

# INSPECTION REPORT

East Tilbury Infant School  
East Tilbury

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique Reference Number: 115014

Headteacher: Mrs S Cosgrow

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Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Bamber  
15064

Dates of inspection: 1st to 3rd November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707312

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Princess Margaret Road East Tilbury Essex RM18 8SB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body East Tilbury Infant School
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr R Osborne
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Paul Bamber, RgI	Mathematics, design and technology, physical education	Attainment and progress; teaching; leadership and management; efficiency of the school.
Mrs Sue Thomas, Lay Inspector		Equality of opportunity; Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; attendance; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; partnership with parents and the community.
Mrs Marie Gibbon	English, art, music, religious education.	Special educational needs; curriculum and assessment.
Mrs Judith Howell	Science, information and communication technology, history, geography.	Provision for children aged under five; staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

### **What the school does well**

- The pupils make a secure start to their first stage of education as a result of the hard work of a strong staff team.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and, as a consequence, the pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work.
- The school cares very much about the welfare of the pupils.
- The school makes good provision for the social and moral development of its pupils.
- The school's provision for children aged under five years is good.
- Parents are very involved in the life of the school and make a significant contribution to their children's learning.
- The new headteacher provides the school with a very clear direction for improvement and development.
- The school's administration is efficient.

### **Where the school has weaknesses**

- I. Standards in writing are well below the national average.
- II. Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable as a result of a lack of challenge in lessons.
- III. Teachers do not always use the available information about pupils' attainment to ensure that the work they set in lessons matches the pupils' abilities.

**The weaknesses are far outweighed by the strengths but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school**

### **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last OFSTED inspection. In relation to the key issue identified as a result of that inspection, the school has made improvements in short-term planning to include learning objectives for each lesson. The school's draft strategic plan now clearly identifies targets and priorities for school improvement. Although no substantial collection of pupils' work exists, teachers meet termly to scrutinise pupils' work in certain subjects in order to agree upon the standards represented. Less improvement has been made in ensuring that teachers use recorded information about pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that the work they set closely matches pupils' needs. This applies particularly to pupils with higher attainment. Other improvements are evident in the quality of teaching, the better resources now available to support learning and the amount and impact of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The school is now in a more settled state than for some years. The Local Education Authority has now assured the school's continuing individual identity, the school has a newly appointed, forward-looking headteacher and the teaching staff are enthusiastic and are committed to raising standards. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve.

## Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools		Key
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
Reading	D	E	<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
Writing	E	E	<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
Mathematics	C	E	<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

The information shows that standards in reading are below average when compared with all schools and well below average when compared with similar schools. In writing, standards are well below average when compared with all schools and similar schools, and standards in mathematics are below average compared with all schools and well below average compared with similar schools. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science show that standards are below the national average. The findings of the inspection are that pupils in the present Year 2 are attaining average standards in mathematics and science, below average standards in reading and well below average standards in writing. They are attaining average standards in all other subjects of the National Curriculum and standards in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Some improvements in overall standards since last year have been achieved as a result of teachers' higher expectations. However, these are still not high enough, particularly for pupils with higher attainment. Children aged under five years attain above average standards in their personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. They attain average standards in mathematics but below average standards in language and literacy. At Key Stage 1, boys attain standards in reading, writing and spelling which are considerably lower than girls. However, substantially more boys have special educational needs, especially in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs usually make satisfactory progress and attain standards in line with their capabilities.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	N/A	Satisfactory
Information technology	N/A	Satisfactory
Religious education	N/A	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory

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

During the inspection, 45 lessons were observed. Of these, four were very good, 18 good, and 23 satisfactory. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when 20 per cent of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory. A major strength in the teaching is the very good relationships that teachers establish with pupils. This contributes significantly to the enjoyment that pupils gain from their lessons and the pleasant, purposeful atmosphere in the school. Weaknesses include teachers setting work that is too easy for higher attaining pupils and insufficient provision for pupils to record their work within a familiar, structured format. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and sometimes good.

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. The pupils behave very sensibly in lessons and around the school. They are polite and play well together.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are in line with the national average, but unauthorised absence is significantly higher than found nationally.
Ethos*	Good. There is now a strong commitment to improve standards; the quality of relationships is very good and there is a strong, positive partnership with the parents.
Leadership and management	Good. The headteacher, other staff with management responsibilities and the governors are united in their determination to maintain the positive ethos of the school, build a strong staff team and raise standards.
Curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides pupils with a broadly based curriculum, teaches swimming to Year 2 pupils and offers pupils a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. Pupils receive good support in lessons from well-qualified, dedicated staff. Individual education plans are clear and well linked to pupils' needs. The provision is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall. Staff are suitably qualified but many are new to teaching. Accommodation is adequate but one or two teaching areas are cramped and the hall is too small for some aspects of physical education. The quality of learning resources is good and this makes a good contribution to pupils' progress.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## The parents' views of the school

### What most parents like about the school

- IV. Their children like coming to school.
- V. They find it easy to approach the school with question or problems.
- VI. The school promotes values and attitudes, which have a positive effect upon their children.
- VII. The pupils behave very well.
- VIII. The school provides them with good information about what their children will be taught.
- IX. The school involves them actively in the life of the school.

### What some parents are not happy about

- X. They are not satisfied with the work their
- XI. They are not sufficiently informed about the

The findings of the inspection concur with the positive views of the parents. The school uses homework



satisfactorily to reinforce pupils' basic work in reading and number. Pupils are set fewer homework tasks to promote their writing skills or to involve them in seeking information. The school meets statutory requirements regarding the information it provides for parents about their children's progress.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

**The governors, headteacher and staff should address the following matters in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes still further.**

**i. improve standards in writing by:**

- increasing the frequency with which pupils practise phonics and handwriting;
- encouraging pupils in their speaking and listening activities to tell stories in sequence;
- devising structured formats for pupils to record their work and findings in subjects across the curriculum;
- monitoring the quality of writing more frequently throughout the school.

(paragraphs 61, 65, 70-79, 86, 109, 118 inclusive.)

**i. ensuring that higher attaining pupils are set consistently challenging work through:**

- teachers identifying more specific learning objectives for these pupils in their lesson plans;
- teachers providing further opportunities for higher attaining pupils to work independently on more open ended tasks;
- the school identifying medium term targets for higher attaining pupils to achieve;
- teachers setting short term targets in lessons for the amount of work that pupils should achieve in a given period of time;
- monitoring the progress of these pupils more thoroughly.

(paragraphs 20-25, 27, 50, 52, 71, 72, 82, 84, 85, 97, 89, 90 inclusive.)

**i. using information about pupils' attainment and progress more rigorously in order to:**

- ensure that teachers link the learning objectives in their planning more closely to their knowledge of pupils' previous attainment;
- set tasks for all pupils that ensure their good progress in lessons.

(paragraphs 6-15, 28, 32, 33, 40, 50, 84, 85, 89, 90, 99 inclusive.)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **· Characteristics of the school**

1. East Tilbury Infant School is situated in a village setting on the northern shores of the Thames estuary. The school serves the immediate area of mixed housing and some nearby villages. Recent demographic changes in the area have resulted in a much larger proportion of pupils entering the school with social problems and special educational needs. At present, there are 230 pupils on roll with 16 more girls than boys. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds nor pupils who come from homes where English is an additional language. Both these figures are below the national average. Sixty pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This is higher than the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.
2. The school currently has 15 children aged under five years. There are three intakes to the school during the year. The children are admitted to the school in the term in which they have their fifth birthday. Induction procedures include visits to the school by parents and children for six sessions and a welcome pack containing information for parents. Children aged under five years are taught in the Reception classes. Children generally enter at below average standards, particularly in language and literacy skills.
3. Significant changes to the school since the last OFSTED inspection involve a substantial turnover of teaching staff, including, this year, the appointment of a new headteacher and six teachers, four of whom are newly qualified. For the last three years, the school has been the subject of a review, one option within which was the amalgamation with the Junior school which shares the site. As a result, when the previous headteacher left in 1997, the governors decided not to appoint a substantive headteacher until the future of the school was decided. The school's deputy headteacher became the acting headteacher during this period.
1. The school aims to "accentuate the positive in all pupils" and to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential, experience a rich and varied curriculum, behave with regard to the needs and feelings of others, and express themselves clearly and creatively. The school also aims to involve parents and governors in its work. The school's strategic development plan for the period to 2001 prioritises improvements in standards of literacy and numeracy and more monitoring of these standards. The plan is related well to the school's aims, provides a sensible timetable for implementation and contains careful costings.

## 2. Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	42	40	82

5. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	29	26	38
	Girls	36	34	34
	Total	65	60	72
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79(75)	73(72)	88(72)
	National	82 (80)	83(81)	87(84)

5. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	25	37	38
	Girls	34	33	31
	Total	59	70	69
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	72(67)	85(72)	84(79)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

5.

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
through absence for the latest complete reporting year: 1998/99	Authorised	School	5.7
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	1.3
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

### 5. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year: 1999		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

### 5. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	9
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

## 5. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### 5. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### 5. **Attainment and progress**

6. Analysis of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national test results shows that in reading, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was just below the national average, but that the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 was average. In writing, the percentage of pupils attaining at Level 2 or above was well below the national average and the proportion achieving higher levels was broadly in line with the average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above in mathematics was in line with the national average. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards are below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. When these averages are compared with those of similar schools, they show standards well below the average in reading, writing and mathematics.

7. When the Key Stage 1 test results are compared with those of the previous three years, they show an improvement in mathematics, similar standards in reading and a decline in writing. Over this period, girls have consistently outperformed boys in reading and writing. In mathematics, the relative performance of boys and girls has fluctuated but, overall, they have achieved similar standards. Although there was some improvement in 1999 in the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels, generally, this has been below the average. Analysis of the 1999 end of key stage assessments by teachers in science shows that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was below the national average.

8. The findings of this inspection are that the proportion of pupils in the present Year 2 who are attaining standards in line with the national expectation for age is around the average in mathematics, below the average in reading and well below the average in writing. This represents a fall in standards in reading and writing since the last OFSTED inspection. This can partly be explained by the increase in the number of children with special educational needs who have joined the school since then. Standards in numeracy are in line with those expected for age. They are below this expectation in literacy, but with some higher attainment evident amongst younger pupils. The present Year 2 cohort has over 40 per cent of the pupils with special educational needs, which affects average standards negatively, particularly in literacy. The findings of the inspection are broadly in line with the 1999 end of key stage test results. However, in comparison, a smaller proportion of pupils are attaining at higher levels.

