

INSPECTION REPORT

MILWARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harlow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114922

Headteacher: Mrs S Sigston

Lead inspector: Mr P B McAlpine

Dates of inspection: 29-31 March 2004

Inspection number: 256925

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	220
School address:	Paringdon Road Harlow Essex
Postcode:	CM19 4QX
Telephone number:	01279 435850
Fax number:	01279 430954
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss Annabel Mortimer
Date of previous inspection:	2 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is average in size. There are 173 full-time pupils in the Reception class to Year 6, organised into six classes, two of which are mixed-age. A further 47 pupils attend a Nursery class part time, with both morning and afternoon sessions. The Nursery was opened in 2000. Numbers on roll have increased since the previous inspection by about five per cent. The immediate locality has significant social and economic disadvantage. The school is popular and is drawing in pupils from outside the immediate locality. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal, about 19 per cent, is broadly average. About 15 per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which include black African, Asian and Chinese. A small proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language but none is in the early stages of English language acquisition; first languages include Shona, Turkish, and Cantonese. The proportion with special educational needs, 23 per cent, is high. Five pupils have statements; this is a very high proportion. The more significant special educational needs include moderate learning; emotional and behavioural; speech and communication; physical; and autism. Pupil mobility is broadly average. The pupils have very low attainment on entry, particularly in language and communication skills. The school is involved in Excellence in Cities; Single Regeneration Budget funding; Sure Start; and the Children's Fund. Community provision includes a family learning programme and a family support service. The school received an achievement award in 2000 and gained Investors in People status in 2002. Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a difficult period with staff turnover being very high.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21552	Mr P B McAlpine	Lead inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Special educational needs English as an additional language
11414	Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector	
11419	Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education Religious education
17208	Mrs G Briggs	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Foundation stage

The inspection contractor was:

PBM, Brookbridge and Bedford Ltd
13A Market Place
Uttoxeter
Staffordshire
ST14 8HY

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	17
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	20
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory school with many good features and a few important aspects for improvement. In broad terms, the school is effective in raising standards that are well below average on entry to broadly average by Year 6. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory, with some pupils doing very well. Almost all pupils work hard and behave well. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with more very good and excellent teaching than is typically found but also a significant amount that is poor. The variations reflect the very high turnover of teachers in recent years and differences in expertise. Good leadership and management have held the school together during difficult times and maintained momentum to learning. Because educational value added is broadly in line with the majority of schools, and the cost of education for each pupil is average, value for money is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The vast majority of pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 achieve to their potential and standards improve substantially as year groups get older.
- The Nursery is particularly effective.
- The speaking and listening skills of many pupils, particularly boys, are limited and this is restricting their capacity for learning.
- Pupils in a class for Year 3 and 4 pupils have made slow progress during the current year.
- The attitudes and the behaviour of pupils have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now good overall.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good but provision for gifted and talented pupils is underdeveloped.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good.
- The leadership of subject managers is satisfactory but their roles are underdeveloped.

The very high turnover of teachers has been a constraint on the development of the school. Even so, improvement has been satisfactory. Standards overall have kept pace with national improvements. Each of the key issues for improvement from the previous report has been tackled with satisfactory success. Both provision and standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly. The provision for experimental and investigative science has improved and standards in this aspect have risen. The overall standard of behaviour has improved. There has been less progress with developing the roles of subject managers because of the high turnover of teachers.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	D	D
Mathematics	C	E	C	C
Science	D	D	A	A*

*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 in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. In these year groups, the substantial majority of pupils are doing well compared to their attainment on entry. The pupils in a class for Year 3 and 4 are not achieving to capacity because of weak teaching. Test results in Year 2 and Year 6 vary annually because the cohorts are small and differences in ability can significantly distort the overall picture. In the 2003 tests, more pupils in Year 6 attained the nationally expected level in English than in the majority of schools but fewer had high attainment and this is why the result in the table was below average. In science, 100 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 attained or exceeded the expected level in 2003, including two-thirds who exceeded expectations,

placing this result in the top five per cent of similar schools. Current standards in Year 6 are average in mathematics and science but below average in English. The lower standard in English is because about half the boys have difficulty with speaking, listening, and writing. The test results in Year 2 in 2003 were average in writing but below average in reading and mathematics. In Year 2, current standards are below average in these subjects but better than attainment on entry. In the Foundation Stage, standards are well below average, reflecting very low standards on entry. Standards in information and communication technology are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Standards achieved in the other subjects inspected are satisfactory. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is satisfactory, including those with English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve to their potential. Gifted and talented pupils attain highly but do not always have the opportunity to excel further, except in science, where satisfactory provision is made. **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good.** Attendance is below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education, including teaching and learning, is satisfactory overall. There is considerable inconsistency because many teachers are new to the school and some are inexperienced. More teaching is high quality than is found on average nationally. The high quality teaching inspires pupils to give of their best. Most of the teaching is effective and leads to pupils learning efficiently. A significant amount of teaching in a class for Year 3 and 4 pupils, however, is ineffective and this is slowing the pace of learning for these pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory, all relevant statutory requirements are met, and opportunities for enrichment through visits and extra-curricular provision are very good. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Links with parents are very good. Links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Senior management is fully aware of strengths and weaknesses within the school and acting effectively. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Between them, they are tackling the significant issues in teaching and working hard to bring about improvement. The headteacher has created a school with a good ethos, where individual pupils are valued, and there is a strong emphasis on learning. The leadership of subject managers has been constrained by the high turnover of teachers but they are doing their best in difficult circumstances. Several of the subject managers are themselves new to the school and this has slowed the development of consistently good practice in some subjects. Governance is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils like the school and appreciate the hard work of the headteacher and her staff. The school is popular and has grown in size because parents from some distance away are choosing to enrol their children. A minority of parents, rightly, have concerns about the progress their children are making in Years 3 and 4. The headteacher is fully aware of these concerns and acting to remedy them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in speaking and listening to at least average levels;
- improve standards in writing, especially those of the boys;
- increase the progress of pupils in all year groups to at least nationally expected levels;
- develop the provision for gifted and talented pupils so that they have the opportunity to excel;
- develop the roles of subject managers so that they are able to identify and share good practice in teaching their subjects consistently through the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall. The standard of work seen in Year 6 is below average in English but average in the other subjects and this is a good improvement on the well below average attainment on entry. Standards achieved are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve to their potential and the proportions attaining or exceeding the expected level for their age increase substantially as year groups get older.
- Many pupils have limited communication skills, particularly in speaking and listening.
- Standards in information and communication technology have improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- The progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 has been unsatisfactory during the current school year.

