

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARGARET'S C of E VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Toppesfield

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115071

Headteacher: Mrs A Green

Lead inspector: Mr R Sharman

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th January 2004

Inspection number: 260748

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 66 |
| School address: | Church Lane Toppesfield Halstead Essex |
| Postcode: | CO9 4DS |
| Telephone number: | 01787 237354 |
| Fax number: | 01787 237534 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Neil Pyman |
| Date of previous inspection: | October 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small rural primary school with 68 pupils. There are slightly more girls than boys. The roll fell considerably in September 2003 when a large group of Year 6 pupils left. The school has now restructured itself into three mixed-age classes. The school serves the villages of Toppesfield, Gainsford End and Stambourne and the pupils come from a wide range of social circumstances. Many pupils travel to and from school by car or bus. Approximately 15 per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, a proportion that is broadly in line with the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The pupils with special educational needs are mainly in Years 2 and 6, and this has an impact on standards in these year groups. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are in public care. On entry, pupils show the full range of abilities but, overall, attainment over the past few years is below average. Few pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual time of admission.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| 1696 | Mr R Sharman | Lead inspector | Special educational needs English as an additional language English Science Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education |
| 9619 | Mr B Miller | Lay inspector | |
| 17208 | Ms G Briggs | Team inspector | Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education |

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REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 6 |
| PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS | |
| STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS | 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 | 17 |
| AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE | |
| SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 | |
| PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS | 28 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides its pupils with a sound education and gives satisfactory value for money. The leadership of the headteacher is good and satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. The standards in English and mathematics in Years 2 and 6 fluctuate each year, as there are often small numbers in the year groups. Taking account of this, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are average. In Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are average but standards in English are below average. Teaching is sound but improvement in standards is hindered as arrangements for assessment are unsatisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English in Year 6 are below average, particularly in writing.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good and this ensures that the school has a clear direction for its further improvement.
- The arrangements to assess pupils' standards and progress are unsatisfactory and this hinders improvement in standards.
- Pupils' personal development is good and relationships are very good.
- Pupils are well cared for and this gives them confidence to learn.
- Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

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 | C | E | E |
| mathematics | E | D | C | C |
| science | E | D | C | B |

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

In this small school, numbers in year groups are usually small and results can vary considerably from year to year.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In reception, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils are on track to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in their personal, social and emotional development and in their creative development. Most pupils are not on track to meet the expected goals in communication, language and literacy. They are on track to meet these goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. It was not possible to make a secure judgement on children's mathematical development. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils attain average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, except in writing where it is unsatisfactory. In Year 6 over the past three years, pupils have attained average standards in mathematics and science. In English, standards are below average. Overall, girls attain higher standards than boys. The standards seen during the inspection in mathematics were below average, reflecting the make up of the small number of pupils in the year group. The standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in religious education are in line with those required by the Essex Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are keen to learn. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

The quality of education provided by the school is sound. Teaching is satisfactory and a significant proportion of it is good, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils work well independently and collaborate effectively when teachers provide opportunities. Teaching in reception is satisfactory. Two particular strengths in the teaching across the school are the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons and the very good contribution made by teaching assistants. These strengths ensure that pupils participate well in lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress in their learning. The assessment of individual pupils' standards and progress is unsatisfactory and the information is not used effectively to set targets for pupils to aim for. A useful start has been made using ICT for assessment and this, together with planned training, means that the school is well placed to make the necessary improvements. The curriculum is satisfactory and the care, guidance and support pupils are provided with are good. Links with parents are satisfactory and those with other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good and provides the school with a clear direction for its development. The governors fulfil their role satisfactorily and ensure that the school meets its statutory requirements. They have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. Governors satisfactorily hold the school to account regarding standards of attainment and the quality of education. Accommodation and finances are managed satisfactorily. The management of the school is satisfactory. Staff with leadership and management positions work hard and undertake their responsibilities conscientiously.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. They particularly appreciate that their children like going to school; that their children make good progress; and that children are expected to do their best. A minority of parents who replied to the questionnaire and those parents who attended the meeting held prior to the inspection expressed concern about the arrangements for homework. Pupils speak well of their school and feel that they are well looked after.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing.
- Build on the sound start that has been made to establish effective arrangements to assess pupils' standards and progress and to use the information to set pupils' targets to aim for and to plan their work accordingly.
- Improve levels of attendance, paying particular attention to the taking of holidays during term time.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory, except in writing where it is unsatisfactory and standards in English are below average. The achievement of girls in Years 5 and 6 is better than that of boys, especially in writing. Across the rest of the school the achievement of boys and girls is broadly similar in most subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as the support they receive is good. The achievement of more able pupils is satisfactory. As the school usually has small numbers in each year group, standards can vary from year to year according to the make up of each year group. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 over the past three years have been average in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards seen during the inspection were average in these subjects. In Year 6, standards over the past three years have been below average in English and average in mathematics and science. The standards seen during the inspection were below average in English and mathematics and average in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 6, standards in English, particularly in writing are below average.
- In mathematics, the standards seen during the inspection are below average.
- The standards attained in science in Years 2 and 6 are average, as they were at the last inspection.
- In reception, children are likely to exceed the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development and in their creative development but are not on track to meet the expected standards in communication, literacy and language.
- Children with special educational needs make good progress.

Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 17 (15) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 15.4(15.4) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 15.9(16.8) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 9 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 24.4 (27) | 26.8(27) |
| mathematics | 27.3 (26) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 29.3(29) | 28.6 (28.3) |

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

1. The National Curriculum test results in 2003 showed that compared with schools nationally, pupils in Year 6 attained well below average standards in English, and average standards in mathematics and science. When compared with schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2, standards were well below average in English, average in mathematics and

above average in science. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who attained standards higher than those expected for pupils of this age was well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science.

2. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in the national tests in 2003 showed that compared with schools nationally, standards were well above average in reading, above average in writing, and below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 that reached higher standards was above the national average in reading, average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science showed that standards were well above average and the proportion that reached higher standards was very high.
3. In Year 6, the standards seen in English during the inspection were below average and reflected the results attained in the national tests. Standards in reading were average. At the heart of the problem is the quality of pupils' writing. Whilst most girls achieve reasonably well in writing, the boys do not. The weaknesses lie significantly in spelling which is not accurate enough. Skills such as using a paragraph are not advanced enough. The quality of pupils' handwriting is variable, but overall it is unsatisfactory. The writing of a good number of pupils is not well formed or neat enough.
4. Over the past three years, the standards in mathematics attained by pupils in Year 6 have been broadly average. However, the standards seen during the inspection were below average. Almost a third of the pupils in the year group have special educational needs. Although these pupils make good progress, the size of this proportion has an impact on the overall standards. Standards in mathematics over the past three years show an improvement on those reported at the last inspection.
5. The standards seen in science in Years 2 and 6 were average. In the case of Year 2, the fall in standards does not reflect a change in the quality of education, rather a change in the make up of the year group where there are a small number of pupils.
6. Most of the children in reception have just started and are settling into school well. The good care provided is enabling them to make a successful start to their school life. The assessments made at the end of the summer term over the past few years show that a majority of children are not on track to meet the goals pupils are expected to reach by the end of their reception year in communication, literacy and language. These standards reflect overall levels of children's attainment when they start school during this period and the length of time some have in reception. Most pupils are likely to reach or exceed the expected goals in their personal, social and emotional development and their creative development. Most are on track to meet the expected goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical development. No judgement was made on standards of children's mathematical development.
7. Throughout the school, children with special educational needs make good progress. This is due in no small measure to the good management of their support together with the very good support provided by the teaching assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are both **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**, whilst punctuality is **satisfactory** overall. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils speak well of their school and behave well.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and the school promotes these very well.

- The pupils understand and fulfil their responsibilities of living in a community very well.
- Pupils learn in an environment that does not tolerate racism, bullying and other forms of harassment.

Commentary

8. Pupils are keen to come to school and take part in the activities provided. Almost all parents report that their children like school. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with staff and with each other and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of these relationships reflects the strong sense of community in the school. Pupils often support one another in class and are respectful of those with different abilities and aptitudes. All staff act as good role models for the pupils and promote a good ethos throughout the school.
9. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There have been no exclusions in the past three years and this too is an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents are satisfied that behaviour is good and that there is very little bullying. Most pupils consider that behaviour is good and that the other children are friendly.
10. The incidents of racist remarks, bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and when they do occur, the staff speedily and effectively deal with them. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss these aspects of school life during assemblies, religious education and personal, social and health education lessons, as well as during activities known as circle time.
11. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are given considerable opportunities through collective worship, personal and social education and religious education to consider the beliefs and feelings of other people and to develop their own values. The good school ethos makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are carefully taught to distinguish right from wrong.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. The school fosters a sense of community, with common, inclusive values, very well. This strong sense of a community where all have responsibilities for caring for each other provides very well for pupils' social development. All pupils show respect for people, living things, property and the environment. A number of pupils exercise responsibility by undertaking jobs, for example by looking after the school grounds. Plans are well advanced for a school council. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about their own culture through art and design and music as well as educational visits. Fewer opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about the cultures of other peoples. Issues of racism are openly discussed and pupils have a sound understanding of what racism is.

Attendance

13. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory and have deteriorated since the last inspection. The attendance rate is well below that found nationally. The school has good systems to promote regular attendance. A significant factor in the decline is the number of family holidays being taken during term time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.3 | 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.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the last three academic years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. The school takes good care of its pupils and has good links with local schools and colleges. Teaching is satisfactory. The quality of assessment and the use of information to plan work are unsatisfactory. The curriculum and accommodation are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good.
- Good use is made of ICT in lessons.
- Lack of systematic arrangements to assess pupils' standards and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Insufficient use of assessment, including the marking of pupils' work, to set pupils' targets.
- Very good use is made of the teaching assistants who work in close collaboration with teachers to the benefit of the pupils' learning.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively and pupils respond well.
- The setting of homework is inconsistent.

Commentary

14. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good, and at times very good. Central to the strong teaching is the use made of ICT, in particular in the use of an interactive white board (the board becomes a computer screen and is operated by the teacher's touch), together with imaginative links made with other subjects. The use of these approaches enhances learning as pupils become interested and keen to learn. For example, in a very good English lesson, the teacher made very effective use of the technology to improve pupils' spelling by helping them to identify words in which there are syllables that are 'silent'. Pupils enthusiastically used the 'cordless' mouse to display their ideas on the board. Later in the lesson the teacher used the 'whiteboard' to good effect to show pupils how to make notes. Good links are made with other subjects, for example, in a lesson about writing a balanced argument, the topic chosen by the teacher was effectively linked to work about the life of Tudor sailors. No time is wasted and lessons move at a very good pace.
15. Other teachers make good use of ICT. Pupils in the mixed Years 2, 3 and 4 class also are taught using an interactive white board. Teachers are growing in confidence in their use of the whiteboards and this use enables lessons to move at a good pace and helps pupils to identify where they have made mistakes or misunderstood part of the lesson. Good use is made by all teachers of the computers both in the classrooms and in the hall. For example, in a good English lesson in this mixed-age class, pupils confidently used the computers to compose a poem in which they had to carefully count the number of syllables used.
16. A sound start has been made to use ICT to assess pupils' standards and progress and to plan lessons. Planning has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' planning takes due account of the mixed age classes. Teachers record their evaluations of lessons on their lesson plans. However, as teachers are at an early stage in using the software, no systematic arrangements are in place to assess and record individual's progress or that of groups of

