

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Hamstel Infant School**

Southend-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend

Unique Reference Number: 114771

Inspection Number: 187241

Headteacher: Mrs V Tarte

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Reporting inspector: Miss C Thompson

22822

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707291

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hamstel Road Southend-on-Sea Essex SS2 4PQ
Telephone number:	(01702) 468 461
Fax number:	(01702) 602 064
Appropriate authority:	Southend-on-Sea
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Churn
Date of previous inspection:	March, 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Miss C Thompson, Rgl	English Information technology Music	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency of the school
Mr R Ibbitson, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Support, guidance and pupils' Welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs Bimla Thakur	Areas of learning for children under five	Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Ms R Frith	Mathematics Special educational needs History Art	Curriculum and assessment
Mr G Slamon	Geography Science Design and technology Religious education Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well.
- When compared to similar<sup>1</sup> schools, standards in writing and science are above average.
- Standards of teaching are good overall.
- Pupils develop very good attitudes and behave very well; they are polite and courteous.
- Relationships within the school are very good.
- The 'Early Birds' class provides very good foundations for learning; children make very good progress.
- The school provides good value for money.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. In speaking skills, reading and mathematics, standards are below the levels expected for seven year olds.
- II. There is no formal method for checking on teaching.
- III. Brighter pupils are not always stretched.
- IV. Assessment procedures are not good enough to help the school set crisp targets for future improvement.
- V. Teachers do not always plan their lessons from a clear assessment of what the pupils already know.

**The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. A copy of the action plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils in the school.**

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

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection of 1996. Nearly all the key issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed effectively. Standards of teaching have improved considerably. Standards in mathematics have risen, although few pupils achieve the higher levels. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. The responsibilities of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators are now clearly defined although they are not yet checking on the quality of teaching. In the academic year 1998/99, the school introduced new initiatives to raise standards. In the area of writing these initiatives have been very successful; standards rose from well below the average for all schools in 1998 to average in 1999. Assessment remains an acknowledged area for improvement; however, with the recent, successful initiatives in place and the commitment to raise standards further, the school is well placed for further improvement.

## Standards in subjects

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

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



The information shows that the standards achieved in the school compare favourably with those of similar schools. For example, standards in writing and science are above the average for similar schools. When compared to all schools, standards are below average in reading and mathematics because fewer than average pupils reach the higher Level 3.

Inspection findings show standards in religious education are above the expected levels. Year 2 pupils are achieving the expected levels in information technology. The new computer suite is having a significant impact on the standards achieved in the school; reception class children are already achieving high standards for their age.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory



Science		Satisfactory
Information Technology	Very good	Very good
Religious education		Good
Other subjects	Very good in personal development	Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with just over a quarter being very good or excellent. Ninety-seven per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better. Two lessons account for the three per cent of unsatisfactory teaching.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Pupils are polite and courteous.
Attendance	Satisfactory.
Ethos*	Very good. Relationships are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and school life. The school is setting targets for improving standards but this is an area for further development.
Leadership and management	Good. The headteacher provides effective leadership and is highly respected by parents.  A new governing body has been appointed very recently and has not yet had time to establish its working procedures.
Curriculum	Very good for children under five. Good for Key Stage 1. The school makes very good use of visits to enrich the curriculum.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and a strength of the school. Within the school there is a sense of calm purpose built on mutual respect and shared values.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. A strength of the school is the number and expertise of the teaching assistants and nursery nurses.
Value for money	Good.

*\*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

VI. The information the school provides about what their children are learning and how they can help in this.

VII. Children love coming to school.

VIII. The way the school promotes good behaviour with the 'ROBINS' awards.

IX. Teachers are always approachable and helpful.

X. There are lots of visits for the children to go on.

### What some parents are not happy about

XI

XI

pupils.

XI

work of the school supported.

Inspectors entirely agree with parents' positive comments. More could be done to help the higher attaining pupils make better progress. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of all pupils in the school. The school is most successful in its fund-raising activities for local and national charities. School fetes raise substantial amounts of money which are used to help run the swimming pool. The parents association has also contributed towards the cost of the new computer suite. The school welcomes all the parental involvement it can get.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The headteacher, governors and teaching staff should:

- **At Key Stage 1, raise standards further in reading by:**

- providing more guidance for higher attaining pupils, so that they choose from a range of reading material which will extend their skills;
- making clear assessments of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in their reading and using the outcomes of this assessment to teach pupils what they need to learn in order to raise their level of attainment;
- providing a more structured framework for lower attainers so that they have better opportunities to build up a good sight vocabulary;
- setting targets for improvement.

*Paragraphs: 11, 17, 52, 107*

- **At Key Stage 1, raise standards further in mathematics by:**

- ensuring that all teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum Level criteria;
- using the outcomes of accurate assessment to set realistic targets for improvement;
- providing challenging work for higher attaining pupils which takes into account the programme of study to allow pupils to reach Level 3 or above in mathematics;
- providing homework activities to reinforce the work pupils do in school.

*Paragraphs: 12, 37, 45, 47, 120, 122, 123*

- **Throughout, raise standards in speaking by:**

- ensuring that teachers are clear about what they need to teach in order to raise standards;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise specific skills.

*Paragraphs: 10, 32, 97, 105*

- **Improve assessment procedures so that the outcomes of assessment can be used to set clear targets for raising standards by:**

- ensuring that all teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum Level criteria for English, mathematics and science;
- ensuring that all teachers know what they need to teach to raise pupils' attainment from one grade to the next within Level 2 and from Level 2 to Level 3;
- making best possible use of outcomes from assessment, standardised tests and other test procedures to set challenging targets for improvement.

*Paragraphs: 44, 48, 52, 53, 123, 130*

- **Provide challenging work for higher attaining pupils to enable them to reach their potential by:**

- identifying higher attaining pupils;
- making better use of ongoing assessment so that lessons are planned to take account of what pupils have learned in the previous lesson;
- identifying, in lesson plans, activities for higher attaining pupils that will extend and challenge their thinking.

*Paragraphs: 17, 32, 36, 37, 38, 44, 48, 50, 60, 79, 129*

- **Introduce a system for monitoring teaching regularly and against agreed criteria.**

- Use the outcomes from this monitoring to share good practice and improve standards of teaching further.

*Paragraphs: 73, 76, 123*

**In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in *paragraphs 27, 38, 111, 127, 129*:**

- On occasions pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet. Teachers need to consider how they can organise their teaching time to provide a better balance between the time pupils sit listening and the time they spend engaged in their tasks.
- In mathematics and science there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate and apply what they already know to new situations in order to find out things for themselves.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. Hamstel Infant School serves an area of predominantly local authority and housing association housing. The school is popular. A significant number of parents who live out of the catchment area choose to send their children to the school. There is high unemployment in the area which has very recently gained Education Action Zone (EAZ) status. Since the last inspection in March, 1996, the school's admission policy has changed to allow pupils who are just four years old to start school part-time in the 'Early Birds' class. The number on roll remains about the same with 332 pupils plus the 35 who attend part-time. There are 26 more boys than girls in the school and a few pupils from ethnic minority families. A small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language attend the school, but none is learning English as an additional language. There are 60 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs; this is about average. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational need which is below the national average. Twenty-nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above the national average of 19.9 per cent. Children start school in the September of the school year in which they will be five. During inspection, 35 of the youngest children under five attended part-time in the 'Early Birds' class and 63 children under five attended full time in three reception classes. Attainment on entry to the reception classes is below the level expected for the children's age, especially in the area of language and literacy. By the time children reach statutory school age, attainment is generally in line with that expected for their age but with a weakness in vocabulary and speaking skills. The school shares the same site as Hamstel Junior school and, until September 1999, shared the same governing body. At the time of the inspection, a new governing body for each school had just been elected.
2. The school's main aim is to continue to provide a rich, stimulating and caring environment where the school's vision of 'Working, Playing and Achieving Together' can be fulfilled. The school is aware that the ethos and environment of the school are especially important in supporting those children who enter with limited social and linguistic skills. The main priorities for the school are: to continue to raise standards further, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology; to develop the role of the new governing body and to take full advantage of the additional support and funding generated by being part of a newly-formed Education Action Zone. The school had set targets for standards to be achieved in future years but nearly all have been already been exceeded. New targets are to be set.

3. **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	60	59	119

3. <b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	45	46	53
	Girls	49	50	52
	Total	94	96	105
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79(73)	81(66)	88(87)
	National	82(77)	83(81)	86(84)

3. <b>Teacher Assessments</b>		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	41	56	54
	Girls	46	54	51
	Total	87	110	105
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	73(72)	92(81)	88(74)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

3. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
Authorised	School		5.3
Absence	National comparative data		5.7
Unauthorised	School		0.4
Absence	National comparative data		0.5

3.

3. **Exclusions**

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

3. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
Very good or better		26
Satisfactory or better		97
Less than satisfactory		3

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

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

#### **Attainment and progress**

3. National performance data for pupils aged seven, for the years 1996 to 1998, which take pupils' average scores and compare them with national averages, indicate that standards in reading were below the national average, standards in writing were well below and, in mathematics, standards were close to the national average.
4. In 1998, when compared to similar schools, standards in reading were average; in writing, below average; and, in mathematics, above average. Standards in science were well below the national average and the average for similar schools.
5. Results of 1999 National Curriculum tests and tasks for seven year olds show the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in mathematics to be in line with the national average but the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 to be below average. In reading, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels is just below the national average, with a below average percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. In reading and mathematics, when average levels are calculated, the standards are said to be below the national average because the school does not have enough pupils reaching the higher Level 3. In writing, standards have improved considerably and are in line with the national average and an average percentage of pupils achieve Level 3. Standards in science have also improved considerably and are now in line with the national average. The good improvement in standards is the result of the school's initiatives to raise standards in writing and the implementation of the new scheme of work for science.
6. When compared to similar schools, 1999 National Curriculum test results show standards in reading and mathematics to be broadly in line with average. In writing and science, standards are above average.
7. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, although girls do slightly better in writing.
8. When children start school, aged four, in the 'Early Birds' and reception classes, attainment is generally below that expected for their age, particularly in speaking and vocabulary skills. By the time children reach statutory school age, attainment is broadly in line with nationally prescribed areas of learning, although the weakness remains in speaking and vocabulary skills. This weakness has some effect on their work in mathematics because they do not have the correct vocabulary to apply to certain situations or ideas.
9. Inspection evidence shows that, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in listening are in line with national expectations, but, in speaking, standards are below. Pupils are confident to answer questions or give accounts of their 'news', but these accounts lack detail and show a lack of a wide vocabulary. Pupils make good progress in developing their listening skills but only satisfactory progress in developing their speaking skills. Throughout, there is a need to provide more opportunities for speaking skills to be developed in a more systematic manner.
10. At the end of Key Stage 1, in reading and writing, standards are in line with national expectations, although few pupils achieve the higher Level 3 in reading. For their age, Year 2 pupils read

fluently and accurately; they use of an appropriate range of strategies to tackle words they cannot read. Pupils make good use letter sounds and letter blend (phonics) to help them read and spell. In writing, pupils write well ordered accounts of their visits to places of interest and are beginning to develop an appropriate understanding of the way authors write their stories. Progress in reading and writing is, overall, good because teachers have a sound understanding of how to teach reading and writing skills in a meaningful and enjoyable manner. A strength in the way in which writing is taught is the way teachers encourage pupils to write through other subjects such as history and geography. When they write about visits they have made, pupils' interest is high and their writing purposeful. In reading, teachers are not keeping track of the books pupils are reading, with the result that some higher attaining and some lower attaining pupils are not making the progress they should.