Commentary

1. The substantial majority of pupils are achieving to their potential. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6, almost all pupils are doing as well as pupils of similar ability in other schools and they are achieving in line with their capacity for learning. The more able pupils in these year groups are mostly challenged and stretched by the teaching and the less able are properly supported, achieve well, and often get closer to national expectations as time goes by. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently not achieving as well as they are capable because of poor teaching. This significant weakness is being remedied by senior management.
2. Attainment on entry is well below average. School assessments on entry to the Reception year show that broadly two-thirds of the pupils have attainment that is below the level expected, with a third having very low attainment and only one in twenty having potential for high attainment. This was very much the picture of attainment on entry for the Year 2 pupils tested in 2003, yet nearly 90 per cent of these pupils attained the nationally expected level for their age in reading and writing, showing that many with low attainment on entry had caught up with expectations; in mathematics, the proportion was 100 per cent, which was excellent. In the 2003 tests, about one in five pupils in Year 2 attained highly; this was a very good improvement compared to attainment on entry but was not enough to lift the overall standard for the year group to national average levels. In Year 6 in 2003, more than 75 per cent of the pupils attained or exceeded the nationally expected level in English and mathematics, with 100 per cent in science. These proportions were the same or better than most other schools and compare well with standards on entry.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (14.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.6 (12.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Over the past five years, test results in Year 2 and Year 6 have improved in line with the national trend. The results vary annually because the numbers of pupils tested each year are

relatively small and the presence or absence of pupils who are gifted academically or have learning difficulties can have a greater impact than in a larger school. The 2003 test results in Year 6 were well above average in science, average in mathematics but below average in English. The 2003 results were a significant improvement on the previous year. The results in science were excellent compared to similar schools, being in the top five per cent. The results in mathematics were the same as similar schools but were not as good in English. The improvement of the Year 6 pupils in 2003 compared to their attainment in Year 2 was very good in science, good in mathematics, and satisfactory in English, where some pupils, mostly boys, did not make enough progress in writing.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (24.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.7 (24.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.1 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Current standards in Year 6 are not as high as 2003 but still represent satisfactory improvement since admission to school. Present standards in mathematics and science are broadly average. In mathematics, the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is helping all pupils in Year 6 to give of their best. In science, the teachers prepare the Year 6 pupils well for the tests; this is leading to good levels of factual knowledge and is one reason why results in that subject have improved in recent years. The other reason is the increased emphasis being placed on experimental and investigative science. In English, the majority of pupils are achieving to capacity but, for boys especially, this capacity is constrained by weak speaking and communication skills. Current standards in Year 2 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 are nevertheless achieving well and are fully stretched by challenging and motivating teaching.
5. Standards in information and communication technology have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Standards in Year 2 are below average but standards in Year 6 are now average and this is a good improvement compared to attainment on entry. Almost all pupils are achieving well and attaining levels close to those expected for their age. Few pupils exceed national expectations, particularly in Year 2, and this is why standards in that year group are below average. More pupils exceed expectations in Year 6, reflecting the impact of challenging teaching. Standards in religious education are average and consistent with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus.
6. Over the years, boys have not done as well as girls in tests in English and this is mainly because of weaker performance in writing. In 2001 and 2002, boys in Year 6 were more than a year behind girls. Although the gap narrowed in 2003, it has widened again in Year 6 among current pupils. This is not the case in mathematics where boys regularly do better than girls. Underlying the boys weak performance in writing are their limited skills in speaking and listening, which are much more pronounced than among girls. Boys throughout the school are reticent speakers and often find great difficulty answering teachers' questions or when communicating their thoughts and opinions. The attainment of the few pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language is generally higher than the other pupils and their achievement is satisfactory.
7. Pupils who are gifted or talented generally attain highly but are not given the opportunity to attain even higher levels, except in science, where extra provision is helping particularly able pupils in Years 5 and 6 to excel. The school has introduced satisfactory arrangements to identify gifted and talented pupils and improving provision is a current development priority.

8. Throughout the school, about a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs and receive extra support. The attainment of these pupils in literacy and numeracy is often very low. The support they receive is effective and they are mostly achieving to their potential. For many of them, the progress they make is good enough for them to catch up with the national levels expected for their age. The progress made by pupils with statements of special educational needs is often limited when compared to national expectations but is good when compared to the difficulties faced by these pupils. The pupils who join the school at other than the usual time of admission settle quickly and generally do well. More pupils join than leave and those who join are often among the higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are good overall. Attendance is below average. Punctuality is satisfactory. The effectiveness of the provision for pupils' personal development is leading to a good school ethos.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The substantial majority of pupils enjoy lessons and behave very well but there is some misbehaviour and inattentiveness in one class.
- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- The pupils have very good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills, and to take responsibility.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective.