9. In speaking and listening, by the age of seven, pupils attain below average standards. This is due to pupils being given insufficient opportunity to talk in a more structured formal situation. Although most of them listen well and take part in class discussions willingly, many find it difficult to develop their answers beyond a single statement and to articulate their thoughts clearly. Standards in reading are below average. Whilst higher attaining pupils generally use their knowledge of words and phonics to read fluently, many need support to apply this knowledge to read unfamiliar texts. Few higher attaining pupils read challenging texts and most pupils read an insufficient range of texts and find difficulty in talking about the plot and characters of stories that they read. Standards in writing are well below average. Pupils do not use punctuation consistently accurately and spell poorly. They find it difficult to record what they have done in other subjects, such as science and design and technology. Pupils do not develop a sound sense of sequence when writing stories. In mathematics, pupils achieve average standards. They combine numbers by addition to at least twenty, count back in ones from one hundred, and distinguish even from odd numbers. Higher attaining pupils divide shapes into halves and quarters. In their work on shape and measure, pupils name two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and measure using metres and centimetres. Weaker aspects of pupils' attainment include a limited knowledge of mathematical language, and a lack of speed in mental calculations. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in science by the age of seven. They know that plants and animals grow, record seed growth, sort materials into categories, according to texture and appearance, investigate how materials change shape when twisted or pulled and understand that toy cars travel different distances according to force and friction. Their recording skills in science are very limited.

10. In religious education, pupils attain standards in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils know that Christians worship God in church and that the Bible is a special book. They understand some of the similarities and differences between Christianity and other religions through learning about the Hindu festival of Diwali. By the age of seven, in information technology, pupils attain average

standards. Pupils use computers to communicate ideas in text and pictures, have good control of a 'mouse' and correctly identify icons, which call up programs and functions. They enter data, with help from adults, about the weather and print off graphs to illustrate it. They do not use CD-ROMS to help them find out further information about their work across the curriculum.

11. Pupils, by the age seven, achieve average standards in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In art, pupils draw carefully from observation and mix and blend colours to achieve effects such as stripes and skin colour. In design and technology, they create three-dimensional effects with folded paper or straws. In history, they know why certain people are famous, such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale, and recognise changes in methods of transport over time. In geography, they draw maps of the school and contrast their own lives with those of children in an African village and in music, they sing from memory and use simple notation to follow melodies. Pupils skilfully control a ball with many parts of their bodies in physical education and learn rudimentary tactics of invasion and evasion when playing simple games.

12. In recent years, when they enter the school, the attainment of children aged under five years has been below average, particularly in language and literacy. The attainment of the children who entered the school in September 1999 is average overall. Within this judgement, the children's personal and social development is good and they make good progress. They are happy in school, play well together, take turns and relate well to other children and adults. They behave well, listen attentively and understand the difference between right and wrong. The children attain standards in language below those expected for their age, but make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Many enter the school with poor language skills. Although they listen well and answer questions readily, their responses are often expressed in very short sentences or phrases. They enjoy looking at books, understand how they are organised and recognise characters from illustration. They practise letter formation and many attempt to write their own names. However, few communicate by writing simple words and phrases. Some higher attaining children use upper and lower case letters correctly. Children achieve satisfactory standards in mathematics. They use appropriate language to describe weight and height and most know numbers to ten. They copy and continue repeating patterns using beads, counters or cubes. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, children attain above average standards and progress well. They explore the world outside the school building, noting sounds and features, name visible parts of the body and develop an awareness of the past by studying old toys and carpet beaters. They draw and paint what they observe, explore routes using maps, make models and move objects on a computer screen with a 'mouse'. In their physical development, children attain well and make good progress. They use tools well to paint and construct, develop greater control over their movements when running, jumping and climbing and throwing and catch well for their age. Children's creative development and progress are good. They draw well with a pencil to recreate a human head, sing traditional songs in tune, remembering the words, and act out imaginary scenes, assuming the roles of veterinary surgeons or shopkeepers in their play.

13. Overall, the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they receive support and attain satisfactory standards for their capabilities. However, when they do not receive support, their progress is less marked and sometimes unsatisfactory. Their individual education plans identify appropriate, realistic targets which are well focused on their needs. This is reflected well in planning for their work in literacy but less successfully in other subjects. Teachers, teaching assistants and the co-ordinator for special educational needs plan together effectively to ensure a good understanding of pupils' needs. Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed and their targets are adjusted appropriately. In these termly reviews, pupils move up and down the stages of the register and some pupils move off the register completely.

14. Pupils show progress in reading by increasing their fluency and using more expression. In writing, pupils' progress is less marked and they do not increase their ability to use upper and lower case letters correctly, spell with accuracy or develop their use of a wider vocabulary. In Year 2, a much larger proportion of the pupils with special educational needs are boys and there is a significant difference in the progress they make, as compared with girls, in writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, as they respond to questions at greater length and listen to their teachers and fellow pupils with more attention. In mathematics, pupils show progress by coping with larger numbers to add together, naming more common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and measuring and estimating length with more accuracy. Satisfactory progress in science is evident as pupils develop their ability to use observations to predict outcomes and know more about the life cycles of animals and humans. Across all of these areas of the curriculum, pupils with higher attainment are often insufficiently challenged in lessons and do not always make as much progress

as others in the class. In information technology, pupils become quicker at using keyboards and use more functions, which they access by using icons on the computer screen. In religious education, pupils become more aware of the meaning of some stories from the Bible and increasingly understand that people worship in different ways. Progress in art is evident, when pupils draw more accurately, use an increasing number of media and show a growing use of colour. In design and technology, pupils show progress as they appreciate more that their products need to meet certain criteria. In geography, pupils progress in their use of maps from simple ones of the school building and grounds, to tracing routes from street maps. In history, they become more aware of the differences that occur over time and of the significance of famous people in the past. In music, progress is indicated as pupils begin to understand musical notation and play more instruments and in physical education, they move more safely and use more sophisticated methods of controlling and sending a ball.

## **5. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

15. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. In all lessons, they have a positive approach to their work. They usually listen attentively to their teachers and work conscientiously. Pupils are keen to take part in lessons and enjoy answering teachers' questions. When well taught, they respond with enthusiasm. In a Year 2 music lesson, pupils enjoyed learning a new song and spontaneously suggested using instruments to accompany themselves. Children aged under five years enjoy school, listen attentively to their teachers and take pride in learning new facts.

16. Behaviour in class, in the playground and in moving around the school is very good. Pupils line up quietly for assembly and know school routines well. They play purposefully together and there is no bullying. Ninety-five per cent of the parents who returned the questionnaire felt that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. Children aged under five years settle quickly into the school routines, behave well and have a positive approach to their learning activities.

17. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils respect adults and teachers value the pupils as individuals. Teachers work well together as a team. All support staff uphold the school's values well and make a very worthwhile contribution to the running of the school. In addition to his usual tasks, the caretaker paints highly attractive scenes for displays which the pupils enjoy and respect. Office staff give a warm welcome to visitors and parents. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the very good relationships within the school. All pupils are equally valued. In this caring and supportive atmosphere, pupils with special educational needs respond well in lessons and play a full part in the school community. Children aged under five years relate very well to each other, learn to take turns and share resources willingly.

18. Personal development is good. Pupils develop an awareness of their responsibility as citizens. They collect for local and national charities. Harvest gifts are donated to local elderly folk and the school was pleased to receive many letters and cards of appreciation from the recipients of these gifts. Pupils enjoy their monitorial duties around the school. In some cases, there are too few opportunities in lessons for pupils to extend their thinking and to take responsibility for their own learning. The personal development of children aged under five years is good and they show a good independence for their age.

## **5. Attendance**

19. Attendance is satisfactory and is broadly in line with the national average. However, unauthorised absence is much higher than the national average. This is due largely to parents taking their children on holiday in term time and to sickness. The school says the area in which the school is situated on the Thames estuary gives rise to numerous ear, nose and throat problems. Registration is efficient. Teachers mark registers correctly. Most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings and lessons begin on time throughout the day.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **5. Teaching**

20. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is the case for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Of the 45 lessons observed during the inspection, four were very good, eighteen good and 23 satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This represents a good improvement since the last OFSTED inspection, when the quality of teaching was judged to vary between good and unsatisfactory with 20 per cent of lessons judged to be less than sound. The judgement of this inspection is particularly positive when the relative inexperience of the teaching staff is taken into consideration. Six of the nine class teachers are new to the school and four of these are newly qualified. The quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the very good standards of pupils' behaviour and the satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress that pupils make. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.

21. The quality of teaching for children aged under five years is good overall. This has a positive impact on the children's attainment and progress. Teachers show a sensitive understanding of the needs of young children and know them well. Teachers plan tasks that are purposeful and well organised. The direct teaching of literacy is good and in mathematics, it is satisfactory. In general, expectations are realistic, but, at times, there is insufficient challenge in some tasks for the higher attaining children. Routines are well established and teachers manage children very well. Teachers and classroom assistant work effectively as a team and all listen with interest to what the children have to say. Through careful questioning, they develop the children's knowledge and understanding. However, staff do not systematically record their daily observations of children's development in order to plan further work matched to their specific needs. In general, teachers make good use of time and resources.

22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In English lessons, the work set for pupils is appropriately matched to the targets on their individual education plans. This is not always the case in other subjects. Targets are clear and realistic and are reviewed on at least a termly basis. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and encourage them to become more confident in their attitudes to meeting challenges.

23. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall with many good features. Of the 38 lessons observed at this key stage, three were very good, 15 were good and 20 satisfactory. A major strength of the teaching is the very good relationships that class teachers and other adults, who support pupils in classrooms, have with the pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and have very good attitudes to their work. Teachers positively encourage pupils to behave very well and pupils respond by working with the minimum of disruption to teaching and learning. In the best lessons, teachers plan work which challenges pupils of all abilities and thus ensures their good progress. This was evident in a lesson on measurement where the teacher challenged higher attaining pupils to think hard about different ways in which a 30 centimetre rule could be used. Where teachers do not plan in such detail, learning objectives are often too broad and, as a result, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Teachers do not always sufficiently use the targets within pupils' individual education plans, which address their specific weaknesses, to set work for pupils with special educational needs.

24. At Key Stage 1, teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. Those teachers who have good subject knowledge and are fully aware of the needs of pupils of this age respond flexibly to pupils' difficulties. This ensures that pupils understand concepts better and teachers limit the number of new facts they introduce at one time so that pupils can hold them in their memory over time. Where teaching is not as effective, teachers try to introduce too many new concepts at once and pupils forget some of them by the end of the lesson. Teachers generally provide pupils with good quality resources, use them well and encourage their pupils to treat them with respect. This means that pupils are motivated and gain valuable experience in using books, apparatus and equipment to aid their learning. In the best lessons, teachers use questions skilfully to promote understanding and to include all pupils in oral sessions. This was well illustrated in a very good literacy lesson about structure in story writing, during which the teacher asked questions of differing degrees of difficulty to ensure that all pupils were included and challenged.