11. At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils achieve standards in mathematics that are in line with national expectations, except in the application of mathematics to solve simple problems. However, there are fewer pupils than expected attaining at the higher level. Pupils in Year 2 count on and back from a given position of numbers up to 100. Pupils have a sound understanding of data handling and use this to draw graphs, for example, of their favourite foods or favourite crisp flavours. Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics. They are beginning to use a range of strategies to help them in their calculations and are beginning to use mathematical vocabulary correctly. Higher attaining pupils are not always extended by the work set them. Sometimes, they make only satisfactory progress because teachers are not providing the opportunities for them to work at the higher levels. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately and teachers organise their 'numeracy hours' well. The results of a greater focus on numeracy are evident in pupils' sound ability to respond quickly in mental mathematics sessions.
12. In science, standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils identify a range of common materials, both natural and man-made and can explain why some materials, such as gelatine and dough, are changed by heating or cooling. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science as they move through the school. The majority of pupils describe changes that take place as animals, including humans, grow and they understand that different living things are found in different places.
13. Attainment in religious education is above the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a good understanding that each person is special and that people celebrate a range of occasions that are special to them. They have a good awareness of right and wrong and are able to discuss good examples set by people such as Jesus, Mother Theresa and Guru Nanak. Pupils make good progress. They understand how different faiths celebrate their major festivals such as Christmas, Advent, Diwali, Hanukah and Ramadan
14. Attainment in information technology at the end of the key stage is in line with national expectations. However, given the very good progress pupils are making in the new computer suite, it is quite probable that the standards pupils achieve by the time they leave the school will be above those expected for their age. Pupils use a mouse competently to click on an icon. They can open a program, for example an 'artist' program and use the mouse to draw, colour and insert text. Pupils also use earphones and tape recorders competently when they listen to story tapes. Pupils make very good progress because of the outstanding facilities in the computer suite and the very good teaching they receive. The computer suite has been in operation for only five weeks but is already having a significant impact on the standards achieved. Children under five can 'log on' to the network by entering their names as the 'password'. They use the mouse competently to click and drag colours to compose a firework picture.

15. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets set for them in their individual education plans. This good progress has been maintained since the last inspection. There are two main reasons for this: first, the needs of the pupils are assessed effectively so that the targets in their individual education plans are appropriate; secondly, proficient teaching assistants are guided well by the special educational needs co-ordinator and support pupils very well with their work.
16. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. However, in speaking, reading, mathematics and science there are lessons where the work set for them is not challenging enough to extend their thinking in order to move them on in their learning at a faster rate. In these lessons, their progress is unsatisfactory.
17. In other subjects of the curriculum, pupils generally make good progress. A key reason for the good progress in subjects, such as art, history and geography, is the very good use of visits made to local places of interest. Pupils have many interesting, first hand experiences that enliven their learning. For example, writing a tourist brochure for Southchurch Hall, sketching trees in Wat Tyler Park and visiting Colchester Zoo to observe a variety of animals.
18. The school, in consultation with the local education authority, had set targets for standards to be achieved in 1999 National Curriculum tests. Targets set for reading and writing have been exceeded and, in mathematics, the results were only one per cent below the target percentage.
19. In the last inspection, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations with the exceptions of mathematics, where standards were judged to be below average, and physical education where standards were above. The findings of this inspection show that standards have generally been maintained and that there has been a significant improvement in mathematics.
20. Parents are very pleased with the standards achieved in the school.

21. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

21. The consistently high standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, together with the very good relationships, make a significant contribution to their progress.
22. The personal and social development of the children under the age of five is very good. Children develop confidence, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. They are attentive, eager to learn and remain on task for a good length of time. Children show very good attitudes towards activities and respond well to the lessons. Behaviour is very good and facilitates children's learning. They form good relationships with other children and adults. Children work happily together during group activities and are polite to each other. They wait patiently for their turn during snack times. Children share their resources well during activities. They help to tidy away equipment after use and help to make their role play area 'spotless'. Children take their responsibilities very well, for example, as milk monitors. They take pride in their finished work and admire the work of others.
23. Attitudes to learning are very positive; pupils are keen to learn. They are attentive and have the capacity to concentrate for a long period of time, for example, during whole class demonstrations. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and strategies with others, although limited time is devoted to this. Assemblies, 'circle times' and religious education lessons help to enhance pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures and beliefs.

24. Pupils' behaviour is very good and has a positive effect on achievement and learning. This is consistent with the findings of the previous inspection. Parents have a favourable view of the high standards of the good behaviour in school. The school's behaviour and discipline policy is well known and accepted by the pupils and their parents. There is a 'Code of Conduct' and a 'ROBINS Club' (Rules Of Behaviour IN School), to help improve and maintain good behaviour. Expectations are high; clear systems of reward and sanctions are helpful in achieving the desired results. Pupils are fully involved in the management of behaviour and follow the agreed rules and conventions well. They value their 'Red Robin' badges and awards. Pupils are orderly and controlled during their play times, lunch times and before school. No incidents of misbehaviour or bullying were observed during the inspection period. There have been no exclusions in the past two years.
25. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils are polite and courteous. There is a good sense of community amongst the pupils and adults; everyone shows regard and respect for each other. There are high expectations in terms of observing the principles of safety and for showing care and respect for others, including other people's belongings. Adults provide good role models by the care and concern they show for the pupils.
26. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of extra-curricular, sporting and fund raising activities and events and to make good contributions to the life of the school community. There are good opportunities for the pupils to show their initiative and to undertake responsibilities within the school, for example, by tidying up at the end of the lessons and by holding the doors open during assembly times. There are good opportunities for them to participate in charitable activities. Pupils' capacity for personal study, however, is not fully extended. There are limited opportunities to carry out their own investigations, for example, in science and mathematics and to develop and refine skills as independent learners.

27.

### **Attendance**

27. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and is satisfactory as it was in the last inspection. Most pupils arrive punctually for school and teachers mark registers promptly and briskly using the correct symbols. Following registration, lessons begin immediately. Attendance has improved slightly since the last inspection.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

28. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with just over a quarter being very good or excellent. Ninety-seven per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better. Two lessons account for the three per cent of unsatisfactory teaching. The main cause of unsatisfactory teaching is that the pace of the lesson is too slow and pupils sit for far too long on the carpet area. The predominantly good teaching is a strength of the school and an improvement since the last inspection where teaching was *'..good in a quarter of lessons seen. In the remainder it is mostly satisfactory, but in a significant number of lessons at Key Stage 1 it is less than satisfactory'*.
29. Strengths underlying teaching throughout the school are the very good relationships and the calm, purposeful atmosphere that teachers create in their classrooms. Such an atmosphere provides a situation where teachers can teach effectively and pupils learn successfully. Teachers are well

organised for their lessons; resources are appropriate and used effectively. Classrooms have very attractive displays of pupils' work which are valued by pupils. Displays such as the alphabet, key words and numerals, are placed appropriately for pupils to refer to. Equipment is carefully stored so that pupils know where to find and replace it independently. Teachers set very high expectations for behaviour and consideration for others. They manage their pupils well, especially those who have the potential to disrupt lessons. Pupils feel valued and have good self-esteem.

30. Very good teamwork is another strength of the school. Teachers work well together in the planning stage; co-ordinators support their colleagues well with their subject expertise. Proficient classroom assistants and nursery nurses also work well as part of the school team and provide very good support for teachers and pupils in lessons. The support they give in literacy and numeracy hour sessions makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved, especially by lower attaining pupils or pupils with behavioural difficulties.
31. Teaching for the youngest children under five in the Early Birds class is nearly always very good. In these part-time classes, very good links are established with parents so that children feel happy and secure and settle quickly into class routines. For example, some parents had helped their children make 'ice cream cones' at home to reinforce the class activities. Others had helped their children look for articles at home beginning with the initial sound 's' so that they could bring them to school to share.. For children under five in the reception classes, teaching is at least satisfactory and mostly good. Teaching is very good in the area of personal and social development. Teachers use the daily 'snack times' very effectively to teach and encourage good manners, social skills, such as sharing and taking turns and consideration for others. All teachers of children under five have a secure knowledge of how young children learn and what they need to learn. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught well, although there is a need to provide more opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills whilst talking about their own experiences. Teachers' planning is good and shows a clear understanding of the nationally prescribed areas of learning. Assessment procedures are very good but there is inconsistency in how these are used. As a rule, teachers are not using the outcomes from their assessments to plan more challenging work for higher attaining children to help them make better progress.
32. At Key Stage 1, teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent, but, overall, it is good. In the main, teaching is better in Year 2 classes because the pace of lessons is brisker. Unsatisfactory teaching is the result of poor pace and an imbalance between teachers' input to the lesson and pupils' active learning. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils do not have the opportunity to get on with their tasks and make progress.
33. All teachers have at least satisfactory subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
34. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers know their pupils well and provide tasks which develop their learning and maintain their interest. The close liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all are clear about the targets in pupils' individual education plans. Under the direction of the special educational needs co-ordinator, teaching assistants provide very good support which contributes positively to the good progress pupils make.
35. Teaching in English is good with many strengths and few weaknesses. All teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach basic literacy skills in a meaningful and enjoyable manner. For example, very good use is made of dry markers and wipe-clean boards for pupils to make quick lists of words that rhyme and are spelt the same. They make very good links with other subjects

to develop pupils' writing skills. All teachers plan their lessons according to the National Literacy Strategy framework for a 'literacy hour'. Very good use is made of the proficient teaching assistants to work with groups, ensuring that pupils make good progress. Planning is good but, as yet, the use of ongoing assessment of what pupils have learned, or need to learn, is not always used to plan the next lessons. In practice, this means that higher attaining pupils are not always provided with suitably challenging work and, therefore, do not make the progress they should. A very good system of assessment, related to target setting, has recently been introduced; teachers assess the National Curriculum level of their pupils and then set targets for pupils to achieve at the end of a particular term. Homework, in the form of reading at home with parents and learning spellings, contributes significantly to the standards achieved in reading and spelling.

36. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of a variety of games to promote pupils' ability to perform quick mental calculations. There is a suitable amount of direct teaching with clear explanations and demonstrations. Group work is well planned and organised. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively during group work and help lower attaining pupils make good progress. Very good teaching in mathematics is evident when teachers set high expectations and provide pupils with strategies and just the right level of challenge to ensure that they build up confidence., for example, teaching pupils that to add nine, the easiest way is to add 10 and then take one away. Pupils were given easy examples to build up confidence and they then progressed confidently to more difficult calculations such as 89 add nine. The weakness in mathematics is that teachers are not making good use of ongoing assessment to help them plan their next lessons. As a result, higher attaining pupils are often not given sufficiently challenging work to help them make the progress they are capable of. Currently, an area for development is to provide opportunities for parents to be involved in helping their children at home to improve their standards in mathematics.
37. Teaching in science is satisfactory, overall. A strength is the clear learning objectives for the lesson which are shared with the pupils. Teachers use questioning well to help pupils recall what they have learned but this needs to develop in order to provide the focus for pupils to think about why certain things happen in their experiments. The two main weaknesses in science teaching are that tasks do not always extend the thinking of the higher attaining pupils; pupils sit for too long on the carpet so there is an imbalance of information giving and pupils' opportunities to find out things for themselves.
38. In information technology, teaching is very good, overall. All teachers have worked hard to improve their knowledge of the hardware and software used in the new computer suite. In an excellent information technology lesson, the teacher had set clear learning objectives and taught to these. She moved the lesson along at a very brisk pace and, together with the teaching assistant, ensured that all pupils could make very good progress by helping pupils to quickly rectify and learn from their mistakes.
39. In religious education, teaching is good, overall. Teachers are confident in their teaching. Special features of the teaching are the sensitivity and sincerity with which teachers approach Christianity and other faiths.
40. Teachers mark pupils' work well and, in lessons, give helpful feedback to pupils as to how they can improve.
41. In all other subjects, teaching is good. Good team work and planning ensures that pupils in parallel classes have similar content to their lessons and share similar trips to places of interest.

## 42. The curriculum and assessment

42. The curriculum for children under five is broad and balanced and forms a good basis for the National Curriculum. There is equality of access and opportunity in the curriculum provision. Staff use a good range of activities to promote all areas of learning, especially the areas of personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. Planning for under fives is generally good and procedures for assessment very good. Staff have a good knowledge of the children's needs and the areas for development, through using baseline assessment and through holding interviews with the parents. Ongoing assessment is effective, through the observation of children's progress in the six areas of learning. Children's responses are observed and recorded well by teachers and non-teaching staff, although the use of assessment to inform curriculum planning varies between teachers. Planning does not indicate how work will be extended to meet individual needs. Baseline assessment and interviews with parents are proving useful in identifying needs and planning for the educational provision, on a long-term basis.
43. The school provides a good curriculum which is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. All National Curriculum subjects are covered and statutory requirements are met. The time allocation for subjects is appropriate. In response to the key issues raised in the previous inspection, the school now has all curriculum policies and schemes of work in all subjects, supported by a sound teaching and learning policy. The policies for religious education and assessment are currently being revised. The 'Literacy Hour' is in progress and the 'Numeracy Hour' has been introduced recently, as per national and local guidance. Information technology is on the school's list of priorities and on course to becoming a strength of the school. However, the policies for English, mathematics and information technology are still to be revised, in light of the national strategies for these subjects. Overall, as a result of action taken by the school, standards in English have improved, especially in writing. However, the curriculum is less challenging for high achievers, especially in science and mathematics areas.
44. Mathematics was identified as having a number of weaknesses in the previous inspection. The national curriculum requirements for mathematics are now met. There are improvements in the quality of teaching and learning as well as planning. The schemes of work are sound and continuity is ensured through the National Numeracy framework. Assessment of pupils' progress in mathematics is improving, through using the key learning objectives for each year group; marking of work is also improved. Standards in mathematics have improved progressively over the last three years, and considerably since the previous inspection, although the high achievers are not challenged sufficiently.
45. Whole school assemblies, collective acts of worship and religious education strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Sex education is taught informally through discussing topics, such as 'growth' and 'life cycles'. Health education features in the curriculum and the 'snack times' promote healthy eating habits. However, no formal teaching is undertaken to raise pupils' awareness of drug misuse. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have access to weekly lessons in swimming, at the appropriate times during the year.
46. The extra-curricular provision in school mainly consists of weekly recorder lessons for pupils in Year 2, from a committed teacher during her lunch time break; three times per week. All Year 2 classes have access to the recorder lessons and the pupils benefit immensely from them. The subject areas of history, geography and science are enriched by visits to places of interest, such as Jackapeni Farm, Langden Nature Reserve, Wat Tyler Country Park and the Sea Life Centre. Visitors are also invited to support activities and events in school. Visitors mainly include local artists, theatre companies and advisers. Pupils benefit from a range of sporting events, for example, 'Jump Rope for Heart' and 'Aerobics at Sports Day'. Opportunities are also provided to teach games skills through lessons in 'short tennis', 'top play', football and net ball. The music

festivals and activities during the 'Book Week' and 'Maths Week', create a stimulating learning environment for the school community. Homework supports literacy through the home-school reading scheme and the reinforcement of spellings, but homework is under emphasised as a resource in supporting numeracy.

47. Curriculum planning is generally good across all year groups. A new curriculum framework supports the planning of work in all areas of the curriculum. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy frameworks support curriculum planning, as do additional schemes of work in science, music and phonic work. A new planning format has been introduced, which provides an effective outline structure for teachers' planning. Learning objectives are focused, the lesson content and structure are clear and the intended support from teacher assistants is clearly indicated. However, the short term planning is not well informed by on-going assessment. Continuity and progression in learning are secured through schemes of work and medium term plans, but there are weaknesses in short term planning, which does not indicate how pupils' learning will be assessed and how the subsequent teaching will be adjusted to meet individual needs. As a result, progress is only satisfactory for high achievers, when progress is good for the majority of pupils in school.
48. Liaison between the Infant and Junior schools is good. Reports and records are passed on to the junior school and teachers from both the schools meet to discuss pupils' transfer, on an informal basis. There are very good procedures to ensure a smooth transfer for Year 2 pupils to the Junior school. Year 2 pupils spend a morning in the junior school to meet their new teacher and become familiar with the new school surrounding. The training for numeracy was jointly undertaken and this has helped to have a common understanding of the recommended good practice.
49. Each year group has a co-ordinator who has a good overview of the year group curriculum and ensures that there is equality of opportunity in all four parallel classes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. Pupils are well supported and make good progress, overall. The requirements of the special educational needs code of practice are met. The quality of provision for pupils' personal development only partially meets the aims of the school and the needs of the pupils, in that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and refine independent learning skills. The needs of higher attainers are not fully met.
50. There is a new governing body, which has yet to meet and establish its role in monitoring the curriculum and assessment. Curriculum co-ordinators are involved in monitoring planning in their subject areas. The previous year's work is reviewed and new action plans are devised. A 'curriculum monitoring log' is used for reviewing the core subjects. The senior staff monitor the weekly planning and use information to discuss the relevant issues with the subject co-ordinators. The co-ordinators offer support to their colleagues and informally monitor and evaluate developments in their subject areas. The monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of development
51. At Key Stage 1, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in subject areas are unsatisfactory, although assessment procedures are much better in the area of writing than they are in other subjects. Teachers are not using National Curriculum level criteria, consistently, to assess their pupils' attainment and set targets for improvement. Nor are teachers keeping track of the books that pupils read and the skills they use in their reading. However, there are improvements in assessment procedures from the previous inspection; a good marking policy is in place and implemented well by teachers; record keeping systems are in place and up to date. The assessment co-ordinator has recently left the school, so, until a new appointment is made, the responsibility is shared between the senior staff in school. A draft assessment policy is in use and awaiting governors' approval at their next meeting. Pupils' work is marked regularly and



consistently and pupils are given useful written and oral feedback. Procedures are good for assessing the needs of pupils with special educational needs; as a result, progress over time is good. Individual education plans show clear targets for improvements in literacy and numeracy. The good systems of assessment in English result in improved standards, especially in writing. Pupils' samples of written work are analysed and levelled against the National Curriculum levels. However, assessment in other subjects is not firmly rooted in the National Curriculum. The finer differences between the national curriculum levels are not taken into account while planning work for the pupils. Assessment is not moderated in mathematics and science to ensure a shared understanding of national curriculum levels and, as a result, it is not helping to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils in these areas.

52. There is informal assessment on a day-to-day basis, but the practice varies between teachers. Assessment procedures are not yet good enough to be of much use in informing curriculum planning or to help set long-term targets for improvement. National test results are analysed and the trends noted by the senior staff, although the co-ordinators are not yet in a position to use the outcomes of the test results, to make changes and to raise attainment levels. The school's current arrangements for the administration of end of key stage assessment and reporting to parents meet statutory requirements.

53. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

53. Hamstel Infant School offers its pupils a welcoming, secure, peaceful and caring environment. Parents agree that pupils are happy to come to school and that they are known and treated as individuals within a welcoming atmosphere. The learning environment is characterised by a sense of calm purpose, built on mutual respect and shared values. The school is very successful in meeting its aims to foster aesthetic, moral, spiritual, social and emotional development. There has been a very significant improvement in its provision for these areas of pupils' development since the last inspection when provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development was satisfactory and provision for their moral and social development was good. Provision is now very good, overall, and makes a strong contribution to the very good ethos of the school. Inspection evidence shows that excellent provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision is made for their moral, social and cultural development.

54. Pupils' spiritual development is carefully fostered throughout the school day. In assemblies, circle times and daily acts of collective worship, pupils are provided with many opportunities to reflect and consider. In a whole school assembly, for example, pupils were thinking about some of the sayings of Confucius, such as "use your eyes and you will see many wonderful things." Displays of pupils' poetry on themes such as 'I Love You' 'Seeing Things' and 'Sounds I Hear' are examples of some of the many opportunities provided for pupils' spiritual development within the classroom. In science, they are provided with very many occasions to reflect on the wonders of nature and the beauty of our world. In dance, pupils are given opportunities to explore moods and feelings in response to music. Singing in assemblies adds another valuable dimension to pupils' spiritual development. Hymns such as 'God Loves Me' and 'He Gave Me Eyes', are well explained to pupils and are sung in a meaningful and joyful manner. Another very good example of provision for pupils' spiritual development was witnessed in a Year 2 class where pupils were asked to observe a minute's silence in memory of those who died during wartime. The inspector present reported a very spiritual experience when 'you could hear a pin drop'.

55. There are very good systems in place for promoting pupils' understanding of right and wrong and good behaviour. Parents agree that the school promotes positive values and good behaviour well. The behaviour policy contains school and class rules and identifies rewards and sanctions. The school ensures that all staff are fully aware of the contents and aims of the policy so as to ensure consistency of approach. This successfully contributes to the calm and orderly atmosphere of the

school. Moral values are fostered through the very caring and supportive relationships which exist between all members of the school community and by the very good example set by all who work in it. In assemblies and religious education lessons, pupils are encouraged to think about their actions and the effect these will have on others. Assembly themes such as responsibility, rewards and punishments, fairness, forgiveness, kindness and respect, demonstrate the school's strong commitment to the promotion of strong moral values. The 'ROBIN' assembly (Rules Of Behaviour In School), is held once a week to celebrate achievements and to remind pupils of the importance of each and everyone within the school community.