Commentary

9. The vast majority of pupils behave well because there is a clear behaviour code and appropriate expectations. Behaviour in assembly and throughout the school day is good. The recently trained play leaders from Year 6 act as good role models on the playground and they gain in social awareness as they engage with younger pupils. For example, one play leader was seen caring for an injured infant pupil in a very sensitive manner. However, the behaviour of pupils in one class is a concern. The senior management has taken appropriate action to remedy the situation and there are signs of improvement.
10. Pupils are interested in their work and many are enthusiastic about the tasks provided for them. In particular, they enjoy the challenges set by teachers that encourage them all to take a full part in lessons. Pupils are happy at school and willingly take part in the many extra-curricular activities provided for them. Many are proud of their work and happy to talk about it with adults.
11. The school successfully provides a range of responsibilities for pupils. As well as being classroom monitors, the older pupils can take part in various initiatives such as playground leaders or buddies for younger pupils. The school council meets regularly and each councillor reports on the issues that were raised in their class council. Personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies are used to promote self-esteem and self-awareness. These lessons help pupils to explore common human experiences, emotions and attitudes and to develop appropriate moral principles and social awareness.
12. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. All pupils, whatever their gender, ability or background are fully included in all aspects of school life. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of different religious beliefs through assemblies and religious education. Pupils' moral development is effectively promoted through the curriculum, the classroom rules, reward system and golden time. There is a weekly celebration of pupils' successes and this has a positive affect on behaviour and effort. Pupils' social development is promoted very effectively through the range of responsibilities they are given in and around the school.

Different cultures are explored through studying other countries in geography, listening to stories and participating in activities to celebrate special festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year.

13. The school is aware that attendance is not good enough. Governors have identified holidays taken during term time as a significant issue. The amount of absence recorded as unauthorised has increased during the current year as a result of clearer definitions. In spite of introducing individual awards and a competitive element between classes, attendance has not improved. Monitoring of attendance is not systematic or regular enough and the capacity of the computerised attendance records is underused. Almost all pupils arrive punctually in the mornings except for children from a small number of families who are late too often.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

14. There have been two exclusions in the last school year, relating to the same incident. Although this is higher than the level found in most primary schools nationally, it was an appropriate and effective response to violent behaviour; correct procedures were followed.

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	111	2	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	20	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is satisfactory overall.

Teaching and learning

The teaching is satisfactory, with good and very good features but also some significant weaknesses. Senior management is on top of the weaknesses and helping to bring about improvement. Learning is satisfactory overall but there are variations between classes and year groups. The arrangements for assessment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most of the good, very good and excellent teaching is found in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2, and in Year 6.
- The teaching in the junior age groups, but particularly in Years 3 and 4, is too variable in quality and this is a significant weakness.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	7	9	1	2	0

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

15. The amount of high quality teaching, about a quarter, is greater than found in the typical school. This teaching is inspirational. It leads to pupils being highly motivated and learning quickly. In an excellent session in the Nursery outdoors, a very appropriate range of well chosen and challenging activities had been set out which enticed the children and helped to develop a broad range of skills. The members of staff made excellent use of every opportunity to play with the children and extend their speaking, listening and social skills. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 2, the pace of learning was very quick, reflecting the teacher's strong grasp of the subject and the teaching methods used. Questions were challenging and designed to involve all pupils. By the end of the lesson, pupils were dividing sets of numbers accurately and identifying any remainders, which was ahead of national expectations and a considerable achievement when compared with their attainment on entry.
16. The bulk of the teaching, with notable exceptions dealt with elsewhere, is meeting most learning needs. Assessment information is being effectively used in the core subjects to check progress and identify pupils who need extra help because they have learning difficulties or are capable of high attainment. The use of assessment in other subjects is being developed but improvement has been hampered by the high staff turnover. Learning is particularly quick in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, where newly appointed and newly trained teachers have settled in well. They are well prepared, have good class management skills, motivate pupils well and make learning fun. The use of assessment in the Foundation Stage is well developed and helping to identify and target learning needs. Learning is satisfactory in Year 5 and quick in Year 6. In these year groups, good support from senior management is helping teaching skills and methods acquired overseas to be adapted to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
17. Throughout most of the school the pupils work hard and apply themselves well. They generally complete the work set in the time available and are acquiring knowledge and skills at an appropriate pace in lessons and over time. As pupils get older, their ability to work independently, showing initiative, increases, as does their ability to work with partners and collaboratively in teams or small groups.
18. The pace of learning is too slow in Years 3 and 4. Extensive action has been taken by senior management to bring about improvement in teaching where it is weak. The action is appropriate but has not improved the situation quickly enough because of factors outside the control of management. Where teaching is weak, it does not follow the planning, includes too little new learning and lacks challenge for most pupils but especially the more able. Not enough priority is given to motivating pupils, sustaining their attention, or to involving them actively in learning.

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities effectively enrich the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and effective support gives them full access to the curriculum.
- Accommodation for the Foundation stage is spacious and provides a stimulating environment for learning

Commentary

19. The statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. A satisfactory curriculum is provided for children in the Foundation Stage that includes all the six nationally agreed areas of learning. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented well. Teachers plan a broad programme for personal, social and health education, including sex and drug education and this aspect of the provision is good. The school is inclusive¹ in its methods and works hard to offer all pupils access to activities and equal opportunities.
20. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is appropriately tailored to their learning needs. Identification procedures are efficient and effective and there is adequate diagnosis of need. Individual education plans are generally of good quality though they vary somewhat from class to class reflecting the experience of individual teachers. The individual education plans for pupils with statements of special educational needs are of particularly good quality. Overall, the provision is helping pupils with special educational needs to work to their potential and achieve as well as they can.
21. The curriculum is meeting the needs of the few pupils with English as an additional language. Most of these pupils speak English fluently and do not receive or need extra support. The general provision in lessons is helping them to be fully involved in the curriculum and achieve broadly in line with their potential. Needs are properly assessed and there is provision to provide extra support if it is ever needed.
22. All subjects have a scheme of work devised from national guidelines and revised yearly to ensure it is still relevant for the pupils. This element of planning is good. Termly staff meetings are held to discuss the curriculum and make amendments where necessary to ensure it continues to meet the learning needs of the pupils. Throughout their planning, teachers endeavour to make meaningful links with other areas of the curriculum, for example good use is made of information and communication technology to extend pupils' mathematical experiences; this is good practice.
23. Teachers provide a rich and varied programme of learning opportunities for all pupils including a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as craft, football, reading, French, music and dance. All these are open to both boys and girls. The enrichment opportunities also include a range of visits to museums, a synagogue, a residential experience, visiting theatre groups and musicians. These opportunities help to make learning meaningful and interesting as well as widen pupils' perspective on the world and deepen their understanding.
24. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is good. It is spacious and offers plenty of room for a range of activities that stimulate learning in all relevant areas of learning. The main school

¹ Inclusion refers to the arrangements schools make to meet the learning needs of all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or background.

provides appropriate accommodation and an adequate range of resources in most curriculum areas. Outside, the grounds provide a good variety of opportunities for pupils to play and relax. The copse is a delightful space where pupils can sit as a class for a story or study the wild life encouraged by the careful development of this area as a natural resource.

