

GALLEYWOOD INFANT SCHOOL

Galleywood, Chelmsford

LEA area : Essex

Unique reference number : 114887

Headteacher : Mrs. A. Tilsley

Lead inspector : Elizabeth Camplin

Dates of inspection : 10th – 12th November 2003

Inspection number : 259841

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	156
School address:	Barnard Road Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM2 8RR
Telephone number:	01245 472686
Fax number:	01245 473056
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. S. Ritter
Date of previous inspection:	19 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Galleywood Infant School caters for 156 pupils, aged between four and seven, 31 of whom attend Reception part-time. Pupils' first language is English with the exception of one pupil, who is bilingual. Most pupils are white. There are nine mixed-race pupils. Pupils' family backgrounds, though wide-ranging, are broadly average, economically and socially with an average percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals. Children enter Reception in the September prior to their fifth birthday. Most benefit from pre-school education and their attainment is typical of the age group. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is a little above average. The group includes two pupils with a statement of special educational need, which is about average for the size of the roll. Four pupils receive support from external agencies to help them with a variety of difficulties, including conforming to expectations for behaviour and making progress academically, especially with speech and language. There are 18 pupils on the gifted and talented register with, for example, special interest and capability in music. The percentage of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time of admission is low compared with other primary schools. In 2001, the school won a *Schools Achievement Award* for improving standards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3586	E. Camplin	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, Art, Design and technology, Music, Personal and social development.
8941	J. Fletcher	Lay inspector	
22178	K. Robertson	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, Geography, History, Religious education
21046	V. Collier	Team inspector	Mathematics, Science, Information and communication technology (ICT), Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 3YB

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, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
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	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This effective small school enables pupils of all ages to achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 are likely to attain above average standards by summer 2004. This is because the school is led by an outstanding headteacher, whose personal example in making the school a welcoming place where pupils want to learn and achieve at their best underpins the school's aims and values. The deputy headteacher, staff team and the governing body are committed to the same educational ideals and together they lead and manage the school effectively. Good teaching is based on a very stimulating and varied curriculum. Value for money is good because, despite higher than average costs, the school prepares pupils very well for the next stages of education.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make very good progress to achieve high standards in writing.
- Pupils do well in mathematics because they enjoy a variety of interesting practical activities.
- Pupils make very good relationships, achieve high standards of behaviour, are independent in their learning, and readily take on responsibilities.
- High standards in art and music stem from a strong emphasis on creative activities.
- Pupils are cared for and supported very well.
- The partnership with parents, other schools and the community is very successful.
- The governing body contributes very capably to school improvement.
- Teaching is not as effective as it could be in extending pupils' vocabulary and helping them to fully understand what they hear and read.

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Key issues have been addressed. Subject co-ordinators are now more effective at monitoring pupils' progress. High standards have been maintained in writing and standards have risen in mathematics and science. Provision in ICT and procedures for first aid have improved. Parents organise fewer holidays in term-time.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	C	C	D	D
Writing	B	A	A	A
Mathematics	C	C	B	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.*

Overall achievement is good. In 2003, pupils in Year 2 were above average compared with pupils in similar schools. Having started school at broadly average levels of attainment, pupils made very good progress in writing and science. They obtained very good results in the national tests in both of these subjects. Their achievement in mathematics was also good but only satisfactory in reading. In Year 2 currently, standards achieved are similar, being above average in literacy, numeracy and science. Pupils achieve well, too, to attain high standards in art, music and games, whilst standards are average in ICT and religious education. Children in Reception are also likely to exceed the goals expected for the age group. They achieve very well in social development, well in language, literacy and creative development and satisfactorily in mathematics and physical development. The inspection team found that pupils in Year 2 make the most rapid progress but pupils of all backgrounds, pupils with special educational needs and the more able achieve equally well. Inspectors found that raising standards in reading rightly remains a priority.

Pupils' personal qualities are highly developed as a result of very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive and their behaviour is very good, in class and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good because of the emphasis on providing a broad and stimulating curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. **Teaching is good**, with particularly effective use of learning resources to make lessons interesting. Where lessons are good or better, the pace is demanding and learning support assistants often play a prominent part in teaching groups of pupils with differing needs. The strength of pupils' good learning is their capacity to work without direct supervision and to collaborate effectively. In the weaker lessons observed, teachers did not pitch tasks realistically when pupils were asked to work independently or the pace was slower than necessary. One lesson was unsatisfactory. Consequently, pupils made no better than sound progress. Teachers occasionally miss opportunities to improve pupils' speech, vocabulary and understanding of text. Procedures for child protection, support, guidance, health and safety are very effective. Links are very strong with parents, other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are very effective. Other curriculum managers' contribution is good. The headteacher is an outstanding leader who carefully evaluates everything the school does and who works hard to make the most of a small team's individual strengths. There is a strong emphasis on improving assessment, curricular planning and the programme of professional development so that weaknesses that hinder pupils' progress are carefully diagnosed and tackled rigorously. The governing body takes a lively interest in the school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and pupils share the same very positive view.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Do more to widen pupils' vocabulary and help them to read with greater understanding.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (15.9)	15.6 (15.6)
Writing	16.2 (15.5)	14.5 (14.1)
Mathematics	17.2 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Achievement is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very good standards in writing and do well in mathematics and science but achievement in reading and religious education is only satisfactory.
- Pupils make good progress in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical area of learning and achieve good standards in art and music.
- Reception children achieve well in language and creative development and very well in personal, social and emotional development.
- Full-time children achieve better standards in physical development than the part-time children.
- Pupils of different backgrounds, the more able and pupils with special educational needs achieve equally well.

Commentary

1. National test results show that in the past three years improvement in standards has kept pace with the national trend. The biggest spurt came in 2003 when, overall, standards were above average for the first time due to pupils' very good improvement in writing and mathematics. Standards in science were also high. Boys' performance was particularly strong. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving well to sustain these standards. Children in the Foundation Stage perform better than expected for their age in personal development, literacy and creative development. They meet the goals expected in mathematics and physical development. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards overall in knowledge and understanding of the world, though the work seen in the foundations of science, ICT and history was good, irrespective of children's starting points.

2. The school recognises that in the past they have not been sufficiently successful at helping pupils make sense of texts. This is why pupils have not scored well on comprehension questions in reading tests. Lack of a permanent library location until last year was another reason why pupils did not read as widely as the school would have liked. Already pupils read more books because the stock has improved. However, the more able pupils still lack sufficient fiction at their level. Teachers allocate more time to working directly with small groups of different ability on specific targets and this helps pupils to move forward step-by-step. However, there is still insufficient emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary in some teachers' lesson plans despite the school's aim to improve planning. Such inconsistencies are being monitored vigilantly by the senior management team because they are committed to resolving difficulties and building on recent improvements in reading standards. In religious education, there is good attention to exploring relationships and respecting people of different faiths but not enough work on developing pupils' understanding of religious symbols.