25. Teachers' knowledge of pupils' attainment is not always used to promote their best progress. Although teachers keep records of what pupils understand or can do, this information is too broadly based to provide a foundation for planning the future work of all pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils. As a result, those pupils capable of achieving high standards are often not sufficiently challenged in lessons. They finish work too

quickly, having found it too easy.

26. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to reinforce learning in literacy and numeracy and to encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning.

## **5. Curriculum and Assessment**

27. Overall, the curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and personal and social education. Curricular provision is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements, where these apply, including those for sex education and for making children aware of the dangers of drugs abuse. Weekly teaching hours are satisfactory and time allocations for the different subjects are appropriate. There is daily teaching of literacy and numeracy. Provision for these is sound and time is appropriately allocated. The curriculum generally promotes the aims of the school effectively. In most cases, curricular provision promotes the pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development satisfactorily and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. However, there are weaknesses in some aspects of curricular provision for mathematics and science and for higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2.

28. The school's previous inspection report identified as a key issue the refinement of short term planning, to ensure that specific learning objectives meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and identify clear targets for pupils' progress. Although the school has made some progress in addressing this key issue, it recognises that this remains a priority for further development. The frameworks for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies provide effective support for short term planning in these areas and teachers in the same year group plan together weekly to an agreed format. These plans identify work for pupils of differing levels of ability, but the activities do not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. The school is currently trialing setting short term targets in literacy and numeracy in two classes. The process has only just begun and further development has been identified in the school development plan. There has been some improvement, since the last inspection, in the curriculum for mathematics and science and, although investigative work has improved, it still remains a weaker element in both subjects. Individual data handling is still insufficiently developed in mathematics. The teaching of phonics has improved since the last inspection through the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, but it does not always provide sufficient support for pupils' reading. Plans for topic work provide for subjects to be taught both discretely and within the topic. In practice, this results in a lack of clarity about the exact coverage of the National Curriculum experiences in some subjects. The school has recognised this and is currently reviewing its provision, particularly in religious education.

29. The school makes good provision for pupils' next stage of learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to visit the adjacent Junior school, on a formal and informal basis, and teachers from both schools meet to ensure that transfer arrangements cause the minimum of disruption to pupils' progress in learning. A particularly effective part of the provision is the opportunity for pupils who have just left the Infant school to talk about their own experiences and to answer questions from pupils in the current Year 2. The school aims to provide all pupils with equality of opportunity. In practice, pupils, apart from higher attaining pupils in some lessons, receive fully equality of opportunity.

30. The curriculum for the children aged under five years is broad, balanced and relevant. The programme of activities based on the designated areas of learning is clearly planned and meets the needs of the children well. Provision for indoor activities is good, both in range and frequency. Literacy and numeracy activities are well structured and all play activities are planned for and appropriately organised within the areas of learning. However, planning for outdoor physical play is not formalised and there is a shortage of equipment for outdoor play. Provision for children aged under five years with special educational needs is good, particularly for children with significant special educational needs. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Children are assessed on entry to school using the detailed Local Education Authority's procedures and, in general, the results of these assessments are used appropriately to identify and plan for their individual needs.

31. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils receive good support in classrooms and also receive individual help, usually in language and literacy. They have full access to the curriculum. The targets on individual education plans are clear and are well linked to pupils' needs. They identify realistic and achievable steps forward for the pupils. However, teachers do not always consider individuals sufficiently when planning work for these pupils. There are good procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and for the review of their progress. The school has just begun the



process of identifying higher attaining pupils so that their good progress is ensured, but procedures are still in the planning stage. The school's procedures for assessment and record keeping for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teaching assistants carry out activities, planned together with the teachers, very effectively and keep careful and appropriate records of pupils' progress. Teaching assistants, teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs work well together.

32. The quality of assessment in the school is satisfactory. The school has useful guidelines for assessment, recording and reporting as well as marking, monitoring and evaluation. However, these have only recently been reviewed and amended and are not yet fully implemented. In the school's previous OFSTED inspection report, a key issue for action was 'to raise expectations of pupil capability, by using appropriate baseline assessment to inform planning which extends pupil achievement'. The school now has a system of assessing pupils on entry to the school, which is generally effective in providing a broad picture of pupils' abilities and as a baseline for tracking pupils' progress. This has proved to be particularly effective in assessing pupils' abilities in spelling and reading. However, this information is not sufficiently used to set clear targets to extend pupils' achievements. A further key issue was to provide a moderated school assessment portfolio, so that teachers could accurately assess pupils attainment against National Curriculum levels. The school now has a system whereby pieces of work in all subject areas are regularly assessed against National Curriculum levels and time is allocated in staff meetings to discuss pupils' work. This system has been recently established and, partly as a result of a high number of staff changes, is not yet used fully to ensure consistent standards. Teachers also keep useful class books, which include samples of pupils' work from all activities covered for each term.

33. There is a sound whole-school system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and which is generally well maintained for all subjects. In literacy, the school has recently administered a standardised spelling test, in order to establish pupils' attainment and to support the development of target setting. However, comments in pupils' progress records are still insufficiently linked to National Curriculum levels. Although a sound range of procedures for assessment has now been established, teachers do not use assessment information sufficiently to plan pupils' future work. This is true particularly in terms of providing sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Although the school has set realistic whole-school targets for improvement, it has not yet adequately identified targets for groups or individuals. Teachers plan carefully and conscientiously, but do not consistently use the information from assessment to provide appropriate challenge for all levels of ability. Annual reports to parents about their children's achievements include the statutory information required. However, as was identified in the school's previous inspection report, they are descriptive and do not sufficiently identify the next stages for development.

34. The curriculum is enhanced by special events such as book weeks, visiting story-tellers, and musical concerts. Pupils visit the local church and make use of the local area in their studies. Year 2 pupils swim at the local pool and receive instruction from well qualified staff. This is an unusual provision at Key Stage 1 and promotes pupils' health and safety. Extra-curricular provision is good. Pupils take part in a number of after school clubs including ball-skills, art, choir and a writers' club. In the spring and summer terms, mathematics and science clubs are also offered. A good number of pupils take part each week and about 30 pupils take part in the ball-skills club. Most staff are involved in extra-curricular activities including some of the support staff.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

35. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There is a well-prepared policy, which gives clear guidance to teachers on how to develop spirituality in lessons. Teachers have yet to incorporate the policy into their planning and, as a result, provide pupils with few opportunities in lessons to develop their spiritual awareness. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on spiritual matters in assemblies, to develop their own beliefs and to respect and understand the beliefs of others. The headteacher creates an appropriate atmosphere for worship by dimming the lights and lighting candles to enable pupils to concentrate on a theme.

36. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. This has been maintained since the last OFSTED inspection. Pupils know right from wrong and are taught to be aware of those less fortunate than themselves. Recent school policies, such as that for special educational needs, reflect the school's aim for pupils to learn courtesy and consideration for others.

37. Provision for social development is good. Pupils have discussed how they should behave in and around school and most classes have class rules displayed. Pupils mix well and learn to think about the consequences of their actions and their impact on others. They willingly accept responsibility and carry out their duties

earnestly.

38. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school introduces pupils successfully to the heritage of the local area and to local and national traditions. For example, in geography and history, pupils study local villages and create maps of the area showing relevant landmarks. They also learn about famous people such as Guy Fawkes. In art, pupils study the work of different artists. In the Reception classes, pupils make good observational drawings of Modigliani's Four Heads. A range of music from different cultures is used in physical education. Attractive displays, such as the books and artefacts of the major world religions, help to develop pupils' understanding of the world.

39. The provision to support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for children aged under five years is good. Appropriate opportunities are planned and provided for spontaneous play, which fully support the children's progress in personal and social areas. Religious education is taught as a separate subject and cultural traditions are gradually introduced to the children at the appropriate times.

## **5. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

40. The quality of the support, guidance and welfare that the school provides for its pupils is good. The school continues to provide a caring, supportive environment in which the pupils learn. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress are satisfactory. Teachers meet together each week to plan lessons. Staff in each year group carry out curricular reviews and gather together samples of pupils' work to match to National Curriculum levels, in order to help them assess pupils' progress accurately. The quality of marking is variable. It is best when teachers make helpful comments showing pupils how they may improve their work. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are well prepared. Teachers are aware of the plans but do not always prepare their lessons with these in mind. Staff know the pupils well. Pupils trust the staff and are confident to approach them with any problems, which are dealt with swiftly. All children receive sensitive support and guidance from all adults in the Reception classes. Very good relationships are promoted by all adults, who work with the children, and there is a caring and supportive environment in which daily routines are firmly established. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils feel safe and secure in their surroundings and there is an atmosphere of trust and confidence in the classrooms. The school receives good support from and is in regular contact with outside agencies and specialists such as the special educational needs support service, an educational psychologist, speech therapists, social services and the educational welfare service.

41. The school prepares pupils well for entry to the Reception class and for moving on to the Junior school. Young children are invited to the school for several mornings before admission. They receive a well-prepared and useful pre-school pack which includes reading books and games to play to familiarise them with literacy and numeracy concepts. Parents receive advisory leaflets with helpful guidance on reading with their child. When pupils reach Year 2, they are invited to the Junior school to meet their new teacher and to see their new classroom.

42. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Parents are required to inform the school immediately of the reason for their child's absence. Registers are checked daily by the administrative staff. The head teacher, or the secretary, contacts home if no notification of absence has been received. Pupils are praised for good attendance and enjoy receiving certificates for one hundred per cent attendance at the end of each month. Where necessary, appropriate referrals are made to the educational welfare officer.

43. Measures to promote discipline are good. All staff are aware of the clear procedures set out in the school's behaviour policy. All staff apply the policy consistently and set firm boundaries for acceptable behaviour. Pupils appreciate the gold stars awarded for good behaviour.

44. Child protection measures are satisfactory. The school follows the Local Authority guidelines. The policy contains clear guidance on the recognition of signs of possible abuse. The school has a high commitment to health and safety. Arrangements for monitoring safety in the classroom and for school events are good. Risk assessments are carried out; possible problems are identified and suitable procedures put in place to ensure the well-being of all. A governor, together with the deputy headteacher and the caretaker, inspects the premises once a term. Any action required is noted and a detailed report is given to the full governing body.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

45. The partnership with parents is very good and is a significant strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last OFSTED inspection. Parents are very supportive of the school and the school places a high value on their involvement. The quality of the information that parents receive is very good. The prospectus is very informative and is a good introduction to school life. The governors' Annual Report to parents is an interesting summary of the school year. Reading records are used well by teachers to create a useful dialogue between parents and teachers. Parents appreciate the weekly newsletter recently introduced by the new headteacher. Ninety per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire felt that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress and 91 per cent felt that they were given a clear understanding of what is taught. Pupils' end-of-year reports are satisfactory but often rather bland. Parents feel that they could be more informative. They do not contain targets for improvement. Induction procedures for the children starting school, which includes regular visits to the school before entry, are very effective and ensure that the children have a happy and secure start to their school life. All parents of children aged under five years have the opportunity to meet the teachers before their children start school. Parents and children are invited to fill in a book 'All about me' and are provided with a pre-school pack which contains a selection of books for the children to use with their parents. There are regular opportunities for parents to meet with staff and discuss their children's progress and the information boards provided for parents keep them well informed of daily routines and special events. The school has good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. There are appropriate, formal arrangements for parents to discuss their children's progress where individual education plans are reviewed and discussed. There is good informal contact between staff and parents, which helps to ensure that pupils' needs are addressed quickly and effectively.