Care, guidance and support

The overall provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice, and guidance based on monitoring, and the involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements for receiving new pupils into the school are very good.
- Target setting to improve the academic performance of individual pupils is an established part of the class teacher's role.
- Pupils' views are sought, in particular through the school council, and used to improve the school.
- The provision of a learning mentor is successfully helping to guide and support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Commentary

25. The headteacher has established a supportive ethos and good welfare procedures so that pupils are well cared for. Matters of child protection are appropriately prioritised. Pupils who are injured or unwell are well cared for. There is a rolling programme of first aid training for all staff, provided by a suitably qualified teacher; this is good practice.
26. The school has appropriately adopted the local education authority's health and safety procedures. These are good because they are based on regular checking and responsive to changing needs. Risk assessments are regularly undertaken as are functions, visits and events. Members of staff undertake routine health and safety walkabouts during the working day to check that standards are maintained.
27. All pupils receive a set of five targets, updated each term, as a guide for their work; this is better than many schools. The targets also include one for social and personal development and this is good practice. The new role of learning mentor has much potential for this person to work alongside individuals or groups and to support their personal development. At present, personal targets are somewhat limited and do not include improving attendance, for example.
28. Parents are very pleased with the arrangements made to welcome children, help them make friends and settle down when they start school. Inspection evidence confirms this view and finds that children are well prepared for secondary school. Pupils are included alongside their parents in consultations over the school's priorities. The school council works well and is an effective forum for seeking pupils' views. The council is influencing the development of after school clubs, the effectiveness of school rules, and the purchase of resources.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and find the headteacher approachable.
- The school is good at keeping parents informed through meetings and informal contacts about what their child is learning and their individual targets to improve.

- Written reports are not clear and do not tell parents how their child is getting on.

Commentary

29. The high quality links with parents have been sustained since the previous inspection. Parents have confidence in the headteacher and value the fact that she makes herself available and takes action on their concerns. Parents agree that their child is expected to work hard and to do their best. They think that the school is well led and managed and that they are kept well informed. Concerns raised by a minority of parents about behaviour in one class are justified. Inspectors have investigated very carefully the action taken by the school; they find that it is appropriate and leading to improvement.
30. The school mostly provides parents with very good written information. Starting with the Nursery and Reception class introductory booklets, parents are encouraged to be partners in their child's education. Care is taken to write in a friendly style that explains to parents what is being learnt and how it is achieved. Invitations to consultation meetings accompany pupils' targets and explanations and about homework. However, annual reports are only satisfactory because they do not give clear, quantifiable information so that parents can understand how their child is getting on, for example in relation to National Curriculum expectations for the age group.
31. Local and national initiatives are well used to improve the provision for the pupils. The headteacher has been successful in obtaining funding to help develop parents' support for their children's education. The school is making good use of its secondary school's inclusion resources to help teachers manage pupils with behavioural difficulties and the role of the learning mentor, funded through a national initiative, has got off to a good start and has much potential. Secondary schools provide pupils with good supplementary opportunities in science and in information and communication technology, including master classes for the most able pupils that are held regularly at weekends. There is good cooperation between schools, within the community and with business which strengthens the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead well by example. Management is effective. The work of subject and middle managers is satisfactory but has been affected by the high turnover of teachers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is good.
- The roles of middle and subject managers have been constrained by the high turnover of teachers.
- The arrangements for performance management are effective.
- The strategies for recruitment and retention of teachers are effectively ensuring that vacant posts are filled and that there is satisfactory continuity of learning for most pupils.

Commentary

32. The headteacher, well supported by her deputy, has united the school and steered a careful course through recent troubled times; her leadership is good. The school is orderly and well managed. During her tenure as headteacher, the school has grown in size and become popular locally. The ethos of the school is good and places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal as well as academic development. The governing body understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide good challenge and support for senior managers. All relevant statutory requirements are met including those for race equality. Senior management and the governing body are creating a very inclusive school where the needs of all pupils are met, whatever their background or ability.

33. The work of teachers is regularly checked for quality, evaluated and action taken to remedy shortcomings. Targets for improvement, guidance, and support are strong features of the arrangements. Teachers new to the school are extensively assisted by senior management. They have constant help learning the procedures and policies of the school and they have good access to mentors. The impact of this support is persistently monitored and where it is not effective further steps are taken. These steps include additional training, skilled teachers working with new teachers, deadlines for improvement, and the involvement of the local authority. Action to identify and share good practice in teaching is not always as consistent as that to remedy shortcomings because it is more dependent on middle and subject managers. Several of these are themselves very new to the school and have had little opportunity so far to work with colleagues to increase the effectiveness of teaching.
34. All of the class teachers have joined the school within the past four years. Five out of the seven classes are taught full-time or part-time by teachers who have been at the school a year or less. Reasons for the turnover are straightforward and include promotion, maternity, and relocation. Senior management is working hard to recruit teachers, including campaigns to attract teachers from overseas and newly qualified teachers. Strategies to support and develop newly appointed teachers are good. Even so, the high turnover of teachers is a significant constraint to pupils' learning and to the development of the school. However, the effective actions of senior management have prevented a very difficult situation that is outside their direct control from being significantly worse.
35. The school is involved in two national projects to raise standards, Excellence in Cities and the Single Regeneration Budget. The extent of additional funding for the school is small because total funds are shared between several schools. Using this funding, work at the school to improve provision for gifted and talented pupils has got off to a slow start but is now gathering speed. The use of a learning mentor to support potentially disaffected pupils is a recent introduction funded through the projects and it shows considerable promise. Overall, these projects are beginning to have a worthwhile impact on the school but it is too early to establish value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	533,643
Total expenditure	511,616
Expenditure per pupil (317 pupils)	2,744