3. Pupils achieve very good standards in writing and achieve well, overall, in numeracy, science and ICT because they have many stimulating opportunities to practise basic skills. By Year 2, pupils write confidently for a variety of purposes, using a legible joined script. They are good at writing about their achievements, for example, in physical education, science, history and geography. Pupils anticipate logically how to apply knowledge of adding, dividing and sharing. They apply sorting, matching and measuring skills well too in much of their work in other subjects. Since the computer suite opened, progress has also accelerated in ICT. Pupils have quickly understood its potential and make good use of it across the curriculum.

4. Standards are better than expected in art and music. This is due to the improved emphasis, since the previous inspection, on developing skills from year to year. Pupils' skills improve through increasingly complex tasks in both subjects. For example, they are extended in art when pupils learn batik and make ceramic models. In music, they learn to follow notation successfully when using tuned instruments.

5. In Reception, children listen very well and have made a good start with reading, writing and in their creative development. Their progress in mathematics is also good when supported by an adult. Children are very co-operative and well behaved. They are also independent, resourceful and keen to achieve as well as they can. Children understand the need for classroom routines that ensure their health, safety and well being. They achieve highly in personal development because this area of learning is very skilfully planned and managed. Lower-attaining children respond particularly well to patient support and guidance from adults who work with them. A good example was when a teacher helped two boys to make repeating patterns in sand.

6. The older children in Reception attend school full-time, whereas all whose birthdays come after Christmas attend part-time. For the most part, children achieve well despite this difference in their experience. However, children in the part-time class do not progress as well as their peers in the use of large apparatus in the hall. This is because they do not have the same breadth of learning opportunities as the children in the other class.

7. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and with special gifts and talents, make at least good progress because the school tracks individual performance carefully from the first year in school. If pupils appear at risk of slipping behind, remedial action is taken to help them catch up. If they show promise in specific subjects or skills, such as music, numeracy or literacy, they pursue extension tasks in lessons or in small groups with the learning support teacher. Pupils in Year 2 make the most rapid progress. A major reason is that teachers motivate pupils by consulting with them to agree relevant individual improvement targets that they understand and work hard to achieve. Some pupils in Year 1 are making up ground for underachieving in Reception when past temporary teaching arrangements failed to stretch them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

8. Provision for pupils' personal development is **very good**. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality to school and throughout the day is good. Pupils' achievement is significantly influenced by very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school monitors attendance closely and effectively encourages attendance and punctuality.
- Standards of behaviour are consistently high.
- Pupils are relaxed and happy at the school and relationships are very strong. They show a real desire to learn.
- Children show a growing respect for other people's views and feelings, and demonstrate an increasing awareness of themselves and of accepted moral and social standards.

Commentary

9. Unauthorised absence is very low and absence due to holidays during term has reduced since the last inspection. Pupils want to attend regularly and are disappointed if they have to stay away for illness or medical reasons. The school monitors individual attendance and punctuality very closely. It is quick to provide support and encouragement to any parents or pupils experiencing problems. Pupils arrive at school on time and quickly involve themselves with their friends in productive activities whilst waiting for formal lessons to start.

10. A temporary exclusion was sanctioned in July 2003. The action was taken in the best interests of the class and the child concerned.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003

Authorised absence (%)		Unauthorised absence (%)	
School data:	5.5	School data:	0.2
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.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
Mixed White and Black Caribbean

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
173	1	0

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

11. High quality provision for social development results in pupils' very good attitudes to school and has a positive influence on their progress. One seven-year-old summed this up when she revealed that the thing she really liked most about the school were the opportunities to work and play together, enabling her to learn and to understand more things. Access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities makes a significant contribution and pupils participate in them with real enthusiasm. For example, in the gathering gloom of a cold and damp November evening, twenty-three boys and girls showed a real desire to take part in football practise to improve their skill levels.

12. There is very good provision for moral development. A very effective behaviour code and reward scheme ensures that the school is a safe and orderly environment, conducive to good learning. Behaviour at the school is consequently very good. Pupils respect and respond very positively to adults' expectations of them. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and show developing respect for different feelings and views. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems respond very well to the help the school provides.

13. The relationships between pupils and with staff are very good and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The school is rightly proud of its social and racial harmony. Pupils interact in a polite manner with staff and visitors, listen intently, and are uninhibited in their questioning and discussion. Staff emphasise spiritual and cultural values and beliefs, and value all achievement, which fosters pupils' respect and tolerance of others and lively interest in world events. A particularly effective example of this was when pupils in Year 2 watched and then discussed a video about the reason for Remembrance and Armistice Day. As they progress through the school pupils show a growing understanding of themselves in relation to the wider community and an increasing awareness of the moral, social and cultural norms in today's diverse society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

14. The school provides a high quality of education. The curriculum is very stimulating and considerably enriched by activities outside lessons, links with other schools, the community and parents.

Teaching and learning

15. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. It is at its best in Year 2, resulting in the oldest pupils making the most rapid all round progress. Teaching is at least good in 50 per cent of lessons in every year group. Lessons are consistently good in mathematics and ICT, and in language and literacy in the Foundation Stage. It is also good in most English lessons in Years 1 and 2. There was one weak science lesson in Year 1.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	10	8	1	0	0

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage pupils very well and achieve consistently high standards of behaviour.
- Teaching assistants support pupils very effectively.
- Staff are committed to developing individual talents whilst respecting differing abilities amongst members of the class.
- Lessons are usually interesting and enjoyable because adults make effective use of the school's good range of resources, attractive accommodation and grounds.
- From the time they start school, pupils are encouraged to be responsible and to be as independent as possible.
- Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' vocabulary and improve their reading.
- Teachers occasionally fail to make tasks match learning objectives for pupils of different ability.

Commentary

16. Teachers are patient, calm and consistent in their expectations of high standards of behaviour. This means that pupils benefit from a very positive learning atmosphere. Pupils are able to concentrate and persevere with their work, which enhances their self-esteem and motivation to work as hard as they can. Arrangements for assessing needs and supporting all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are effective. There are very good working relationships with outside agencies to ensure that pupils with statements of special educational need are given full and appropriate support. Targets on individual education plans are relevant and are used to address both learning and behavioural difficulties very well. They are frequently reviewed and amended as necessary. Because of this, pupils with special educational needs achieve well during class lessons and when they are withdrawn for small group work.

17. Teaching assistants and a learning support teacher partner class teachers in many lessons or lead small groups independently. They are closely involved in planning an appropriate range of activities and skilled in making them interesting. For example, they teach children in Reception to gain confidence in playing number or word recognition games, and to develop skills using a computer. They patiently support pupils with statements to achieve their learning targets to sustain concentration and refrain from disturbing others. They challenge pupils of upper ability to improve, for example, by thinking carefully about the best way to write instructions.