pupils in most subjects. Marking of pupils' work is regularly undertaken. Praise and encouragement are often given but advice on how to improve the work or targets for improvement is rarely given. Sufficient assessments are made to enable teachers to report to parents in the pupils' annual reports. The assessment of the few children in the Foundation Stage is good.

17. Teachers carefully record the standards pupils attain in national tests and in tests set by the school. A target is set for individual pupils to attain by the end of the year in English, mathematics and science. Although teachers plan work to take account of the different year groups in the classes, little use is made of these targets to plan work that is well matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment within each year group. Pupils are not clear about what their targets are. The lack of use of targets hinders pupils from making good progress, especially the more able pupils. Teachers do not usually make the best use of the time towards the end of lessons to assess what pupils have learnt. Whilst marking is completed conscientiously and pupils are given praise and encouragement, rarely are they given clear advice as what to do to improve their work. The school is well aware of the need for improvement in assessment. The school development plan has a detailed action plan for improving assessment, and considerable training is planned for the near future, reflecting the good leadership of the headteacher. The quality of assessment is not as good as that reported at the last inspection, partly due to the change of use of ICT not being complete.
18. Throughout the school, the collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants is very good and enhances pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. This effective collaboration ensures that all pupils are fully involved in lessons and make progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as teachers and teaching assistants pay careful attention to the well-written individual education plans provided for these pupils. Both teachers and teaching assistants satisfactorily assess how well pupils with special educational needs have got on in lessons and use their findings to plan work and to keep track of pupils' progress towards the targets in their plans. This practice provides a good model for the use of information from assessment more generally in the school.
19. Pupils confidently work on their own, and usually concentrate hard as they are interested in what they are doing. Pupils collaborate effectively as teachers often provide them with opportunities to work in groups. For example in science lessons, pupils work jointly on the task in hand, discuss their ideas and come to a view as to what has happened. Frequent use of ICT enhances these opportunities.
20. Homework is set. However, the arrangements are not consistent, and homework does not have a significant effect on pupils' standards and progress. A number of parents expressed concerns about the inconsistency in the provision of homework.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum. It fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum and those of the Essex Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils have good opportunities to enrich their learning. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. There are sufficient staff to meet the requirements of the school's curriculum and levels of resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided to enrich the curriculum.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The way the curriculum is organised, linking learning in one subject to that in others, enhances learning.
- Effective use is made of ICT to promote learning across the curriculum.
- The school has to use the nearby village hall for aspects of physical education and this limits opportunities for gymnastics.

Commentary

21. The curriculum is broad, with a good focus on literacy and numeracy, and a satisfactory emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are satisfactorily implemented. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education, including the appropriate teaching of sex education and the dangers of the misuse of drugs. The curriculum is considerably enriched by the activities the hardworking teachers provide. Specialist weeks are organised that provide pupils with opportunities to work at a greater depth than they can in a single lesson. For example in a 'science week' where pupils concentrated on learning about flight, they visited a collection of aircraft and looked closely at model aircraft and met experts. Similarly, in an 'art week' pupils worked with visiting experts to develop their own skills. In addition, good use is made of education visits, some of which are residential. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided.
22. All groups of pupils have equally good access to the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The very good collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants, together with the effective implementation of the Code of Practice ensure that these pupils make good progress. The support for a pupil with a statement of special educational need is in line with that required by the statement. Satisfactory provision is made for those pupils the school has identified as being more able. They generally make satisfactory progress but the lack of clear targets to aim for hinders them from making the good progress necessary to reach standards higher than those expected for pupils of their age.
23. Teachers plan carefully to ensure, where possible, that what is taught and learnt in one subject is linked to learning in others. In art and design, for example, pupils use their skills to illustrate what they are learning in history. In religious education links are made with science as younger pupils learn about Noah's Ark and consider how it might have been waterproofed. English lessons often have content that is linked to pupils' work in history or geography. ICT is used well in promoting learning in many subjects. For example, in art and design, where pupils in Years 1 and 2 took photographs of themselves using a digital camera and effectively used a program to modify the photographs to produce a 'freaky' version. In science, pupils competently use spreadsheets to record and display their results.
24. Overall, the accommodation satisfactorily supports pupils' learning. The reduction in roll has enabled a classroom to be available for groups of children to work in as well as providing an area for resources. Pupils have access to a library and staff have good facilities for their staff room. The school lacks a hall for physical education. It makes the best use of its available space together with the nearby village hall. The use of the village hall for the teaching of gymnastics limits the provision but this is not unsatisfactory. Good improvement has been made in the development of provision for the physical development of children in the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **good** care, guidance and support for its pupils. This is a caring school in which pupils' health, safety and care are paramount. Procedures for gathering pupils' views are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers and support staff give good guidance and support to all pupils, and procedures for the induction of new pupils are good.
- Pupils' social needs are well supported by a healthy and safe environment.
- Pupils are satisfactorily involved in the work of the school.