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	14,808
Balance carried forward to the next	36,835

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. The Nursery was established in 2000 and attracts children from a wide area. Some children remain at the Nursery for up to five terms before transferring to the Reception class or to another school. Children enter the Reception class in the September or January of the year in which they are five. About a quarter of the children admitted to the Reception class have not attended the Nursery nor experienced alternative pre-school provision. This has a significantly negative impact on overall standards. The very good work undertaken by the Nursery is not as beneficial to the school as it could be because not all Nursery children transfer to the Reception class.
37. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed although the very good provision seen in the Nursery is not always reflected in the Reception Class. Despite this, the planning of the work throughout the Foundation Stage is very good. This is supported by a very good range of resources. Activities fully take into account the needs of the children and their progress is very well monitored. Information provided for parents of children in the Nursery is very good and induction² procedures are appropriately tailored to the needs of each child, with successful home visits taking place before children join the Nursery. The work of the nursery nurse is very influential in supporting the work of the teacher in the Nursery. However, in the Reception class, the work of other adults is not sufficiently well directed and monitored. The establishment of the Nursery since the last inspection is raising standards for those pupils who attend but because not all pupils experience the Nursery, the impact on standards in the main school is more limited; improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery is **very good** and, at times excellent. In the Reception class it is **good**. In the Foundation Stage overall, achievement is satisfactory but standards are well below average because of the low attainment on entry.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children settle very quickly into their new settings.
- The ethos of the Nursery ensures children learn rapidly right from wrong and how to become independent.
- Inappropriate behaviour is not as well managed at times in the Reception class and this restricts learning in other areas.
- The work covered throughout the Foundation Stage ensures all the skills needed for personal and social development are addressed.

Commentary

38. The majority of children enter the Nursery with poorly developed personal, social and emotional skills. All children settle quickly and their achievement is very good, with many leaving the Nursery with skills above expectations for their age, though standards overall remain below average. Children currently in the Nursery relate well to others, share toys and work happily alongside each other. Teaching and learning in the Nursery are very good. The adults encourage children to become independent, setting out a range of appropriate activities from which they can self-select. The atmosphere is calm, caring and very stimulating. The expert teaching develops children's self esteem and confidence.

² Induction refers to the arrangements for receiving new pupils, helping them settle into school routines and make friends.

39. Standards on entry to the Reception are below average overall. The children make good progress. More than half of them are on course to achieve the national goals for early learning by the time they leave the Reception class; even so, this is well below the standards in most other schools. The children understand the class routines and try new experiences confidently. Occasionally, inappropriate behaviour occurs and a few children have difficulty concentrating for set periods of time. The children are interested in what they are learning and enjoy the activities. All children are included well in all the activities with the help of the adults working with them. Teaching and learning in the Reception class are good. The good provision for personal, social and emotional development has been maintained since the last inspection.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for the development of communication, language and literacy in the Nursery is **good**. In the Reception class, the provision is **satisfactory**. Achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage overall but standards are well below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery, both adults use every opportunity to develop children's speaking and listening skills.
- In the Reception class, the children are left alone too often in the role play areas and adults are not used sufficiently to model language and develop the children's skills in speaking and listening.

Commentary

40. Achievement in the Nursery is good. The substantial majority of children enter with well below average communication and language skills. The attainment of those who have attended the longest is close to where it should be for their age. Teaching and learning in the Nursery are good and, at times, they are very good. The expert teaching ensures every opportunity is taken to encourage children to talk about what they are doing. By the end of the Nursery, a majority of children are talking confidently, answering questions enthusiastically, and beginning to acquire early literacy skills. However, not all of these children transfer to the Reception class.
41. At the beginning of their time in the Reception year, most children, particularly those who did not attend the Nursery, attain well below expectations. All of them make satisfactory progress, reflecting satisfactory teaching and learning. However, the role play area is insufficiently structured and planned to develop speaking and listening skills effectively. Most children leave the Reception year having made steady progress but not enough to catch up with national expectations, particularly in speaking and listening. They enjoy reading and are keen to take books home. In a lesson on initial sounds, the children enjoyed the quick repetition of words and copied the sounds from the teacher well. Children are being helped effectively to develop their writing but many are still not able consistently to form letters correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in the Nursery is **good** and in the Reception class it is **satisfactory**. Achievement is satisfactory overall but standards remain well below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff use every opportunity to develop mathematical knowledge and skills through other subject areas.
- The activities for children to develop their mathematical skills are motivating and children work with enjoyment.

Commentary

42. Children enter the Nursery with very little early mathematical knowledge but achieve very well. Those currently in the Nursery are catching up with the expectations for their age, reflecting the very good teaching and learning. Achievement in the Reception class is satisfactory and all pupils are making progress towards the national goals for early learning but overall standards remain well below average.
43. In the Nursery, a good range of opportunities is provided to encourage counting. During activities, the adults work and play with the children and encourage the development of early number skills; this is good practice. Good use is made of the computer to extend number skills. In the Reception class, children are beginning to use non-standard units to measure length, for example buttons on a snake. They need constant adult support in order to learn and they are still developing their accuracy when estimating. The number of adults ensures activities are adequately matched to the children's needs though teaching assistants do not always manage misbehaviour or inattentiveness well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good** in the Nursery and **satisfactory** in the Reception class. Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery very good use is made of activities to motivate boys.
- Effective approaches to learning, with opportunities to learn at first hand, stimulate the children's interest in the world in which they live.