18. Teachers recognise that all pupils have aptitudes that deserve to be fostered in lessons and other school events. The headteacher made exemplary use of pupils' interest in drama during one assembly. The music co-ordinator enables members of the school orchestra to accompany other pupils as they sing during assemblies. Many pupils excel at games, gymnastics and art and craft because they develop their skills in clubs after school and in special events. Pupils develop an interest in conservation because they receive opportunities to look after plants and go on nature walks. Pupils in Year 2 apply practical skills well in a variety of activities in ICT. This is because there is regular and constructive use of digital cameras and microscopes, the computer suite and large electronic whiteboards to make learning enjoyable.

19. There is a strong emphasis on pupils taking responsibility and being as independent as possible from an early age. Children in Reception, for example, have only been in school for a few weeks. Yet, as a result of high expectations of them to be responsible, they already show the capacity to work sensibly on their own. They co-operate happily as they use construction apparatus, puzzles and other equipment. They are very good at helping each other. Four children did well, for example, to make up their own game using dice and counters when the parent volunteer who was going to support them was unable to be there. Children also excel at tidying up when activities end.

20. Teachers are very aware that results in reading lag behind similar schools. They have accurately identified that pupils require more help with understanding what they read. The quality of learning has improved since the school introduced two sessions rather than one per week of guided reading with an adult. Teachers are trying to set specific language targets in lesson objectives and to check at the end of the lesson whether pupils have met them. Teachers, however, still miss opportunities to help pupils explore the meaning of traditional sayings, metaphors or technical vocabulary that they have not encountered before. Pupils themselves say that they would like more help with learning to interpret the way some things are written. These aspects of teaching and learning are the most in need of strengthening.

21. Both teachers in Reception are still finding out just what children are capable of managing without the direct support of an adult. Similarly, teachers in Year 1 are getting to grips with managing some pupils who were unsettled by temporary teaching arrangements last year. They try hard to plan appropriately challenging tasks when children of different ability work in groups. They do not always succeed as well as intended. On several occasions the tasks set for some pupils were either too easy or too hard, or the pace of the lesson was rather slow. Reception teachers, for example, in mathematics lessons, underestimated the potential of one small group and over-estimated the capability of another. Both groups were resourceful and modified their activities to suit themselves and consequently they did not waste time. Both these teachers spotted children's responses, recorded them and subsequently took steps to adjust their planning for the days ahead. A science lesson, where the emphasis was on working with the teacher in groups to investigate light, did not cater well for other pupils who were working independently. Therefore, they made inadequate use of their time. Lessons observed in religious education were sound, but unexciting. Their timing, usually at the end of the day, meant that pupils did not persevere with their work as well as in other lessons.

The curriculum

23. Curriculum provision is **very good**. It is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in Key Stage 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is particularly well organised to link literacy, numeracy and ICT with other subjects.
- Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects are planned well to generate pupils' interests. Activities in religious education, however, are not as stimulating.
- The commitment to equality of opportunity serves pupils of all ages very well, especially in their personal and social development.

- A very good range of after school clubs, special events and links with other schools enriches the curriculum.
- Insufficient attention is given in written plans to extending pupils' vocabulary and helping them gain a full understanding of what they hear and read.
- The good level of staffing and resources and the very good accommodation support pupils' learning well.

Commentary

23. In Reception, provision is good overall, and is very good for children's social and creative development. This accounts for children's very sensible behaviour and highly positive attitudes to learning. There are occasional weaknesses in planning for mathematical and physical development. In Years 1 and 2, adults work together well to maintain the often exciting and challenging curriculum, especially in drama, the arts and ICT. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are thoroughly assessed and their individual targets are devised to help them overcome their specific difficulties. Overall, the curriculum is adapted very successfully for them and they make good progress to achieve well. Recently introduced weekly opportunities for accelerating the learning of more able pupils extends and enriches their knowledge and understanding in literacy and numeracy. The orchestra gives pupils with musical talents the chance to develop their instrumental playing and their enjoyment of making music. The programme for health education appropriately covers life cycles, personal and road safety, and the importance of friendships. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection because strengths have been sustained and the school has dealt with the weaknesses in provision for ICT and design and technology.

24. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of learning opportunities that are offered to the pupils either during or after the school day. For example, visits to Galleywood Common and the local park prompted lively writing, very good observational drawing and paintings and worthwhile investigation about plants and wildlife. A recent visit from an artist in residence enabled pupils to produce work of high quality in art and design. An annual 'Children's Challenge' does much to improve pupils' athletic skills, enthusiasm for exercise and sense of fair play. Games, music, art and French clubs that take place after school stimulate a high proportion of pupils.

25. The school prepares the pupils well for their transfer from Reception classes to Year 1 and subsequently from Year 2 to Year 3 at St. Michael's Church of England Junior School. There is a very good relationship between the two schools, which supports the transition arrangements.

26. Planning for speaking and listening and reading does not, however, focus consistently enough on helping pupils to strengthen their understanding of different texts. This has an adverse effect on results in national tests. The range and variety of tasks in religious education are not as good as in other subjects. They do not engage pupils so well and consequently standards are no better than average.

27. Teachers are well matched in each year group and a strong team of teaching assistants provides very good support for them and for pupils. This is particularly effective when the assistant works with an allocated group of pupils on very specific learning objectives.

28. Resources for learning are good whilst the accommodation is very good and in excellent order. In particular, the addition of the computer suite and many digital resources since the previous inspection has considerably improved provision and standards achieved in ICT. The new library is also fostering pupils' greater interest in reading. The high quality of pupils' work displayed throughout the school combines to celebrate achievement and make the environment welcoming and stimulating. The youngest children benefit from a separate outside play area. They use it regularly throughout the year to enhance their physical and creative development. Pupils say they enjoy the recently improved seating area outside where they can meet at play times.

Care, guidance and support

30. The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Since the previous inspection, they have much improved. Pupils' achievement and personal development are closely monitored and all pupils benefit from very effective support and guidance. Good efforts are made to seek pupils' views and to involve them in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is vigilant in applying its procedures for child protection, health and safety. Staff provide a high standard of care and concern for pupils.
- New children are inducted very sensitively and each pupil's academic progress and personal development is very carefully monitored.
- The school encourages pupils to express their views on all aspects of their learning.

Commentary

30. The well-being of pupils is always uppermost in the minds of staff. Daily routines are well established and respected by children and staff. Appropriate levels of supervision are always provided, whether in classrooms or in the playground. Consequently, accidents are rare. Staff know pupils very well and put them at ease.