46. Ninety-six per cent of parents feel that they are encouraged to play a part in the life of the school. Parents bring their child into school each morning and spend the first ten minutes reading with their child or helping with writing. This enables parents to be actively involved with their children's school work. Many parents help in class and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Some parents assist in the running of clubs such as the reading and mathematics clubs. They appreciate this opportunity and feel that it gives them a good insight into what their child studies and enables them to help their child at home. Every Friday morning, parents welcome the chance to meet their child's teacher for an informal chat about progress. The school holds curriculum workshops to explain new educational initiatives such as the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. Parents' attendance at these events is limited. There is an active Parent Teacher Association, which organises fund-raising and social events. Parents' attendance at these events is very good. Last year, the Association raised £4000, which was shared between the Infant and Junior schools.

47. Links with the community to enrich the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils take part in a variety of stimulating activities. They perform at the Infant Music Festival and visit the local church to learn more about the Christian religion. The local vicar visits the school and takes part in assemblies. Local community studies are enhanced by visits to surrounding villages such as Stanford-le-Hope. The school has benefited from some sponsorship from local industry. Certificates were awarded to children by one local business for the part they played in a road safety competition.

## **5. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **5. Leadership and management**

48. The quality of the school's leadership and management is good. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the school's last OFSTED inspection. The newly appointed headteacher, who has been in post only since September 1999, has rapidly established a clear vision for the future of the school. This is rooted in improving standards of attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy, and in ensuring high quality teaching for all pupils. This determination is already bearing fruit and, with the full support of the governing body, her deputy and other staff with management responsibilities, the headteacher has, through written and oral communication, set challenging targets for school improvement.

49. The new headteacher has already formed a very positive staff team, who are united in their

determination to provide the pupils with both security and challenge. The school has recognised weaknesses in pupils' attainment in writing and spelling and has identified this as a priority for improvement in the new draft strategic plan. In addition, underachievement by higher attaining pupils has been identified and the school plans to ensure that these pupils fulfil their potential in future national tests. The headteacher has a clear overview of provision and planning for the children aged under five years. The early years co-ordinator provides sound leadership and management. There is a good ethos and the quality of relationships in the Reception classes is very good. All children receive full equality of opportunity. The school meets all statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs. There is a designated governor for special educational needs, who has regular contact with the co-ordinator for special educational needs and who is interested and supportive of the school.

50. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have observed teaching, sampled pupils' work and monitored teachers' plans. This has already had an impact on improving standards in this academic year. They have provided teachers with feedback, which has particularly helped newly qualified teachers to modify their approach to teaching and planning. The headteacher visits classrooms daily and supports teachers through comment and working with individual pupils. As so many of the teaching staff are newly qualified, monitoring standards in subjects, other than literacy and numeracy, is very limited. The numeracy co-ordinator has carefully analysed the pupils' performance in recent national tests and, as a result, has identified weaknesses in certain areas. This has yet to have a sufficient impact upon classroom teaching in order to address these weaknesses.

51. The governors are supportive of the school and are very aware of the priorities for improvement. Many have undergone training specific to their responsibilities, notably those governors responsible for overseeing the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy and the provision for special educational needs. For some time, the future of the school as a separate entity has been in doubt and long-serving governors have worked hard to ensure that morale has remained high and the school has remained forward-looking. The governors, through the committee structure, ensure that they are well informed about the progress the school makes in curriculum areas and that staff are recruited in order to provide a good balance of expertise.

52. The school's ethos is good. The welfare of the pupils is a strong priority and all those who work in and influence the school ensure a happy and secure atmosphere in which parents are involved as valuable partners in the all-round education of the children. Although there is evidence of a history of low expectations of the standard of work that pupils should achieve, particularly the higher attaining pupils, this has now been recognised and is a priority for improvement. In other respects, the school meets its aims well. All statutory requirements are met.

## 5. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

53. The number, qualifications and experience of the school's teaching staff meet the needs of the curriculum satisfactorily. Over the last two years, there have been considerable changes of staff, due to the issue of possible amalgamation of the Infant and Junior schools. Since the issue was resolved, in April 1999, and it was decided that each school would maintain its independent basis, the governors have appointed a new headteacher and six new members of staff. Five of these are newly qualified teachers. In all, the school has ten full-time teachers and two part-time teachers who, between them, provide the school with sound expertise in most areas of the curriculum. One part-time teacher is effectively employed as the special educational needs co-ordinator. The other part-time teacher has been sensibly appointed to support the professional development of all staff, but, in particular, the newly qualified teachers and to provide non-contact time for the deputy headteacher. The six teaching assistants work for a total of 109 hours weekly, which, in general, is a low number for this size of school. They include teacher assistants who, at present, are designated to support special educational needs pupils in Year 1 and 2, plus a full-time teacher assistant for the Reception classes. These staff are well qualified and have a suitable range of experience between them. All staff, both teaching and support, work very well as a team and are committed to the school, and to the pupils' learning and welfare. Very effective use is made of the skills of the many volunteer helpers. A good level of administrative support ensures that the daily business of the school runs smoothly. The qualifications and experience of the teachers and classroom assistants in the early years unit meet the needs of the young children well. One newly qualified teacher, is very well monitored and supported by the early years co-ordinator. In general, however, the amount of assistance provided by the school is insufficient for the number of young children.

54. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a part time non-teaching role. She has used her expertise well, in her relatively short time in the post, to ensure that the school's provision meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and to provide support and guidance for the development of the staff's knowledge and expertise. The six teaching assistants link well with class teachers, pupils, parents and the co-ordinator for special educational needs and provide effective support for pupils. However, there are insufficient support staff to meet the needs of all pupils who require assistance.

55. The school's arrangement for the professional development of teaching and support staff is good and training is related to both the priorities of the school and the needs of the individual staff. Teaching and support staff all have the opportunity for further professional training. The school's current arrangements for the statutory appraisal of teachers meet requirements. In addition, the headteacher has held professional development meetings with all staff to discuss personal targets. Job descriptions are in place, tailored to the individual. Induction procedures for the newly qualified staff are excellent. The Local Education Authority's 'Early Start' scheme enables newly qualified teachers to join their appointed school as soon as they qualify. All have suitably qualified mentors and the headteacher has taken on the role as their induction tutor. All have been allocated the required non-contact time for their own professional development and actively participate in school development by overseeing a curriculum area in which they are interested.

56. Although the school's accommodation is satisfactory overall, it has some shortcomings in terms of adequate space, which place some restriction on teaching methods. Year group classrooms are designed as shared open plan teaching areas and this has some implications for the rigour of teaching and learning. This difficulty is mostly overcome by careful organisation and planning. However, at certain times, the working noise from the parallel class can be intrusive. There is good library provision, a small separate special educational needs room and an audio-visual room, that is also used to store resources. The Reception class base has its own toilets, cloakroom and playground. At present, it is of adequate size to meet the needs of the children's daily activities. It is a pleasant environment with open plan areas, which are well used by both teachers. Good use is made of accommodation within the school for the special educational needs co-ordinator. It provides a focal meeting point for all involved with special educational needs provision, both in and outside the school. The multi-purpose hall is too small for some physical education activities and school concerts. The school is very well cared for by the caretaker and cleaners, well decorated and very clean. The cracks appearing in the roof, as reported in the previous inspection, remain a concern. The site itself is spacious and includes both hard-surfaced and separate grassed play areas, an adventure area and a wildlife area with a pond. With increasing pupil numbers and a commitment to nursery education in the borough, three new classrooms are shortly to be built in order to accommodate a Nursery.

57. Overall, the quality and quantity of the school's learning resources are good. Since the last inspection,

additional resources have been purchased for geography, music and mathematics. Resources for special educational needs are good. Learning resources for indoor activities are good and are effectively used to support all areas of learning. For the pupils' outdoor play, they are insufficient. There is a developing range of resources within the school and these are well supplemented by the co-ordinator and by the creativity of teaching assistants. Although the range of resources provided for children aged under five has improved, there is a lack of outdoor play equipment. Resources for teaching information technology are good and fully support curricular requirements. The library is suitably stocked and catalogued with non-fiction books and reading books are well organised and easily accessible. Overall, the quality and quantity of the school's learning resources make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. The school makes very good use of the local environment as a resource and a wide range of visits to places of interest enhance the curriculum.

## **5. The efficiency of the school**

58. The management of the school's resources is good. This is an improvement on the previous OFSTED inspection, which found this aspect to be sound. The quality of financial planning is good and governors carefully anticipate the impact of changes to the school roll, of building programmes and curricular initiatives in their budget planning. The school has prudently built up a substantial reserve, over the last two years, in order to fund an increase in staffing costs and the purchase of new furniture, which were made necessary by the increase in the school roll and the building of new classrooms. Priorities in the school's new strategic development plan are carefully costed and the governing body has published a very coherent statement about how it will achieve value for money in all its spending.

59. Procedures for monitoring spending are good. Regular statements about income and expenditure are provided for the governors' finance committee and the whole governing body. This ensures that expenditure is in line with forecasts. A recent external financial audit confirmed that the school's financial procedures are in good order and the school has implemented the very few recommendations made in the audit report. Money allocated for staff training is well used. Of particular note is the very good use of these funds to provide the newly appointed staff with opportunities to be involved with the school before taking up their posts and for good support since starting teaching at the school. Funds allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are used well. The provision for these pupils is well managed by the part-time special educational needs co-ordinator and money is spent wisely in employing dedicated and well qualified teaching assistants.

60. The deployment of the school's teaching and support staff is efficiently managed. Teachers are used well as classroom teachers; the more experienced teachers carry out their management roles efficiently and teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The two Reception teachers work effectively together. The teaching assistant is appropriately deployed and makes an important contribution to the progress made by the children. The school's accommodation is used well. Despite restrictions on space in the school hall and in some teaching areas, teaching staff fully use the available space to provide pupils with a wide variety of experiences. A well-equipped audio-visual room is used as a specialist teaching room for music and for viewing television programmes. Resources are effectively used and often contribute very well to the progress that pupils make in lessons.