56. The example set by the headteacher and her staff provides a very strong foundation for pupils' social development. One parent described the headteacher as 'always smiling and being so very kind and helpful towards us parents and our children.' The school's ethos very effectively promotes good social interaction and equality of opportunity. During the school day pupils are required to take on various responsibilities, keeping classrooms tidy and tidying away at the end of lessons. Year 2 pupils are given further responsibilities within the school. Organising the hall for assemblies and holding doors for other pupils, are good examples of these. Many suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to appreciate and contribute to the community in which they live and to develop a sense of citizenship. Distributing Harvest parcels to the elderly, planting trees during 'Tree Week', taking part in music and dance festivals and links with Southend Tennis Club, are some very good examples of this provision. Pupils are also offered very many opportunities to contribute to the wider community, through supporting charities such as the NSPCC, Fair Haven's Hospice, Kosovo Appeal, Comic Relief and Cancer Research.

57. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to appreciate and to develop their understanding of British culture and traditions. The school arranges many visits to places of cultural and historical interest such as Priory Park, Wat Tyler Country Park, Southchurch Hall and Old Leigh. There is very effective use of visiting speakers, as for example, representatives from Christian churches, local artists, Quantum Theatre and the Barking Dog Theatre Company and visitors during 'Health Week' to support this provision. There are also well planned opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the richness and diversity of other faiths and cultures through the religious education programme and assemblies. For example, this year's Harvest Festival was closely linked to the Jewish New Year and the festival of Diwali is celebrated in an assembly. Pupils are given a clear understanding that caring for each other and being kind is a common feature of many faiths and cultures. Activities, such as studying the works of famous artists and listening to the music of well-known composers, effectively enrich pupils' experiences.

58. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

58. The school's provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is good.

59. Teachers know their pupils very well. The informal procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good and effective, especially for children under five. Relationships within the school are very good, therefore, pupils feel secure, develop good self-esteem and are confident to 'have a go' at anything new. A good example of this is the high level of confidence pupils show in their approach to the new computers and software programs in the new computer suite. Even the youngest pupils are very keen to try something new and are not put off trying again if they make a mistake. Satisfactory records are kept of pupils' achievements in relation to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Marking of pupils' work is good and helpful oral feedback is given to pupils in lessons, so that they know what to do to improve their work. A strength of the school's provision is the good support given to pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans contain clear targets for improvement and proficient teacher assistants give good support to help pupils achieve these targets. The weakness is that insufficient use is made of

assessment of what pupils have learned and need to learn next, to plan the next lessons. Therefore, some higher attaining pupils are not given work to extend their learning and help them make the progress they should.

60. The procedures for monitoring discipline and promoting good behaviour are very good. The school's 'rules of behaviour in school', known as the 'ROBIN' scheme, is a system of rewards for good behaviour. The scheme is implemented consistently by teachers, is well understood by pupils and is very successful. Staff are particularly alert to signs of bullying and steps are taken promptly to deter such behaviour. Pupils are given every encouragement to show consideration for others and to respect differences in others.
61. The procedures for the monitoring and promotion of attendance are good. The school uses a computer-based system to record the attendance of pupils and keeps a close watch on both their attendance and punctuality. Pupils' absences are routinely followed up and cases of unexplained absences investigated.
62. The arrangements for child protection are good and good records are securely maintained. There is a named person to deal with child protection issues and all staff are aware of the procedures to be followed. There are good relationships with other agencies that assist in child protection matters, even though support from these is sometimes limited. Arrangements for assisting the school with pupils having emotional problems are good and very effective for the pupils and their families. The work of the School's Liaison Officer in giving this service is much appreciated, but it is understood that the service will soon be no longer available. The promoting of pupils' wellbeing takes place at all levels by caring teachers and support staff. Health and safety requirements are being met. Regulatory inspections and tests are carried out appropriately. An emergency lighting system has recently been fitted. The previous governing body was mindful of its responsibilities for the safety of pupils and staff and had taken precautions to ensure this.
63. The school has maintained the quality of its welfare and guidance to pupils mentioned in the last inspection report and in the area of personal safety there have been significant improvements
64. **Partnership with parents and the community**
64. The school has established a very good partnership with parents and the community.
65. The quality of information to parents is very good. There are frequent newsletters covering a variety of subjects to do with school, including information on future topics to be studied. Open evenings are arranged each term for parents to come and see their children's work and to talk to their class teachers. Annual reports are sent to parents on their children's development and progress and the reports are accompanied by a computer record of weekly attendances over the year. The annual reports on pupils meet statutory requirements. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are very informative and meet statutory requirements. Parents appreciate the information given to them before children start school. Parents receive home visits at this time, so that teachers can explain how their children will be integrated into school life.
66. The involvement of parents in their children's education is good. Parents are very positive about the school and 95 per cent of parents who replied to the parent questionnaire said that the school encourages them to be involved in the life of the school. Some parents help regularly in the school by assisting in such subjects as art and in design and technology lessons. Some parents also accompany pupils on school visits. Parents show their interest in their children's education by

listening to them read at home and by commenting on this in their children's reading diary. There is a parent/teachers association whose members give freely of their time to raise funds for the school and, as a result, are able to make substantial donations to the school. The association is largely responsible for the upkeep of the swimming pool and this year has also contributed to the new computer suite. The various fund raising events of the association are regularly supported by several local businesses.

67. The school is enriched by its very good relationships with the community. The fund raising events arranged by the parent/teachers association also provide opportunities for parents, pupils, relatives and friends to mix socially and add to the sense of a 'community' school which many parents say it is. Pupils take part in many visits which support their learning as well as develop an interest in the wider community. As part of their geographical studies, pupils in Year 1 visited a nature reserve to look at animal habitats and Year 2 visited a railway museum as part of their history programme. Reception children visited a sea life centre to support their work in English. Children are also involved in local events such as a music festival and a movement festival. Year 2 pupils sang Christmas carols at a local home for the elderly and also in a nearby shopping centre. There are also many visitors to the school. In the past year these have included two theatre companies, one giving a performance of 'Rumpelstilskin' during book week and the other performing a play about levers and forces. A local artist talked to pupils about creating paintings and a local aerobics teacher worked with children during their sports day. A teacher from a nearby special school currently visits the school once a week to share her expertise with staff on how to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills.
68. Pupils become aware of others less fortunate than themselves through their support of charities. Following the efforts of pupils to raise money for heart charity, a representative from the charity visited the school to talk to children about health. A substantial amount of money was raised by the school for a children's charity and gifts and money were also sent to refugee appeal.
69. Liaison with the junior school, which shares the same site, is good and, among other advantages, it enables pupils to transfer smoothly when changing schools. Towards the end of the summer term, Year 2 classes spend a morning at the junior school to meet their new teachers and to gain familiarity with their new school. Both schools share the services of a special educational needs co-ordinator so that pupils with special needs are also helped to fit in easily to their new school. At the receiving end, parents are impressed with the help given to children in enabling them to settle into school life. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved as much as possible in the individual education plans for their child. Parents are invited to the reviews of the plans and are shown ways in which they can help their child at home.
70. The school has improved on the good partnerships with parents and the community mentioned in the last inspection report. The Governors' Annual Reports to Parents now meet statutory requirements.

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

### **71. Leadership and management**

71. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She has a very clear understanding of the needs of her pupils and their families and, accordingly, has established a strong pastoral ethos. This ethos underpins all the work of the school and provides a very effective foundation for pupils to develop very good behaviour and very good attitudes to learning. More recently, the headteacher has taken a positive lead in introducing and monitoring the outcomes of initiatives to

raise standards. Results of these initiatives are shown by a rise in standards in the 1999 National Curriculum tests, especially in writing and science. The headteacher visits classrooms regularly and teaches classes if teachers are absent, therefore, she has a good understanding of what goes on in all classes. The senior management team and year group co-ordinators meet regularly. All staff are consulted on important management issues and kept well informed of decisions made; therefore, all staff feel valued and work very well together as an effective team.

72. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in 1996. Nearly all the key issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. Standards of teaching in Key Stage 1 have improved considerably and are now good, overall. Standards in mathematics have risen; in 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level is in line with the national average. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, with some being revised to take account of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The roles of the senior management team have been clearly defined, with the deputy headteacher taking responsibility for the curriculum. The role of the senior management team and co-ordinators has not yet developed sufficiently to formally monitor the quality of teaching within the school. The school is reviewing its assessment. This academic year, good work has started in using the outcomes of assessment in English to set future targets. However, the use of the outcomes of assessment to set targets for improvement or change and/or modify the curriculum remains an area for development.
73. Prior to September, 1999, Hamstel Infant and Hamstel Junior schools shared the same governing body. At the time of the inspection, a new governing body had just been appointed for each school; consequently, the roles and responsibilities of committees and individual governors have yet to be established.
74. In the main, co-ordinators provide good leadership for their subjects. They are well informed of current trends and take advantage of opportunities offered for professional development. The roles of co-ordinators are well-developed with regard to planning; good, joint planning ensures that all pupils in the same year group have a similar content to their lessons. Good planning, related to the national Numeracy and Literacy strategies, also ensures that pupils build systematically on the skills they learn as they move from year group to year group. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. A particularly good feature of this management is the very good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, teaching assistants and teachers; all are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. Weekly meetings are held for teaching assistants so that they are kept up to date with developments, procedures and pupils' progress. All statutory obligations are met with regard to the annual review of pupils with statements of special educational need.
75. Currently, the headteacher and co-ordinators do not monitor teaching against agreed criteria in order to improve the quality, share good practice and raise pupils' standards. However, the majority of teaching in the school is good or better and is monitored informally. The headteacher is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Monitoring roles are an acknowledged area for development. An appropriate and effective appraisal system is in place for all staff.
76. The school's most recent development planning is good; it is detailed and costed. In addition, there is an action plan for English, mathematics and information technology in which areas for improvement are prioritised, realistic and have a named person to monitor the progress towards meeting the targets for improvement. Targets have been set for standards in reading, writing and science to be achieved in future years. These are to be revised as the school exceeded the targets this year in reading and writing and was only one per cent below the target for mathematics.
77. The school has clear aims and values which are reflected in all areas of its work. The vision for a school where all are 'Working, playing and achieving together' is, in the main, fulfilled most

successfully. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their work and behave very well. Recent initiatives have been successful in raising standards in 1999 National Curriculum tests. The school is committed to raising standards further.

78. There is a strong and generally successful commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress. However, there are instances where higher attaining pupils are not given work to help them make the progress of which they are capable.
79. The school has recently introduced sound strategies for raising standards of attainment. With these strategies and systems in place and the good leadership and management of the headteacher, the school is well placed for further improvement. The newly elected governing body will need to familiarise itself with target setting procedures and work together with the headteacher to see that targets are appropriate, yet suitably challenging.
80. There has been clear improvement in the leadership of the school since the last inspection. Parents are very supportive of the headteacher and her staff and feel that all are very approachable and care about their children as individuals.
81. All statutory requirements are met.