Commentary

25. The school provides good guidance and support for all pupils including those with special educational needs. A significant strength of the school is its sense of community where all have a responsibility for others. Circle time, when pupils sit and discuss a range of personal and social issues, is used to good effect. Good procedures are used for the induction of new pupils to the school, particularly when joining the school in the reception year. As pupils progress through the school they receive well-targeted pastoral support. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well, especially as they often work with the pupils for two years and this enables them to keep a watchful eye on them and to celebrate their achievements. Systematic arrangements to let pupils know what they need to do to improve academically are not in place. The vast majority of pupils indicated in their completed questionnaires that they had someone to talk to if they were worried and that teachers were approachable and helpful and prepared to listen and give advice.
26. All statutory requirements relating to child protection, health and safety and those with disabilities are in place and adhered to. Child protection procedures are secure. The policy is implemented effectively and is in line with that of local child-care procedures. Proper checks are carried out on staff prior to their appointment. The arrangements for health and safety and risk assessments are regularly checked. Proper arrangements are in place and used to ensure that pupils use the Internet safely.
27. Formal procedures are now being established for the setting up of a school council, and pupils are developing a more structured approach to presenting their ideas. Pupils are given a number of responsibilities in the daily running of the school which they undertake conscientiously.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **satisfactory** partnership with parents and **good** links with other schools and colleges. Links with the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to deal with parental concerns and complaints are very effective.
- The provision of information given to parents is good. End-of-year academic reports are very good.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for parents to contribute to their children's learning.
- Consultation with parents over school improvement, curriculum and homework is limited.
- Links with the community and with other schools is good, but those with pre-school groups are underdeveloped.

Commentary

28. The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. They say their children like school and that they are making good progress. They think teaching is good and that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best. A very active Toppesfield School Association raises money for school resources. A small number of parents are of the opinion that the school could develop more regular and formal consultation methods with parents on matters such as homework, the curriculum and school improvement generally. The school recognises this as an area for development.
29. The school deals very effectively and sensitively with any complaints that parents may have. They know their parents very well and parents agree that they feel comfortable approaching the school about any concerns and that the school tries to ensure satisfaction.
30. The information provided for parents is good overall. A regular informative weekly newsletter provides news not only about the school but also about community events. The end-of-year academic reports are of a very good standard and clearly identify areas where pupils need to improve. The school prospectus is in place and meets statutory requirements. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
31. The school recognises that it is not doing enough to enable parents to support their children's learning at home. Few opportunities are provided to share with parents the way their children are taught, for example in mathematics. Younger pupils regularly take books home to read and this practice usually consolidates what pupils have done in school. Across the school, homework arrangements are unclear. Homework is not provided in a consistent way so that parents know when to expect it and what area it might cover. Consequently, homework does not contribute significantly to pupils' standards and progress.
32. Good links have been established with the community. The school plays its part with community events such as the church fete and village fair. For example, the pupils contributed to the large mosaic on the wall of the village hall. Links with other schools are good but those with pre-school groups are underdeveloped. Good liaison with the local secondary school ensures that most pupils make a smooth change to their next school. For example, pupils in Year 6 make a 'PowerPoint' presentation about themselves prior to the move and then continue to develop the presentation when they arrive at their new school in Year 7. Links with other schools in the area are effective through a consortium arrangement and result in joint professional development taking place and the sharing of good practice such as the 'science weeks'.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both the leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides **good** leadership. The management of the school is **satisfactory** and the school runs smoothly. Governors are involved in the work of the school, and governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership for the school.
- The leadership and management of ICT are very good.
- The governors monitor the school well and understand its strengths and weaknesses.
- The governors are not sufficiently involved in setting priorities in the early stages of the formulation of the school development plan.
- The financial management of the school is sound overall, but there has been an unallocated surplus over the past two years, which is not closely monitored.

Commentary

33. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory requirements. Appropriate policies are in place and implemented in relation to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex education. Governors have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are very supportive. Governors are well informed through their regular visits to the school, including planned visits to classrooms and discussions with teachers and other staff. They receive good information and are prepared to take difficult decisions; for example, when they had to reduce from a four-class to a three-class school as the numbers fell and the budget indicated the need for this. Governors have responded well to the findings of the previous inspection, especially in the way they have addressed the key issues for improvement.
34. This is an inclusive school for pupils and staff. The headteacher has a strong sense of direction and a clear vision for the school. Since the last inspection, there has been a focus on improving standards in English and mathematics, and in reducing the incidence of unsatisfactory pupil behaviour. These have been successfully achieved, apart from raising standards in writing, which is an area that continues to be the focus for attention. Staff morale is high. Everyone works well as a team and shares a desire for improvement. Subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science manage their areas satisfactorily. Leadership and management in ICT are very good and this area has improved significantly over the past year. The management of reception is good, as is the management of special educational needs.
35. The school satisfactorily reviews its performance in consultation with advisors from the local education authority and consultants from the National Leadership Programme in which the headteacher and English and mathematics co-ordinator are involved. The school development plan is good. It is detailed, thorough and focuses on the important issues that need to be addressed. Governors monitor the outcomes of the school development plan well but are not sufficiently involved in drawing up the plan and identifying priorities at the early stages.
36. During the past three years, the school has provided good opportunities for initial teacher training with school placements for these students. Staff development is good and its effect is seen in teachers' expertise, especially in ICT, and in the development of approaches to improve standards in writing. The recent involvement in the National Leadership Programme is already beginning to positively help with this.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 335,780 |
| Total expenditure | 285,271 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,478 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 55,759 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 50,509 |

37. There is sound financial management overall, which led to a difficult decision taken last year to reduce to a three class school. Overall, best value principles are followed satisfactorily but more consultation is needed with parents. Finance has been held for the possible development of a school hall. An underspend has accrued over the past two years which is not sufficiently well monitored.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school makes **satisfactory** provision for the Foundation Stage.

