

INSPECTION REPORT

HARLOWBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Watlington Road, Old Harlow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115056

Headteacher: Mrs. Marianne Fuller

Reporting inspector: Mrs. C. Pittman
18275

Dates of inspection: 29th January - 2nd February 2001

Inspection number: 185680

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Watlington Road
Old Harlow
Essex

Postcode: CM17 0DX

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. Gabrielle Pritchard

Date of previous inspection: 25/09/1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9499	Mr. P. Daruwala	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15477	Mrs. C. Glenis	Team inspector	English History Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
3687	Mr. G. Bancroft	Team inspector	Maths Information and communication technology Physical Education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
31218	Mr. T. Allen	Team inspector	Science Design and Technology Geography Equal opportunities	
3055	Mr. C. Tombs	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Speech And Language Unit	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Harlowbury Primary is a one-form entry community school, with a separate Speech and Language Unit, situated in a residential area north of the new town of Harlow. The school is smaller in size than other primary schools.

There are 176 pupils aged from 4 to 11 in mixed age and ability classes including 20 pupils in the unit. The attainment on entry is below average. Most children have attended a playgroup prior to coming to the school but few have had any nursery education.

The school draws most pupils from outside the catchment area from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, although a large proportion of pupils come from backgrounds with social and economic difficulties. The children who attend the school are predominantly white and British. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

The number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is above the national average and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is well above.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. It helps pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Most make very good progress from the time they come to the school to when they leave at eleven years. A high proportion of pupils is keen to learn. Behaviour is good and there is little absenteeism. The teaching is consistently good with much that is very good. Staff constantly look for ways to improve the quality of their teaching, are imaginative and make challenging demands on the pupils. There are good arrangements to support all pupils and care for them and the school has a strong partnership with parents. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff is very good. The school is well governed, self critical and gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well in comparison to similar schools and make good progress overall.
- The headteacher's leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is consistently good, and much of it is very good.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about school; their good behaviour and respect for each other create very good relationships throughout the school.
- The school cares for its pupils very well and parents think very highly of it.
- Community liaison is excellent and enhances pupils' learning, very positively.

What could be improved

- The teaching of literacy skills in all subject areas and particularly writing throughout the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected five and a half years ago, there were weaknesses in standards of achievement at Key Stage 1, reading standards, curriculum provision, quality of teaching, assessment, planning and the length of the taught week. Since then the school has made some remarkable improvements.

Achievement in reading and mathematics has improved considerably. There is now an appropriate curriculum in place with suitable time allocations for every subject. Teaching has improved significantly and so has the quality and range of learning opportunities for the pupils. Assessment is used more effectively to evaluate pupils' progress. There have also been marked improvements in most subjects at Key Stage 1 and particularly good improvement in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and ICT at Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment in writing, however, is very low when they start at the school and continues to

be a weakness.

The school has effectively improved its performance in many other areas. Governors are now more involved in financial planning and supporting the curriculum. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Co-ordinators have more responsibility for their areas and take a more active role in monitoring their subjects through the school. The school has maintained its strong reputation for catering for pupils with special educational needs. Given the very good quality of its leadership and the total commitment of its staff, the school is well placed to develop even further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	C	A	well above average A
mathematics	E	E*	C	B	above average B
science	E	E*	C	A	average C
					below average D
					well below average E
					very low E*

Most children when they start school are achieving standards below and often well below those expected of children of this age. By the time they reach Year 1, attainment is at the expected standard in many cases, although writing is still below average. Over half are attaining standards that are just below average for children of this age.

Pupils' achievement at eleven years, when judged against their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, is well above average for English and above average in mathematics and science. When judged against similar schools, results are well above average for English and science and above average for mathematics. In comparison with all schools attainment in all the core subjects is in line with national averages. This is very good achievement considering that in the four years preceding, the number of pupils with special educational needs taking the tests doubled from a third to two thirds of the group.

The school's challenging targets last year were effectively met. Girls perform better than boys in English and mathematics, but boys get better results in science. The school has made rapid improvement in all these core subjects, bringing them up into line with national averages. This upward trend is largely the result of successful targeting and monitoring of pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and eager to take part in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good overall. Pupils respect each other and their teachers.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is good. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and older children are given specific responsibilities, which they complete enthusiastically.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are very enthusiastic about school and show sustained interest and commitment to their work. They enjoy learning and are reluctant to stop when they have to. Pupils' relationships are very good. They are tolerant of each other, listen very well and show a mature and growing understanding of differing viewpoints.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is good or better in nearly four out of five lessons seen. It is very good in almost a third of all lessons. There was a negligible amount of unsatisfactory teaching.

Teaching is usually knowledgeable, stimulating and perceptive. The best teaching uses imaginative resources and makes intellectual and creative demands on all pupils to extend their learning. Challenging questions are used to extend and verify what pupils know and understand. Relationships between pupils and their teachers and also with each other are very good and provide a positive learning ethos in which achievement flourishes. Pupils are consequently keen to learn, work well for long periods and generally make good progress.

Numeracy is taught better than literacy. Writing skills are still not emphasised enough throughout the school. The school meets the needs of most pupils well, although pupils with SEN are better challenged than higher attaining pupils.

Pupils with SEN, including those in the Speech and Language Unit, receive focused and effective support and as a result make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and breadth of the curriculum is good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with SEN. They have access to the full curriculum and individual education plans (IEPs) are well designed to challenge and stretch their capabilities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The principles of right and wrong are actively promoted and pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils' social and cultural development is good. They show a high degree of respect for the differences between people and for their values and beliefs. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's procedures for monitoring academic performance are good. Children are well known and this awareness is used very effectively to support their personal development. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good in English and mathematics but need to be brought up to the same standard in other subjects.

The partnership between parents and the school is good. Most parents are happy that the school works closely with them. Pupils are given very good guidance and personal support. However, the end of year reports are a weakness and need to be explicit about what pupils have actually achieved and how they can improve further. The school deals well with any issues of anti-social behaviour.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very good leadership of the headteacher ensures clear direction for the work and development of the school. Good management by a cohesive senior management team has begun to promote higher standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors monitor performance, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and set the right priorities for development and improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching and curriculum development are well monitored by the headteacher, although there is insufficient monitoring of teaching by some subject co-ordinators. The school assesses pupils' progress effectively in core subjects, although this is insufficiently developed in other subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Decisions on spending are linked effectively to educational priorities. This ensures that good value for money is achieved and the best use is made of resources.

One of the main reasons for the good progress made by pupils last year is the effective leadership provided by the headteacher. She has built a committed team who reflect critically on what they can do to improve learning. There is good delegation to staff with management responsibilities and effective evaluation of outcomes. The governing body is shrewd, effective and well aware of best value principles.

There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. There are enough support staff and they are very well trained. The accommodation is small but adequate for the number of pupils on the roll. It is in a very good state of repair and cleaned to a high standard. Resources are adequate in most subject areas, but there are insufficient free choice books in English and there is nowhere suitable for the teaching of food technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like to see the information they receive on their child's progress improved.

Inspectors agree with the positive remarks made by parents. The annual reports to parents need improving. However, the school operates an open door policy so that parents can check on their child's progress whenever they need to.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children when they start school are achieving standards below and often well below those expected of children of this age. However, by the time they reach Year 1, most make very good progress in their learning and attainment is at the expected standard for just under half the children, although standards in writing are still below average. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving results that are in line with national averages in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. When judged against similar schools results are well above average for English and science and above average for mathematics. This is very good achievement considering that in the four years preceding, the number of pupils with SEN, taking the tests, doubled from a third to two thirds of the group.
2. Pupils' achievement at eleven years, when judged against their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is also well above average for English and above average in mathematics and science. This is good progress. The significant underachievement at Key Stage 1 at the time of the last inspection has been greatly improved, although writing standards are still below average.
3. There is no significant difference between the attainment and progress of pupils by gender, ethnicity and social background. Analysis of data shows that girls perform better than boys in English and mathematics, but boys get better results in science. The school has made rapid improvement in all these core subjects, bringing them up into line with national averages. This upward trend is largely the result of successful targeting and monitoring of pupils. The school's challenging targets last year were effectively met.
4. The results of the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests for English are in line with the national average for reading but well below for writing. The percentage of pupils reaching higher levels in reading is close to the national average, but well above average when compared to similar schools. No pupils achieved the higher level 3 in writing, which is low when compared nationally but in line with what was achieved by other similar schools. The number of pupils in Key Stage 2 who reach higher levels in English is similar to the national average but, in comparison to similar schools, it is well above average. In lessons standards are at expected levels at both key stages although pupils' achievement is again well above average when compared to the standards they were achieving at the end of Key Stage 1. This is good improvement since the last inspection when standards in English were unsatisfactory overall.
5. In mathematics, the attainment of pupils, in the national tests, is below the national average but in line with similar schools by the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, results are in line with all schools nationally and above average when compared with similar schools. Improvement since the last inspection of the school is good and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Inspection findings show that by the time pupils are aged seven and eleven attainment is close to that expected for their age and their achievement is good.