61. Pupils enter the school with below average standards, particularly in language and literacy. They make satisfactory and, in some cases, good progress. The quality of relationships and standards of behaviour are very good, as is the partnership with parents. Leadership and management are good and the pupils develop well socially and morally. Set against this, standards in writing and spelling are well below the national average and few higher attaining pupils attain above average standards. On balance, the school offers satisfactory value for money. This is a similar judgement to that made in the school's last OFSTED inspection report.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **5. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

62. There were no key issues for action dealing with provision for children aged under five in the previous report. Children at pre-Key Stage 1 were said to have opportunity to experience the full range of areas of learning. However, the report stated that children have a narrow range of resources provided for writing, speaking and listening and role-play. Although these shortcomings have been rectified, there are insufficient resources for the children's outdoor play.

63. The children are admitted to the school full time at the beginning of the term in which their fifth birthday occurs. A very effective induction programme before starting ensures that they have a confident and happy start to their school life. The school provides a secure and caring environment, with daily routines firmly established. Relationships with adults are good and children feel able to ask for help when they need it. Levels of assistance provided by the school are low with only one full-time classroom assistant between the two Reception classes. She does, however, provide very good support to both teachers and children. Teaching is good overall and careful attention is paid to providing appropriate activities for children in the more formal lessons for literacy and numeracy. The programme of activities planned on the recommended areas of learning for this age is good and meets the needs of the children well. Soon after entry to the school, a detailed assessment is made of the children's skills and, from this, it is judged that usually standards are low for children of this age. From this starting point, the great majority of children, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and, by the time they are five years old, most are on course to meet, or have the potential to exceed, the Desirable Learning Outcomes in most areas of learning. However, in the core skill of writing, many children are not on course to achieve the expected outcome by the time they are five years old. At present, accommodation is adequate for the number of children on roll and the space is well utilised to accommodate a full range of daily activities. With an increasing roll and a commitment to nursery education in the Local Education Authority, three new classrooms are to be built adjacent to the present Reception classes. This will create a new designated area for the early years.

#### **Personal and Social Development.**

64. The personal and social development of children aged under five years is good and the great majority of them make good progress. All the children are happy and contented to be in school. They play well together, both as part of a group and independently, take turns and ask for help when they need it. They respond positively to new activities and enjoy their work. Children are very attentive and many of them are able to sustain great interest in their activities for some considerable time. They are well behaved and clearly understand what is right and wrong. The children are polite and friendly. Children relate to, and interact with, others well and all staff are good role models for the children. The provision for spontaneous learning inside the classrooms is appropriate and supports the children's ability to work and play together. However, provision for outdoor play is limited in terms of both scope and frequency. Most children show independence in dressing and personal hygiene.

#### **Language and Literacy.**

65. Although the children make satisfactory progress in most areas of language, most of them are not attaining standards which would be expected of them by the age of five years. Many children come into school with below average standards in language and need careful encouragement and frequent opportunities to talk about their thoughts and to write their ideas down on paper. The teaching of language and literacy receives a high priority and children are provided with many opportunities to increase their speaking and listening skills. For example, while they carry out activities, staff actively seek to extend their vocabulary. Through participating in role-play, such as in the home corner or 'the office', staff encourage and extend children's use of language. The time set aside for the teaching of literacy is used well. The children listen attentively, respond readily to questions and learn to reply using whole sentences. They enjoy books, understand how they are organised and talk about the characters in a story. They know words and pictures carry meaning and recognise their own name. Many identify sounds and relate them to letter shapes, but only a few recognise familiar words in simple text. In writing, children know that marks and shapes on paper carry meaning and make attempts at writing independently for different purposes. Appropriate attention is given to teaching the children correct

letter formation and many attempt to write their own names, although only a minority use upper and lower case letters correctly. Few children produce written work that communicates meaning through simple words and phrases. The quality of teaching in formal aspects of literacy is satisfactory and all activities, both spontaneous and focused, are carefully prepared to develop the children's language and literacy skills.

### **Mathematics.**

66. Attainment and progress in mathematics are satisfactory. Children use appropriate mathematical language and gain experience of basic activities such as weighing and measuring. For example, they use comparatives, such as 'heavier than' and 'lighter than' when weighing objects, and 'taller than' and 'shorter than' when measuring one another's height. Most of them know numbers one to ten, have an idea of what they represent and, by the time they are five years old, do some simple addition with help. A few higher attaining children record this work, although sometimes their written figures are unevenly shaped. Children use number apparatus and games and also utilise everyday objects for counting and for gaining a sense of number, quantity, size and shape. Many children copy and continue repeating patterns using beads and simple shapes. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. However, at times, the higher attaining children are insufficiently challenged by the activities provided.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world.**

67. In this area of learning and development, the children's attainment and progress are generally good. In the scientific area of learning, children develop their observational skills by going on a 'listening' walk around the school and explore the school's outdoor environment. They show interest in living things, objects and the world around them. They name visible parts of the human body. In history, they develop an awareness of the past by looking at old toys and household equipment, such as carpet beaters. Children record their observations through drawings and paintings. Through their "small world" play using "play maps", they explore routes and directions and begin to use correct geographical terms, such as 'next to', 'up' and 'over'. Children enjoy making models with construction toys and learn simple skills of joining different materials. For example, they use paper, glue and staples to make bags for "Baa-Baa black sheep's" wool. In information technology, children confidently use the computer to support their learning. They use the mouse to move objects displayed on the screen, such as items of furniture in a house, or clothing to dress a teddy bear. Overall, the teaching in this area of learning is good and all children are provided with the necessary practical experiences of the world around them. All staff work effectively alongside the children, talk to them and listen to what they have to say. The planning focuses on concepts carefully chosen to link with the content of the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

### **Physical development.**

68. Children make good progress in their physical development and overall, their attainment is good. When making models, threading beads or using the computer mouse and keyboard, they develop greater control over their movements. Although the provision for outdoor physical play is limited by the lack of suitable resources, children move confidently and, when throwing and catching balls, show considerable skill for their age. Very good teaching observed in a formal physical educational lesson clearly enabled the children to develop their physical skills well.

### **Creative development.**

69. In their creative development, most children make good progress and their attainment is above average. They have good drawing skills for their age. For example, after looking closely at the drawings by Modigliani of the 'Four Heads', children use pencils with great care to produce their own drawing in a similar style. Children enjoy working with a range of media and experimenting with different materials. They are well taught in the basic art skills and techniques. A wide range of opportunities is provided for children to develop their early musical skills, such as listening games, singing traditional songs together and exploring percussion instruments. Through role-play situations in the "home" corner, at times transformed into a 'hospital', a 'vets' or a 'shop', the children are very creative in their play. The available 'dressing up' boxes, which include a variety of multi-cultural costumes for the children, enrich this area of learning.



5.

5. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

5. **English**

70. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 shows that the percentage of pupils attaining at Level 2 or above in English was below the national average in reading and well below that average in writing. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with that of all schools, they show that standards in reading are below average and that standards in writing are well below average. Compared with similar schools, the averages of the school's test data show that standards in reading are below average and that standards are well below average in writing. When the end of key stage test results for 1999 are compared with 1997 and 1998, they indicate broadly similar standards to 1998 with a slight rise in reading standards since 1997.

71. The findings of this inspection are that, in the present Year 2, standards are below average in reading and well below average in writing. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection when standards were judged to be sound when compared with national expectations. This difference is due to the fact that a different group of pupils are involved and, in the current Year 2, a significant percentage of pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. Of these, sixty-five per cent are boys. This contributes to the fact that boys' attainment falls below that of girls by more than the national average. Pupils with special educational needs attain well for their capabilities but higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Provision for literacy is satisfactory overall. Lower standards in Year 2 are in contrast to evidence that standards of attainment in reading are higher in younger pupils. There has been a gradual improvement in standards of spelling since 1997 although standards still remain below the average expectation for age. The school has identified the improvement of standards in writing and standards of attainment for higher attaining pupils as priorities for development.

72. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is below average in Year 2. Most pupils listen carefully in class and take part confidently in question and answer exchanges. However, the ability of a significant number of pupils to retain and carry out more complex instructions, or to develop their answers beyond a single statement, is limited. A significant number of pupils do not articulate clearly. Some higher attaining pupils read their work aloud, clearly and sometimes fluently, to the rest of the class, but the majority of pupils need support in this activity. Opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and oral fluency through imaginative play are planned within the curriculum but were not observed during the week of the inspection.

73. Standards in reading are below average at the end of the key stage. Although a number of higher attaining pupils and some pupils of average attainment develop a sound sight vocabulary, a significant majority of them are insecure in the application of their knowledge of sounds to support them in reading. Most pupils use the main feature of illustrations to support their reading of unfamiliar words but often require support to use other strategies. Some pupils' range of reading in school does not contain sufficient challenge. Most pupils read regularly at home; some higher attaining pupils talk about simple aspects of stories they have enjoyed and a few identify favourite authors. Many average and lower attaining pupils do not have a sufficiently wide experience of reading outside school. The school has good arrangements to support pupils' reading at home in their use of shared reading books and in their identification of a core range of books which all pupils take home during the year.

74. Pupils' attainment in writing is well below average. Some higher attaining and pupils of average attainment write at a reasonable length for their ages. However, accurate expression and basic punctuation are very inconsistent. Pupils' awareness of simple narrative structure is limited and, although they write simple sentences and captions in their work in science, history and religious education, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop a clear awareness of how meaning can be developed. Recording skills are generally insufficiently developed across the curriculum. Sentence awareness is limited to simple statements in a number of pupils' writing and the range of vocabulary is confined to familiar words with only a little evidence of the use of interesting and varied expressions. The spelling of more than simple familiar words relies on the use of phonics, rather than a secure knowledge of spelling patterns. Higher attaining pupils' writing is often consistently joined and clearly formed. However, the majority of pupils write with limited control over the size of letters and an inappropriate mixture of upper case and lower case letters.

75. Pupils enter the key stage with below average attainment, and the current Year 2 has 43 per cent of

pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. However, there is evidence that some pupils of average and below average attainment make better progress within the structure of the literacy lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged and their rate of progress over time is sometimes too slow.

76. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Progress in reading is generally more marked than in writing. This is the result of the school's clear focus on developing reading skills and closer scrutiny of pupils' attainment and progress. There is evidence that attainment in reading is generally of a higher standard in younger pupils. The school has recognised the development of pupils' writing skills as a priority and continues to focus on improving standards in spelling. This has resulted in a gradual improvement over the last three years. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and often make good progress when their work is closely linked to targets in their individual education plans.