38. Children join the school at the start of the term in which they have their fifth birthday. They join a class in which pupils from Years 1 and 2 are also present. At the time of the inspection, only one reception child had been in school during the autumn term, and another three children had only just joined the class the week before. The assessments made at the end of the summer term over the past few years have been taken into account. Lesson observations focused on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development. Pupils' physical development was also inspected, as this had been a significant weakness at the time of the last inspection. It was not possible to make a secure judgement on children's mathematical development. The teacher's planning, whilst focused on the appropriate needs of the older children in the class, also reflected the needs of these younger children. Activities take into account fully the Foundation Stage curriculum. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Information provided for parents is good and induction procedures are appropriately tailored to the needs of each child. Over the past few years, children enter the reception class with attainment below the expected levels for their age group, especially in speaking and listening. Pupils' progress is well monitored on an individual basis and assessment procedures are good. However, by the end of the reception year the majority of the pupils have not had a complete year in school, some have only had one term. This makes it more difficult for them to reach the expected level by the time they reach the end of the reception year. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, particularly in the area of pupils' physical and creative development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children settle very quickly into their new setting.
- The teaching assistant is well deployed to support pupils identified as needing reassurance.
- The children are helped by having older pupils in the class from whom they watch and learn.

Commentary

39. Teaching and learning are good. Children's achievement is good and most are well on track to exceed the expected goals at the end of reception. The teacher ensures that the environment provided and the ethos of the class help the children learn rapidly the correct way to behave. The children learn quickly the class routines by watching the older children. The classroom assistant is always available to support those pupils requiring help, and provides very reassuring support for them. This develops the children's confidence and self-esteem and they very quickly join in with all the activities. Although the majority of these children had only just joined the class, they were difficult to identify, as they were conforming with the classroom routines so readily. At this early stage, all these children maintain attention, sit quietly listening and are confident to try new things. They are particularly keen to help the puppet, Raj, learn how to behave, when the class rules are being discussed with the older children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for role-play and the use of puppets help to develop speaking and listening skills.
- The learning objectives for some group sessions are not always well targeted.

Commentary

40. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most children are not on track to reach all the expected outcomes by the end of reception. Given below average levels of attainment on entry, children's achievement is satisfactory. All the children are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents, and the home-school link book provides an opportunity for staff of the school and parents to make useful comments about the child's responses. The children listen carefully to what is being said by the adult on a one-to-one basis, but are less sure in their response. For example, in the role-play activity using animal puppets, the children enjoyed the activity and listened to what the adult was saying, but the majority preferred to respond by making animal noises and through action rather than through speech. Occasionally, when working in groups the task does not meet the need of the children and they are unable to participate effectively and this hinders their learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

It was not possible to make a secure judgement on children's mathematical development. Teachers' planning shows that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding. Good attention is given to providing children with useful activities with well-chosen resources.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of visits to enhance learning.
- Effective approaches to learning with opportunities to learn at first hand stimulate the children's interest in the world in which they live.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children's achievement is satisfactory and most are on track to meet the expected goals by the end of reception. Children are given opportunities to learn at first hand wherever possible, for example their visit to the seaside to look at that environment and study plants and creatures found there. Children are encouraged to act out parts, for example when learning about Africa. They wash their hands in preparation for eating a range of available African food. The teacher always provides appropriate artefacts of a good quality, for example in the photographs taken of candles to support the children when investigating candles and their uses. The children listen attentively to the stories from the Bible, such as Noah's Ark, and are well supported by the class teacher who sits close to these younger children, giving encouragement and support. The teacher uses a good range of targeted questions to encourage the children to think about the story, and captures their attention and imagination well. The children investigate materials well and are seen fully engrossed in building with construction apparatus, and in using the computer and listening centre.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement in the provision for pupils' physical development since the time of the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory.
- The outside area has now been redesigned to meet the needs of these children and provides a good range of apparatus to support their physical development.
- Children enjoy 'music and movement' in the village hall, and respond well.

Commentary

42. Standards at the end of the reception year are in line with the national expectations and children's achievement is satisfactory. The new outside play equipment gives opportunities for children to practice climbing, balance, swinging and jumping. A satisfactory range of toys and bikes for children to ride are now provided. Children have regular opportunities to use a range of practical equipment, such as scissors and joining equipment, using small construction material to develop their fine motor skills. The village hall is used well for 'music and movement' lessons.
43. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the dance lesson observed, the teacher and the teaching assistant supported the children well. There was good pace to the lesson and the choice of music really motivated them. Even the most reticent child joined in enthusiastically by the end of the lesson. All pupils moved spontaneously and responded well to the rhythm of the music. They were beginning to move about the hall with an understanding of how to use the space. The small round mats scattered by the teacher helped the children to use the space well. The children enjoy this area of learning and participate happily in the range of activities provided.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enthusiasm and skill of the teacher sets high expectations and motivates the children to achieve well in painting and drawing.
- The presence of older pupils provides good role models for these younger children to imitate. This raised standards in an observed session.