6. In science, national test results at Key Stage 2 show that sixty nine per cent of pupils achieved standards at the expected level, which was above the national average. Twenty two per cent attained the higher level, which was below the national average. Overall, standards attained in science were in line with the national average, although, when compared to the performance of similar schools, they were well above average. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year. At Key Stage 1, teacher assessments last year showed that the percentage of pupils attaining at both the expected and higher level was well below average. Inspection findings indicate standards in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.
7. There has been an improvement in the standards attained in literacy and numeracy since the last inspection, although there has been better improvement in numeracy than literacy. Pupils have good opportunities for speaking and listening. Discussion is of a good standard in all subjects and teachers actively encourage and develop this skill in lessons. Standards of reading are improving and help pupils to make progress in many subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils are confident in the use of subject specific vocabulary. Writing standards at both key stages are below average. Too much time is spent discussing writing rather than incorporating discussion into the writing process. In many classes pupils answer the teacher's question while the teacher does the writing on the board. Literacy skills and particularly writing skills are underdeveloped through the other subjects of the curriculum.
8. The numeracy strategy has been successfully implemented within mathematics lessons and the use of numeracy in other subjects is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Most pupils apply a range of techniques effectively to solving mathematical challenges. They find ways of breaking up difficult calculations into manageable sections. The pace of their learning is beginning to improve significantly.
9. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT), by the end of both key stages, is close to that expected for their age and their achievement is good. For example, at Key Stage 1 pupils use CD ROM encyclopædias efficiently to research information for their work in other subjects. Pupils at Key Stage 2 use computers for a range of purposes and in a range of subjects. They record data collected in mathematics on graphs and charts. In science they prepare sheets to record the details of their experiments. Information and communication technology is fast becoming part of their everyday repertoire of ways to communicate.
10. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in all other subjects, with the exception of physical education and religious education, where it is above average. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in all other subjects is in line with national averages. Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1 is good in all other subjects. At Key Stage 2 it is good in design and technology, geography and ICT. It is satisfactory in art, history, music, religious education and physical education.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Progress is particularly good in reading, spelling and handwriting, as a result of specific targets in IEP's and effective in-class support. Pupils in the Speech and Language Unit make consistently good progress across a range of subjects and develop their language and confidence in speaking and listening. Higher achieving pupils are appropriately challenged.
12. There has been good improvement in standards of attainment in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and ICT since the last inspection. Standards in the

rest of the subjects have been maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have continued to improve since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their standards of behaviour are good in lessons and around the school and contribute to an environment in which they can learn effectively. Key Stage 1 pupils have good attitudes to learning in almost all lessons. In one in three lessons their attitudes are very good. At Key Stage 2, attitudes are good in approximately three out of four lessons observed; in a third of lessons pupils have very good attitudes. The good quality of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes. Most pupils are interested and involved in activities across the curriculum. They ask and answer questions and contribute to discussion confidently. Most treat the views of others with respect even if their answers are incorrect, as a result pupils play an active part in lesson. For example, pupils in Year 6 were very keen to discuss the effects of the holocaust on the Jewish people attending the recent Holocaust Remembrance Day, showing a mature understanding of the experiences of people at that time. Most pupils listen attentively and work conscientiously until they complete their tasks. There were no signs of aggressive or oppressive behaviour during the inspection.
14. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils and pupils and their peers. Pupils work well together and share resources well in lessons. In a design and technology lesson in Year 4 and 5, pupils tested whether their ideas worked by substituting components. They did this by working co-operatively sharing parts yet producing different end products. Pupils collaborate effectively in pairs or in groups and relate very well to each other. For example, one pupil, who was experiencing particular difficulties, was treated in a very supportive way by others in the reception class. Pupils generally show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They celebrate their achievements in special assemblies and in lessons they spontaneously applaud their successes. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils are polite, well mannered and keen to talk to visitors. They show respect for people and property and, although sanctions are not often necessary, pupils know the consequences of any misbehaviour. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are also good; they respond particularly well to the support given in small groups. All pupils are friendly and polite, the school is litter-free and there are no signs of graffiti.
15. Pupils' personal development is sound. They mature as expected as they progress through the school and willingly take on responsibilities. Older pupils have assembly and lunch time duties. There is a 'buddy system' of support for younger and new children. Year 6 pupils work with younger pupils to help develop their activities and learning. However, more opportunities could be planned for pupils to take responsibilities in the general routines of the school. There are limited opportunities for pupils to take the initiative in their work, to research independently or to use the library as part of their learning.
16. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs and in the Speech and Language Unit is good. They respond well to the consistent application of rewards and sanctions. They display positive attitudes to work because they are given appropriate opportunities to succeed and their achievements are recognised and celebrated. They are readily accepted by their peers and socialise independently in class and around school. Pupils from the Speech and Language Unit are integrated well in lessons such as physical education and music.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 98% of lessons and, in over a quarter of lessons, teaching is very good or excellent; almost a half of all lessons are good. There is a negligible amount of unsatisfactory teaching. There is marginally more very good teaching in the Under Fives class and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. There is an excellent ethos for learning in most classrooms.
18. Teaching has improved since the last inspection; it is now a strength of the school. Staff training has focused effectively on raising standards of teaching and learning. In one third of lessons teaching is at least very good; there were some outstanding lessons in English, mathematics, ICT, art, religious education and geography. There is a negligible amount of unsatisfactory teaching and no poor teaching. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is mainly due to inadequate planning and insufficient challenge in the lesson. These were features of some lessons in English and mathematics. On balance however, the very high proportion of good teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement.
19. A number of features contribute to the best teaching. Classroom control is very good and encouragement and humour are used well to motivate pupils. There is often a crisp pace through English, mathematics, science and religious education lessons and the skilful use of questioning broadens pupils' understanding and promotes thinking and discussion. Questioning is particularly well used to identify progress in many subjects. However, there is sometimes too little emphasis on pupils writing what they know. This inhibits teachers when they need to evaluate pupils' progress over time. In two very good religious education lessons in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils showed a mature understanding of difficult religious concepts and good learning was taking place. However, when asked to write down what they knew in sentences although most had a clear understanding of the lesson they could only manage one-word answers on paper.
20. Teachers' subject knowledge and planning is particularly good in art, geography, science mathematics and ICT. Teachers of the Under Fives understand young children very well and challenge them effectively so that they make very good progress. Planning is very good and lessons are well structured. Learning is fun and children are convinced they are playing a series of games. Every opportunity is used to challenge their thinking, for example, reception children sing counting rhymes while queuing for dinner and Year 6 pupils compare the ideas, methods and approaches of a variety of artists, which helps them to appreciate how and why paintings were created.
21. Literacy is taught appropriately in English lessons but literacy skills are not consistently reinforced in other subjects of the curriculum. Nonetheless, literacy is beginning to make an impact on pupils' attainment in English. Most teachers ensure that pupils know the correct terminology for the subject but some do not follow this up by giving pupils the relevant vocabulary to use in specific subjects. Numeracy is effectively taught in mathematics lessons; and used appropriately in other subjects.

22. Teaching and non-teaching staff share expertise and support each other well. Classroom assistants and parent helpers work well with teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
23. Teachers have high expectations of pupil performance. For example, in a geography lesson on the local area, pupils were set challenging tasks through a wide range of activities. Year 3/4 pupils were challenged to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of using the land adjacent to the school for various projects from building a hospital or a supermarket to a large house for a celebrity. Pupils worked in pairs discussing ideas, thinking for themselves and sharing their ideas with the class. The teacher's well-structured questions helped them to focus on the evidence and develop an awareness of environmental issues and land-use conflicts. They acquired new skills in map reading and were able, after completing the task, to present their findings and draw their own conclusions.
24. Almost all teachers make effective use of a wide range of control and managing strategies. The positive relationship staff have with pupils creates a very good learning environment. Good behaviour is a feature of almost all lessons. Pupil-teacher relationships are very good and all adults are good role models. The active involvement of pupils helps to sustain interest. In an art lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils developed their own design ideas from part of a picture. These were then used to motivate the remainder of the class. They were encouraged, to evaluate their own work and that of others, to choose the picture that was going to be developed further. In lessons, where there is too much teacher direction and advice, pupils' personal development and progress are undermined.
25. Most teachers use time and resources well. For example, in an ICT lesson the excellent use of resources made a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' work. Pupils were shown a Power Point presentation and learnt how to put text into slides and create special effects and sounds to insert on their slides. Time and resources are used particularly effectively in English, mathematics, science, ICT, geography and religious education.
26. Teachers are particularly aware of pupils with special needs. Pupils who have a statement are well known and supported through detailed individual education plans. Support assistants are used very effectively throughout the school. In English and mathematics, teachers present different work to pupils of differing ability so that all are challenged. In all other subjects teachers use various methods of providing the work needed by pupils with SEN, from matching work to pupils' ability to withdrawing them to work on special material for extra support. Work for pupils with SEN is planned with reference to their IEPs, which are reviewed and targeted regularly and used by teachers as working documents in the classrooms. Pupils with SEN are treated as a priority by the school, the resource provision for this area is good and resources are added when needs are identified.
27. In their weekly planning and daily lessons teachers build in ways to assess pupils' learning and there is an established policy for marking that is aimed at helping pupils to improve their work. Where marking is good, written comments are constructive and help pupils improve the quality of their work. These procedures enable the school to have a very good knowledge of pupils' attainment. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is excellent in the reception class and good in many other classes. However, the quality varies in some, where assessment is not recorded or used to improve further planning. Homework is well focused, involves research and is improving standards,
28. The teaching in the Speech and Language Unit is consistently good and occasionally

very good and, as a result, pupils make good progress. Good assessment procedures accurately place pupils at learning stages and this enables teachers to build on prior learning. Teachers plan their lessons well and manage pupils in a positive way, resulting in them settling into school routines and becoming more confident learners. There is good support from learning support assistants for pupils with SEN in the main school, particularly for literacy and numeracy. This enables teachers to engage all pupils in planned class discussions and investigative work and, as a result, learning improves. Planning takes the needs of all pupils into account and materials used reflect equally the values of gender, ethnicity and social background.