31. Very good systems ensure that identified hazards or safety concerns around the site are quickly eliminated. First aiders hold up-to-date qualifications and there are clear procedures for administering medicines. These are carefully followed. Comprehensive records of incidents and accidents are maintained. Parents are quickly informed of any illness or injury.

32. All aspects of pupils' progress are closely monitored. Staff use the assessment information they collect on each pupil to provide very effective support and guidance to all. The induction arrangements for new pupils are very good and effectively enable children to make a successful transition to full-time education.

33. Pupils are consistently asked to express their views and listen to the opinions of others as part of their own personal and social development. They help to determine school and class rules and make suggestions about how to improve the school. A sample group eagerly expressed their very positive views of school to the inspection team when they completed the pupil questionnaire whilst others echoed this sentiment in informal discussions with inspectors. Plans are well advanced to establish class and school councils to provide a more formal and regular means of involving pupils in the school's work and development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

34. Links with parents and the community are **very good**. Very good use is made of the local and regional community to enrich learning opportunities. There are very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school enjoys a very effective partnership with parents, which contributes positively to pupils' learning and development.
- The school uses the local community very effectively to extend the learning opportunities available for all pupils.
- There are very effective links with pre-school groups and a particularly effective relationship with the neighbouring junior school.

Commentary

35. Communication with parents on all aspects of their children's progress and development is very good and parents are very involved in providing help and support for learning programmes at home. Reading record books show very regular messages on achievement being passed between parents and teachers. Parents are very involved in the life of the school and their views are regularly sought and taken into account. The vast majority of parents enjoy high levels of confidence in the school and express satisfaction with the progress that their children are making.

36. There are very positive links with members of the community that are very well used to widen learning experiences. One Chelmsford resident, for example, impressed by standards in music, donated the school a set of hand-chimes. Pupils now use them frequently to entertain everyone at assemblies. Regular visitors who contribute to pupils' education include the fire service, the library service, travelling theatre and arts groups and members of local churches. Frequent visits to local places of interest are much enjoyed by pupils and contribute very well to their social and cultural development. For example, recent outings to a Norman castle and a centre for African art and culture are depicted around the school and talked about very positively by the children. Local sports clubs also use school facilities on most evenings during the week and the fees involved are used constructively to supplement school funds.

37. The school has developed very good relationships with pre-school feeder groups and there is effective co-operation and collaboration over transition arrangements. The link with the neighbouring junior school is particularly strong. There are exchange visits by staff and very good systems for the transfer of comprehensive data about pupils' achievement. A number of events are organised on a joint basis to provide very good personal and social development opportunities for pupils and ease transition.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

39. Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and very good management. She and the deputy headteacher form a very effective partnership. Overall, other curriculum managers lead their subjects and manage their responsibilities well. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is an inspiration to other staff.
- The deputy headteacher is a very good role model for colleagues both as classteacher and curriculum co-ordinator.
- Governors demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility and accountability for the work of the school.
- Managers plan effectively to tackle the things that need further development, though they know there is still scope to improve the way that standards are monitored in their subjects.
- The headteacher is successful at coaching staff to take on new areas of responsibility.

Commentary

39. The headteacher earns the respect and goodwill of staff, parents, governors and pupils alike due to the example she sets for a cheerful and resilient approach to her work. Her high aspirations for a united and happy community are solidly reflected through her excellent leadership of assemblies. She is highly motivated to provide as well as possible for all pupils. The headteacher is acutely aware of the school's successes and its areas for development. This is because, over her time in the school, she has promoted the development of very thorough monitoring and assessment procedures that indicate how well pupils are taught and achieve. She manages her role as co-

ordinator for special educational needs very well, which accounts for pupils' good progress. The headteacher is also successfully coaching a part-time teacher to take on this role next year. This reflects her ability to develop and harness the leadership and management capability of everyone in the staff team. Roles are delegated effectively and care is taken to help everyone to build on their strengths. Weaker practice is addressed through a rigorous programme of professional development and performance management. Future improvement targets are worked out as a team and clearly set out in the School Improvement Plan. Action is systematically planned to reach shared goals and staff share a strong commitment to achieve them. That is why standards are so high in writing and good in numeracy and why there is a strong emphasis on raising standards in reading.

40. The deputy headteacher is also very well respected by staff, pupils and parents. As a teacher in Year 2, she is instrumental in raising standards, especially in ICT, and enabling pupils to achieve well in all aspects of their work. She has played a lead role in improving schemes of work and developing successful ways of enabling pupils to understand and tackle their targets for improvement. She is spreading good practice and is constantly seeking fresh ideas to develop pupils' independence and initiative. For example, she has introduced 'talk partners' that are improving pupils' ability to help each other. She is also preparing pupils to take on formal responsibilities, such as learning how to manage the role of school councillor.

41. Co-ordinators liaise with colleagues formally through regular staff meetings and training days. They evaluate samples of work to assess standards in literacy and numeracy but they do not have copies of each year group's weekly plans. This hinders their ability to check whether schemes of work and procedures for sharing lesson objectives with pupils are being implemented as intended. There are times when teachers do not remember to do this and then pupils are not absolutely clear what is expected of them. Co-ordinators present useful written reports to governors about each year's work but do not clearly summarise findings about standards achieved. Consequently, objectives to extend pupils' speech and ability to read for meaning are not always sharp enough and governors lack precise information to pass on to parents about how well pupils achieve.

42. Governors are very effective. The chair of governors knows the school intimately. She has listened to every pupil in the school read. She is, therefore, very well informed about pupils' attitudes to books and reading and understands the need to harness this enthusiasm through better-targeted provision. She has worked hard with other governors to help the school set up the new library and develop the computer suite. Pupils use this accommodation enthusiastically and access to them is raising standards and helping pupils to be independent in their search for information. Governors allocate a substantial sum of money to support pupils with special educational needs effectively. They carry sufficient funds forward at the end of a financial year to cover committed expenditure in the summer term, including the salaries of some teaching support assistants and the learning support teacher. Governors give these staff access to courses that increase their effectiveness. This means that small groups of pupils of lower and upper ability make good progress towards literacy and numeracy targets. Governors also compare how well their school performs with other schools. They have rigorous expectations that every pupil makes good progress. They observe teaching and learning for themselves and also consult with parents to find out their views about what can be done to make the most of the home/school partnership.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	514982
Total expenditure	461031
Expenditure per pupil	3290

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	53685
Balance carried forward to the next	53951

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. **Good provision for children in the Foundation Stage** has been sustained since the previous inspection. Recommendations to improve the use of outdoor areas have been addressed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator has a good overview of the stages of development in all six areas of learning.
- The school has very good induction procedures, enabling children to settle quickly and happily.
- Teaching is good overall. Every member of the team who works with the age group models behaviour that results in children forming very good relationships with each other.
- Adults successfully encourage children to concentrate and persevere with activities.
- Staff record their observations of children working every day, noting individual strengths and weaknesses, and identifying what they need to do to improve learning.