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

82. The number and expertise of the school's staff are good, as are the accommodation and learning resources. There are sufficient staff to meet the demands of the curriculum throughout the school. The stability of staffing and the way in which teachers and support staff work so well together made an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers are well qualified and there is a good range of experience within the school. Staff development reviews are held twice a year at which budget allocations for the following year and also training requirements are discussed. The school has a designated staff development officer to oversee arrangements for training. The support staff make a positive contribution to the quality of the teaching and are particularly effective in working with pupils having special educational needs. The school has a good induction programme in place to meet the needs of teachers new to the school and it includes the use of a mentor to guide the new appointee. The induction programme allows new teachers to integrate quickly into the life of the school. The school benefits from efficient administrative staff who contribute to the effective working of the school and its site manager and cleaners who maintain the school's pleasant learning environment.
83. The accommodation is good and used effectively for teaching. The main school building dates from 1914 and was the first in the area to have corridors between classrooms and hall. Since that time there have been considerable alterations and extensions to cope with the rising number of pupils and to bring undersized accommodation up to standard. Changes in recent years have included two new classrooms for reception children and two classrooms remodelled to make better use of available space. Since the last inspection, two classrooms which were undersized have been extended and can now each comfortably accommodate 30 pupils. Although these classrooms are now in use and provide a very good learning environment, the standard of building work, particularly on the outside, is unsatisfactory because some of the work is incomplete. The school is pursuing this matter. In addition to the main classrooms there are two relocatable classrooms for infant children on the site. The latest alteration to the school is the conversion of the former library into a computer suite. Some of the space in the new suite is taken up with bookshelves and some books are held in the adjacent corridor, but, overall, the space still makes a satisfactory library. The school benefits from the use of a covered swimming pool on site which it shares with the adjacent junior school. There is an adequately equipped medical room. The grounds surrounding the school are extensive and include playgrounds for infants and younger children and there is a large playing field. There is also at the side of the school a 'secret garden' with various imaginative facilities for adventurous play.
84. The school is well resourced to meet the demands of the curriculum. The level of resources in classrooms is good and specialist resources are available for subjects such as physical education. The new computer suite with its 16 computer stations is a great improvement to the resources required for information technology and, in addition, each class is equipped with a computer. The library space, although reduced in size because of the new computer suite, houses a good selection of books. There is a good range of books in the classrooms.
85. Since the last inspection, the good provision of teaching and support staff has been maintained, there have been major improvements to accommodation and resources are good in all subjects.

86.

### **The efficiency of the school**

86. The efficiency of financial control and school administration is very good. The school's finances are managed very efficiently by the headteacher and, until recently, the governing body. Development planning is costed and criteria set for success with named individuals responsible for monitoring the progress of initiatives. Judicious financial planning has enabled the school to make

outstanding improvements to two very small classrooms. These are now light and spacious rooms where pupils' work is displayed to advantage and there is plenty of room for practical activities. In conjunction with the local education authority, the school has financed the excellent new computer suite. The suite has been in use for only four weeks, but is already having a very positive effect on the standards attained by all pupils. Very good use is made of teaching and support staff. The school employs a high number of teacher assistants, including nursery nurses, who are deployed throughout the school. They make an excellent contribution to the standards of work and behaviour achieved in the school. The school employs a specialist music teacher to teach music throughout the school; this has been a good use of funds as the teacher provides a good role model for other teachers both in the content and delivery of her lessons.

87. Specific funds allocated for provision for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately. Funds allocated for professional development of staff have been used wisely but almost exclusively for familiarising staff with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
88. Resources are used effectively in lessons and excellent use is made of visits to places of interest to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of their local area. The accommodation is used very efficiently, although the new computer suite has taken most of the space in the library so there is more limited space and time for library use. The school is aware of this problem and is seeking a solution.
89. Day-to-day administration is very good. The minor shortcomings identified in the last auditors' report of 1995 have been addressed satisfactorily. Office procedures are very efficient, run smoothly and support teaching and learning effectively. The school office is a welcoming place and gives a very good first impression of the school. Parents find the office staff very helpful and approachable.
90. Given the pupils' good progress, the average or above average standards achieved when compared to similar schools, the good quality of teaching and pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, the school provides good value for money. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection.
- 91.



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

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

91. The admission policy has changed recently and the school admits children in the Autumn term, after their fourth birthday. The youngest children start on a part-time basis in the reception classes and attend on a full time basis when they reach the designated age. This gives the children a good start and addresses the issue of inequality of provision, which was reported in the previous inspection. Altogether, there are 39 boys and 20 girls in the reception classes, attending on a full time basis. In the 'Early Birds' class, there are 23 boys and 12 girls, attending on a part time basis. Children are assessed on entry and then at the end of the reception class, using the local education authority's approved system of baseline assessment. Standards of attainment on entry are mixed, with very few children scoring highly on the baseline assessment. Overall, levels of attainment on entry to the reception classes at age four, are below local and national levels. By the time children are five and reach statutory school age, attainment is generally in line with national expectations, although the area of speaking and vocabulary skills remains a weakness. Baseline assessment is used for long term planning. There is a policy statement for early years, which is to be updated to take account of the latest developments in education for under fives. There are detailed schemes of work for each of the six areas of learning. Home-school links are well established through home visits, prior to the admission. Children benefit from the strong home/school partnership with parents/carers. There is a good level of co-operation between staff involved with early years.
92. There are many improvements in the provision since the previous inspection, to bring the curriculum in line with the new requirements and to move children on to work related to the National Curriculum. Children are happy and secure and settle very quickly into the daily routine. There is a good learning ethos throughout the early years. The quality of teaching has generally improved, although there is some scope for providing more opportunities to develop children's skills as independent learners and to provide less direction in art and craft.
93. The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Teaching promotes sound educational standards. Teachers have a secure knowledge of how young children learn and are sensitive to the individual circumstances of the children, which contributes effectively to the children settling down quickly and forming good relationships. A warm and friendly ethos is created and the pupils feel safe and secure. There are detailed long, medium and short-term plans, which guide the work throughout the early years. A wide range of stimulating activities is provided, which show clear learning objectives. The activities are well linked to the six areas of learning. Assessment procedures are good, both ongoing and long term, but there is inconsistency of practice. The planning does not show how teaching will be modified to meet individual needs. This has impact on extending children's language and literacy. Children's individual progress is recorded systematically and the parents are well informed about their child's progress. Their thinking is well developed through the use of skilful questioning by staff. Non-teaching staff are actively involved in supporting activities and recording children's progress. They make a positive contribution to the work with children under five. Accommodation is generally good and the space is well organised and used. Resources are generally sufficient, except in relation to outdoor activities for the older children in reception classes where resources are limited. Staff make good use of the available resources, to enhance children's learning.
94. Children respond well to the adults. They concentrate on activities that are set for them and are keen to learn. They show good levels of patience during their computer activities. They readily express their joy and excitement, show their favourite pictures to friends and admire the work of others. They select activities on an independent basis and pursue their own interests when opportunities are provided. They make very good progress in the 'Early Birds' class, and, in the

reception classes, they consolidate and extend their experiences. Progress is good throughout their time in the early years. By the time they reach statutory school age, most children reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all six areas of learning, although there remains a weakness in vocabulary and speaking skills. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their targets. Observations by staff are used effectively to record children's progress and to identify needs. Parents are involved in the baseline assessment interviews and support the staff in assessing their child's needs.

95.

95. **Personal and social development**

95. Personal and social development area is a strength of the school. Children make very good progress in this area. By the time they reach statutory school age, children's behaviour is very good and they have positive attitudes towards work and the school. The school successfully promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a good range of activities. Children are able to select an activity of their choice and concentrate on it for a good length of time. They co-operate well and share their activities and resources willingly with others. The snack times are used effectively to develop children's literacy and numeracy and their personal and social skills. Children are encouraged to show care and respect for others and are sensitive to the needs of other people. They form good relationships with adults and respond well to the teachers' instructions. Children display good manners, through using words, such as 'pardon', 'please' and 'thank you'. They show an awareness of the feelings of others, including people from other cultures. Children help and show responsible attitudes during tidying up times. They learn to feed and take good care of small creatures, such as the goldfish. Children take part in celebrations and have opportunities to listen to stories with themes, such as 'what is right and what is wrong'.

96.

96. **Language and literacy**

96. Attainment in language and literacy is below the level expected, especially in vocabulary and speaking skills. Progress is good. Opportunities are provided for the children to be the authors and illustrators of their early reading and writing books, for example, through writers' workshops. Since the last inspection, there have been satisfactory improvements in the provision of resources to extend opportunities for children's imaginative role-play. Children are good at listening and responding to stories, songs and number rhymes. Children's speaking skills are below the level expected and under-developed. They listen attentively and respond well to instructions. However, limited opportunities are provided to talk about their own experiences. Reading is progressing well. Children are encouraged to read labels around the room and 'key words' that are selected for the week. They enjoy reading books from their book area and show a good level of interest in listening to stories. Stories, such as 'Mrs. Wishy-Washy' and 'We're going on a Bear Hunt', provide a good context for a range of activities, to support reading, writing and to extend vocabulary. Fortnightly visits to the local library are made to make children familiar with how books work. Parents are involved in supporting their child's reading at home, through books brought from the school and they write comments in their child's reading diary. Children learn the initial sounds of letters through a variety of games, such as the 'fishing' game. Parents support children by reinforcing letter sounds, learned in school and through sending familiar items for the classroom display. Some children can read and write their own name and identify words, such as 'she' and 'he'. A few children are beginning to read simple text, using sight vocabulary, picture cues and their knowledge of sounds. Children are becoming increasingly aware of the initial sounds made by letters and familiar words. They trace letters and draw writing patterns; they copy their own name, using upper and lower case letters and copy words written by their teachers. Children learn to use their writing materials, such as pencils, chalks and crayons correctly and make recognisable marks on their 'thank you' cards, writing boards and the note books.

97.

97. **Mathematics**

97. The attainment of children under five in mathematics is sound and progress is good. Opportunities are provided to develop children's mathematical ideas and language, related to weight, time, money and capacity. This is often achieved through activities during the 'Numeracy Hour' and the children's snack times. There are sufficient resources to support the area of mathematics. Opportunities are provided to select activities and resources, to make their own investigations, and to play mathematical games. This is achieved through allocating time for 'exploratory activities', although the children need more guidance and support during these activities. Good opportunities are provided for developing children's mathematical vocabulary and an awareness of patterns. Children have many opportunities to count, match and sort objects and shapes, according to the set criteria. Children use a variety of resources, such as beads, dyed pasta and number rods, to thread or to arrange them in different ways. They recognise simple patterns and some children can repeat patterns with two or three colours, shapes or sizes. Many children can name two and three-dimensional shapes; some can describe the shapes and match them with real life objects. Children are encouraged to use mathematical language, such as 'bigger than/smaller than' and 'biggest/ smallest', to compare different objects and to arrange them in an order of size. Many children count and recognise numbers to 10 and some can count and order numbers beyond 10. Children enjoy singing number and finger-rhymes, such as 'Five little monkeys', using their glove puppets. Through day-to-day activities and practical work, children develop a sound understanding of addition and subtraction.

98.