29. The general standard of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection with a greater emphasis on planning and adding variety to teaching methods.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

30. There have been significant improvements in curriculum provision since the last inspection. This aspect is a strength of the school. The curriculum is now balanced, the subject expertise of the teachers has improved and subjects are individually identified and given an appropriate amount of time. The quality and range of curricular and other opportunities provided by the school are now good. The governing body and headteacher have successfully ensured that all aspects of statutory provision for the curriculum are in place and all pupils are given the chance to study the same curriculum.
31. Strategies for teaching literacy skills are satisfactory. Some aspects of the literacy strategy are beginning to impact positively on pupils' attainment. The teaching of Numeracy skills is good. The National Numeracy Strategy has made a significant contribution to raising standards and is used effectively by most teachers.
32. There is a good programme of extra curricular activities, this includes sports clubs, such as football and gymnastics, to which parents and visitors contribute. There are also drama and computer clubs. These activities are open to all pupils and very well attended. Effective support is provided for pupils' learning by the breakfast club and by the booster classes for those preparing to do the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
33. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. A programme, to which all have weekly access, is planned well and is effective. It includes appropriate provision for sex education and for raising awareness of the misuse of drugs. Visitors, including a doctor, a nurse and a police officer, contribute to this aspect of the provision.
34. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. They do this well, helping with administrative tasks, preparing resources for lessons and assemblies, and acting as members of the school council. They are also developing their understanding of living in a community by donating to charities and taking part in projects to improve the environment.
35. The school has very strong links with the community and the contribution this makes to pupils' learning is excellent. This includes liaison with local companies that has improved provision for science and for information and communication technology.
36. Relationships with partner institutions are also good. Teachers and other staff make a significant contribution to the consortium of local schools, working together to raise attainment and improve the quality of provision.
37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. SEN has

an appropriate policy for inclusion and provides effective learning opportunities for all of its pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified as early as possible and appropriate steps are taken to assess their needs, write individual education plans (IEPs) and provide support. These are reviewed regularly and provide the necessary detail to enable teachers to plan appropriate learning experiences. The school fully complies with the Code of Practice (SEN) and all pupils have equality of access to the planned curriculum and the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Links with a local special school enhance the curriculum provision for some pupils with special educational needs; for example, one child with severe physical and neurological difficulties makes use of the hydrotherapy pool there.

38. The special needs provision is well managed and co-ordinated by the headteacher and on a day-to-day basis by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Staff and resources are well deployed to match the needs of pupils. The special needs provision is effectively monitored by the headteacher and governing body. The Speech and Language Unit is efficiently monitored by the LEA SEN and Psychology Service.
39. The curriculum promotes good awareness of equal opportunities issues. Visitors to the school provide demonstrations of Egyptian dance, Indian dress, dance and food, and Hindu artefacts. Religious education lessons promote respect for the opinions and beliefs of other faiths. The organisation of teaching groups is effective for all pupils and lessons include discussions of similarities as well as differences of the way of life in other cultures. Curriculum materials are regularly checked to ensure that bias and stereotyped images are eliminated. Books are selected to reflect a multicultural society.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

40. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Provision for their moral development is very good. The headteacher and staff of the school actively promote the principles of right and wrong. Pupils know this and respect the school rules. They have high expectations of behaviour. Honesty is highly valued and pupils are taught to regard misbehaviour, such as lying or stealing, as totally unacceptable from the time they enter the school. Reception children arguing in the playground are told to think about their actions and helped to apologise to each other. Adults set a good example and the caring family atmosphere allows pupils to understand right from wrong and the needs of others. This results in a high standard of behaviour at playtime, lunchtime, and in lessons.
41. Social education is good. Staff are good role models for pupils and relationships are very good. Adults speak courteously to children and expect them to do the same. Pupils are expected to take responsibility from an early age. Those in the reception class, for example, put toys and equipment away; older pupils automatically clear away with minimal direction from the teacher. They also take part in the school council and look after the younger ones. Social development is provided for in such activities as caring for the elderly in the tea and biscuit visits to the school.

42. Cultural education is good. Pupils are encouraged to know about their own particular cultural traditions. They learn to study their locality in geography and the history of the neighbourhood. In art pupils study famous painters. There are numerous trips to local and national museums. Religious education makes a good contribution to the multicultural aspects of British society in its study of world religions. Pupils study festivals associated with major religions and visiting speakers from Africa, Egypt and India have helped to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures. Fund raising activities provide help for those less well off than the pupils themselves.
43. Spiritual education is sound. Generally assemblies enhance the spiritual aspect of the curriculum well. There is always suitable music to set the mood and a prayer with time for reflection. Special events are celebrated, for example at harvest time when gifts are provided and pupils visit the homes of senior citizens. In the curriculum pupils are encouraged to wonder at the beauty of design. This was illustrated in an art lesson in Year 6 when Joseph Turner's paintings were shown to them. Spiritual development is also encouraged through music and science but is not planned for through a specific policy or included in subject schemes of work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school is a community school and the whole school community works together in providing appropriate care and support to all its pupils. The school ethos is 'Caring for the Whole Child'. The Speech and Language Unit is an integral part of the school. The school is conscious of its statutory obligations towards its pupils. It makes suitable provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils with SEN are supported well and are fully integrated in the school community. Positive and purposeful attitudes and values are integrated in all curriculum aspects and in different extra curricular activities. The headteacher, teachers and other support staff are approachable, welcoming and always accessible to parents and pupils alike. Good and positive behaviour, consideration for each other and respect for individuals are encouraged. The school is smaller than average, so both the teaching and non-teaching staff get to know individual pupils very well.
45. A few weeks after pupils join the school they complete a baseline assessment. This information is shared with parents and used effectively in setting individual targets for attainment. Clear records of attainment in the National Curriculum subjects, as well as personal records, are maintained by the school for all pupils. These records are transferred to the receiving school, when Year 6 pupils leave. This collaboration is well established and engenders a smooth, stress-free transfer of pupils from the primary to secondary stage.
46. There are effective procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour and personal development. In the case of unacceptable or improper behaviour the school imposes appropriate sanctions. One of the essential aims within the school community is to recognise and praise good, positive attitudes to learning. The school has established a weekly achievement scheme, in which individual pupils or a group of pupils, are praised for positive achievement or behaviour. The school organised the 'Behaviour Week' in May 2000 in order to emphasise good conduct and discipline in school and on the playground.

47. The school prospectus emphasizes the school's expectations and parental responsibilities in respect of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality. The school's guidelines and procedures for marking attendance registers are carried out meticulously by the teachers. The rate of attendance was well below the national average for the academic year 1999 - 2000. The rate of unauthorised absence at the school, in the same year, was below the national average. The school maintains a good collaboration with the Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school at regular intervals.
48. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for monitoring and supporting their academic progress are good. The school has established procedures for tracking the progress of pupils in English and mathematics. Such information on pupils' attainment and achievement is used very effectively to identify their needs and to adjust and adapt the educational priorities accordingly. The current focus for English is on writing. In order to raise pupils' attainment from Level 3 to Level 4 at Key Stage 2, the school organises booster classes in English and mathematics before the school day begins. The use of the 'success maker' programme in mathematics helps pupils to understand the progress they are making and does much to motivate them and maintain their interest in the subject. The school supports higher attaining pupils by ensuring that their learning activities are more challenging, for example, arrangements are made for two Year 5 pupils to be included in a Year 6 class.
49. Teachers assess the potential attainment of pupils accurately. A helpful range of testing procedures is used effectively to confirm teacher assessments. Teachers also share and confirm these assessments with each other and with colleagues from other schools. These processes build effectively on the well managed baseline assessments of pupils when they enter the school. The governing body, headteacher and subject leaders all make good use of assessment information when planning how to improve the quality of education provided by the school. Teachers also make good use of this information, particularly for the youngest pupils, when deciding what they need to teach next to help their pupils to improve.
50. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with SEN receive effective guidance and support. They are fully integrated into mainstream lessons and have full access to the curriculum. All staff are aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and providing for pupils with SEN. The school fully complies with the legal requirements set out by the Code of Practice and calls, when necessary, on the advice and support of the LEA Learning Services. The school maintains a Speech and Language Unit, as an integral part of the whole school community and pupils in the unit have the additional expertise and support of a speech therapist. The unit is successful in instilling each pupil with adequate expressive and receptive language skills, to re-enforce social skills and to raise their self-esteem and confidence. A few pupils are successfully re-integrated into the mainstream schooling.
51. As part of the school's Community Policy, it has recently re-constituted the School Council, with a very active and knowledgeable Year 6 pupil acting as a chairperson. At the last meeting, Council representatives discussed the need for structured homework, availability of car parking facilities, the need for landscaping mud patches around the entrance to the school building, putting a fence around the picnic area and the necessity for installing drinking fountains in the playground area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school has been successful in establishing a strong, positive and tangible partnership with parents. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting and those responding to the questionnaire expressed a high level of satisfaction about the head teacher's sensitive and perceptive leadership in raising the expectations and achievements of all pupils within the school. 'Working together for Success' is the theme used by the school in order to augment its existing good links with parents.
53. Parents feel welcome in the school. They play an important and valuable part in supporting their children's learning at home and this parental initiative has a positive impact on pupils' progress. The Home School Agreement is well established. Both formal and informal consultations are available to parents at regular intervals. This enables parents to discuss their children's progress and development in the school. The school provides clear information on what is taught in year groups. For instance, at the beginning of each term the school provides parents with details about the curriculum topics to be covered in each year group.
54. The school prospectus is a clear and comprehensive document. It identifies the school as a community school, where teachers, governors, parents, pupils, local education authority and the community work together in ensuring that pupils can achieve their highest potential. The prospectus provides a good insight into the many aspects of school life, policies, information about the school's Speech and Language Unit, as well as a brief account of curriculum provision and the various extra curricular activities on offer.
55. The school encourages regular and effective communication with parents, for example, each pupil has home school diary, reading and spelling book, in which comments and observations are encouraged on a two-way basis. Monthly newsletters and formal and informal meetings enable parents to get to know about the life of the school community. The school uses a questionnaire to canvass parental opinion on whole school policies, for example, a questionnaire is planned for during the spring term to ascertain the parental preference for school uniform. Parents feel free to approach the school for discussion with the headteacher or other teachers. Specific issues raised by parents are looked at with care, sympathy and sensitivity and issues are resolved amicably and in the best interest of the pupils concerned.
56. All parents receive comprehensive annual reports towards the end of the academic year. The general reports are parent friendly, providing the necessary facts and figures, such as special educational needs, finance and the school budget, links with the community, etc. However, specific reports on pupils' progress do not provide sufficient detail about what they need to do to raise their attainment and increase the rate at which they make progress. Some reports for pupils of differing abilities contain very similar comments about their performance and this is unsatisfactory. This aspect of provision needs to be improved.
57. Pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity to meet new teachers from the secondary schools, during one day in the summer term. At the same time, all pupils at Harlowbury effectively spend a day in their new class which makes for a smooth transition in the new academic year. The school also invites those parents whose children would be joining the school in reception in for the day. In something like 50% of cases, the school organises a home visit by the teacher.
58. The school receives strong support from its parent teacher association, The Friends of Harlowbury Association. The group raises sufficient funds and provides a good range of resources for the school. A variety of social events is organised by the association to develop positive relationships amongst parents.