Commentary

44. Achievement in the Nursery is good, reflecting the good teaching and learning. Current standards in the Nursery are close to average. In the Reception class, achievement is satisfactory and children are acquiring a broad knowledge of the world in which they live though only half are on track to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of Reception year and this is well below average. Reception children show considerable curiosity in the world of nature and, in one lesson, enjoyed planting seeds. However, limited personal development among some Reception pupils confines their concentration and slows the pace of learning. In design and technology, children use a range of tools and methods to make things. Nursery children are developing a broad understanding of information and communication technology by using the computer, tape-recorders and having telephones and cash registers in their role play areas. The boys in the Nursery are very motivated when using the site office on the building site.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**, both in the Nursery and in the Reception. Achievement is good. Standards are close to average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside areas have been greatly enhanced since the time of the last inspection, and these support the children's physical development well in both the Nursery and the Reception classes.
- Nursery children enjoy using the school hall and achieve well when undertaking physical activities.

Commentary

45. Attainment on entry is generally better than in the other areas of learning and so standards overall are higher. Children's achievement is good and most are on track to attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning are good in both the Nursery and Reception. The outside areas have been improved since the last inspection to give children opportunities to develop physically through balance, jumping, building and movement. The Nursery children demonstrate an awareness of space and use their imaginations to move around the hall, avoiding bumping into others. They show skill at balancing the beanbag on different parts of their body and persevere with the task. They slither, crawl, hop and jump, adjusting their speed as appropriate. Children thoroughly enjoy their work. The Reception children are using a range of tools and follow lines carefully when cutting with scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

46. This area of learning was not a focus of the inspection and it is not possible to make a secure judgement on achievement or standards. Teachers' planning shows that children have regular opportunities to develop their creative skills. The range of completed work shows that children are provided with appropriate activities supported by well-chosen resources.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory but standards are below average. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The substantial majority of pupils achieve to their potential.
- A majority of the boys are reluctant speakers and they often find it difficult to express themselves clearly or in detail.
- The high turnover of teachers is a constraint on learning.

Commentary

47. The substantial majority of the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are doing as well as can be expected in reading and they are achieving to their potential. In writing, nearly as many are achieving to potential but a number of boys in Year 6 whose ability when in Year 2 was only slightly below average could do better. These boys, and boys of similar ability throughout the school, have limited skills when speaking and their difficulties in writing are partly linked to their inability to articulate their thoughts accurately or in depth. Current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 reflect the well below average attainment of many pupils on entry. Almost all pupils are making the nationally expected amount of progress over time and some are catching up with expectations. The pupils in Years 2 and 6 have not been as affected by the turnover of teachers as pupils in Years 3 and 4 and this is why their achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made slow progress this school year because of insufficient challenge in the teaching.
48. Attainment in speaking and listening covers a wide range. The majority of pupils have verbal communication skills that are consistent with national expectations but a substantial minority, mainly boys, have skills that are significantly below those expected for their age. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are below average in Year 6 and well below average in

Year 2. This largely reflects the very low levels of skill in speaking on entry. The school provides a typical range of opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their speaking skills and this helps a number to improve. New strategies that include opportunities to discuss and agree solutions to questions with a partner or in a small group are being introduced and these are effective in classes where they are used. However, given the extent of the weaknesses in speaking skills, the range of opportunities offered is not always sufficient for those with the weakest skills and the school needs to do more to raise attainment in speaking.

49. Standards in reading are below average. Even so, almost all pupils are working hard and making progress. About three-quarters of the pupils in Year 6 are independent readers. This is fewer than is found in the typical school but is much better than on entry when only a third of the pupils have attainment in early literacy that is expected for their age. Those who are independent can read most text confidently and have the phonic and predictive skills necessary to pronounce and infer the meaning of unfamiliar words. About 25 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 are two or more years ahead of expectations and can read text of an adult level of difficulty. This proportion is close to that found in the typical school and is much larger than found on entry. In Year 2, about 70 per cent of the pupils are well launched into reading and beginning to tackle unfamiliar words, mainly words with three or four letters, but still need help with longer, unfamiliar words. Fewer than 10 per cent in Year 2 are on course to exceed expectations. In both Year 2 and Year 6, the teaching of reading is satisfactory and broadly consistent with the National Literacy Strategy. However, in the lower junior age groups, the methods lack rigour and there is insufficient emphasis on shared and guided reading, as recommended in the national guidance.
50. Standards in writing are close to average in Year 6 but well below average in Year 2. In Year 6, about 70 per cent of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the school year, including more than 10 per cent likely to exceed expectations; these proportions are about the same as the typical school. The more able pupils in Year 6 are fully stretched by the teaching and making good progress. Their writing is beginning to reflect specific genres, such as diary or adventure story, and their grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting are largely accurate. The typical Year 6 pupil writes at length and organises the content to suit the purpose but makes more errors in punctuation and spelling than is expected for the age. A sizeable group of boys find writing difficult at both the content and basic skills level. Some of these boys could do better. The school is introducing strategies to improve the boys' motivation in writing, with early success, but is not linking this development sufficiently to strategies to improve speaking skills. In Year 2, just over two-thirds of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level in writing; this is far fewer than found in the typical school but is more than found on entry. Most pupils in Year 2 write short stories and accounts that have a logical beginning, middle and end but lack consistent punctuation and accurate spelling of simple words. The methods for teaching writing are not always consistent with the National Literacy Strategy, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5, where they are neither efficient nor effective.
51. Pupils experiencing learning difficulties with literacy, including those with special educational needs, generally achieve to their potential, though progress for some is slow compared to national expectations. These pupils are well supported through nationally prepared programmes, booster groups, and the help of teaching assistants. Gifted and talented pupils do not currently receive extra support. They generally attain highly but are not given the opportunity to attempt even higher attainment. The school, as part of a national project, has recently introduced arrangements to identify such pupils. Improving provision for those who are gifted and talented is a school priority.
52. The teaching is satisfactory or better in the main but very inconsistent. Learning in Years 1 and 2 is often good and all pupils make worthwhile gains in lessons because the teaching in these classes is consistently satisfactory or better. Learning in Years 3 to 6 is very uneven. It is generally satisfactory in Year 5, where a recently appointed teacher trained overseas is coming to terms with the National Curriculum and national strategies, and is often good in Year 6,

where the teacher is experienced. However, it is currently poor in Years 3 and 4. The action taken by senior and subject management to bring about improvement in Years 3 and 4 was carefully examined during the inspection and is appropriate. Newly appointed teachers have been very well supported. Where teaching is good, it motivates the pupils and makes them eager to learn. Where it is poor, the pace of learning is very slow, the work is uninspiring, and the pupils' behaviour is ineffectively managed.