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

98. Attainment is sound and progress is good in this area of learning. A good range of activities is provided, to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. This area lays good foundation for the future subjects of history, geography, science and technology. Opportunities are provided to explore the properties of a range of natural materials, including sand, water and play dough. Children access a wide range of materials and tools, including re-cycled materials, for their construction work. They make good use of the computer and develop their technology skills progressively. They use the mouse and keyboard and talk about what they are doing. Children have opportunities to use their senses, through planned activities and they learn about their bodies and healthy eating habits. Children are given many opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form, in two and three-dimensions. They visit places of interest, such as the farm, the zoo, the country side park and the local supermarket, to learn about the community and the environment. Through stories, such as 'The Bear Hunt', they become aware of simple directions and learn to name familiar features on the map, which they help to create by using a variety of materials. They cut, fold and stick cards and paper to make their cone shaped party hats. The school's 'Secret Garden' is used well to observe the plants, mini beasts and the pond, to recognise features of living things. Children observe changes in the weather and seasons and are encouraged to talk about them. They begin to know the days of the week and language related to time, but few examples are available for talking about the past and comparing it with the present.

99.

99. **Creative development**

99. In the creative development area, attainment is satisfactory and progress is good. Some improvements have been made since the previous inspection, although there is scope for more. There is a tendency to over-direct art. As a result, children are not able to use their own ideas creatively. Children use materials, such as paints, crayons and play-dough, to express their ideas and feelings. They enjoy using a variety of materials, such as scissors, glue, sponges, crayons and paints and brushes, to learn new techniques in colouring, painting and printing. Children

learn to mix their colours and observe the effect of mixing the three primary colours. They enjoy cutting, folding and sticking and using re-cycled materials, to make their models and pictures. Children are encouraged to create group pictures for their classroom display. Generally, there are limited opportunities to explore new ways to express own ideas creatively, although the computer is used very well to explore different techniques of drawing, painting and printing. For example, children used the computer well to create their firework pictures. There are opportunities to explore sounds, through using percussion instruments, such as shakers and triangles. Children play simple instruments to create special effects, for example, relating it to the story of 'The Bear Hunt'. They enjoy singing songs and nursery rhymes using their memory. Children use their imagination, to rehearse different roles in the role-play area. However, children's role-play is not well developed and there are limited opportunities to make up their own stories.

100.

#### 100. **Physical development**

100. Physical development progresses well. By the age of five, children's physical development reaches the expected standards for their ages. Children develop their fine motor skills, through activities, such as pouring, doing up zip fasteners, changing shoes and socks, and using scissors. Children use their scissors appropriately, to cut along a straight or a curved line. They mould their play-dough into different shapes and enjoy the feel of its texture. Children develop physical skills through using their construction kits and through using the balancing and climbing apparatus. Children move with increasing confidence, awareness of space, co-ordination and body control. They are encouraged to think of new ways to use their space, the apparatus and their bodies. Children listen attentively to the instructions and observe simple rules of safety. They move and work well with others. Children respond well to the taped music. Opportunities are also there to move freely, to express own ideas and feelings. They dance, walk, stamp and clap to the music and use their bodies to make different shapes, as they rest on the floor. However, there are limited opportunities for outdoor play. Children in the 'Early Birds' class make good use of the outdoor space and the available wheeled toys. Currently, there are limited resources for outdoor activities and two classes do not have easy access to an outdoor play area.. The school is aware of these limitations and has plans to address the difficulties of access once the current building work is completed.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

101. The last inspection in 1996 judged standards in reading and writing to be generally in line with national expectations. However, results of National Curriculum tests that year showed standards in reading to be below the national average. Results of 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, show the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in reading and writing is just below the national averages. Using pupils' average scores and, comparing them with national averages for the years 1996 to 1998, shows that, overall, standards in reading and writing were below the national average. In 1998, compared to all schools, standards in reading and writing were well below average. When compared to similar schools, standards in reading were around average, but, in writing, standards were below.

102. In 1999, standards have improved, especially in writing. Standards in reading are below average when compared to all schools but are average when compared to similar schools. Standards in writing are in line with the average for all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. These improved standards are the result of the recent initiatives to raise standards, such as targeting pupils for extra support from teaching assistants in order for them to reach the

expected level.

103. Analysis of pupils' results shows that the performance of boys and girls is similar in reading, but, in writing, girls do better than boys.

104.

105. Inspection evidence shows that, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in listening are in line with national expectations, but, in speaking, standards are below the expected levels. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other and show they have understood by answering questions correctly or making an appropriate contribution. In speaking, younger pupils in the key stage are happy to give one word answers or parts of sentence, but few are able or confident in speaking in whole sentences to their class. In Year 2, pupils are more confident in expressing their ideas or answering questions, but there is a lack of detail in their responses; for their age, many pupils do not have a wide vocabulary. Progress in listening is good because teachers set high expectations for pupils to listen carefully and answer questions. Given their starting point on entry to full-time schooling, progress in speaking is sound. However, there is a need to provide both more and more structured opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking skills so that they can make even better progress.

104. Standards in reading are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, although few attain the higher levels. For their age, Year 2 pupils read fluently and accurately. They use an appropriate range of strategies to tackle words they are unsure of, such as looking at the pictures or reading past the unknown word and guessing the word from the meaning of the sentence. Pupils can use the contents and index pages of a non-fiction book to help them locate information. Higher attaining readers in Year 2 can talk a little about their favourite authors and the type of stories they like and why. Pupils of all ages make particularly good use of phonic strategies such as initial letter sounds and letter blends when they attempt unknown words.

105. Overall, progress in reading is sound, but for some lower and higher attaining pupils, it is unsatisfactory. The sound progress pupils make is related to the very positive attitudes they develop towards books and good parental involvement. Pupils who read at home nearly every day make better progress than those who do not. Throughout, progress in learning and using phonic strategies is good because teachers follow the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy and teach the skills well. Currently, teachers do not assess the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' reading skills and keep ongoing records of the skills pupils use or need to learn in order to make better progress; consequently, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Similarly, there is no formal system for keeping track of the books pupils read. Pupils choose from colour coded boxes which contain books graded according to difficulty. In most cases, pupils choose appropriately, but some higher and lower attaining pupils are not choosing books which would help them make better progress and teachers are not always aware of this. In the main, lower attaining pupils make sound progress. However, there are some who have difficulty remembering the wide range of different words associated with the variety of reading schemes they encounter in their colour coded box. Their progress is slowed because it takes them longer to remember so many new words. These pupils need a more structured framework to guide them in their choice of reading material. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in achieving the appropriate targets set for them. They have good support from their teachers and teaching assistants and, most importantly, they have good self-esteem.

106. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in writing is in line with national expectations. A very good feature in the school's provision for writing is the opportunities it provides for writing in other subjects. These opportunities provide meaningful and purposeful reasons for pupils to write. For example, in history, Year 2 pupils write suitably sequenced accounts of their visit to Southchurch Hall and design and write informative 'brochures' for potential visitors. In their

science lessons, Year 1 pupils write up their observations of colours and autumn trees when they visit the Watt Tyler country park. In their story writing, Year 2 pupils show a good awareness of audience when they re-tell traditional fairy tales such as the Three Billy Goats Gruff. Pupils are also developing a good understanding of an author's style. They do this by attempting to write in a similar style to their 'class author', for example 'The Ghost Train', by Allan Ahlberg. During inspection, Year 2 pupils were making good use of words or phrases to link sentences in their writing about 'What's in the box?'.

107. Progress in writing is good. Pupils are taught basic writing skills systematically and cumulatively, so that they have time to practise and consolidate what they learn in a meaningful context. For example, pupils are taught to order their work and have opportunities to practise these skills when they record the growth of their hyacinth bulb's roots. Good teaching ensures that pupils learn letter sounds in the most efficient order and how to use these sounds to help them spell. Good teaching helps pupils learn to spell by listening carefully to see if a word rhymes with one they know how to spell. For example, most Year 2 pupils could read and spell 'oil' and could go on to spell 'boil', 'foil' and 'spoil'. As a result of the good teaching, nearly all pupils are confident in their spelling ability and will 'have a go' at spelling unknown words they want to use. Handwriting skills are taught well. Pupils develop good letter formation and appropriate proportion to their letters. However, not enough attention is paid to ensuring that pupils develop and practise a suitable pencil grip. Too many pupils in Years 1 and 2 use an inappropriate pencil grip and, as a result, cannot write as fluently or speedily as they should. Pupils use a word processing program competently to present their poems and stories. Some good examples were noted of group poems and class books of individual pupils' poems.
108. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards reading, enjoy taking books home to share with their families and take care of their reading books. They take pride in their work and enjoy sharing the stories and poems they write. In lessons, pupils behave well. They listen attentively to their teacher even when they have been sitting for a long time. In group work sessions, most pupils concentrate on their work, especially when working with a teacher or teaching assistant.
109. Overall, teaching is good, with the best teaching in Year 2 classes; in these classes, teachers move their lessons along at a good pace. All teachers have at least sound subject knowledge and satisfactory understanding of how to teach letter sounds (phonics). Year 1 teachers have a good understanding of how to teach initial sounds and simple two letter blends. Year 2 teachers have a good understanding of how to teach spelling, using rhyme in an enjoyable and efficient manner. All teachers have a good understanding of how to organise the different parts of a literacy hour. They make very good use of their proficient teacher assistants in group work sessions to support lower attaining pupils and help them persevere with their tasks. Planning is good and in line with the format of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers mark their pupils' work appropriately and in lessons, give them good feedback about the work they are doing and how they could improve. Homework in the form of reading at home and learning spellings is used effectively to promote standards and attitudes. In all classes, teachers keep their pupils sitting on the carpet area for too long. Most teachers do not take into account that, in many instances, their pupils have been sitting for about fifteen minutes during registration time before they start the text part of their literacy hour. This can mean that pupils may be sitting on the floor for at least three quarters of an hour. In the only unsatisfactory lesson observed, pupils had been sitting on the floor for fifty minutes. Quite understandably, they became restless and inattentive and lost interest in the text and, consequently, did not make the progress of which they were capable.
110. The literacy co-ordinator has been in post for seven weeks, but is already providing very good leadership for the subject. She has completed an audit of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. Using the findings of this audit, the co-ordinator has drawn up a

comprehensive action plan for improvement. The co-ordinator is clearly aware of the need to analyse all available data on the school's performance in baseline testing, reading and writing to help set measurable targets. However, she has not had the time to do this, as yet. She has already put into practice a very good system for using the outcomes of assessment to set targets for future attainment in writing and is to extend this system to set targets in reading.

111. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, although there is a need to extend the range of non-fiction large text books (big books). Some of the reading schemes contained in the colour coded book boxes are outdated. The resources are used efficiently. Currently, the library is also used as the computer suite. Pupils still have access to the suitably stocked library but space is limited and the opportunity for teaching library skills with a whole class is restricted. The school is considering ways in which they can improve on this situation.

112. The school's strategy for literacy is good. Planning is good and in accordance with the National Literacy Strategy. Early literacy skills are taught well and systematically. Pupils are encouraged at an early age to be independent in their attempts at spelling and to use the skills and strategies they know to help them. The school recognised the need to develop pupils' writing and has raised standards successfully in this area by providing very good opportunities for writing within other subjects. The school keeps parents well-informed about how reading and writing are taught in the school and encourages parents to be involved in their child's learning. The school has a good home/school reading policy which most parents take advantage of.