59. The school was one of the participants in the Essex Primary School Improvement Project. The main thrust of the project was 'Developing and Extending Parental Involvement'. The school's success in enlisting parental help in their child's learning at home, parent volunteers helping in the school and in developing the role of parent governors and Friends of Harlowbury Association is considerable. The partnership with the parents of pupils with SEN is also very good. Parents are fully involved in review meetings and are kept well informed by the good information provided by the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a clear, shared vision of where the school is going and how standards are to be improved. A significant strength has been the development of a climate of mutual respect amongst staff and pupils alike. Staff and pupils feel valued; this improves their self esteem and raises their level of commitment. The school has explicit aims and values and all share in the commitment to make these work. The links with parents and the local community are excellent. The headteacher has an open-door policy, which instils confidence in parents to share problems and concerns.
61. The school is very well managed. Senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators make a cohesive team, have clear roles and carry out their responsibilities very effectively. Staff are trusted and there is a clear delegation of responsibilities and accountability for their work. The strong team ethos is reflected in their high levels of commitment. The school reviews its own work effectively. Decisions are arrived at by a thorough analysis of the problem or issue. The senior management team has been very effective in monitoring the work of the school and this has had a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching. Staff support each other very efficiently and policies and schemes of work are developed collaboratively. Subject co-ordinators monitor learning to help teachers assess outcomes and plan future activities, although the co-ordinators' role in monitoring teaching is still insufficiently developed.
62. Educational priorities such as the forward planning for ICT provision are supported through careful financial management. The school improvement plan is well organised, costed, sets realistic targets and is effectively targeted to periodic review to ensure the implementation of plans and focus on further raising standards in specific areas. The day-to-day running of the school is well organised. Administrative procedures and routines are clearly documented and contribute to the efficient way the school is run. Administrative staff carry out their responsibilities well and often go well beyond their stipulated contracts.
63. Governors make an effective and increasing contribution to strategic planning and management. There is an appropriate committee structure, which monitors and evaluates the work of the school. Governors are actively involved in planning decisions. The staff and governors are involved in regular audits and evaluations of the progress made in meeting the school's targets for improvement. There is an effective programme, which helps integrate the governors into the life of the school. There is a shared commitment to improvement and the need to succeed. Governors fulfil their statutory duties in helping to shape the direction of the school and through effective monitoring understand its strengths and weaknesses.
64. There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. There is a very good mix of experienced senior staff and teachers new to the profession. Staff have had good training in literacy and numeracy, which is very evident in classrooms. There is an

appropriate number of support staff who have been very well trained. The midday supervisory assistants manage pupils well at lunchtimes. The process for the induction of newly qualified teachers is good. Staff are well supported by a range of courses both in school and in other institutions. The headteacher has regular professional interviews with all staff.

65. The accommodation is limited but adequate for the number of pupils on roll. The high standards of cleanliness and maintenance noted in the last inspection have been maintained. The school has no suitable facility for the teaching of food technology. There is no separate medical room. The new storage facility within the central quadrangle area was recently completed and is an attractive part of the school building. The school has two separate playgrounds, one for the infants and other for the juniors. Both the exterior and the interior of the building are in good condition. One of the interesting features of the classrooms is the painted colourful mural on the wall. There are new designated facilities for pupils and adults with physical disabilities allowing full access. The school has established good links with the art department at the local college and they have produced some interesting designs for improving the environment within the school building and in the playgrounds. At present there are three classes at Key Stage 1 and three at Key Stage 2. There will be one additional class at Key Stage 2 from September 2001. It will be located adjacent to the school building in a new self-contained portable unit.
66. Resources are good in most subject areas. However, there is a need for more resources in art for three-dimensional work and more free choice books in the library to improve pupils' enthusiasm for reading.
67. Effective procedures ensure good financial control. All spending is carefully monitored and regular financial statements are available for senior staff and Governors. All departmental plans are carefully costed and relate well to the overall budgetary position for the school. The school is cost conscious and makes significant savings in relation to the purchase of its equipment. The recommendations of the most recent audit have been implemented. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purpose.
68. The school uses new technology very effectively. The best value principles of comparison, challenge and competition are rigorously applied by the headteacher and governors in the school's acquisition and use of services and resources. There has been significant improvement to certain aspects of management, such as governor involvement in the curriculum and the monitoring of teaching, since the last inspection.

69. **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

Key Issue for Action

Raise standards of attainment in writing throughout the school by:

- ensuring that sufficient time is given to teaching literacy skills and particularly the skills of writing across all subjects
- developing strategies to improve the quality of independent writing
- providing more time to improve the quality of handwriting
- encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and share in the setting of their own writing targets.

Paragraphs: 2, 4, 7, 15, 19, 21, 48, 72, 80, 81, 85, 89, 128, 150.

Other issues for consideration:

- improve the overall quality of reports to indicate what pupils can do and suggest ways in which they can improve.
- encourage pupils to become more independent as learners, through using the library more frequently.

Paragraphs: 56, 66, 84.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	16	29	14	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	176
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Na/	23
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	12	11	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	9
	Girls	9	9	11
	Total	18	17	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (68)	74 (68)	87 (84)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	10	8
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	16	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (79)	83 (79)	74 (79)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	19	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	17
	Girls	14	14	16
	Total	26	27	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (42)	75 (37)	92 (47)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	17
	Girls	14	16	17
	Total	27	29	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (28)	81 (21)	94 (47)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	139
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	212

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	441632
Total expenditure	419773
Expenditure per pupil	2427
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5291
Balance carried forward to next year	16568

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	176
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	38	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	60	11	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	46	8	6	5
The teaching is good.	66	27	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	30	18	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	19	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	54	33	12	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	55	35	5	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	42	6	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	48	8	4	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. The education provided for the Under Fives is broad and balanced and in line with the nationally recommended areas of learning. Most children when they start school are achieving standards below and often well below those expected of children of this age. However, they make rapid progress in the reception class and by the time they reach Year 1, pupils' attainment is at the expected standard in many areas, although writing is still below average. Pupils make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Progress is still good but less marked in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The provision for pupils with SEN is good. Pupils are identified early and are successfully working towards the targets in their individual education plans before they start formal education. Higher achievers are also well challenged.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. Nearly all the children enter the school with immature skills in personal and social development. Pupils' confidence is not strong when they start in the reception class and few are able to establish effective relationships. They prefer to work alone and find working in-groups sharing and taking turns difficult. Few are able, when they join, to take the initiative in games or activities, although most listen and respond well and are eager to explore new learning. By the time they are five many make very good progress and are attaining at the expected level for this age. They work well in groups and are developing their own independence. They show a growing confidence in making choices, particularly when allowed to choose their own reading books. They know right from wrong and are sensitive to the needs of others. This is evident in the way they care about and the tolerance they show for children with disabilities. This shows good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching in the reception class where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. Pupil management is excellent. All children think learning is fun. They are encouraged to learn through a series of games and are rewarded with praise when they show initiative or make choices. They are also encouraged to think about others and why they have taken certain actions.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Teachers in the reception class place suitable emphasis on developing language and literacy. Communication and listening skills are encouraged in every activity, including role-play. Many children talk confidently about what they like doing. Children make a satisfactory start to early reading and writing skills and many show good progress. All adults use talk to good effect and are good, active listeners. Children are encouraged to take books home regularly. They enjoy books and handle them carefully. When they first start at the school they understand how books work but do not associate sounds with words and letters. Most can tell stories, using the illustrations within the book and answer simple questions. However, they are unable to recognise their own name and other familiar words. Their ability to write is well below expectations. By the time they start their formal education at age five years, many can write their name and they know many small connecting words. They are able to recognise initial sounds associated with the

letters of the alphabet and a few recognise key words from their first reader. A sound understanding of phonics is developing through effective word, sentence and text level work using well-known stories and rhymes. Children hold their pencils correctly and some can shape letters accurately. Most can trace over or copy the teacher's writing. Many are keen to produce their own emergent writing. They can draw simple artistic figures well and are confident when talking about their drawings and mark-making. They make good progress in their writing and many are achieving at the expected standard by the age of five years, although the majority is achieving just below average. Teachers understand young children well. Much of the good learning that is accomplished is in the form of games and play. Planning is structured to provide each child with the appropriate challenge. Assessment is immediate and very good. This enables every child to make good progress.

Mathematical development

73. Children make good progress in the mathematical area of learning. On joining the school most children are achieving standards below and often well below the expectation for children of this age. They are beginning to use some mathematical language such as 'bigger' appropriately and can match items, although very few know counting rhymes. By the beginning of Year 1, many are using number to 10 and can sort, match, order and sequence and are familiar with counting songs and games. However, most are achieving just below average for children of this age, although their ability to count is at the expected level. Basic mathematical skills are well taught. Although they do not use strategies for counting, most pupils are able to count up to 20 with the teacher. They find it more difficult to use number but some can add simple sums on their fingers. Teaching methodology is particularly inventive. Children's attitude to their learning is very good. The teacher uses their competitive spirit to motivate them to stay on task throughout the activity because they are convinced they are playing a game. The tasks set keep changing and the quick pace of events keeps their concentration. Resources are inventive as in a lesson where bus puppets were used to count how many passengers were on the bus.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children enter the reception class with basic general knowledge. Good teaching builds on this knowledge to help them understand more about the place where they live and their families past and present. Many know how they get to school and some can question the differences and similarities in the world around them, although only a few can explore materials or use the skills of cutting, joining, folding and building. By the time they enter formal education, most are able to talk about where they live, their families, the past and present in relation to themselves and they are aware of some features of living things. They talk about when they were younger and the toys they used to have. Teachers challenge all the children to work according to their capability. Children are encouraged to use the computer independently and do so with confidence. Some can control the mouse and recognise letters on the keyboard. A few can select resources and just under half now uses tools safely to construct and build. Most are making good progress in this area and are set to reach the expected standards by the time they are five years old.