Commentary

44. Children make good progress and are likely to exceed the expected standards by the end of reception.
45. The quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the use of colour, drawing materials and paint is good. The teacher has enthusiasm and a high level of skill in this area, which is used to set good standards in final pieces of work. These children produce very good finished drawings when making self-portraits. They used half a digital photograph of themselves to complete by adding on the other half of the face. This was a particularly difficult task for the children, but with the teacher's help and guidance they attained well. They concentrated, listened well to instructions and had a sense of pride in their work. The teacher gave effective pointers, which the children followed well.

46. In the musical performance, created by a stimulus from reading Noah's Ark, the young children really tried hard not to let their group down when using the instruments to create a mood. They enjoyed the task, were well supported by the teaching assistant and their final musical presentation showed concentration and rhythm.
47. The reception environment is bright and stimulating. Equipment and resources to develop children's creativity are of a satisfactory quality. The role-play area, dressing up clothes, art and play equipment all encourage children to create their own imaginary worlds and enrich their experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by the pupils in Year 6 are below average.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils overall underachieve in writing and standards are below average.
- Information from assessment is not used to set pupils clear targets to aim for.
- Standards in Year 2 are average in reading and writing and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting varies considerably and is unsatisfactory overall.

Commentary

48. Standards in English in Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection when they were average. The fall in standards is in writing, as standards in reading remain average. The standards attained in English in the national tests over the past three years have been below average. In 2003, an unusually large group of pupils in Year 6 took the national tests. The results showed that standards were well below average compared with the national picture and with similar schools. Girls attained higher standards than the boys did, especially in writing. The standards seen during the inspection were average in reading and below average in writing, again with girls attaining higher standards than the boys.
49. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in the national tests in 2003 were well above average in reading and above average when compared with schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, standards were average in reading and writing. Results vary significantly from year to year due to the small numbers in year groups. Over the past three years, standards have been average in reading and writing. The standards seen during the inspection were average in reading and writing and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they are well supported.
50. The weaknesses in the teaching of spelling contribute significantly to the below average standards in spelling. Whilst pupils, including the boys, usually spell reasonably when tested on words they have been given to learn by their teachers, standards of accuracy in spelling diminish when pupils come to write. The punctuation of the more able pupils is usually accurate but other pupils have difficulties in using commas accurately and in using paragraphs correctly. Teachers now place greater emphasis on the teaching of spelling as part of the school's plan for development and make good use of the advice provided by the National Leadership Programme.

51. Standards in reading and writing are average in Year 2. Teachers teach pupils the sounds letters make (phonics). Pupils use these skills satisfactorily to read words that are unfamiliar as they break the word up and sound out the separate parts. Pupils also make satisfactory use of their growing knowledge of these sounds when they spell and spellings often show that the word has been spelt as it is pronounced. Teachers throughout the school set aside times when they guide the reading of a selected group of pupils. During these sessions teachers often 'model' successful reading for their pupils and learning is good. For example in a session in Year 1, the teacher took great care to show pupils how to read with expression.
52. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where very good use is made of ICT in lessons, which move at a very good pace. Other teachers make good use of ICT in their teaching. For example in a good lesson in the Years 2, 3 and 4 class, the teacher used the interactive white board effectively to enable pupils to identify the rhyming words in a poem and then to suggest words of their own. Increasingly teachers are modelling writing for their pupils as a way of helping them to improve their writing. Planning takes due account of the different age groups in the class but information from assessment is not well used to set targets for groups of pupils to aim for in their writing, and this hinders both achievement and standards.
53. The quality of pupils' handwriting is variable and is unsatisfactory overall. Too many pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not consistently join their letters together evenly or correctly. Although letters are usually correctly shaped, they are not well formed. Often the appearance of handwriting in these older pupils' books is untidy. The handwriting of younger pupils is of a better quality as these pupils have been taught systematically using a consistent handwriting style.
54. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator makes the best use of her two days in school and has a sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. Useful plans for improvement are being implemented with the support provided by the National Leadership Programme. Pupils have an adequate supply of books to read. Younger pupils regularly take books home to read and this provides useful support for their reading.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Pupils use their reading skills satisfactorily in other subjects. At times, pupils' skills in writing, especially spelling, hamper their work in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 over the past three years have been average and, in the case of the older pupils, show an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment of what pupils need to do to improve is not sufficiently effective, as pupils are not set clear targets to aim for.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their mental agility and ability to estimate are underdeveloped.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject.

Commentary

56. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 can fluctuate due to the make up of each small year group. In 2003, the group of Year 6 pupils taking the national tests was considerably larger than the usual year group. The results showed that standards were average in comparison with the

national picture and when compared with similar schools. When looking at the results over the past three years, it is evident that overall pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 have attained broadly average standards. The standards seen during the inspection are average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. A significant number of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs. Achievement and progress of pupils generally is sound. However, those pupils with special educational needs are making good progress as they are very well supported.