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator leads effectively through the example of her good teaching. Management procedures are typical of most schools though their implementation has been restricted by the high turnover of teachers, forcing efforts to be concentrated where need is greatest rather than on developing consistently good practice throughout the school. The arrangements for assessment are rigorous and the information is used appropriately to identify learning needs.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory though more needs to be done to promote the development of speaking skills in other subjects. Curricular innovation is leading to opportunities for writing being identified in other subjects and this is helping pupils who are reluctant writers to have experiences they find worth writing about.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well and standards in Year 6 are broadly average.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is effectively implemented in most classes.
- Poor behaviour in one class detracts from the pupils' learning.

Commentary

55. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. When pupils enter school their mathematical skills are well below average. During Years 1 and 2, standards rise though are still below average in Year 2. Progress in Years 3 and 4 has been too slow since the start of the school year and pupils could do better. Achievement improves and is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. Pupils currently in Year 6 have achieved well since Year 2, and their standards have risen to broadly average. All pupils in Year 6 have made appropriate progress since their national tests in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs mostly achieve well compared to the difficulties they face. No provision is currently made for gifted and talented pupils in mathematics. Their attainment is above average but the extent to which it could be raised further is not explored sufficiently by the school.
56. In Year 6, more than 75 per cent of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the school year, including about 20 per cent likely to exceed expectations. These proportions are broadly in line with the current national average. In Year 2, approaching 80 per cent are set to attain national expectations by the end of the year but few are likely to exceed the expected level and this is why standards in that year group are below average. Throughout the school there is a strong and appropriate emphasis on the learning of number. In all years, except Years 3 and 4, work shows good progress. In Year 4, the work of all pupils but particularly those with higher attainment shows that insufficient challenge is provided.
57. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with some strength in Years 2 and 6. In the better lessons, the mental warm up follows carefully the methods recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy. It is brisk and engages the pupils' interest, focusing their attention for the

rest of the session. Questioning is used effectively to extend and reinforce knowledge. Pupils are keen and respond positively to teachers' questions. Because relationships are good, pupils are happy to explain how they arrived at their answers even when they are unsure if the answer is correct and this helps all of them to learn from each other. Planning for these lessons provides tasks well matched to the needs of all the pupils. Teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.

58. Although most planning shows learning objectives these are insufficiently shared with the pupils and they do not always know the purpose of lessons. One lesson in a class containing pupils from Years 3 and 4 was unsatisfactory. In that lesson, planning was not well matched to the pupils' needs and provided insufficient challenge for the more able. Behaviour was not well managed and detracted from the learning.
59. Assessment procedures have been recently established but there has been insufficient time for them to impact on standards. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Where it is good it provides constructive comments to help pupils move forward. Information and communication technology is planned in most lessons and pupils enjoy the range of programs used to enhance their learning.
60. The subject coordination has been temporarily undertaken by a new member of staff until the coordinator returns to school. However, the role is underdeveloped. There is insufficient time to monitor teachers' plans or to check pupils' books for work coverage and appropriate challenge.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. There is very limited evidence that mathematical skills are used effectively in other areas of the curriculum except information and communication technology, where good use is made of mathematical skills when constructing spreadsheets. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' understanding and appreciation that mathematics can be applied to other subjects. This is an area for further development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils are achieving well and this is leading to average standards in Year 6.
- Good emphasis is placed on experimental and investigative science.

Commentary

62. Efforts since the previous inspection to improve the curriculum have been successful. Lessons place a strong emphasis on learning through practical experiences and this motivates pupils and makes them interested in the subject. In Year 6, about 80 per cent of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level, including about a quarter likely to exceed expectations and this is about the same as found in the typical school. In Year 2, about 90 per cent are on course to attain or exceed expectations and this, too, is similar to the typical school. However, few pupils in Year 2 are likely to exceed expectations reflecting low attainment on entry and because of this, standards overall are below average.
63. In Year 6, standards are broadly average in experimental and investigative science; life processes and living things; materials and their properties; and physical processes. The curriculum has satisfactory balance and the volume of work completed is sufficient to for the programme of study to be taught in sufficient depth. The amount of recorded work completed in Year 2 is somewhat thin and shows that shortcomings in literacy skills are restricting

learning for less able pupils, particularly the skills of communicating findings through constructing tables and charts and reporting findings in writing.

64. The teaching is satisfactory with good features. The emphasis on learning through investigation is leading to exciting lessons. A very good lesson in Year 2 inspired pupils during an investigation into floating and sinking. Because of the careful choice of materials, many pupils quickly learnt that their predictions about which materials might float or sink were often wrong. By the end of the lesson they were eagerly explaining their findings using appropriately scientific knowledge and language gained during the lesson. Teaching in Year 6 prepares pupils thoroughly for the national assessments at the end of the school year and this is one reason why recent test results have been high. The preparations for the tests are appropriately managed learning situations that effectively help pupils consolidate and extend their scientific knowledge.
65. Subject management is good and responsible for the improvements in the subject. The curriculum is adequately planned and based on local authority guidance. The arrangements for assessment are satisfactory. Very good opportunities are offered for gifted and talented pupils through master classes provided by a local high school. Several pupils identified by their teachers go to these classes. They spoke very enthusiastically about what they had learnt and demonstrated exceptional knowledge for their age. Resources are sufficient.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement in resources since the previous inspection has been good but further development of the subject has been constrained by the high turnover of teachers.
- The substantial majority of pupils are achieving well and, in Year 6, this is leading to average standards overall.