Physical development

75. On entering the school, most children are unable to use small equipment like scissors.

They are not confident about climbing and balancing, with or without help. The outdoor play area has helped children to make good progress in the development of their physical skills. They can run, jump and balance and show awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. Teachers make good use of language to encourage children in their physical responses. Children are challenged to think carefully of how they can demonstrate the movements of a robot as well as to change to a different movement and to explain the change. The teacher uses good strategies for learning in choosing a number of children to demonstrate their movements, using the rest of the class to decide who was the best and why. The children demonstrated that they could use space creatively and responded imaginatively to the challenge. Teachers also teach skills such as cutting to enable children to gain safe control of these more delicate movements. By the time pupils reach the end of their foundation year they are attaining standards in line with expectations for this age.

Creative development

76. This is another area where children are making very good progress on what they could do when they first came to school. Children start from a fairly low level of skill when they enter the reception class. They cannot use imagination in play with others or represent ideas with their artwork. However, teachers encourage them from the time they first start school to experiment with paint and colour and work from observation and imagination. Children have enjoyed depicting themselves in poster paint. This work, which is of good quality, hangs as a tribute to their progress at the entrance of the school. They have also printed an imaginary train and produced some good observational drawings of their toys. The teacher's enthusiasm for making music has an inspirational effect on the children. They can perform well for an audience, singing tunefully and with gusto and comment on how loudly they can sing. The teacher uses the correct terminology for the subject, for example, 'conductor' and all the children respond well to the challenge by counting in and beating out the tempo. Teachers support and extend the children's love of role-play with puppets and imaginary characters. Children respond with great imagination and creative skill. By the time they reach Year 1, pupils are reaching the expected standard.
77. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good. Much of it is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to make the learning enjoyable. Lessons are well planned taking account of the requirements of the curriculum for Under-Fives. Pupils think the learning is fun. A wide variety of stimulating and well-structured activities are provided within each session. Pupils' responses are supported and extended sensitively. Appropriate interventions are made to give direction and enable learning to be consolidated. Teaching staff and assistants work very well together and have a clear understanding of how young children learn. Assessment is very good and effectively informs further curriculum planning
78. The Under-Fives curriculum is planned and organised well. Children are very carefully monitored by careful on-going observations. A simple baseline assessment has been successfully carried out. Parents are encouraged to be involved from the beginning of their children's education and to follow their progress throughout. Regular formal and informal consultations, before and after admission, are well received by parents and establish effectively common objectives between home and school.
79. The reception classrooms are visually pleasing and stimulating. Overall, resources are satisfactory. There are sufficient books for pupils to use and borrow. Children's development of early computer skills is good, but there is a need for more software to support the work being done. Regardless of this, pupils under five are making good progress and are prepared very well for more formalised work in Key Stage 1. There has

been good improvement in the progress made by children under five since the last inspection. Teaching and planning have both improved and pupils are better assessed and monitored.

ENGLISH

80. Pupils start at the school with below average attainment. By the time they leave in Year 6, their achievement, when judged against their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, is well above average. In comparison to similar schools it is also well above average. When compared to all schools; attainment is in line with the national average. These results include pupils attending the Speech and Language Unit. When the results of pupils in mainstream classes only, are taken into account, the results are above average. Results from the past three years show a significant improvement in 2000 in reading standards, to average. Writing standards fell in 1998 to well below average, rose slightly in 1999 and 2000 but remain well below average.
81. By the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above in the 2000 tests was broadly in line with the national average and well above average for similar schools. Trends show below average results for the past three years with a significant rise last year to the expected standards. This is good progress and is largely due to the school successfully targeting and monitoring pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. The school has maintained standards overall since the last inspection at both key stages; reading has improved but writing standards have fallen. Pupils with SEN make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in both key stages.
82. Throughout the school pupils' listening skills are above average in English and other subjects. They listen well to staff and peers in whole class and small group sessions. The school has maintained good standards since the last inspection. Pupils' listening skills enhance learning and contribute to the good behaviour.
83. Pupils' speaking skills are in line with the national average at both key stages in English and other subjects. Younger pupils answer questions and express ideas confidently. Older pupils join in discussions appropriately, although they are not always given the opportunities to lead discussions in larger groups. Standards of speaking are slightly less good than at the time of the last inspection. Staff use the Literacy Hour well to provide opportunities for speaking, when discussing features of print or texts.
84. By the end of both key stages, pupils' reading skills are broadly in line with the national average. The school has improved reading standards since the last inspection, when they were found to be unsatisfactory. Pupils at Key Stage 1 recognise familiar words and can work out words using picture and phonic skills. They read reasonably confidently and some are developing skills of self-correction. They are learning to develop an understanding of simple characterisation. However, some Year 2 pupils confuse fiction and non-fiction. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils read independently and understand significant ideas and events in books. Individual pupils can discuss books and authors, although this is not a strength of the reading. Two older pupils were unable to name a favourite book or author. They were accurate readers, but only the higher attaining pupil was fluent and expressive. Parents contribute significantly to pupils' progress in reading. Pupils read a limited range of fiction texts. Older pupils can locate non-fiction books in the library but the use of non-fiction reading skills, such as skimming and scanning, are not well developed. Very little use is made of the library for personal or independent study.

85. Writing standards in English and across the curriculum at both key stages are unsatisfactory. At the last inspection writing was found to be 'sound with some shortcomings at Key Stage 1'. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils know that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop and they are learning about description and the use of adjectives. However, although pupils discuss features of writing, they are not confident to write freely when given the opportunity. At both key stages too much time is spent discussing writing prior to putting pen to paper, rather than incorporating discussion into the writing process. This reduces time, opportunity and pace for improving writing. In some lessons at Key Stage 2 even the oldest pupils spend too much time observing the teacher writing rather than writing themselves. The oldest pupils do not redraft work themselves, because teachers correct work for pupils. In a scrutiny of work, there was unfinished work and staff did not expect pupils to complete it. When given the opportunity, many pupils are able to write at length.
86. Standards of spelling across the curriculum are below average at both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils are learning to recognise spelling patterns through focusing on the structure of words in the Literacy Hour. They make phonetically accurate attempts at spelling but are not yet confident in doing so and this limits their ability to write their ideas freely. Some spelling in Key Stage 2 books and lessons is unsatisfactory, because pupils simply copy spellings or teachers correct all spellings for them and they do not learn from their errors or from remembering spelling patterns. Staff use spelling tests consistently, but these do not always include the words pupils get wrong.
87. Pupils' handwriting is average across the curriculum. Key Stage 1 pupils form letters accurately and with a reasonably legible style; the higher attaining pupils are learning a joined writing style and accomplish this well. Key Stage 2 pupils generally have fluent, joined handwriting but not all pupils write in pen and there is some inconsistency among teachers as to when a pen is introduced. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used appropriately.
88. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They work well together, waiting for each other's answers and showing respect for another's opinions. Most are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to learning.
89. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages and good in some Key Stage 2 lessons, where teachers encourage the development of discussion skills and the understanding of features of suspense writing. In almost all lessons, the strengths of the teaching are: the way in which teachers lead question and answer sessions, recall earlier work and use subject-specific language. Aspects of English teaching are unsatisfactory where the length of staff introductions reduces the pace of lessons and opportunities for pupils to do the work themselves, and when work is not appropriately matched to pupils' capabilities. Throughout the school teachers' expectations of pupils to write independently are insufficiently developed. Work is sometimes aimed at the lower age-range in a class.
90. Marking is up-to-date but does not always indicate how pupils could improve. Some teachers make helpful oral comments. Reading records are well used at Key Stage 1. Older pupils' records are unsatisfactory; they do not state the book being read or the date it was started. Records are combined into the home-school diary but the focus on reading is diminished. During the inspection several average readers read better than those described as higher attaining. The school is aware that this could be due to inadequate reading assessments.
91. The subject is well co-ordinated and the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work takes place. The range of reading resources is satisfactory, although the range of non-fiction resources is limited.

MATHEMATICS

92. By the time pupils are aged seven and eleven attainment is close to that expected for their age and their achievement is good. In the most recent national tests, attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 was below the national average. However, standards are rising and the National Numeracy Strategy, introduced effectively by teachers, is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment was close to the national average. Pupils' achievement aged eleven years, in relation to their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, is above average. Improvement since the last inspection of the school is good and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
93. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good at Key Stage 1 and good overall at Key Stage 2. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson. The quality of learning is good throughout the school. Teachers present their lessons in a lively and stimulating manner. They include activities that are well matched to the capabilities of their pupils and tailor their questions to provide suitable challenges for pupils of all abilities. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are also very good and this results in pupils sustaining their concentration and showing interest in their work.
94. Teachers usually start their lessons with a period of oral and mental mathematics. At these times pupils often show their understanding of a range of mathematical strategies, for example, when multiplying and dividing three and two digit numbers older pupils estimate, round up or use inverse calculations to make the process easier and to check if they are correct. When this occurs, teachers usually ask their pupils to explain their thinking about the procedures they have followed. In some lessons this important way of checking knowledge and understanding is missed out.
95. At Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils manage to add and subtract numbers up to one hundred competently, for example they do subtractions such as twenty-three take away thirteen quickly and correctly in their heads. Lower attaining pupils can do this with numbers up to fifty. However, these pupils sometimes write numbers the wrong way around and, although usually getting the correct answer, sometimes reverse the order of numbers when writing subtractions. All pupils are beginning to understand simple fractions such as halves and quarters and many are able to correctly name common three-dimensional shapes. The majority can calculate how much money they need to make purchases and work out the change they would get from one pound correctly. They are also encouraged successfully by their teachers to use the correct mathematical language.
96. At Key Stage 2 pupils' mental and oral number work is developing well. This is the result of the effective application of the National Numeracy Strategy by their teachers. Towards the end of the key stage pupils give quick answers to calculations such as seventy-eight add fifty-six. Their understanding of place value is developing well along with their knowledge about the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. Typically, higher attaining pupils undertake calculations such as finding twenty four percent of six hundred and fifty correctly.
97. Most pupils apply a range of techniques effectively to solve mathematical challenges. They find ways of breaking up difficult calculations into manageable sections. Higher attaining pupils explain efficient ways of finding the answer to such calculations as dividing one thousand, eight hundred and seventy four by sixty one. The mathematical skills of lower attaining pupils are also developing well. They quickly calculate the

remaining angle of a triangle by subtracting the sum of the angles they already know from one hundred and eighty correctly.