#### 114. **Mathematics**

113. Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with the national average. Standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection when they were below average in Years 1 and 2 and sound in the early years.

114. Analysis of the 1998 national tests for seven-year-olds shows that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and above was broadly in line with the national average, and above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, attainment at the higher Level 3 was below the national average. Taking the last three years into account, performance in mathematics was close to the national average. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics.

115. The 1999 national test results show that, overall, there is only slight improvement in the test results from the previous year. Nearly three quarters of the pupils have reached Level 2 and just over a tenth have reached Level 3. However, when the test results are closely analysed, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Levels 2B and above is below the national average and average in comparison with similar schools. This is because the proportion of pupils who attain the lower Level 2C is higher than expected. Teacher assessments for 1998 and 1999 show higher results for pupils at the higher Level 3.

116. Inspection findings are that by the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with the national average in most aspects of mathematics, except in the application of mathematics to solve simple problems. Fewer than the expected proportion of pupils are attaining higher levels. Pupils in Year 2 count on and count back from a given position of numbers up to 100. They use addition and subtraction and begin to link the two operations. They count in twos, fives and tens and become aware of the different number patterns. Pupils suggest suitable units of measurements and estimate and measure objects, using standard and non-standard units. Pupils use the correct form of notation when recording their calculations relating

to money. They solve simple problems, when opportunities are provided. Pupils have a sound understanding of data handling and they use this to draw graphs, for example, of their favourite foods, fruit or favourite crisp flavours. Pupils recognise a pie chart and learn to interpret a bar graph. They also use information technology to make a graph, using their own data. Pupils in Year 1 find different ways of making 10. They read, write and order numbers to 20. They add and subtract numbers to 20 and use comparative terms to describe the difference between two numbers. They make sensible estimates during measuring activities and compare objects of different weights. They use money for buying things in every day contexts. They recognise and match different coins to £1.00 in value. Pupils in the reception class count numbers to 20, recognise numerals to 10 and add and subtract numbers to 10, in practical contexts. They become aware of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes.

117. Numeracy is integrated with other subjects, such as science and information technology, although there is scope for development in this respect. The introduction of the school's numeracy strategy is making a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Standards of numeracy are beginning to improve. The numeracy hour has been introduced recently and is now established throughout the school, giving teachers more confidence in teaching different aspects of the numeracy framework. As a result, teachers are beginning to reflect on their lessons and they refine their planning and teaching.
118. Starting from a low prior attainment on their entry to the reception classes, pupils generally make good progress throughout their time in school. Pupils are beginning to use a range of strategies to support their calculations and are gaining confidence as they succeed. They are developing their mathematical vocabulary and beginning to use mathematical terms correctly, especially when encouraged by their teachers. They are beginning to check the accuracy of their answers, using strategies they have been taught. In reception class, they build on their previous knowledge of number rhymes and numbers up to 10. In Year 1, they use their knowledge of number bonds to solve simple problems, using numbers up to 20. In Year 2, they begin to learn place value of numbers up to 100. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing sound understanding of place value of each digit in two and three-digit numbers. Progress is just satisfactory for high achievers, as there is a general lack of challenge in activities, especially at the higher Level 3. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets, as they are well supported.
119. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The good learning environment, created through colourful displays in mathematics, helps pupils to take interest in the subject. They behave well during their lessons and are keen to learn. Pupils demonstrate good levels of concentration during teachers' demonstrations. They enjoy calculating mentally and responding orally to the teachers' questions. Pupils enjoy and make good use of the resources in practical activities. They work well collaboratively and help each other as necessary. However, pupils' capacity to apply their previous knowledge and to investigate on their own is hampered due to the lack of opportunities.
120. The quality of teaching is generally sound, although some examples of good and very good teaching were also observed. Lessons are generally well planned and structured for the numeracy hour. However, the planning is not informed by ongoing assessments. As a result, opportunities are missed for extending higher attaining pupils. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. There is a high proportion of direct teaching. Explanations and demonstrations given by the teachers are clear. The introductory activities give due regard to pupils' mental and oral work and to developing their mental calculation strategies. Pupils are involved through discussions and questioning, although limited opportunities are provided for them to make their own investigations. Group activities are well organised and, generally, suitable work is set for the majority of the pupils. However, there is a tendency to provide less challenging work for the more able pupils. This is largely due to the lack of a shared understanding of the



expected levels for the year groups. Teachers are beginning to make a reference to the numeracy framework to provide appropriate levels of challenge in activities. Homework is not used effectively to support pupils' learning. As a result, parents are not fully involved in supporting the subject.

121. The co-ordinator for mathematics is keen and has an appropriate action plan to ensure the effective implementation of the numeracy strategy in school. She has a clear view of the school's strengths and of the areas which need developing. However, the school policy for mathematics is yet to be updated to take account of the requirements of the numeracy strategy. The co-ordinator has attended relevant courses and is providing appropriate guidance and training for the staff. The monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of development and not yet effective in ensuring that all the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered in a balanced way, and that the more able pupils are given suitably challenging work. Reference is made to the key learning objectives from the numeracy framework. This helps to have a good feel of the expected standards for each year group. However, assessment in mathematics remains unsatisfactory, as teachers do not share a common understanding of the National Curriculum level criteria and what they need to teach to raise attainment from one level to the next. There is no moderated portfolio of pupils' assessed work to develop consistent practice in the assessment of mathematics. As a result, the teachers' assessments are, on occasion, unreliable. Assessment is not used effectively to set individual targets for improvement on either a short or long-term basis, except for pupils with special educational needs.

122. Resources are generally good and used well throughout the school. Good use is made of the school grounds to become aware of number patterns, shapes and space and to undertake measuring activities. Good use is also made of the available support from the non-teaching staff, to support work in numeracy. Information technology is used very well to support and to extend mathematics. However, homework is under-used as a resource for raising achievement. Literacy skills are developed adequately through mathematics.

#### 124. **Science**

123. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment in science were reported as being average at the end of the key stage; this remains the case. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 shows that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) was broadly in line with all schools and above the national average for similar schools. This indicates a significant improvement since 1998, when standards of attainment were well below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3), was below the national average. Inspection evidence confirms that standards, overall, are in line with national averages at the end of the key stage. The new scheme of work gives good support to teachers. The curriculum is enriched through visits to places such as Colchester Zoo, Langdon Nature Reserve, sound walks, observations in the school's 'Secret Garden' and tree planting activities. Pupils benefit from an annual Health Week when science makes a good contribution to health education. All of these activities effectively support pupils' attainment in the subject, add edge to their curiosity and strongly support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

124. By the end of the key stage, pupils identify a range of common materials, both natural and man-made and know about some of their properties. They describe ways in which some materials, such as gelatine and dough, are changed by heating or cooling. They are able to record their findings using simple tables, drawings and charts. For example, they make effective use of data handling when sorting objects made from different materials. In this way, the subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' numeracy skills. However, experimental science is not given sufficient coverage and pupils' investigational skills are not well practised. Pupils have a simple

understanding of classification and describe the basis for grouping plants and animals. Higher attaining pupils describe the basis for grouping animals in terms such as the number of legs or the way in which they travel. The majority of all pupils describe changes that take place as animals, including humans, grow and they understand that different living things are found in different places. They use their knowledge about living things to describe basic conditions, such as supply of food, water, air or light, that animals and plants need in order to survive. They have a good understanding of the functions of some of the organs of the human body, such as the eye and ear and compare the effects of similar phenomena, such as the colour of lights or the pitch of sounds.

125. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with average attainment and they make satisfactory progress throughout the school. The additional help given to pupils with special educational needs by teaching assistants, enables them also to make satisfactory progress. Joint year-group planning helps to ensure that pupils in parallel classes make equal progress. Although there is an improved emphasis on experimental and investigative science, pupils still have too few opportunities to demonstrate their ability in carrying out simple experiments. Further opportunities in all classes to make simple predictions, to put forward their own ideas and to carry out fair tests would help to ensure swifter progress for pupils of all abilities, but particularly for higher attaining pupils. Pupils make good progress when teachers provide interesting tasks that challenge their thinking and where there is a good pace to lessons. A good example of teaching promoting good progress was seen in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were required to classify plants and animals using different criteria and being challenged to describe the criteria they used. Progress of all pupils is limited when the whole class spends a disproportionate amount of time sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher. In these lessons, there is a slow pace to pupils' learning with the result that a significant number of pupils lose interest and play a passive role.
126. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to science. Behaviour is good and pupils concentrate well when the pace and challenge of lessons motivate their interest and hold their attention. Pupils show respect for their teachers, other adults and each other. When they are provided with opportunities to work together, they value each other's contributions and every pupil is made to feel important within the group. The very good relationships that exist in classes give pupils the confidence to share their ideas with the rest of the class.
127. The quality of teaching seen during the week of inspection ranged from satisfactory to good and was satisfactory, overall. Other inspection evidence, such as scrutiny of past work, indicates that teaching has been satisfactory over time. Lessons are generally well planned and are based on secure knowledge of the subject. All lessons have clear learning intentions and these are appropriately shared with pupils so that they are aware of what they are to learn. Teachers' questioning is a strength in terms of eliciting information but needs developing to provide more opportunities for pupils to evaluate and reflect. Very good relationships and good use of praise to support and motivate pupils were common features of the lessons seen. The two main weaknesses in teaching are that tasks do not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and when pupils spend a long time on the carpet, there is not a good balance of information, giving opportunities for pupils to find out things for themselves.
128. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of the subject and recognises that, although statutory requirements are being met, provision for investigative and experimental science needs to be improved. Resources for the subject are good and are well managed. The quality of marking is good and tells pupils where they can improve. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end of each unit of work. However, there is a need to ensure that all teachers have a clear understanding of the National Curriculum criteria and what they need to teach in order to raise attainment from one level to the next. The co-ordinator has identified the need to refine these procedures so as to ensure the systematic development of skills

as pupils progress through the school.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

129. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, generally make good progress and by the time they are seven produce work which is appropriate for their age. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Pupils have experience of a range of media and techniques and draw, colour and paint from what they see, remember or imagine. They are beginning to know something of the work of artists. For example, in Year 1, pupils study Van Gogh's Sunflowers and use this work to inform their own paintings. They mix colour well when painting self-portraits and also produce interesting scenes after reading the Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch. Most pupils make good progress in their observational skills and this is encouraged during their visit to a local country park where they make sketches. They use leaves, bark and cones found in the park to develop their printing skills and indicate an ability to represent what they see and touch. In Year 2, pupils study the work of a range of artists to investigate colour and different ways of applying paint, before creating their own collage, using a range of materials to represent a seascape. They use appropriate language when describing their work and give clear reasons for their choice of colour and resources. Pupils develop their critical skills by looking at an exhibition of artists' work and completing a questionnaire.
130. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and generally respond positively to the teacher and the activities. They listen well and display, by their answers, that they have understood. They are keen to talk about their work, try hard and generally sustain concentration. Most pupils share resources well and behaviour is good. Groups of pupils work co-operatively to produce a Millennium Tapestry of good quality which is to be displayed in the Millennium Dome.
131. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and is now generally good. Teachers and support staff ensure that pupils receive a range of experiences and provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Sessions are well planned with clear learning objectives identified and activities that sustain the interest of the pupils. In the best lessons, skills are developed appropriately and there is a good balance between demonstration and intervention by the teacher. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to encourage them to achieve good standards. Formal systems of assessment are not in use throughout the school. Teachers use art well to enhance pupils' understanding of other subjects, such as English, geography and science. Teachers take pride in the pupils' work and displays in classrooms and public areas contribute to both the learning environment and the self-esteem of pupils.
132. Currently there is no co-ordinator for art, but there are plans to appoint one. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the range and quality of the art curriculum due to the development of a scheme of work from which teachers plan their work. A particular strength is the practice of planning in year groups which supports the sharing of expertise and ideas and also ensures that pupils in each year receive a similar curriculum. Photographic evidence and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that they receive a broad and balanced curriculum and that the teaching of art significantly enriches pupils' experiences.