Commentary

66. The installation of a computer suite has enabled large groups of pupils to be taught the subject efficiently. Teachers are making satisfactory use of this resource though the turnover of teachers means that the coordinator is using much of her time providing basic training for new members of staff. This is diverting her away from improving the effectiveness of the provision from satisfactory to good.
67. The knowledge of pupils in Year 6 is fully consistent with the national expectations for their age; they benefit from the teaching of the subject coordinator. The Year 6 pupils have good practical knowledge of computers, including selecting and operating programs and printing, saving and retrieving their work. Keyboard skills are good. Their knowledge across the range of the programme of study has appropriate depth and they have developed the relevant skills to use key aspects of the technology. For example, they use a full range of editing skills when operating word processing programs; can devise simple formulae when constructing spreadsheets; present data using graphic representation; employ animation and sound when creating presentations in PowerPoint. In Year 2, basic computer skills are satisfactory though standards overall are below average because too few pupils exceed national expectations.
68. Teaching is satisfactory with good features. The coordinator leads by the example of her good teaching but does not have enough opportunity to share her expertise with other teachers. She often teaches other classes in Years 3 to 6 and this is helping to ensure their good progress. Teaching assistants regularly work with groups of pupils in the computer suite and their work on these occasions is satisfactory. The curriculum is appropriately planned and is leading to

the programme of study being taught in full except for control technology, which is a current school development priority and not all staff are yet trained in using the relevant programs and hardware. Assessment arrangements are recently introduced and potentially very useful though it is too early to evaluate their impact on raising standards. Resources are good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The use of the technology across the curriculum is satisfactory. In science, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to use electronic sensors to measure temperature, for example, when investigating the rate of cooling of different liquids.

HUMANITIES

70. During the inspection no **history** lessons were observed. Because there was limited written evidence it was not possible to make any judgements about standards. Planning and wall displays show a range of appropriate topics covered. Visits to museums, exploration of the local area and a residential visit which includes a Victorian day, provide the pupils with first hand experiences to enhance their understanding of history.
71. Standards in **geography** are average in Year 2 and Year 6 and have been maintained since last inspection. Two lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was good. Younger pupils clearly demonstrated their knowledge about hot and cold climates, encouraged by the teacher's effective use of questioning. They eagerly and excitedly worked in small groups to explain how they would tackle their "mission" to the arctic, a rainforest or a desert. A CD-ROM, illustrating well-known London sites was used to whet older pupils' appetites and stimulate interest to further their research about a city. They were enthusiastic and responded well to questions about differences between the town of Harlow and the city of London.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**. Although a focus of the inspection, few lessons were taught and so the evidence is limited. Subject leadership is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good range of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Commentary

72. Achievement is satisfactory overall and the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are average overall but there are variations between year groups in knowledge of different religions. All pupils are aware of stories of Jesus and know they can be found in the New Testament in the Bible. They appreciate that Christmas and Easter are special Christian festivals. They also enjoy learning about other faiths. In most year groups apart from Year 6, the pupils are building satisfactory knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils in Year 6 have detailed knowledge of Christianity and Judaism but know little about other religions.
73. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils showed satisfactory knowledge of the Jewish Passover. They knew about its origin in the time of Moses and the Ten Plagues of Egypt and how it is celebrated today. This information had been very effectively provided by an adult on the staff. They also recalled the Hindu celebration of Diwali and the story of Rama and Sita. In a good lesson in Year 5, pupils looked at Hindu pilgrimage to the Ganges and compared this with Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Lourdes. The overall quality of teaching in the lessons seen was at least satisfactory. In one lesson the teacher assistant very capably led the

introduction and focused the pupils as they discussed the Stations of the Cross. During this lesson the pupils were very quiet and respectful of the adult's beliefs.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. No lessons in **art and design** were seen and the subject was not a focus of the inspection. From previously completed work, it is evident that the curriculum is varied and interesting and that the standards are average. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils study a range of artists' work and then use the techniques competently in their own work. This was seen in Year 6 pupils' studies of Boccioni to create movement of hand prints and when studying paintings depicting mood by Millais in order to develop ideas on facial expressions. Year 2 pupils have created some detailed pieces of work when using magazine pictures as a stimulus. The range of pupils' completed work shows that they are taught appropriate skills and techniques involving two-dimensional and three-dimensional work.
75. No lessons were seen in **design and technology** and very little completed work was available. Curricular planning is based around a national scheme of work and this is appropriate. It gives pupils the opportunity to cover the full range of experiences as set out in the programme of study. Records show that the subject is taught at certain times in the school year and that the time allocated overall is consistent with national recommendations. No judgement can be made on standards because insufficient evidence was available.
76. In **music**, pupils were only observed in Year 1, although the whole school was heard singing in assemblies. The small amount of evidence available points to average standards throughout the school. The expertise of the coordinator appropriately influences work in music. The pupils sing pleasantly and the words are clear. Work around the school demonstrates that Year 6 pupils are able to use written notation and are being introduced to the appropriate musical vocabulary. The coordinator runs a recorder club and encourages the use of percussion instruments in concerts, leading some work with accompaniment on the guitar. Some pupils learn a brass instrument. In the lesson observed, pupils handled and played the range of percussion instruments with control and carefully followed the instructions from the conductor as they played. They understand dynamics such as loud and soft and they generally follow the pulse accurately as they keep time to the music. Pupils clearly enjoy their music and the overall satisfactory picture has been maintained since the last inspection.
77. Insufficient lessons were seen to make judgements about provision, teaching or standards in **physical education**. Planning shows an appropriate range of activities to develop pupils' skills in games, gymnastics, dance and swimming. Only part of a lesson was observed so it was not possible to make any judgement about the quality of teaching. The theme for that lesson was Egyptian dancing and this was enjoyed by all the pupils, boys and girls alike. They were keen to demonstrate their skills in devising a simple dance sequence. There are limited opportunities for extra-curricular activities such as football.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. This subject was not a focus of the inspection. In all classes, time is set aside each week for pupils to explore human experiences, emotions, and ways of behaving and this is contributing effectively to pupils' personal development. Assemblies, subjects such as science, geography and history, and arrangements such as the school council also contribute.

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	2
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	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	2
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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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