77. Pupils respond well in lessons. They are interested and involved in lesson activities. They enjoy taking part and are responsive to teachers and other adults in the classroom. Pupils are open and friendly and feel that their contributions are valued. They often work very well together discussing their work and sharing resources. They work well on their own, even when unsupervised.

78. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and teaching was good or better in several lessons. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and one lesson in four was very good. A common feature of all teaching is the good relationships that teachers establish with pupils. This enables pupils to develop confidence in themselves and feel valued. Teachers plan lessons in detail and in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. In the best teaching, progress is more evident when teachers set high expectations and a pace which challenges pupils of all ability levels. In such lessons, teachers set activities for group work which are closely matched to pupils' different needs. They keep careful and detailed records of pupils' progress in reading, but this information is not used sufficiently to clearly identify the next stages in pupils' learning. Records in writing are not so detailed and do not indicate clearly progressive stages in aspects of writing. Although good value is placed on pupils' writing, teachers insufficiently emphasise the systematic teaching of writing skills. Teachers liaise well with teaching assistants to provide good support for the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in literacy.

79. Pupils are provided with a satisfactory curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The policy and a scheme of work for the subject have recently been reviewed and new ones are currently in draft form. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator for the subject is an experienced teacher who has a good understanding of her role and of the priorities for the development of the subject. She has monitored pupils' work, observed literacy lessons and scrutinised teachers' plans. As a result, more time is given to setting clear targets for pupils' progress, which are linked to National Curriculum levels. The curriculum is enhanced by such events as Book Week, which has been very successful in raising the profile of reading, as well as visits by storytellers and writers. A writers' club is held on a weekly basis to encourage pupils' involvement and enjoyment of writing. Staff are adequately qualified to teach this age group and the quality of the accommodation is satisfactory. Resources for the subject are good. The recently refurbished library provides a well used resource for the school and all classes have regular timetabled opportunities to develop library skills. There are good resources for imaginative role-play, which are well used by younger pupils. Book corners in each classroom provide a range of appropriate reading books and there have been some recent good quality purchases for use in literacy lessons.

## **5. Mathematics**

80. Analysis of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests show that in mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining at Level 2 or above was at the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving higher levels was well below that average. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with all schools, they show average standards, but well below average standards when compared with similar schools. Boys and girls achieved similar standards. This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous OFSTED inspection report. The trend in standards since 1996 shows a steady decline between 1996 and 1998 to below national averages, but in 1999, a good improvement to match national averages.

81. The findings of this inspection are that the proportion of pupils in the present Year 2 who are attaining standards in line with the national expectation is average. This year group has over 40 per cent of pupils with special educational needs. Partly as a result, few pupils attain at higher levels, although there is also some lack of challenge for those capable of achieving higher standards. By the time they are seven, pupils know number

bonds to 20 and higher attaining pupils to 50. Many use halves and quarters correctly when dividing up shapes, count on in tens, back in ones and distinguish between odd and even numbers. They name two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes such as triangles, pentagons, pyramids, cones and cubes. Pupils relate these shapes to everyday objects such as traffic cones, stock cubes and chocolate bar containers. When telling the time, pupils recognise half and quarter hours on an analogue clock and write these times in digital form. Pupils recognise mirror symmetry in triangles, hexagons and circles and measure length using metre and thirty centimetre rules. They estimate height and weight using non-standard measures, such as thumb-nails or multi-link cubes. In mental mathematics sessions, few pupils achieve rapid recall of addition and subtraction facts or use a wide range of mathematical language to describe these functions. They have a limited range of strategies for problem solving or for using shortcuts in calculation. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils worked out that doubles could be used to help calculate near doubles and calculated several examples accurately. Although groups of pupils, or whole classes, collect, sort and display data, there is less evidence of pupils doing this individually. Pupils use the computer to enter data about favourite foods and how they travel to school and illustrate the results in graphical form. There is less evidence of their understanding of the mathematical process which achieves this. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory.

82. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They develop a wider range of techniques for mental calculation, from counting fingers in Year 1, to using their knowledge of number bonds in Year 2. Over time, they measure more accurately, using standard units of length, volume and capacity and become more adept in their use of measuring instruments, such as rulers and scales. Pupils in Year 1 name two-dimensional shapes and, by Year 2, they name properties of three-dimensional shapes such as faces, edges and corners. Pupils make slower progress in improving the speed of their mental calculations or in using a range of mathematical vocabulary. Some higher attaining pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable as a result of being set work that is too easy.

83. Pupils respond well in lessons. They often enjoy the tasks they are set and like to succeed. During whole-class mental mathematics sessions, they join in enthusiastically and are keen to compete with one another. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other and talk willingly about what they have done in the lesson, what they have learnt and any difficulties they have encountered. This contributes well to the understanding of other pupils. In lessons, when they work in pairs or groups, pupils cooperate well and greatly enjoy using the computer to enter data and produce graphs.

84. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the seven lessons observed, three were good and four were satisfactory. Where teachers have good subject knowledge, they use a range of methods to help pupils understand new concepts and different ways of calculating. All teachers have good relationships with the pupils and maintain good discipline. This results in lessons which are calm and purposeful and in which pupils are not distracted from their work. In the best teaching, pupils are given clear instruction about how to do their work and the way in which tasks will be carried out. Teachers motivate pupils by using imaginative ways of demonstrating mathematical facts. In one lesson about three-dimensional shapes, the teacher hid shapes in a bag and revealed them one by one, the pupils had to name them and identify the number of edges, corners or faces. Later, pupils described the shapes they had drawn and challenged other pupils to identify them through the description. They enjoyed this greatly and it reinforced their knowledge of shape. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and prepare resources well. This means that most lessons have a clear structure, learning objectives are identified and little time is lost in distributing equipment. Teachers encourage pupils to help organise resources, which promotes independence in their learning and a sense of responsibility. Where teachers' plans are less clear about the objectives for learning, some pupils, often the higher attaining pupils, finish tasks quickly and do not make sufficient progress. Similarly, teachers rarely link tasks set for pupils with significant special educational needs to the targets within their individual education plans. This means that those pupils do not always work on their area of greatest mathematical weakness. Teachers have made a satisfactory start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Some do not conduct the mental mathematics session at a fast enough pace or include all pupils. When this occurs, too few pupils contribute answers and some higher attaining pupils mark time. Strengths in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy include the use of good visual aids, which help pupils understand patterns in number and recognise shapes, and the well structured summaries at the end of lessons, during which pupils talk about what they have done and what they have found out as a result. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to reinforce basic number work and to involve parents in their children's mathematical progress.

85. The curriculum in mathematics meets statutory requirements and is broad and balanced. In view of

previous underachievement, the school rightly places strong emphasis upon basic number work and practical mathematical skills, such as measuring, weighing, money calculations and estimating. This means that less time is devoted to problem solving and mathematical investigations. The mathematics co-ordinator has recognised, through analysing past national test papers, that pupils have found difficulty in interpreting the language used in some questions. This is now a priority for development, but has insufficiently influenced classroom teaching. All pupils have access to the mathematics curriculum, but, in some cases, higher attaining pupils have insufficient opportunity to work at the level of which they are capable. This results in some underachievement and few pupils attaining higher levels in national tests. Numeracy is taught daily and is in line with the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. Assessment is satisfactory. The systems for recording pupils' attainment are generally effective in identifying the next steps in learning for average and below average attainers. It is less successful in identifying clear targets for higher attaining pupils. The quality of leadership in the subject is good. The mathematics co-ordinator, in addition to analysing test data, has observed some numeracy lessons, and has scrutinised pupils' work and teachers' plans in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. Teachers have received support as a result. The staff are suitably qualified to teach mathematics to this age group. Teaching assistants are well qualified and make a significant contribution to the progress that pupils make, especially those who find mathematics difficult. Resources are adequate. The school has spent considerable sums of money to aid the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and each classroom has a good supply of equipment to support basic number work, measure and shape. Pupils in each class have access to a number of computers, which they frequently use to good effect in promoting their mathematical understanding. Accommodation is satisfactory, although some teaching bays are rather small, but adequate. The subject makes a good contribution to other curriculum areas, for example, when pupils compile tables in science, measure in design and technology and illustrate weather data in geography. A notable feature is the weekly "maths club" in Year 1 where up to ten parents work with different groups of pupils to support their development by playing mathematical games. This contributes very well to pupils' progress and to the partnership with parents.

## **5. Science**

86. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 assessments by teachers for 1999 shows that standards in science were close to the national average at Level 2 or above, but well below the national average at Level 3 or above. The findings of the inspection indicate that standards of attainment have been maintained since the school's last OFSTED inspection and are broadly in line with the national average. By the age of seven, pupils understand that plants and animals grow and reproduce. They understand the life cycle of a frog and a sunflower. They observe and make a record of the growth of seeds. Pupils make suggestions about what plants need to begin to grow and find out what happens when, at times, things may go wrong. For example, when planting seeds in different conditions, the pupils find out that, although seeds need water to grow, the pots in which they plant the seeds need holes for drainage, otherwise the soil becomes water logged and the seeds die. Pupils sort materials into groups using criteria, such as appearance and texture, and name common types of materials. They investigate ways in which some materials, such as modelling clay, can be changed in shape by twisting and bending. Their knowledge and understanding of forces and movement are well developed. They explore toy cars rolling down a ramp and measure the distance each car travels. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' investigative skills are generally adequate, but there is little evidence of higher attainment in this aspect of science. Examples of their work show that pupils make observations related to the tasks and record their findings through drawing and, in some cases, graphs. However, the low level of pupils' writing skills hinders their ability to make careful recordings of their findings.

87. Pupils' progress is satisfactory. Their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and use of scientific language develop appropriately. Through the topic on 'Mini-beasts' in Year 1, pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of animals in the local environment. They sort living things into groups classifying them by those with legs, those with wings and legs and those with no legs or wings. They use drawings and diagrams to present their work. Pupils develop observational skills through a series of activities related to each of their five senses and distinguish between them, such as the eye is for seeing and the ear is for hearing. They know that pushing and pulling things makes objects start or stop moving. Through work on light, they identify a number of light sources of different kinds and explore the formation of shadows. As they move through the school, pupils refine their ability to observe and learn to use the correct scientific terms. All pupils are clear about tasks set for them and work at an appropriate rate. Pupils develop their skills in scientific

investigations, for example, when they observe and record the movement of toy cars. They progress less well in predicting outcomes and in their understanding of a fair test. A lack of appropriate challenge means that higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress that they should. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding, but their recording skills are less well developed.

88. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to science are good. They listen attentively to teachers' explanations and instructions and are keen to answer questions. They show genuine scientific interest and curiosity. All pupils enjoy practical science and approach activities with enthusiasm. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and act responsibly when carrying out their work. Pupils work well together in group activities and share resources sensibly. Overall, their behaviour is good, either when working independently or in groups.

89. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan together and are well prepared and organised. They know pupils well and use an appropriate range of activities to interest and involve them practically in their learning. Teachers have sufficient understanding and knowledge of the subject to explain scientific ideas clearly to pupils. Teaching is particularly effective when they use questions well, not only to involve pupils in discussion, but also to challenge their ideas and develop their thinking further. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson, when pupils were challenged to think carefully about what comprises a fair test. Clear explanations and demonstration led pupils to know and understand what went wrong in a previous investigation. Most teachers create a sound balance between discussion, demonstration and practical work. Effective use is made of resources and of teaching assistants and parent helpers. Classroom management is good. Teachers do not always enable pupils to reach higher standards because they do not help them sufficiently to predict outcomes or investigate their ideas.

90. The science curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The policy is outdated, and although the scheme of work is generally appropriate, planning for science has become more closely linked to the materials produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This is beginning to ensure the progressive development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in science are unsatisfactory. The school does not have a structure to support the pupils' investigative skills or a system to help their recording skills. The school has recognised the need for assessment to be more rigorous and to use this information to plan more challenging work for the higher attaining pupils. A newly qualified teacher has just taken over responsibility for co-ordinating the subject and has had little time in which to monitor teaching and learning. Nevertheless, she has familiarised herself with the requirements of the National Curriculum and, together with the headteacher, has recognised the need to develop a programme for monitoring standards in science throughout the school. Teachers are satisfactorily qualified to teach science to this age group. There is a good range of apparatus, materials and reference books to support the teaching of all aspects of science. The large school grounds contain a pond and wildlife area and are used well to support the pupils' environmental science. Good use is made of visits to enrich the pupils' scientific experiences. Pupils visit a farm, the Science and Natural History Museums and Tilbury Environmental Centre. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development, for example, when they work together and share resources during their practical activities.

## **5. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **5. Information technology**

91. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils reach standards at the level of the national expectation. This judgement is based on observations of pupils working on computers, work on display and discussions held with pupils. In the school's previous OFSTED inspection report, standards of achievement were good. By the end of the key stage, pupils work with computers to communicate ideas in text and pictures. They use the keyboard to write their names, poems and simple stories. Many pupils control the mouse well when selecting icons to operate programs and enter, amend, save and retrieve work. They change the style of font headings and the size of type. Pupils control the movement of a programmable toy by a simple sequence of instructions. With help from adults, they collect information about the weather and their favourite books, enter it into a data-base and present the information in various ways. Pupils are not familiar with using a CD-ROM to help them with research skills. The programs used develop skills in control and word processing and reinforce basic concepts in other areas of the curriculum, such as making graphs in geography and creating pictures in art. Many pupils know that information technology is used to help them in different ways, for example, at home in such appliances as microwaves and videos.

92. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology. They make a good start in the Reception class and soon develop confidence with the keyboard and mouse. They create pictures on screen and control the mouse to move objects into position. In Year 1, pupils understand some computer functions, which they reinforce with practice, and then apply their knowledge and skills to a range of tasks. They enter data and create a pictogram that shows the different forms of transport they use to travel to school. They select colours and brush size to produce pictures of butterflies, using an art program. Most pupils build steadily on their skills as they move through the school and develop a growing understanding of the uses and value of information technology. Pupils with special educational needs use computers well to support their learning and make satisfactory progress.

93. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They enjoy using computers and happily share equipment, when they work with others. They are eager to get involved and quickly become absorbed in the tasks set for them.

94. In the few lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teachers are generally confident about the subject and with the equipment and programs available to them. Information technology is planned into the timetable and pupils have regular opportunities to use the available equipment in classrooms. Teachers manage learning very well and make very good use of the many volunteers who come in to help. As each year group has a designated area for computers, it is possible for teachers to incorporate information technology activities into many areas of the curriculum, including the literacy hour. The layout of the area means that the teacher can demonstrate a program to pupils, because of the suitable height and adequate surrounding space for all pupils to view the screen. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to become familiar with an appropriate range of information technology equipment, such as tape recorders and programmable toys. They help pupils with difficulties and teach them direct skills when they work at the computer.

95. The school teaches the required curriculum satisfactorily. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. Although she is new to post, she is well informed and enthusiastic about her role. There is a sound policy document and half termly plans show how pupils will be taught skills progressively. The scheme of work is currently under review. Although teachers do not formally assess pupils' attainment, they encourage pupils to enter and store relevant information on their own computer file. The number of computers and software available is sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum and is used effectively.

96. At the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are generally in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In the school's previous OFSTED inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements about pupils' attainment. Pupils know Christians worship God in a special place called a church. They understand that the Bible is a special book for Christians and know about some of the important stories, such as the story of Moses in the bulrushes and the Christmas story. Through their studies on festivals and celebrations, pupils learn that people celebrate in different ways, such as in the Hindu festival of Diwali. They consider how friends are important in their own lives and learn about some of Jesus' friends and how they were important to him. In their visit to the local church, Year 2 pupils learn about the features which make it a special place.

97. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the key stage. Pupils enter the school with a very varied understanding of religious beliefs and traditions. Through their lessons and well-organised sessions of collective worship, they develop their knowledge and experience of the Christian faith. Opportunities for them to develop their spiritual responses and to reflect on important questions and beliefs are more limited. Pupils, with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are included in all experiences offered by the school and their contributions are valued.

98. Pupils respond well in lessons and in collective worship. They show respect for the views and opinions of others and are interested in the activities and the experiences offered. They work effectively together and respond well to opportunities to examine artefacts, which they handle respectfully and with care.

99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have appropriate knowledge of most areas of the syllabus, but not all have confidence to teach aspects relating to pupils' spiritual experience or to discuss issues of faith and belief. The school has recognised this as an area for development. The very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils ensure an atmosphere of trust and confidence and pupils feel able to offer opinions and ideas. Teachers use artefacts effectively to create interest and variety. Good use is made of sessions at the end of lessons to reinforce the main teaching points and to ensure that pupils understand. Formal assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are not used sufficiently to support planning in the subject. Planning is satisfactory but, where the subject is taught as part of a topic or in conjunction with other subjects, the religious element is frequently obscured. The curriculum is enhanced through links with the local church. Pupils visit the church and local clergy take part in assemblies.

100. The school satisfactorily meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There is a policy for the subject and a scheme of work based on the Agreed Syllabus. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator for the subject is the newly appointed headteacher. She recognises the need to make more structured provision to link spiritual dimensions more closely to pupils' own experience. She has already introduced a new scheme of work into the Reception year. It is planned to introduce this new scheme to Key Stage 1. Staff are adequately qualified to teach the subject; accommodation is satisfactory and resources for the subject are good. The library has a good range of simple stories from the Bible and a sound range of books on the major religions of the world.

## **5. Art**

101. By the age of seven, pupils achieve average standards. In the school's previous OFSTED inspection report, similar standards were observed. Pupils make careful, and sometimes detailed, observational drawings and show an appropriate sense of line, shape and form. They mix paint colours, blend, and use them to achieve desired effects, such as the painting of skin colours in self-portraits. They use different media, including pencil, paint, crayon, collage and wax resistant techniques to good effect. Children produce pictures, which demonstrate, for example, how a textured effect can be created in a collage by using glue and tissue paper and create printed effects with a variety of materials. There are more limited opportunities to express ideas in three-dimensional work although pupils experience some work in clay and collage.

102. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils gradually develop attention to detail and through their study of the work of painters, such as Van Gogh, they develop their awareness of colour and shape. They use a range of resources appropriately and work with increased control in different media. Pupils experience a range of work from famous artists, but this is generally confined to Western art and they have limited opportunities to develop their experience of artists from other cultures.

103. Pupils have good attitudes, enjoy their work in art and respond well. They understand the need to protect their clothing and work well together to share resources and handle them appropriately. They are enthusiastic about new ideas and activities and contribute their thoughts in discussion.

104. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and effectively teach the use of colour. Planning for the subject provides clear learning goals and criteria for assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. It provides appropriate support for less experienced teachers but does not sufficiently provide for three-dimensional work, or for the work of artists of non-European cultures. The subject is effectively planned to support work in topics, such as food in Year 1. Simple notebooks are made and used well in Year 2 to help pupils to develop a range of experience in different materials and to support discussion and skills in self-evaluation.

105. The curriculum for art is satisfactory. There is a policy for the subject and a suitable scheme of work. Assessment is satisfactory. Parents are informed about their children's attainment and progress in the end-of-year reports. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator for the subject is new to the role and to teaching. She has an interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject and is developing a clear understanding of her role. The school effectively enhances the awareness and experience of a number of pupils through the art club, which is held after school. A non-teaching member of staff provides an appreciated and interesting additional dimension to pupils' awareness through his own work and his contribution to the enhancement of the school environment.

5.

### **Design and technology**

106. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection. However, from discussion with teachers, sampling pupils' work and studying curricular plans, it is possible to say that pupils attain average standards in designing and making, but have few opportunities to evaluate and improve their work or record it. This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous OFSTED inspection report. In Year 2, pupils make sunflowers from cardboard tubes and coloured tissue paper. Pupils design a way to attach this to a base by folding paper, and using straws or pins to create a three-dimensional effect. They apply this technique to attach a cut-out of a butterfly or caterpillar they draw onto a painted background. Pupils also construct a folding book to reveal a cartoon story. They design a recipe for sandwiches, which incorporates the likes and dislikes of classmates and use the computer to store and illustrate these data. Pupils make vehicles and moving equipment from construction kits, and use simple tools, such as rulers and various pins, to measure and attach materials. They identify different materials that might be more or less suitable for a particular purpose.

107. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They improve the design of their products and become more aware of the use of tools for specific jobs. They predict more accurately, over time, what difficulties there might be in making a product to a particular specification. Pupils make less good progress in recording their findings in a coherent, structured way.

108. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They enjoy making things, take a pride in their finished products and like to talk about their ideas. They use tools carefully with a sense of their own and others' safety.

109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to ensure that pupils of this age group make satisfactory progress in understanding safe working, in their use of an increasing range of materials and in how to design within set criteria. They plan interesting tasks to motivate pupils to use their imagination and creative skills. Teachers encourage pupils to experiment with different designs and to orally evaluate their initial prototypes. They are less diligent in providing a structured written format through which pupils record their work and identify things that they would do differently next time.