Commentary

44. Responsibility for Reception is astutely delegated to a teacher with considerable experience of working with the age group. Because the co-ordinator understands young children's needs and learning styles, every area is planned with a good balance of practical activities, many of which promote learning in several areas at once.

45. The school forges very good relationships with parents arising from close liaison with families prior to children starting school. Consequently, the teaching team get to know children well before admission and parents help children to consolidate their learning at home. A high percentage of parents listen to children read every day and loan items to school that match a learning topic, such as torches to use in activities based on the theme of light and dark.

46. Adults have excellent relationships with each other and create a very positive atmosphere in each classroom. They are consistent in their high expectations of children. They speak to them politely, encouraging good manners and consideration of each other. Classroom routines, such as self-registration and packing away to keep the classroom tidy, are carefully taught and consolidated. Grown-ups praise a lot and never raise their voices or show frustration. That is why children's attitudes and behaviour are so impressive.

47. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well. Teachers note children's achievements and evaluate how well each activity matches children's needs. They learn from their own planning mistakes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond very well to teachers' high expectations of them to take good care of each other and the environment.
- Children respond very well to opportunities to share feelings, take initiative and be independent.

Commentary

49. Standards are above average in this area of learning, due to very good teaching and learning. Children achieve very well because they feel secure and welcome. They listen intently to teachers when they are in a large group. They rarely fidget and never interrupt when teachers are talking. Children co-operate very well, for example, when a part-time group pretended to be the baby owls in a story about an owl family. They respond eagerly to questions, such as suggesting how they would feel if their mother left them for hours at a time like the mother owl did. Children sustain concentration when working in small groups, sometimes making up their own rules for games. They help each other willingly and do not need a second reminder when asked to tidy up. Everything goes back to their proper places because adults make sure these are accessible and carefully labelled. Children are keen to try out new things, and share ideas about how to improve their work.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well balanced and organised effectively, enabling children to achieve well.
- Teachers encourage children to practice literacy through drama and role-play.
- Opportunities are occasionally missed to extend children's vocabulary or understanding.

Commentary

51. Teaching is good and results in children making good progress from average standards on entry. Children achieve well and by the end of the year they are likely to exceed the goals expected of their age. Many speak confidently in a variety of situations. All enjoy books and develop good handwriting for their age. Stories, rhymes, drama and writing activities are all imaginatively linked, making it easy for children to understand the relationship between all aspects of literacy. Both teachers engaged children's interest successfully as they read a story called 'Owl Babies'. They encouraged children to anticipate what the book was about by studying the illustrations on the cover. The use of finger puppets worked well as children practised speaking the lines of their chosen character from the story. Repetition of key phrases helped all children to learn new words and read them confidently. When asking questions, teachers stress the language of books and they encourage children to listen for words that start with the same sound. One able child noted, for example, that *soft*, *silent* and *swoop*, all begin with 's'. Following the story, carefully graded tasks, led by two or three adults, helped children to progress well at their own rate. A shared reading activity, for example, helped a lower-attaining group to point to and read each word in a sentence and learn the new word *wing*. The use of a torch to search for word cards hidden in the dark area of the classroom caught the imagination of a middle-attaining group and helped them to remember words from the story. Neither teacher, however, did as much as they might have done to help children to understand why the author wrote, "The baby owls sat together on Sarah's branch" and "Owls think a lot, you know." This prevented children from gaining an even better understanding of the story.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

51. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and teaching assistants help children learn from a good range of practical experience.
- Teachers make good links between numeracy and other areas of learning.
- Some activities are not planned well enough to match the need of the most able children.

Commentary

53. Children are likely to attain the early learning goals for mathematics by the end of the year. The more able will exceed them. Overall, achievement is always satisfactory and often good because teaching is consistently sound with good features. There is good emphasis on ensuring children participate daily in a variety of purposeful activities. These steadily extend knowledge of numbers, shape, size, pattern and direction. Children of different ability make good progress when directly supported by one or more of the team. A lower-attaining group, for example, gained confidence in recognising an adult's deliberate mistakes when matching spots with numbers to 6. Activities are designed to be fun, foster co-operation and independence and extend creative development and knowledge of ICT. The start of one lesson, for example, built strongly on a prior lesson in the computer suite where children learnt how to move a screen robot forwards and backwards. The language of direction was extended well as an assistant pretended to be a robot that wanted to move from the centre of the room to the fire-escape door in the corner. Children gave her instructions, purposefully practising *turn left* and *turn right*. Children worked out for themselves how many steps forward the robot should take before changing direction. One child also explained what would happen if they over-estimated the steps forward, saying confidently, "she would bump into the tables."

54. There is a wide range of ability within the two class groups. Because of this, teachers readily acknowledge that they are still finding out what children are capable of doing unaided. In one lesson, a couple of children were ready to find more ambitious ways of making repeating patterns using more than two colours or shapes. In another, four children misunderstood the complex rules of a board and dice game involving adding and subtracting one. Both groups failed to make more than adequate progress because teachers did not fully explain their expectations or intervene soon enough to sort out difficulties. Teachers identified their mistakes, however, and they took appropriate steps to avoid repeating them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

55. This area was not inspected in detail and therefore no overall judgement is made about provision.

Commentary

56. Activities are well planned and provide effective foundations for science, ICT and the humanities. The impact on learning and standards achieved is good. Currently, for example, children are discovering a lot about nocturnal creatures, sources of light, and the effect of seasons on the natural world. Teachers are making good use of the outdoors and educational visits to stimulate children's curiosity. Children in one class, for example, gained from going outside to look for patterns and make rubbings of the rings on the top of logs. Children know a little about the events that lie behind the November 5th tradition because they discussed it before making exciting pictures of Bonfire Night.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

58. Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are taught to be responsible and safe when working in the hall and are encouraged to identify how well they perform new skills.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to make the best use of apparatus and extend children's mathematical vocabulary when they work in the hall.

58. Overall teaching is sound and, as a result, achievement is satisfactory and the early learning goals are met. Both teachers emphasise good habits as children get ready for lessons. For example, they ensure that children undress independently and learn to safely set out the mats and benches. Children in both classes work with purpose, following instructions carefully and using their

initiative well when given opportunities to find different ways of travelling across the apparatus and the floor. Most can successfully hold a balance for several seconds and the most agile boys and girls achieve forward rolls. In one good lesson, children demonstrated new ways of balancing and readily explained why they thought they were worth imitating. There was insufficient emphasis, however, in the other lesson on children initiating their own ways of travelling or practising the language of direction that children were learning in mathematics. Children lacked opportunities to find their own ways to climb and balance. This ensured children's safety but slowed their learning.