98. Towards the end of lessons teachers make effective use of opportunities to check what their pupils have learned and to share this information with them. When pupils make mistakes, teachers turn this into a positive experience by discussing why the error occurred and enable pupils to identify how it might be rectified. This does much to increase pupils' confidence in their abilities in the subject. Pupils also respond well to comments intended to help them improve.

SCIENCE

99. In the 2000 science national tests the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 and above was above the national average, but the percentage attaining the higher level 5 was below the national average. Overall standards were in line with the national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year. Inspection findings indicate standards in line with national expectations in both key stages. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 when compared to their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average.
100. Improvements since the last inspection have been significant. Achievements are no longer low and pupils are able to make hypotheses and explain outcomes. The quality of teaching has improved throughout. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. All pupils were observed to be enthusiastic about the work and to make the maximum effort to succeed.
101. In Key Stage 1 younger pupils are beginning to use scientific vocabulary with increasing confidence and understanding and make good progress in their investigative skills. Pupils correctly sort materials into different groups according to observable characteristics. They know that some materials float and others sink, some are porous and others are waterproof and that their properties are important when deciding their use. They skilfully investigate the properties of a range of materials and understand why some materials are useful for specific purposes, for example, they discover by testing that plastic material is best suited for an umbrella and cotton is suitable for a warm day. Most pupils know that the shape of materials can be changed by bending, stretching, twisting and compressing and that materials change state by heating. Higher attaining pupils know that some materials can revert back to their original state but others will not. They record their findings and explain the reason for differences. They know that sound is caused by vibrations and relate this to the sense of hearing. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know about the conditions required to promote healthy growth and the importance of a balanced diet. They discover by independent investigation that foods contain minerals as well as vitamins and can identify which fruits contain each vitamin. They successfully grow plants under different conditions and observe the principle of fair testing. Younger pupils correctly label the parts of plants and of flowers. They examine the difference between day and night and identify fluorescent materials, which can be seen at night. They make satisfactory predictions about the outcomes of an experiment and compare the results.
102. In Key Stage 2 pupils build on their earlier knowledge of materials. They understand that materials can be solids, liquids or gases and that the properties of certain materials make them suitable for specific uses, such as insulators and conductors. They successfully experiment with substances to test solubility and to discover which materials can revert to their original state. They use different methods to separate

mixtures, for example by evaporation or by using magnets. They know that when water is heated it turns into steam and that invisible water vapour is present in the air. Most understand the importance of a fair test and predict, test, refine and evaluate their work. They study the human body and extend their knowledge of diets and their importance for healthy living. They study the process of decay and learn about micro-organisms and the work of Louis Pasteur. In their study of forces they successfully demonstrate the influence of upthrust on falling objects, measure the difference between the weight of objects in air and in water and record their findings in newtons. They use information technology effectively to make multimedia presentations of their work on forces. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have made considerable progress in answering factual questions, using appropriate scientific terminology and planning and recording experiments in a logical manner. They identify problems individually, design tests and conduct their own experiments. Most use scientific vocabulary well and demonstrate a good understanding of such terms as photosynthesis, ecosystems, and habitat.

103. The quality of teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good in both key stages. Teachers have a secure understanding of the science curriculum and there is a developing emphasis on experimental and investigative science throughout the school. Teachers' planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work show that work is related to the prior attainment of pupils and takes account of ongoing assessment, which determines what is taught next. In the lessons observed the objectives were discussed with the pupils so that they knew what they were supposed to learn, thereby enabling them to make good progress in the session. Questions were used well to make the pupils think for themselves and to apply previous learning. As a result, pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for their lessons and are eager to learn and to improve the quality of their work. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils work together well and listen to the views of others. They take turns and handle resources confidently. Pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress.
104. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic and competent co-ordinator who, although very new to the post, has introduced significant changes and keeps abreast of developments in the subject. A national scheme of work has been adapted to suit the needs of the school and the subject policy is in place. Monitoring takes place through planning, discussion with staff and examination of pupils' work. The monitoring of teaching is scheduled to begin during this academic year. In both key stages, teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and comments provide guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their work. Information technology is used to improve presentation. Resources are good and fully support the teaching and learning of science throughout the school. Good use is made of numeracy within science, for example pupils take temperature recordings in the quadrangle, tallying their records and presenting their findings in graph form. Very good links are maintained with local industry, which enhance the provision for science education, when pupils from the school visit a pharmaceutical and a telecommunications firm to perform scientific experiments. Visits to the school by representatives also extend pupils' understanding of science at work. Areas for improvement, which will help to raise standards further, include the provision of additional textbooks to enable pupils to engage in more independent learning, better use made of the school environment for a nature reserve and the extension of the opportunities for investigative science.

ART AND DESIGN

105. By the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils attain standards that are typical for their age. They make good progress in developing ideas and are beginning to compare ideas, methods and approaches and modify and improve their own work to meet their

intentions. Pupils with special educational needs and higher achieving pupils, make particularly good progress. Higher achieving pupils are challenged well and given work, which is well matched to their capability. They are learning how to explore the work of others to assist them in developing their own.

106. Standards in art have remained the same since the last inspection. However there has been good improvement in the way pupils evaluate their work and that of others. This was a weakness in the last inspection report. The good standards achieved and the good quality of teaching have both been maintained. The school is using national guidelines for their planning.
107. From the time pupils start school they are encouraged to experiment with paint and colour, to explore pattern, to work from observation and imagination and to respond to examples of art in the world around them. Children in the reception class have enjoyed working on portraits of themselves in poster paint, which are hung as an exhibition in the foyer of the school. They have made an effective train from their attempts at printing and produced some good observational drawings of their toys. In Year 1 pupils effectively describe what they like about a favourite garment and then paint it in the way it appears to them. Even at this young age they are learning how to look at their work in different ways. By the end of the key stage, pupils can take a part of a picture and expand and extend it through imagination. They understand how to focus on line and composition. Difficult art skills are being successfully learnt by the majority of pupils. As a group they choose from all the paintings the best ones to develop. This is good progression. Higher achieving pupils are working well above expectations and develop quite complicated pictures from a simple stimulus.
108. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are competent at colour mixing and matching, using pastels and are able to use a variety of media, like charcoal, to achieve the results they want. Year 3/4 has designed animal images to print on fabric. They are learning to evaluate their work. There is a readiness to question, adapt and modify their own work and learn from their own mistakes. Some higher attainers in Year 6 show competence in painting with pastels in the styles of Debussy, Monet and Cézanne. Pupils in Year 6 can compare the ideas, methods and approaches of a variety of painters. They effectively evaluated a painting by Joseph Turner to establish the mood the artist was trying to establish. They can discuss the purpose of the work and the intended audience. They are beginning to compare methods and improve their work to meet their intentions.
109. Pupils enjoy their artwork and are enthusiastic about the practical nature of the tasks. Attitudes are good. Most pupils demonstrate concentration, collaboration and respect for the work of others. They work as individuals and most can also co-operate well in groups when required to do so. Behaviour in lessons is always good.
110. The quality of teaching is good overall and much of it is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and this is reflected in the pupils' positive response to the subject. A strength in learning is the pupils' ability to explore ideas and share information to make improvements. Pupils use the correct terminology for the subject throughout the school. Art skills are taught well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils of all abilities and pupils respond well to the stimulus achieving better results than they at first anticipate.
111. Teachers' planning is good, it gives details of learning objectives and careful attention to the development of skills and techniques. Teachers are responsible for their own assessment. However, many are not recording pupils' individual progress in art. Although good learning is taking place at both key stages, there is insufficient monitoring

of the quality of teaching, assessment and the standards being achieved. The use of information and communication technology for graphic work is well developed at Year 6 although resources for three-dimensional work are inadequate. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

112. The co-ordinator is very involved and conscientious, and has taken the subject forward. It is now well placed to develop even further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Standards in design and technology are in line with expectations nationally and pupils are making good progress. Throughout the school pupils have comprehensive experience in all aspects of the subject.
114. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are now fully met and sufficient attention is given to conveying knowledge and understanding and developing the making skills required. Pupils spend ample time evaluating their work and the work of others, in order to raise standards of achievement. The quantity and quality of work produced have improved considerably.
115. Pupils develop their making and designing skills by working with a good range of tools and materials. Each unit of work in design and technology includes the aspects of designing, making and evaluation including modification. They have regular experience in food technology. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make coleslaw, choose the fillings and handle equipment with confidence and a good awareness of hygiene and safety. They evaluate and, where necessary, modify their product. They develop skills in joining materials together using different agents and processes. They skilfully design, cut, paste and staple different shaped cards to produce moving cards, modifying them in order to improve the finished product. They experience working in clay and textiles using a range of tools and equipment. Pupils in the reception class understand the importance of using the right material when designing and making models of cars, houses and animals. In Key Stage 1 they enjoy making clay thumb pots, pinch pots and plaques and are keen to talk about what they have made. They make good use of both card and textile in their design and making of Joseph's multicoloured dream coat. They have gained good experience in printing, dyeing and stitching.
116. Pupils in Key Stage 2 extended their experience of food technology when they made sandwiches. They selected the food items required and the ingredients, created their own recipe and evaluated the finished product, suggesting ways in which it could be improved. They made pop-up versions of cards and constructed picture frames, paying particular attention to ensure that they stood up. They test the stability of different methods and constantly strive for the most effective. Each pupil works on the design considered to be most suitable. They develop good problem-solving skills. By the end of the key stage pupils have gained experience in designing and making a variety of money containers, and designing, making, testing and evaluating musical instruments using a wide range of materials including metal, wood, string and glass. They talk enthusiastically about the problems they had when making pockets for different purposes, using a range of materials. Pupils also have appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the properties of materials and discuss the most suitable material for a given purpose. They understand the importance of glazing and firing in the kiln, when they make small clay pots. They apply the skills learned in science lessons to use electric power in their moving toys, alarms and lighting up displays. The work done is always very clearly defined and pupils have good opportunities to choose materials, tools and techniques and to make decisions about their product. Pupils with SEN are making

good progress throughout the school.