110. The curriculum for design and technology is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the profession and has had little time to settle in to her management of the subject. She does, however, have a clear vision for the development of the subject and is determined to obtain professional development in order to enhance her skills as a teacher of design and technology and to manage the subject. There is a clear, helpful policy and a new scheme of work, based on national guidelines, at the draft stage. This document represents a significant step forward to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced experience of the subject. There is a satisfactory range of resources to support teaching and learning. Staff are qualified to teach the subject to this age group and accommodation is adequate to support practical activities. The subject makes a contribution to



111. Due to the nature of the school's programme for teaching geography, it was only possible to see two geography lessons in Year 1 classes during the period of the inspection. However, both teachers' plans and pupils' work were scrutinised and indications are, that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in geography are average for their age. This judgement is in line with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection. By the age of seven, pupils show developing map skills and demonstrate knowledge of their own local area and the important physical features. They read a simplified version of a local street map, and locate the school and their home. They contrast life in their own locality with that of life in an African village. Pupils identify a range of geographical features and develop a sound vocabulary of basic geographical terms such as village, town and city. These skills are further developed when they use simple map co-ordinates and give directions, such as left, right, forward and backward, when they give instructions to a programmable toy.

112. Indications are that progress, including that made by pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Work is organised so that pupils use geographical skills and knowledge to attempt more demanding tasks as they move through the school. Examples are work carried out on the school environment and the local area, where pupils develop human geography skills before tackling the more challenging study of an African village. Pupils learn the map skills, where they draw everyday objects from a bird's eye viewpoint, to help develop an understanding of how maps can represent reality.

113. Pupils respond well to their work in geography. They participate fully in all activities provided and work co-operatively as a group, when required. Behaviour is good and pupils maintain concentration well. They are keen to answer questions and show great interest in learning about their own locality.

114. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Teachers plan well as a team and this ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to make sound progress. They demonstrate secure subject knowledge and provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to undertake geographical studies based on direct experiences. For example, pupils locate their own home on a map, mark it with a flag and describe their journey to school. Lessons are well organised and managed, and groups are monitored effectively. Time is generally used well at the end of a lesson to share the knowledge gained.

115. The geography curriculum is satisfactory. Documentation to support teaching in the subject is due to be reviewed in the light of the changes to the curriculum in September 2000. The school, however, refers to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority exemplar materials for planning. This ensures the progressive development of skills that pupils need to understand relationships between people and the environment. There are good links with other subjects such as science and mathematics. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who has overall responsibility for both geography and history, is new to the school and has not yet had the opportunity to monitor lessons in the subject. Assessment is satisfactory. Judgements about pupils' attainment and progress are reported annually to parents. Resources are adequate, easily accessible and well used. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of interest in the locality. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

116. In history, pupils attain average standards for their age. This judgement is in line with the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection. By the age of seven, pupils display an awareness of chronology shown by their understanding of how features of everyday life, such as household objects and wheeled transport, have changed over time. They demonstrate knowledge of people, events and aspects of life from the past, including Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot, and the work of Florence Nightingale. They recognise that there are reasons why people acted as they did. For example, when writing as a newspaper reporter at the time of the Gunpowder Plot, pupils describe why the events happened and what happened as a result of Guy Fawkes' actions.

117. Pupils' progress is satisfactory. This is shown in their developing sense of chronology, and in their use of historical skills and knowledge about the past. The youngest pupils, for example, make a simple personal timeline and know how toys have changed over time. As pupils move through the school, their knowledge and understanding of historical information increase in depth and breadth. They are aware of some of the ways

people find out about the past, including the use of artefacts and older people as primary sources of evidence. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when compared to their previous attainment.

118. Pupils respond well to their work in this subject and listen with rapt attention to the historical stories told. They are interested in finding out about the past. They usually concentrate well and try hard to complete tasks. Their enthusiasm shows in their eagerness to talk about their work. However, in general, their weak writing skills are detrimental to the presentation of their finished work.

119. In the few lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory, with some aspects that were good. Planning is careful and teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are sufficient to ensure that all pupils make satisfactory progress. Teachers make appropriate use of questioning to encourage pupils to use correct historical terms. In lessons observed, teachers achieve a sound balance between giving information and involving the pupils in meaningful activities. Some imaginative approaches are employed and sources of information are used well to provide many first-hand experiences for pupils. History is taught as a separate subject through appropriate topics, such as transport, toys and food. There are, however, good cross-curricular links through subjects such as geography, art and science.

120. The curriculum for history is satisfactory and well balanced. The school meets the statutory requirement to report to parents annually on their children's attainment and progress. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator, who is new to the school, has the responsibility for both history and geography. She is well qualified and has a great enthusiasm for the subject. The policy is due to be reviewed in light of the changes to the curriculum in September 2000. The present scheme of work is useful and is linked appropriately to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority document. The school has a very good collection of artefacts that are well used to support the teaching of history. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

## **Music**

121. By the age of seven, pupils sing, perform, listen to and discuss music satisfactorily for their ages. Although there were no opportunities to see pupils compose music, teachers' plans indicate that this element is appropriately included. In the school's previous inspection, similar standards were observed. Pupils sing familiar songs with confidence, use percussion instruments to make rhythms and simple beat patterns and learn to control their voices and instruments to make loud and soft sounds. They follow simple notation patterns to accompany simple music and identify some of the instruments when they listen to recorded music. Pupils' musical understanding is well enhanced by the provision for all pupils in Year 2 to learn to play the recorder.

122. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both years. They learn to use their voices with increasing regard for pitch, melody and rhythm. They respond to the mood and feel of music with growing awareness, as they listen to a wide variety of music and discuss different musical elements. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils listened to Handel's Royal Fireworks Suite, to recognise the different instruments played. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities and make satisfactory progress. All pupils enjoy their singing and music making and also like to listen and respond to music. They understand how to handle instruments appropriately and treat them with respect. Pupils work well together in whole class and individual activities and have good relationships with their teachers.

123. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory and, where lessons are taken by a specialist teacher, the quality is very good. The good relationships in all classes enable pupils to develop their confidence and skills effectively and to enjoy participation whether as listeners or performers. Teachers use instruments well to teach pupils the different sounds and moods that they generate. Opportunities to assess and evaluate pupils' performance are included in plans for the subject. In the best teaching, teachers use appropriate strategies to involve pupils in evaluation of their own work and that of the performances of others.

124. The co-ordinator for the subject is a specialist teacher who has a good understanding of her role and provides good support for music in assemblies and for less confident colleagues. Plans for the subject are detailed and thorough and have appropriate regard for the requirements of the National Curriculum. The scheme of work provides satisfactory support for new and less confident members of staff. Provision for the subject is enhanced by the school choir, participation in the annual Infant Music Festival, and Christmas and spring school concerts. Visiting musicians and music specialists broaden the pupils' range of experience. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and include an appropriate range of recorded music from western and other cultures.

## **Physical education**

125. Due to timetabling arrangements, only two lessons, in Year 1 were observed during the time of the inspection. However, through discussion with pupils and teachers and by studying teachers' plans, it is possible to say that pupils attain average standards in dance, gymnastics and games for their age. When practising ball skills, pupils control a small ball with various parts of their body (even with their noses!). Many achieve good control when travelling around the hall or sending a ball to a partner along the ground. Pupils understand that they need to move with regard to the safety of others and to prepare for vigorous activity by warming up specific muscles. They control their movements well when running and jumping and understand tactics in simple evasion games.

126. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They move around in confined spaces with growing control and awareness, use an increasing number of techniques to control a ball and develop the ability to use tactics of evasion and invasion. In dance, pupils sequence steps with a better sense of time and mood.

127. Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons. They participate joyfully in activities and want to improve. They cooperate very well when necessary, but equally enjoy competing against each other. They listen attentively to their teachers in order to carry out instructions properly and take pride in their own and other pupils' performance.

128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that pupils receive clear instruction on how to improve their performance. Where teachers demonstrate techniques and generate a lively pace in activities, pupils respond positively and make good progress. Similar good progress is evident when teachers encourage pupils to comment upon each other's performance and to try to emulate the best practice they observe. Where teaching is less successful, teachers give insufficient instruction about the skills they wish pupils to develop, do not make good use of available space to ensure that pupils have enough room to travel safely and do not provide pupils with enough feedback on their performance to help them to improve. Through their personal example in their dress, teachers encourage pupils to take pride in dressing appropriately for activities. Good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that lessons proceed in a friendly and positive atmosphere.

129. The physical education curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced and all pupils have equality of access and opportunity. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and proficient. She provides strong support for other teachers who feel less confident in their teaching. She ensures that teachers understand all the necessary safety procedures when working with equipment and has initiated training for the staff. A useful policy further supports teachers and the scheme of work clearly sets out what will be taught and when. The co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching in the subject. Staff are adequately qualified and the quality of resources is satisfactory. Overall, the quality of accommodation is satisfactory. However, the school hall is too small for some aspects of indoor team games and dance. In addition to the full coverage of the Key Stage 1 curriculum, Year 2 pupils swim weekly at a local swimming pool. This, together with a ball-skills club which attracts good numbers at one session every week, adds good value to the opportunities in physical education which are available to pupils.

## 5. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 5. 130. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

### SUMMARY OF

The inspection was carried out by a team of 4 inspectors, who spent a total of 12 inspector days in the school. Time spent observing teaching, scrutinising the work of pupils and checking their attainment by working with them during the inspection 52 hours 20 minutes. 10 hours 40 minutes at Pre Key Stage 1, and 41 hours 40 minutes at Key Stage 1. In addition, a further 10 hours 20 minutes were spent on the inspection activities listed below.

- Forty-five lessons or parts of lessons were observed as were a number of registration periods, assemblies, playtimes, lunchtimes and extracurricular activities;
- discussions were held with all teaching staff and some non-teaching staff;
- many pupils were heard to read and were questioned about their mathematical knowledge and understanding;
- three samples of pupils' work across the full range of ability in all year groups were inspected in addition to work examined during lessons;
- all available school documentation was analysed;
- attendance records, pupils' records kept by the school and teachers' planning documents were examined;
- the budget figures were inspected;
- discussions were held with pupils, parents and governors;
  - a parents' meeting was held and the views of the 18 parents at this meeting and those of the 124 families who responded to a questionnaire were taken into account.

### 131.

### DATA AND

### INDICATORS

#### 131. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of S E N	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y2	229	1	60	32

### 131.

#### Teachers and classes

#### 131. Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	21

#### 131. Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff:	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	109

Average class size:

26

**131. Financial data**

Financial year: 1998/9

£

Total Income 407,778

Total Expenditure 372,447

Expenditure per pupil 1633.54

Balance brought forward from previous year 18,171

Balance carried forward to next year 53,502

### 131. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 208  
Number of questionnaires returned: 124

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	54	42	3	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	52	46	1	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	11	57	28	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	33	58	6	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	31	58	6	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	38	55	7	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	29	58	11	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26	60	10	3	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	43	52	5	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	43	52	5	1	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	54	45	1	1	0

### 131. Other issues raised by parents

Parents are very supportive of the school but would like to see a change in the staggered entry system into Year R.

A small minority felt that the higher attaining children were not fully challenged.