59. There are photographs and records to show that children make regular use of the outdoor play areas to develop physical skills. They also develop good hand control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

60. Provision in this area is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effort expended on fostering creativity is visible in the impressive variety of work on display.

Commentary

61. Provision in this area is carefully planned to link with other foundation areas and the range and quality of children's work reflects good teaching and learning. Children's pictures of fruit, plants, spiders, owls and bonfire night link well with topic work. They show that children are acquiring good observational skills and a strong sense of shape and form. They use a variety of materials and tools competently. Several children confidently described to an inspector how they use them to create different effects. The standard of work on display is above expectation. Children clearly achieve well in the foundations of art and also in drama, as they work in the imaginative play area, pretending to be characters from stories.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

62. Provision for English is **good** and has been maintained well since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high in writing because opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum are very good.
- Good teaching stems from sensitive class management and an effective partnership between teachers and teaching assistants. It accounts for pupils' good response in lessons.
- Opportunities to extend vocabulary are sometimes missed, which has a negative impact on standards in reading.

Commentary

63. Standards are high in writing and all pupils make rapid progress to achieve very well. This is due to the emphasis on teaching handwriting, blending letter sounds, spelling and understanding the many purposes for writing. Writing tasks are well planned to challenge and extend pupils of different ability. For example, the most able pupils in Year 1 have been taught how instructions are written and used this knowledge to explain carefully each step in making jelly for a party. Progress in spelling is helped by parents supporting and reinforcing work at home. The use of word lists displayed in the classrooms aids pupils' independent search for words.

64. Teachers make good use of national guidance to plan literacy links. They select a good range of 'big' books to stimulate pupils' interest in literature and motivate them to achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of the structure of books and know about the content's page, the index and the difference between the author and the illustrator. Teachers make their high expectations of behaviour clear but are sensitive when setting improvement targets for pupils who find it difficult to conform. They ensure these are realistic and fair. Consequently, pupils are keen to learn and their listening skills are well developed. They are attentive, eagerly answer questions and offer opinions. Although some find reading difficult, they maintain enthusiasm and try hard to improve their skills. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers use searching questions requiring pupils to think hard for themselves. All teachers review previous learning at the start of each lesson and pupils are informed what they are going to learn next. At the end of lessons, review times are used effectively to either check understanding or extend what has been learned. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for the more able is good. When pupils are withdrawn for additional literacy support or for special extension group sessions, tasks are carefully matched to pupils' needs. Teaching is lively and activities are sufficiently challenging to meet contrasting needs.

65. In reading and speaking, pupils attain average standards. Nearly all pupils read simple words accurately and use a variety of strategies to work out unfamiliar words, such as sounding out the letters or gaining clues from the illustrations. Most pupils in Year 2 are beginning to read fluently, with developing expression, using punctuation to help them with meaning. There are instances when pupils read the text fluently but, when questioned about what they have read, middle and lower-attaining pupils show limited understanding, or have some difficulty in choosing words to explain what they mean. Progress in speaking is only satisfactory because opportunities to extend vocabulary and encourage greater confidence in speaking are sometimes limited. Whilst there are many opportunities for pupils to ask questions and comment, teaching does not focus pupils' attention sufficiently on the vocabulary they might use. This affects the ability of all except the most able to understand the texts that they read and impacts on standards in reading. For instance, a pupil of average ability could not explain what 'scaffolding' was when reading a text about building. Higher-attaining pupils, however, have a good vocabulary and confidently use three or four sentences to explain meanings, or express opinions.

66. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear understanding of the strength and weaknesses within the subject and development is clearly documented. The school has set appropriate targets to raise the standard of reading and has put in place clear programmes of work to extend pupils' abilities. Well-organised learning support sessions are having an impact. However, they are currently only used with a limited group of targeted pupils and have the potential to be utilised more widely. There is a very good partnership with parents, which contributes to raising standards. Extensive home/school reading records show that pupils read regularly to family members at home. Assessment is being used well to identify how groups of pupils are learning. As a result, the school has recognised that a wider range of fiction books is required and that pupils' understanding and use of vocabulary is an area for development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. Writing is supported very well through other subjects. The range of interesting tasks has a significant impact on standards achieved. They include, for example, labelling plant diagrams in science and writing newspaper articles about *Guy Fawkes* in history. ICT is used well to motivate pupils to edit their written work and enhance its appearance. Poetry is used to describe achievement in physical education and designs for *Joseph's Coat* are evaluated in design and technology. Links between reading and other subjects are not as productive. This inhibits pupils' use of expressive language across the curriculum. Although there is some evidence that teachers promote new vocabulary within design and technology, for example, the introduction of key words is not as carefully planned.

MATHEMATICS

69. Provision in mathematics is **good**. Sound improvements have taken place since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards are above average and good progress is made in number work.
- Good teaching is challenging pupils to achieve more highly.
- Practical experiences effectively support learning.

Commentary

69. Standards exceed the national average. Most pupils in Year 2 are on target to achieve average standards and nearly a third are expected to achieve highly. Achievement is good overall.

70. In Year 1, most pupils know numbers to 20, add 10 and subtract 10 from numbers less than 50 and recognise square, rectangular and triangular shapes and the more able recognise them as three-dimensional shapes. Many talk confidently about the longest and shortest length and recognise the value of most coins.

71. In Year 2, the majority of pupils recognise numbers in words and figures from 1 to 99, and they identify the distinguishing properties of a circle, quadrilateral and hexagon. More able pupils easily add and subtract 100 from larger numbers up to 500, often correctly recognising the value of the hundreds, tens, or units' digit.

72. Many of the pupils enjoy counting and solving practical problems. They apply sensible counting strategies using 'sets of' five fingers or ten fingers, doubling and multiples of three to calculate totals. Both boys and girls, who co-operate well and support each other in lessons, make good progress in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding of number.

73. Teaching is good and characterised by the use of practical apparatus, interesting tasks and games that require the accurate use of number facts and operations to win. Teaching assistants are well used to support children and groups with particular learning needs, enabling pupils to make good progress. Extension groups for higher attainers in Year 1 and 2 take place once a week. These assist their good progress. The subject is well led by a competent and hard working co-ordinator who is effectively managing a thorough three-year development plan.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. There are many examples of good links between mathematics and other subjects. In physical education, pupils in Year 1 count every ball bounce and return off a wall, sometimes correctly calling 40 uninterrupted bounces. ICT programs provide opportunities for pupils to practice number facts and to identify two-dimensional shapes in an enjoyable and motivating way. Pictograms and bar charts are used to represent observations in science, whilst pupils consolidate knowledge of shape, pattern and symmetry in much of their work in art and design and technology.