117. The teaching of design and technology in the lessons seen was good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the programmes of study for the subject. They plan their lessons well and make good use of resources. They challenge the pupils to make decisions when designing, choosing materials and making their products. They use ideas to stimulate pupils' imagination and expect high standards of work. Teachers manage their classes well and their organisation is good. Pupils are well behaved during lessons and show real enthusiasm and enjoyment, as demonstrated in a Year 4/5 class when designing, making and evaluating a moveable robot using 'V tech' materials. They are attentive to their teachers and are friendly and supportive to one another, sharing ideas and equipment well. They are very interested in their work and, when talking about what they have done previously, they show pride and satisfaction in the outcomes of their efforts.
118. The work is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who gives support to colleagues and monitors the work through planning and discussion, as well as evaluating the work of pupils. There are good displays of work, which enhance the environment of the school, for example the large mobiles hanging in the central area. A useful portfolio of photographs of pupils' work has been started. There is a clear policy and scheme of work based on the national guidelines. Resources are good with a wide range of equipment and plentiful supply and are used well.

GEOGRAPHY

119. The standard of attainment in geography at the end of both key stages is average compared with that expected of pupils of similar age and pupils are making satisfactory progress.
120. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have experience and understanding of the local environment by carefully observing and mapping what they see from the school gate. They go on a trail in Harlow town centre, observing the types of shops and mapping the route taken. They develop good awareness of the wider world and people who live in it when they discuss the travels of Barnaby Bear on his travels to Jersey, London and Mexico. In London they learn about different means of travel in urban environments, the need for safety and care of the environment. They visit the Millennium Dome and gain a certificate for climbing the 311 steps of the Monument. The younger children learn their home address, talk about near and far places and address an envelope. One pupil, who travelled to Mexico, successfully contributed to class discussions on differences as well as similarities of life in Mexico. Pupils obtained real life experiences of Mexican food, when they sampled dishes prepared by their class teacher in school. Their skills of interpreting landscape are developed well, when they identify features near the school through their examination of large scale maps and suggest ways in which the local area could be made safer. They make comparisons with a contrasting environment, when they compare life on the island of Struay with life in the urban area of Harlow. In Year 2 they examine photographs of the village of Tocuara in Mexico and compare their observations with their own knowledge of Harlow. They share the first hand knowledge of pupils who have experienced life in other parts of the world to extend their knowledge and understanding of how climatic and other factors affect people's lives. They become familiar with locating places on the globe and on the world map and share their experiences of places they have visited. They study the physical and human aspects of the seaside and discuss the forces at work in shaping the landscape.
121. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have extended their knowledge of the local environment through an analysis of environmental change. For example, Year 3/4 examined a large

scale map of the school surrounds and recorded for discussion the advantages and disadvantages of proposals for locating different services such as a hospital, a supermarket or a recreational area in the vacant land which is scheduled for development. They asked searching questions and discussed the impact on the rest of the community. Their mapping skills are extended by analysing symbols found on a map of the countryside round Bishop's Stortford and identifying what the symbols represent. The study of news geography gives the pupils a very wide-ranging experience of geographical topics as varied as weather forecasts and the recent earthquake disaster in India. Pupils employ their investigative skills in geography, when they retrieve information from the Internet on mountain environments and benefit from the experiences of their teacher, when they examine video recordings of holiday travel over the Rocky Mountains of North America. They learn effectively about the importance of water to life as well as its destructive potential in flooding. They examine ways in which the environment could be profitably improved. In their study of the water cycle pupils in Key Stage 2 become familiar with the appropriate vocabulary and understand how rivers alter the landscape through erosion and transportation of material. By revisiting topics introduced in Key Stage 1, pupils extend their skills and knowledge of different aspects of geography, as for example, in map work. By the time they leave school their skills of geographical investigation are well established. Pupils with SEN at both key stages are making good progress according to their individual education plans.

122. Standards in geography have been improved significantly since the last inspection. Attention has been given to the teaching of basic skills and a greater range of topics is being taught. The scheme is based on national guidelines for the subject and a policy for the way it is taught in the school is in place.
123. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Where teaching is good or better, teachers have good knowledge of the subject, which enables them to acquire knowledge and understand it. The work is very well planned so that pupils maintain concentration, use a variety of ways to access and interpret information and acquire new skills. They develop their map reading ability as a result of their lessons in Key Stage 1, drawing maps of the area around the school and their journey through the town. They gain new knowledge of places by using atlases and globes to locate places studied as well as places visited by them. By the time pupils leave school in Year 6, they have developed investigative skills in physical geography through their study of mountains and rivers. They develop aspects of citizenship and concern for environmental issues in their survey of redevelopment in the locality. They establish links with other subjects through their study of Mexico and India. Work is systematically marked and pupils are given suggestions for improvements.
124. The geography curriculum is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has a clear vision for the development of the subject. Resources are adequate and are used well. There are good plans for enhancement of the curriculum through, for example, sponsorship of a child in the Third World through Action Aid and organising a World Café to increase learning about other parts of the world.

HISTORY

125. Only one Key Stage 1 lesson and a small number of Key Stage 2 lessons were observed but, based on this evidence, a scrutiny of work and displays, pupils generally attain the standards expected by the end of both key stages. Standards have been broadly maintained since the last inspection when they were found to be below average in relation to pupils' prior attainment. They have been improved at Key Stage 1. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

126. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can remember and recall the main facts of the 'Great Fire of London', they are aware of differences between 'now' and 'then' and are developing an understanding of time periods. Year 1 pupils are learning about toys from the past; this was greatly enhanced by a visitor from Epping Museum, who brought a collection of old toys for the pupils to observe and experiment with.
127. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are studying the Ancient Egyptians. They have also been using Ancient Greek symbols for work in English and mathematics. Pupils have used information and communication technology for artwork, and word processing to support their learning in other subjects. Year 3 is studying the Tudors and is using both video evidence and practical artefacts to gain experience of life in that time period. Year 4 is studying the Ancient Greeks. There is some overlap in the coverage of the historic periods, for example, pupils in Year 3, 4, 5 have learnt about the Tudor period this academic year.
128. The quality of teaching is sound overall. It was good in the one Key Stage 1 lesson observed where the teacher's good questioning, very clear information and expressive teaching style made the subject real to pupils. Class discussions are usually well taught but the expectations for written work are low with very little writing taking place and written work remaining unfinished.

129. The policy is out of date but the new co-ordinator is aware of this. The time allocated to the subject has been increased recently which should help raise standards. There is some monitoring of planning but monitoring of teaching does not yet take place. Present planning and monitoring do not ensure that different year groups within classes have appropriate learning opportunities. Visits and visitors greatly enhance the curriculum. There are some good links with other subjects; for example, the inclusion of dance when studying the 'Great Fire of London' and the use of 'Ancient Greek' myths to support the study of that period.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. By the time pupils are aged seven and by the time they are eleven their attainment in information and communication technology is close to that expected for their age and their achievement is good. Improvement in the subject since the last inspection is good and pupils with SEN make good progress.
131. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning in the subject is good and teachers receive very good support from their classroom assistants.
132. Pupils benefit greatly from the good subject knowledge of their teachers. Throughout the school teachers use 'Power Point' presentations effectively to introduce aspects of work using computers. When this occurs pupils follow the good examples of their teachers, becoming increasingly independent as their competence develops. For example, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can use CD ROM encyclopaedias efficiently to research information for their work in other subjects. At first they follow the presentation made by their teacher and then they experiment for themselves. They are confident learners and soon know how to access the index and search for the information they need.
133. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use computers for a range of purposes and in a range of subjects. They record data collected in mathematics on graphs and charts. In science they prepare sheets to record the details of their experiments. When they do this, they know how to switch on the computers, how to save information and how to print their work. Before printing they check the layout of their work using the print preview facility.
134. All pupils are enthusiastic learners in this aspect of provision. They often use computers voluntarily and attend lunchtime and after school computer activities. They access the colour facilities of various programs competently, using different fonts and clipart files to make their work more interesting and applying special effects when inserting, removing or changing text. Their word processing knowledge and skills are developed to levels that are appropriate for their ages.
135. Pupils are increasingly using the Internet to search for information and electronic mail to communicate. During all aspects of their learning in this subject they discuss the effectiveness of their work and often pose appropriate questions about how it might be improved.
136. The school's significant investment to improve provision in this subject is having a positive impact on standards. Use of the recently opened computer suite is planned carefully and pupils throughout the school benefit greatly from the time allocated for them to learn in this facility. Provision is also greatly enhanced by a knowledgeable classroom assistant who maintains the computers, ensuring they are ready for use and solving many problems as they arise. Another classroom assistant has created a helpful web page on which pupils and their parents can access details of their homework on their own computers.

MUSIC

137. Only one Key Stage 1 lesson was observed during the inspection and there is too little evidence to make a judgement on standards, teaching and learning. A small number of Key Stage 2 lessons were observed and some assemblies. Standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
138. In the Key Stage 1 lesson observed, pupils could clap to the pulse of a tune and were learning to beat the rhythm; they were not yet able to achieve the more complex skill of keeping the pulse going alongside the rhythm. Pupils listen well to music and can formulate ideas in response although there are too few opportunities created for them to listen to music.
139. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can sing musical notes according to the scale. They are able to compose a simple tune using five notes through improvising with tuned instruments. They can compose, using alphabetic symbols for notes, but are not yet able to use musical symbols. Year 3 and 4 pupils were listening to music by Saint-Saens and Elgar and discussing simple aspects of tempo. They can identify differences in the musical depiction of the creatures the music represents. Pupils have opportunities to sing in assemblies but there was very little teaching of singing in lessons observed throughout the school.
140. Teaching is good in the majority of lessons. Teachers show knowledge of the aspects they are teaching; there is a good range of activities and sessions are lively.
141. At present the headteacher is maintaining the subject until a new co-ordinator can be appointed. The subject is targeted for the future as part of a Creative Arts focus. The time allocated to the teaching of music is insufficient, particularly at Key Stage 1. Resources are satisfactory overall, although staff provide a good range for individual lessons. The instruments are not well maintained and some do not work, which lessens opportunities for teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. By the time pupils are seven they attain standards in physical education that are higher than those expected for their age and their achievement is good. When they are eleven their attainment is close to that expected for their age and their achievement is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and pupils with special education needs make good progress.
143. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning in the subject is good. At both key stages pupils understand the need to warm up as part of their preparation for exercise and to cool down afterwards. Teachers take care to ensure that opportunities are created in each lesson for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others. Pupils do this thoughtfully and often make helpful suggestions that illustrate their knowledge and understanding.
144. In dance at Key Stage 1 pupils move with imagination and suitable control. Their movements illustrate the effect of flames and the actions of people during the 'Great Fire' of London. The music chosen by their teacher helps them to change the speed and style of their movements to reflect the various contexts of the fire. At both key stages pupils

benefit greatly from the ability of their teachers to identify significant points for improvement and to share these with them. Teachers also use questions effectively to draw pupils towards their own conclusions about what they need to do to improve.