57. Although a sound start has been made to use ICT in the assessment arrangements, these are not satisfactory as pupils, or groups of pupils, are not set clear targets to aim for nor are the pupils clear about what they need to do to improve. The current arrangements hinder pupils from making consistently good progress, particularly the more able pupils. Teachers do not use the end of lessons sufficiently well to allow them useful opportunities to assess what pupils have learnt or to enable pupils to comment on their learning.
58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and they are good in Years 5 and 6. In the good lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, the pace was brisk and all pupils were appropriately challenged. There were clear explanations and good oral participation of pupils. The recent support being given to the school through the National Leadership Programme is helping teachers to plan more effective mental/oral activities at the start of their lessons, in order to improve pupils' mental agility, a major area for development identified by the school. Teachers take due account of the different year groups in their classes when planning work.
59. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Teaching assistants ensure they understand what to do and give clear explanations and well-targeted support. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well managed so that they can take a full part in lessons.
60. The recently appointed mathematics co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and recently has been working effectively with the consultant from the National Leadership Programme. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.
61. Sound progress has been made since the last inspection when standards were below average at the end of Year 6 and the quality of teaching was inconsistent. There was also a limited range of opportunities available for pupils to develop problem solving and investigatory skills. Now teachers encourage pupils to think about their mathematics and provide a satisfactory range of problem-solving activities.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. There is satisfactory use of mathematics in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils practise their measuring skills and in geography they develop their knowledge of co-ordinates.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention is paid to the use of investigations and the development of scientific skills.
- Insufficient use of information from assessment to set pupils targets to aim for.
- Pupils are interested in science and enjoy the practical activities.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to collaborate, especially when using ICT to record their findings.
- The provision is enriched through 'science weeks'.

Commentary

63. The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 in the national tests in 2003 were average. When compared with similar schools standards were above average. The standards over the past three years have been broadly average. The standards seen during the inspection are average. In Year 2, the teacher assessments made as part of the national tests in 2003 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching nationally expected standards was well above average and the proportion that reached standards higher than those expected for pupils of this age was below average. Standards seen were average. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they are well supported.
64. Although teachers' planning takes account of the differing year groups in each class, insufficient use is made of the limited amount of information from assessment. Targets are not set for groups of pupils to aim for. This leads to teachers often providing similar work for the class as a whole and providing differing levels of support for groups of children. This approach does not always provide pupils with work that is best suited to their needs and this does not help in improving standards.
65. A limited amount of teaching was seen. Overall the teaching is satisfactory, and on occasion is very good. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teachers now place emphasis on the use of investigations and the development of scientific enquiry as part of the school's plan to improve standards. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils carefully investigated forces as they suspended metal objects in water and measured the force being applied by the water. Pupils paid close attention to ensuring that the tests they applied were fair. They readily predicted what they thought the result would be and discussed at length why the result was not as they expected it to be. Pupils competently recorded their results using spreadsheets and printed graphs that they felt best represented their findings. Similarly, in Year 2, pupils investigate the forces involved when an elastic band is pulled back and released to propel an object. They predict how far they think an object will go and conclude that the further the band is stretched the greater the force applied.
66. Pupils are keen to learn about science and to be involved with practical activities. They are interested in their lessons. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to collaborate in groups when they conduct their investigations. Pupils collaborate well and this enhances their personal development. Teachers make effective use of ICT to enable groups of pupils to record their findings and to share them with other pupils.
67. Pupils participate in 'science weeks' organised by the local group of schools. During these weeks pupils have good opportunities to learn about a scientific idea in depth. The theme of flight was the subject of a science week during the last academic year. Pupils learnt from visiting experts and conducted their own investigations, as well as visiting a well-known collection of aircraft. Such opportunities enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' learning. Recent changes in subject leadership are being consolidated. The leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator keeps a watchful eye on teachers' planning to ensure that the cycle of topics to be studied are covered. Plans are in hand for the monitoring of teaching and learning. Sound progress has been made since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

The standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are average. Pupils' achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achieve well and are rapidly gaining ICT skills in all the required applications of the subject.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Good use is made of the 'interactive whiteboards'.
- The leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

68. Pupils in Year 6 work with competence and confidence. They use multimedia well to devise their personalised posters for the 'Harry Potter' books and to produce a piece of work in the style of Picasso. Pupils use spreadsheets to good effect as they record data from scientific investigations. The 'St Margaret's Times' is an example of pupils' effective use of ICT to write and publish. Pupils use ICT satisfactorily to model as they try out different arrangements of furniture in a room. They use ICT competently to make things happen as they control movement of shapes. More advanced equipment has been recently purchased which will enable pupils to use sensors in experiments. This lack of experience accounts for standards being average rather than above average. In Year 2, pupils competently make coloured patterns, draw graphs showing the different colour of their hair, write up their experiments in science and control the path of a small robot. Across the school, pupils use the Internet safely to find information.
69. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and leads to pupils achieving well and quickly gaining new skills. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is very good and reflects the considerable expertise of the teacher who is also the subject co-ordinator. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they are well supported and have access to equipment suitable for some of their needs. Teachers are confident and appropriately skilled.
70. Good use is made of the 'interactive whiteboards' installed in two of the three classrooms. Teachers use these to good effect. In a very good science lesson about forces in Years 5 and 6, the board was used to show a video of an astronaut walking on the moon, to note pupils' ideas, and to illustrate the action of forces. Pupils report that they enjoy lessons where the board is used as it makes learning more interesting. Teachers' use of the board leads to well-paced lessons.
71. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Although standards remain as they were at the last inspection, the enthusiastic co-ordinator has maintained the considerable improvement reported at the last inspection. A clear scheme of work is in place and a good start has been made to use the software provided by the local education authority to assess and record pupils' standards and progress. Good support and training are provided for other staff. The leadership and management of the co-ordinator make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. Good use is made of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils regularly use ICT to word process and publish their writing. In mathematics and science, pupils use ICT confidently to record and display their findings in tables and graphs. Pupils' work in art and design is enhanced by the

use of ICT. Pupils regularly use ICT to find out information in geography and history, often using the Internet.