SCIENCE

75. Provision overall is **good**. All the issues raised in the last report are being successfully developed, leading to good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in scientific enquiry, life processes and living things and physical processes. Pupils, overall, now make good progress.
- Teaching is good when links with literacy, numeracy, geography, ICT and art support learning in science.

Commentary

76. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain above average standards in science attainment targets with the exception of 'Materials and their properties', where standards are satisfactory. Above average standards are the result of mainly good teaching and successful subject management, a good range of practical resources and motivating links with other subjects. In Year 1, nearly all the pupils record their observations from an investigation in clear pictogram form. Most know that plants need light to grow and many accurately identify the main body parts on a human skeleton and the main parts of a flower. In Year 2, the higher ability pupils draw their own sketches for each stage in the life cycle of a frog or a butterfly. All the Year 2 pupils construct an electrical circuit using switches, bulbs and batteries.

77. Achievement is good overall. In one Year 2 lesson, boys and girls eagerly connected wires, bulbs and batteries to successfully make electrical circuits. They all worked hard. Girls in particular were very focused on following instructions but were reluctant to experiment, which restricted learning from trial and error. The teacher actively intervened to promote girls' curiosity and readiness to experiment. The boys, in general, were more independent and willing to take risks as they tried alternative circuit connections. Consequently, they found out additional facts about conductive and non-conductive materials and the effects of linking batteries together.

78. Work samples indicate that teaching is good overall, despite one unsatisfactory lesson seen. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the lesson objectives were very clear. The independent group investigations successfully extended pupils' knowledge and understanding because the teacher intervened regularly to check the progress pupils were making. The lesson contained imaginative links with their literacy text, 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. All pupils drew a computer picture of a lighthouse and then they used their knowledge and understanding of circuits with switches to insert a light into the picture that could be turned on and off. Towards the end of the lesson time was spent discussing the pupil's observations and conclusions which helped them clarify their thinking.

79. Teaching was unsatisfactory in Year 1 when an independent task about sources of light was insufficiently challenging. Two groups of pupils spent too much time colouring in a worksheet. They therefore made little progress and underachieved. Learning in Year 1 was, however, well supported by the carefully planned visit to Galleywood Common. The digital camera was used to make a record of leaves, seeds and insects pupils discovered at the Common. Computer microscopes were operated to produce magnifications of some of them. Pupils produced charts and tables to record the number of times a creature or plant were seen and annotated maps to show where living things were found. Such activities successfully promote their respect for the natural world.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

81. Provision in ICT is **good** with good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new computer suite and the wide range of resources are supporting the raising of achievement in ICT and other subjects.
- Teaching is good, having improved because of very effective leadership and management.
- Support from teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

Commentary

81. Attainment, overall, is in line with national expectations. In Year 1, most pupils successfully use the mouse to move the cursor around the screen. Many select icons and tools on the tool bar with ease and confidence. Higher-attaining pupils are using a good range of 'clip art' pictures to illustrate their work.

82. Recent improvement in the type and range of hardware in the classrooms and the development of schemes of work for ICT are having a positive impact, especially in Year 2, where pupils are achieving well. Many pupils independently save and log on, draw pictures, drag and drop an image into a page and solve number problems using a CD-ROM. A small number of pupils can insert pictures into a word document, without help. Some pupils make very good progress because, in homework tasks, they are rehearsing and extending their skills and knowledge outside of the school day. One pupil proudly announced that her research on the Internet at home helped her identify twice the number electrical items than her teacher had asked for!

83. Teachers have suitably high expectations for progress and standards in ICT. They provide clear and well explained demonstrations to show how to use the software. They make good use of the interactive whiteboards and data projectors to support learning. On one occasion the interactive white board was used to find and retrieve the pupils' pictures, previously saved on the network. Pupils were challenged to explain their choices of tools to make their pictures and to evaluate the quality of their finished work. They did this effectively.

84. Teaching assistants are successfully supporting learning and improving pupils' progress. They are knowledgeable, having gained from the school's good programme of training. They give accurate instructions and are careful to praise pupils for their good application and for the quality of their work, when it meets the lesson objectives set by the teacher. In Year 1, for example, an assistant effectively demonstrated how to use the keyboard and how to find icons and tools on the screen.

85. Leadership and management of ICT are very good. The co-ordinator provides valuable guidance for colleagues, which has improved planning and assessment. Assessment is being usefully supported through the use of two computer programs. The subject leader has a clear vision for future development of the subject and is a very good role model for both pupils and colleagues.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. ICT is successfully being used to support learning in other subjects, especially in literacy, numeracy, science and art. Most pupils use word processing skills to write sentences, titles, captions or, for example, accounts to explain their experiences and responses in history and geography. In Year 2, pupils developed their understanding of place value using a trial and error game. They also extended both their artistic and ICT skills when they created a picture using a special drawing program to illustrate a literacy text.

HUMANITIES

88. Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses in religious education

- The range of resources and artefacts is good.
- Relationships in lessons are supportive and encourage learning.
- Pupils show some difficulty in understanding deeper meanings and ideas.

Commentary

88. Standards, overall, in religious education are in line with expectations in the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory because teaching and learning is sound. This maintains satisfactorily the position found by the previous inspection. Learning objectives are appropriately identified, although activities in some lessons are uninspiring. School assemblies make a good contribution to religious education through the stories told and the themes presented. The subject also contributes well to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils as it encourages positive attitudes towards themselves and others.

89. Sound teaching ensures that pupils gain an appropriate understanding for their age of Christianity and other world religions. Lessons foster pupils' personal and social education well because teachers encourage pupils to explore feelings and help them to value special relationships with others in the community. For example, pupils in Year 1 thought about ways in which they can help those around them. In raising their awareness of the need to live and work together in harmony, pupils shared ideas and wrote sentences about what they can do in the future, for instance, *I can help by being friendly*, and *I can tidy up*. In Year 2, pupils are developing a sound knowledge of special festivals, by, for example, hearing about the Buddhist *Wesak* and Hindu *Diwali* celebrations. Pupils show satisfactory awareness of the principal features of other faiths and a respect for those holding different beliefs. The lessons seen, however, did not focus enough on helping pupils to understand religious symbols or the significance of religious artefacts and customs.

90. **History and geography** were sampled but there was sufficient information available from scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work to indicate a thorough coverage of National Curriculum requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Stimulating use of a variety of resources, visits and visitors results in good writing within both subject areas.