145. At Key Stage 2 pupils work well in gymnastics. Their movements are fluent and well controlled and many perform skills such as forward rolls correctly. Where this is the case, they are supported by the good subject knowledge of their teachers. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to extend their work by using the available large apparatus. Their work is also restricted by the space available when classes containing larger numbers of pupils are taught in the hall. When this happens, teachers are vigilant and ensure that practice is safe.
146. Pupils usually sustain their concentration and work hard to improve their skills. However, this is sometimes not the case in games at Key Stage 2. On these occasions pupils' skills are developed less well. They find it difficult to throw a small ball with sufficient accuracy; as a result catching proves to be difficult. When this happens they are often not using equipment that is well suited to their abilities, such as a larger or softer ball that would be easier to catch.
147. Pupils benefit from participation in a good range of extra curricular activities and clubs, such as rugby, football and gymnastics. Significant success has also been achieved in swimming and athletics competitions involving other local schools. The subject is well planned and led. Resources are adequate and used well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. Achievement in religious education is good at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils' standards are above those expected for their age. At the end of Key Stage 2 achievement is satisfactory and pupils' standards are in line with those expected for their age. This is good progress overall since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with expectations at the end of both key stages.
149. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils in Year 1 are keen to discuss why the Bible is special to Christians. They know the book is made up of many others, and that it is special and they show a reverence for it, but their understanding of why it is special, in the religious sense, is limited. Most respond well to the teachers' questioning and good learning is taking place. For example, pupils recognise that a bible is used for special occasions like weddings and is a treasured item in the home. However, there is a general reluctance to record what they know by writing it down. By the end of the key stage in Year 2 the pace of pupils' learning quickens and they are achieving standards above those expected for their age. In a Year 2 lesson on 'Hindu Puja', pupils were asking far reaching questions about how and why Hindus worship, making connections with their own experiences of the Christian church. Good questioning by the teacher led them to draw similarities between how a bell calls people to worship in Christianity and is also a signal drawing the attention of the Hindu gods to the fact that people are ready to worship. Most recognised that worship is special not only to Hindus but to people of many different faiths including Christianity. They are making very good progress in learning about religious concepts such as prayer.
150. In Key Stage 2 pupils' learning varies because of differing levels of teacher expectations. In some classes the teacher has high expectations for pupils with SEN and they are well stretched. However, higher achieving pupils are not given the same challenge and the work they are expected to do is too simple for their capability. In a Year 3 class pupils were asked to write an imaginary story about being lost, using the story of Jesus in the

Temple as a stimulus. Most of the pupils understood the New Testament story very well and were discussing with the teacher how Jesus must have felt and why He thought He had to be in the temple at such a young age, and against His parents wishes. However there was whole class resistance when the teacher required this understanding to be written down. Most pupils could describe their understanding of the religious significance of the story better than writing it down. Consequently, the work in their books did not effectively illustrate the progress they were making in their learning. By the end of the key stage in Year 6, pupils are able to discuss the meaning of a covenant. They know that the Jews felt they had this special contract with God. Many understand some of the implications of genocide. Most understand the need for rules and are able to translate this into the Jewish need to follow the rules set down by God but few pupils could express themselves to this degree on paper. There is little written work in the books, although there is good conceptual understanding of religious issues in terms of what pupils know and understand. The quality of learning for pupils with SEN is good.

151. Teaching in religious education is good overall, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and this is reflected in pupils' positive response to the subject. Open-ended questions guide pupils to understand and empathise with religious concepts. Questioning is used well to assess what pupils know and can do, although there is insufficient regular whole school assessment in the subject. A strength of the learning is pupils' ability to identify different religious concepts and appreciate how they could be relevant to our society today, for example, pupils were able to relate their topic on Judaism and the holocaust to facts they have recently researched from the media on the 'Holocaust Remembrance' day.
152. Attitudes are very good and pupils are interested in their work throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6 show interest and enthusiasm researching information from the computer. They share information with others and work well individually or in small groups.
153. There is a sound policy for religious education. The school follows the guidelines of the County Agreed Syllabus. This is translated into good medium term planning. A conscientious co-ordinator monitors the planning to ensure progression and coverage, although there is insufficient time to monitor teaching. Resources are adequate. The effective use of good quality artefacts enhances pupils' learning. The subject contributes well to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT

154. The achievement and progress made by pupils in the Speech and Language Unit are good. Pupils make good progress academically across the curriculum and in developing their personal and social skills. This is as a result of consistently good and occasionally very good teaching, an awareness by all adults of pupils' language levels and appropriate opportunities for pupils to integrate into classes in the main school. Teachers and learning support assistants provide good role models throughout the unit, in their careful and simplified use of the language of instruction and in their use of cued articulation and some signing, to ensure pupils understand and make progress.
155. Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy, because good assessment procedures accurately place pupils at learning stages and this enables teachers to build on prior learning. In a class with pupils up to the age of seven, pupils know, understand and can demonstrate, the difference between a shout and a whisper. They can identify animals from a collection beginning with the consonant 'f'. The teacher managed behaviour in a positive way so that learning was not interrupted, for example, 'That is a very kind thing to do, Jane' and others take note and do the same. In another lesson with older pupils, the contribution of the speech therapists ensured that the specific use of language was practised and pupils made good progress in understanding and using different question forms. Relationships within the group are very good and this encourages everyone to take part and rotate in games to reinforce learning. Younger pupils' counting skills of numbers 1–20 and knowledge of shapes are consolidated using ICT. The teacher handles the hardware and software in the ICT suite with ease and confidence and this enhances learning. The pupils are very mature and responsible in response to high expectations and display very good mouse control skills while completing their numeracy work.
156. Pupils also make good progress in design and technology and physical education. Pupils up to the age of eleven join with a mainstream class for physical education. A clear introduction and good planning meant that pupils knew what was expected of them and they were involved from the start. Within lessons, the quality and composition of movement sequences improved, as a result of the teacher's good observational skills and critical but supportive comment. There was a judicious balance between consolidating old skills and introducing new ones. Pupils were encouraged to evaluate their own and other pupils' sequences and readily share their displays. They worked hard to practise and refine their skills and showed that they enjoyed the exercise. In another lesson, older pupils from the Unit developed their design and technological capability in making and presenting a snack of sandwiches. In addition to extending their knowledge of different kinds of bread, rolls and sandwich fillings, they developed their fine motor and manipulative skills in slicing, spreading and mixing. They were able to present and display the finished products in a variety of attractive ways and evaluate the activity saying how it could be improved. Thorough preparation beforehand, good organisation, clear instruction and demonstration, ensure the lesson proceeds at a pace and learning opportunities are maximised. The pupils are sensible and mature. They have a proper regard for cleanliness and safety and work well as a group sharing ingredients in a very polite way. Effective plenaries at the end of lessons are a feature of all teaching in the Unit. For example, the teacher might say, 'Okay, let's stop now and think about what we have learnt'. Then progress is reviewed, learning confirmed and success celebrated. As a result, pupils go on to the next lesson in a positive frame of mind and with a sense of achievement.
157. Pupils from the Unit have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum, which follows the National Curriculum and gives appropriate emphasis to literacy and numeracy.

Assessment procedures are very good and contribute to pupils' progress and achievement. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are precise and inform teaching and planning. They are regularly reviewed and monitored and shared with parents. The targets are presented in such a way that pupils themselves can understand and be reminded of them. Parents are also kept well informed by 'Go-between Books' and Reading Diaries on a daily basis. The inclusive nature of the school is a particularly good feature. The amount of inclusion into the main school is appropriate and needs led. The levels of inclusion increase with age with the intention of returning pupils to their local school as soon as they have acquired the necessary academic and social skills to succeed. Pupils remain at the Unit for an average of six terms, the majority returning to mainstream primary or secondary schools in their catchment area.

158. The Unit is well led and co-ordinated. Staffing is adequate. It includes the teacher-in-charge, one other teacher and two learning support assistants. Both teachers are experienced and both are undertaking distance learning courses leading to a qualification in speech and language. The contribution of the learning support assistants is invaluable. They work with individual pupils on specific programmes under the guidance of the speech therapist, carry out ongoing assessments during lessons, support pupils on inclusion in the main school and initially in their catchment schools and contribute to reviews. The accommodation is good and is well used. Resources are satisfactory, easily accessible and well used.
159. The Speech and Language Unit caters for up to twenty children in the West Essex area. Pupils are brought in by taxi or minibus. There are clear criteria, administered by the LEA in place for the admission of pupils into the Unit. Pupils have normally undergone formal assessment and have Statements of Special Educational Need. The Unit has the services of two speech therapists, employed by the Essex Health Authority, who between them provide full-time cover. The shortage of one of these therapists, for some time now, is having a negative impact on the quality of the provision. The work of the Unit is effectively monitored by the headteacher and governing body and externally by the LEA Principal Officers (Monitoring) SEN and Psychology Service. There was a LEA review of the provision a year ago.
160. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in teaching in the Unit and as a result, in pupils' progress, achievement, attitudes and behaviour. There have been improvements also in accommodation whereby partitioning within school has reduced the noise level affecting the pupils in the Unit. The Unit has maintained the good level of inclusion, contact with parents and with other schools and agencies, noted in the previous inspection.