken for the benefit of all. Great care is taken by the adults within the school to listen to the views of pupils and the pupils themselves have sufficient confidence in the staff to know that their views, where appropriate, will be acted upon.