Commentary

91. Whole-school displays demonstrate a good range of writing used to support pupils' understanding of the past and present. For instance, pupils describe life from the point of view of a guard, cook and gardener following a visit to Mountfitchet Castle and Norman village. In geography, good learning from the wide range of visits is demonstrated by work arising from a visit to Aklowa, a local model of an African village. Whilst providing pupils with a better understanding of how other people live, such experience also extends their understanding of different cultures. There is a good range of imaginative resources to support subject teaching. For instance, costumes from different countries support multi-cultural understanding in addition to making learning fun.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

92. **Provision in art and music** is very good and better than previously reported. There was insufficient evidence to judge provision in design and technology and physical education though there was evidence of good improvement in planning for design and technology.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many indicators of good teaching with very effective use of subject expertise amongst the staff and imaginative use of visits and visitors to arouse pupils' curiosity and enhance their aesthetic development.
- Pupils achieve well and are above average in art and music.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy creative and physical activities and are proud of their achievements.
- Work is carefully planned to include valuable links with literacy, numeracy and personal development.
- Planning for design and technology has improved since the last inspection.
- Leadership and management are good, overall, with appropriate emphasis on addressing areas for development, such as extending pupils' technical vocabulary.

Commentary

93. There was sufficient evidence from a variety of sources to judge that standards in art, music and games are above average, and the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects is good. Pupils have better than average skills and knowledge and achieve well in art because of the high

quality of their experiences. Pupils report that they enjoy art lessons very much and try hard with their work. For example, having collected leaves from a local park, they carefully noted their texture, pattern and colour. They used their collection to sketch or paint leaf designs in readiness for three-dimensional work on a wall mural. This work, led by an artist in residence, very successfully fired their enthusiasm and improved their ability to collaborate. Every pupil in the school, including children in Reception, helped to make the mosaics that now decorate the Jubilee quiet area outside. A group of pupils representing the full range of ability in both year groups were keen to describe the stencilling part of the process and how they used adhesive to fix the ceramic squares to the wooden leaf templates. Paintings in the style of different artists from around the world are carefully crafted.

94. The music co-ordinator is skilled at developing all pupils' musical talents and encourages pupils to play many instruments. Achievement is good in music because all pupils are challenged to do as well as they can. They are consequently acquiring a range of music making skills and a secure knowledge of different kinds of music from around the world. Pupils sing very well in unison, expressing the mood of a hymn or folk song. They keep in tune with the piano and have a good sense of rhythm and timing. During assembly, for example, they quickly learnt the first verse of a new song by echoing the teacher as she taught each line at a time. Pupils enjoy working with percussion instruments and many older pupils read and compose simple notation. A group of about 16 pupils with special aptitudes for music form the school orchestra. They did well to accompany the whole school as they played the hand-chimes and other tuned instruments to accompany the school singing 'Every colour under the sun'.

95. Since the previous inspection, the lack of a scheme of work for design and technology has been addressed, resulting in more emphasis on improving skills from the start of Year 1 to the end of Year 2. Pupils now apply their art and numeracy skills very effectively in design and technology tasks. In Year 1, for example, they printed repeating patterns with a variety of different shapes to make the covers of folders. These store samples of work for parents to look at on special occasions, such as open day. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of materials for their age. A small group of pupils from Year 2 talked confidently about the experience of making catapults, using balsawood, card, spindles and wheels. They could explain how card was used to strengthen the corners of the models. They did not know, however, that the piece of dowel that joined the wheels represented the axle. The co-ordinator for design and technology rightly concluded, in her written report to governors, that teachers could do more to emphasise appropriate vocabulary at the time they demonstrate skills. It is clear, from looking at lesson plans, that the vocabulary is not consistently identified or used in assessment; though there are intentions to do so under a general topic heading.

96. In Year 2, pupils with a wide range of attainment, make good progress in throwing and catching small balls. The games lesson seen was well planned with an adequate warm-up activity and a sustained focus on improvement. A concluding game involving many of the skills practiced during the lessons and promoted a good team spirit. Good links to numeracy were made as pupils worked against time targets and counted their successful catches.

97. Teachers work hard to give each subject a high profile in the environment. Examples of good work are prominently displayed. A feature of provision in physical education is the annual 'Children's Challenge' when all pupils eagerly participate in a range of athletic events. Good links to literacy and art occur as the pupils record and reflect on the day. These include paintings of participation in a sack race, poems about feelings of pride and excitement when they won, and photographs of pupils working in pairs to make arch shapes or balance on different parts of the body.

98. Leadership and management of the areas are shared effectively. Each subject is planned from a comprehensive scheme of work that ensure balance and progression from year to year. Co-ordinators ensure that resources are plentiful and well organised. Pupils are taught to use tools, instruments and apparatus carefully, to conserve materials and respect rules designed to keep them safe. Co-ordinators check the quality of work produced and produce a written report for governors about pupils' progress. They monitor lessons and identify areas for development, which are built into the School Improvement Plan. They do not, however, summarise their judgements about standards achieved at the end of written reports. Neither do they have copies of plans produced by colleagues

in the year groups where they do not teach. This makes it more difficult for teachers to check whether recommendations, such as to focus more on developing pupils' understanding and use of technical vocabulary, are being implemented consistently across the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

100. Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show concern for others.
- Pupils see themselves as important members of the school community and are mature and confident when they transfer to the next phase of education.

Commentary

100. From their first few weeks in school, children are encouraged to be helpful and thoughtful of others. Teachers regularly acknowledge pupils' achievement during the popular weekly celebration assembly. On such occasions, and during lessons, pupils are encouraged to discuss their work and behaviour and reach conclusions about how well they and their friends have achieved teachers' expectations. Assemblies are particularly successful in nurturing a sense of belonging and awareness of values shared by the family and wider society.

Example of outstanding practice

An assembly led by the headteacher a day after Remembrance Day exemplified the school's deep commitment to raising pupils' awareness of the effects of war and respect for older people's experience of life. The headteacher's aim was to explain the significance of cherished and sad memories and why every generation should work for peace and celebrate the end to war. She carefully planned how to help pupils understand the meaning of memory. Her use of a knotted handkerchief was a humorous way of suggesting to pupils that everyone needs to find ways to remember important things. In her case, she pretended it was to welcome special guests and to find the 'props' she needed for a small drama presentation. This followed and was delightfully managed. Six pupils played the characters in a story about a small boy's discovery that memories can be warm, funny, precious, or painful, depending on the circumstances. It brought home to pupils that some older people lost a brother, sister or friend in a World War. They saw that sometimes people lose their memory and need help from others to bring it back. The excellent partnership with a learning assistant as the old lady with memory loss and equally excellent rapport with pupils enabled them to speak aloud and perform their parts to the very best of their ability. Everyone present was enthralled by the power of the drama.

101. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to learn a sense of fair play, enjoy a healthy life-style and gain self-confidence. Extra-curricular games and inter-school events are organised well, for example, and are strong features of provision. The headteacher of the adjoining junior school, when asked how pupils adapt when they move into Year 3, was positive in her praise for their personal development. They have, she said, a strong belief in themselves and a sense of curiosity and excitement for learning that remains with them in their new school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
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	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).