HUMANITIES

73. In humanities, pupils' work was sampled in history and geography but no lessons were seen. It is not possible therefore to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There are indications from pupils' completed work that standards are broadly average in both subjects. There is sufficient coverage of the National Curriculum requirements for both geography and history. Pupils' work is valued and presented in attractive displays around the school.
74. In **history** and **geography**, the visits made and meetings with visitors make the work interesting and relevant. Pupils spoke confidently about their work. The arrangements in both subjects for assessment are unsatisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 seen during the inspection are in line with those required by the Essex Agreed Syllabus as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to relate their growing knowledge of religious ideas to their everyday lives.
- There are no secure arrangements to assess and record pupils' standards and progress.

Commentary

75. In Year 6, pupils show a sound understanding of what it means to be a member of a religion. They have a satisfactory knowledge of important aspects of Christianity and Judaism. They know that the Bible is a book that is sacred to both religions and that for Christians it is divided into the Old and New Testaments. Pupils in Year 2 recall important parts of the story of Noah and understand that God created the flood to punish the people. Older pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the Christian idea of 'sin' as they look at the creation story in the Bible.
76. Overall teaching is good and pupils make good progress in their learning. A strength in the teaching is the good quality of the teacher's questions that enables pupils to relate the content of the lesson to their everyday lives. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, the good teaching enabled pupils to reflect on what makes one group of religious believers different from another. Pupils discussed confidently what happens when tolerance is absent and the dangers of racism. Good use of ICT enabled pupils to quickly gain information about the Holocaust and this information enhanced the discussion and learning. Pupils in the Years 2, 3 and 4 class, began to grapple with the ideas of sin and crime and with the help of the teacher looked for examples of both in their experience of everyday life.
77. The curriculum is carefully planned to accommodate the mixed-age classes. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning to ensure that the requirements of the agreed syllabus are met. Little time is provided for the observation of teaching. Arrangements for assessment are unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

78. No lessons were seen in music and only one lesson was seen in art and design and design and technology. These subjects were not the focus for the inspection. It was not possible to make a judgement on provision in these subjects.
79. In **art and design**, the completed work on display around the school and in samples of pupils' work indicates the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The very good use made of visiting experts during 'Art Week' results in pieces of work of a high standard, such as the large piece of weaving in the dining area. Pupils practice art techniques carefully before using them within pieces of work, such as in Years 5 and 6 where different ways of using chalk pastels were experimented with, before being used to create their sketches and pictures. In Year 6, pupils' pencil sketches of Tudor sailing ships are of a good quality. Pupils study artists' work and use their techniques to create their own pictures. There are indications from pupils' work that the above average standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.
80. In **design and technology**, a scheme of work is in place and implemented satisfactorily and ensures that pupils cover the full requirements of designing, making and evaluating. Work seen, for example in Year 4 where pupils created a structure to allow an object to stand on its own, indicates that pupils generate their own ideas and recognise that their design has to meet a set of requirements.
81. In **music**, no lessons were seen. In assemblies, pupils sang enthusiastically and a group of pupils played their recorders confidently. Planning shows that the requirements of the National Curriculum are catered for.
82. In all these subjects, arrangements for assessment of pupils' standards and progress are unsatisfactory. Teachers know their pupils well and have a good enough knowledge of them to write informative reports for parents at the end of each year.

Physical education

Provision for physical education overall remains **satisfactory**. For games there is still **good** provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching in gymnastics overcomes limitations created by using the village hall and having a very narrow range of gymnastic equipment.
- Games provision is enhanced by extra-curricular activities, visiting experts and through inter-schools' events. Standards are good.
- Pupils enjoy this subject and participate enthusiastically.

Commentary

83. Pupils have access to a wide range of physical activities. Overall standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In gymnastics and dance, standards in Year 2 and 6 are in line with those expected nationally, whilst in games standards are above average. The good teaching overcomes the limitations posed by the limited equipment in the village hall.
84. In lessons observed, including gymnastics, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and skills are developed effectively. Good use is made of demonstrations by pupils to encourage similar work from others. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and the work of others. This is undertaken sensibly, sensitively and effectively.

85. Pupils participate in a broad range of games activities including cricket, swimming, rounders, athletics, football and netball. Visiting experts for some of these activities, such as cricket, ensure standards are good. Inter-sports activities, such as the swimming gala, cross-country, football and rounders rally all help to raise expectations and standards. Progress is good and all pupils enjoy their sports.
86. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are included well in lessons and they thoroughly enjoy the work undertaken. The younger pupils participate with enthusiasm in their dance lesson and the older pupils set out the equipment quickly and sensibly. They work on the apparatus with concentration and with a desire to perform the movements accurately.
87. Physical education contributes well to pupils' social development. Pupils work co-operatively in pairs and in groups. They understand the need to work as a team and support each other well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. One lesson was seen in the class with pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2. The curriculum makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Due attention is given to the provision of sex education and to the dangers of the misuse of drugs. The teaching seen was good. It provided an effective introduction to the activity known as circle time for children who had only just started school, whilst effectively consolidating work from the previous term. The provision made in this area contributes considerably to pupils' good personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | 3 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 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 | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 4 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 4 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 4 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 4 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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