134.

### **Information technology**

133. In the last inspection of 1996, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations at the

end of Key Stage 1; this remains the case. Few pupils achieve the higher levels, but the percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels is higher than is normally found. Given the very good progress pupils are making as the result of the new computer suite and very good teaching, it is quite probable that the standards pupils achieve by the time they leave the school will be above those expected for their age. After only four sessions in the computer suite, children in the reception class are already achieving standards above those expected for their age. The very recently installed computer suite is having a very positive effect on the very good progress pupils make and the standards attained in the school. The new computer suite ensures that no more than two pupils share one computer or, in the small classes, pupils have a computer each. All pupils have very good opportunities to practise their information technology skills and make very good progress in their lessons.

134. Children under five in the reception class can 'log on' to the network by entering their names; they use the mouse very competently to click on an icon to open an 'artist' program. They use the program very efficiently by clicking on and dragging the various colours and features to create colourful firework pictures. Year 1 pupils are achieving in line with national expectations. They, too, can 'log on' to the network and use a mouse and 'artist' program effectively to create a firework picture. When they copy their teacher's demonstration, they can insert text into their pictures, using different font sizes and styles. However, they are not able to do this independently yet. In Year 2, nearly all pupils are achieving in line with national expectations. They use a mouse competently to click on appropriate icons to display different types of graph. Under the direction of their teacher, all pupils can enter their collection of weather data and use the mathematics program to show this data in the form of different types of graph. Nearly all pupils could interpret the information shown on their graphs. No teaching of control technology was observed but pupils could describe, competently, how to program their 'turtle' in order to make it perform certain sequences of movements.
135. All pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. Even the youngest pupils persevere until they have completed the tasks they are given. Pupils work very well together, share willingly and help each other if they can. They treat the machines with care.
136. Very good or excellent teaching and the computer suite facilitate very good progress. Teachers are confident and skilled in their understanding of the hardware and software. The projector facility had been in the school for only a few days, but already teachers were using it very competently for demonstrations. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and conducted at a suitable but brisk pace. Teachers and teacher assistants are very familiar with the difficulties their pupils may encounter with the machines and programs and are constantly checking to make sure that all succeed in their tasks. They provide good feedback for the pupils and give them time to practise to enable them to get on independently.
137. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. A good scheme of work is in place with an associated system of assessment. However, the co-ordinator is to review the scheme of work and the assessment procedures in the light of the new curriculum for 2000.
138. Resources are outstanding and used very efficiently.
- 140.

### **Design and technology**

139. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in design and technology. The sound standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been improved upon. The subject is well taught as a discrete subject and enhances other areas of the curriculum.

Pupils make effective use of their science skills when, for example, they use their knowledge of simple circuits when designing and making lighthouses linked to the story 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop skills and techniques in meaningful ways. A wide variety of techniques and materials are in use and skills are taught without inhibiting pupils' freedom to implement their own designs at a level appropriate to their ability. Food technology and needlecraft are well represented and the expertise of volunteer helpers is effectively used in these areas. The school ensures that all pupils have full and equal access to all aspects of designing and making. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' numeracy and literacy skills through opportunities for measuring and in acquiring the appropriate vocabulary.

140. Pupils leave the reception year with simple skills in design and construction. They use construction kits to explore model making and are developing a sense of how things function through their work with moving toys. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in designing and making. By the end of the key stage, they exhibit a sound level of competency and are able to choose from a range of tools, materials and resources. They are able to assemble their products by cutting and shaping components and materials with some precision. They manipulate tools safely and assemble and join materials in a variety of ways. Particularly impressive is how confident and accurate Year 1 pupils are when using scissors. Pupils in all classes work from simple plans and pictures, evaluate ideas and make judgements about the outcomes of their work. They are beginning to evaluate their work, bearing in mind the purposes for which it was intended, as, for example when they design and make finger puppets. Completed work in design and technology is usually imaginative and takes good account of aesthetic considerations. A good example of this is when pupils design and make attractive bookmarks during Book Week.
141. Pupils' attitudes to the subject and their behaviour are good. They enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic about their work; they are well motivated, work with sustained concentration and persevere when faced with problems. Pupils take pride in their finished products and are keen to discuss their work. Girls and boys work equally well on all tasks and pupils with special educational needs participate fully in all lessons. Pupils work well together; they are aware of safety issues and act accordingly.
142. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. This, together with scrutiny of pupils' work on display and of teachers' plans, indicates that teaching is good, overall. Teachers' planning is effective; teachers, teaching assistants and volunteer helpers have secure knowledge of the subject. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed and appropriate emphasis is placed upon safety procedures.
143. The curriculum co-ordinator supports colleagues well. There is a good scheme of work in place, which effectively guides teachers' planning. Resources for the subject are good, well managed and efficiently used.

## **History**

144. Only one lesson was observed, due to timetabling constraints, so additional evidence was gained by speaking with pupils and staff, looking at the teachers' plans and the pupils' work. The findings from all these activities indicate that pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress in history and reach standards appropriate for their age by the time they leave the school. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. In some aspects, such as the use of specific subject language and their understanding of how things change over time, pupils make good progress.

145. In Year 1, the pupils' sense of chronology is developed through their study of harvest and how farming has changed over time. They understand the concepts of 'then' and 'now' when looking at pictures of farm technology and use timelines well to understand changes in toys and clothes. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to understand how aspects of their local area have changed, for example, by studying the history of Southend Pier. Following a visit to Southchurch Hall and looking at a map, they realise how places grow and develop and the names of places change. By looking at photographs, they ask and answer appropriate questions about the past.
146. Most pupils have a positive attitude to history. They are generally keen to put forward their ideas and listen to the views of others. Pupils can recall topics which they have studied and indicate that the range of visits offered by the school, plays a significant part in raising interest and promoting understanding. Visits also contribute to pupils' social and cultural development.
147. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers offer a broad and balanced curriculum which links well with other subjects such as geography and stimulates pupils' learning. Teachers use their good knowledge of the local area to build on what pupils know and understand and this results in good progress. They plan well in year groups and this ensures a consistency of provision and allows teachers to share their expertise. Although there is no formal system of assessment across the school, teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to plan appropriate work. They have high expectations and this, in turn, keeps pupils' interest. Pupils' literacy skills are developed through the use of subject specific language and set pieces of writing. Pupils use their numeracy skills well when working with timelines.
148. The policy is a useful document and the school has developed a good scheme of work since the last inspection. These support teachers with their planning and ensure that pupils receive a range of experiences. The subject is well managed and plans are in place to review the curriculum in the light of the introduction of the proposed Curriculum 2000. The co-ordinator has a clear and appropriate action plan which highlights the need to review the use of information technology within history. The school is keen to ensure that pupils receive good first-hand experiences and plan trips which support learning in history and geography. This results in pupils understanding how their immediate location has changed over time as a result of growth and changes in technology.
150. **Geography**
149. The majority of pupils, including those with special needs, make good progress in geography and reach standards appropriate for their age by the time they leave the school. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. In some aspects, such as awareness of the local area, they make good progress.
150. Geographical skills and understanding are effectively developed through using the immediate vicinity and linking all work meaningfully to the current topic. Pupils are introduced to the concept of fieldwork, geography vocabulary and skills through first hand experience. In Year 1, pupils gain an understanding of place and where they belong through talking about where they live, looking at local buildings and different forms of housing. Following a walk in the local country park, they are clearly able to identify the signs of autumn and the changes in the seasons. They use maps and globes to find where a range of different fruit is produced in the world. By the end of the key stage, pupils display good mapping skills when identifying symbols on a map of the local area and use a key successfully to locate features. They draw routes following a trip from school to Southchurch Hall and are able to distinguish between town and country. Brochures

written to advertise the local area indicate a sound understanding of key features and attractions.

151. Pupils' attitudes to geography are good. They enjoy the fieldwork and are keen to discover new facts. The work produced in books is of good quality and indicates that most take care with their work. Pupils' concentration in class is usually good and when they are asked to work collaboratively they do so successfully. Behaviour is generally good, but, in one unsatisfactory lesson, when they had to listen to the teacher for too long, their behaviour became unsatisfactory. The visits to other environments and learning about different countries make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
152. The quality of teaching is generally good, although one lesson observed was unsatisfactory. Teaching is usually meaningful and relevant and pays good attention to first hand experiences, through fieldwork. Most teachers manage their pupils well and have good relationships with them. Occasionally, elements of weak teaching were seen in a Year 1 class where pupils were expected to sit on the carpet and concentrate for a length of time which was inappropriate for their age. In this lesson, the pupils were not managed effectively. Generally, teachers know their pupils well and use this information to set appropriate work. No formal system of assessment is used consistently across the school. Teachers make good use of resources.
153. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a new scheme of work which is proving effective in supporting the planning for a broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to the pupils. Teachers plan well together in year groups and this ensures that pupils receive similar experiences regardless of which class they are in. Teachers are also able to share their expertise and knowledge of the local area and use this when they plan. Good links are made with other subjects such as history through, for example, visits to Canewdon which focus on the geography of the area and how it has changed over time. The subject is well managed and developed and the co-ordinator has a clear action plan with appropriate priorities identified. She is aware of the need to increase resources including Ordnance Survey maps and computer software.
155. **Music**
154. The last inspection of 1996 judged standards in music to be sound; this remains the case. All pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. They are offered a broad and interesting curriculum which enhances their spiritual, moral and cultural development. All pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder and older pupils have the opportunity to become members of the school choir which performs at the Southend annual music festivals and, at Christmas time, sings carols to entertain the public and raise money for charities.
155. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sing enthusiastically and in tune. In an assembly, all pupils joined in joyfully with the actions and singing of 'God is good to me'. They demonstrated a good sense of pitch and phrasing. Pupils in Year 1 use a variety of instruments to represent different types of fireworks. In their whole class composition, they listen carefully and watch their teacher, ready to play their chosen instrument at the correct moment. In Year 2, pupils select appropriate instruments, compose, play and record a short musical pattern most competently.
156. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They show interest in and enthusiasm for the subject. They behave well in lessons and take care of the instruments they use. Older pupils work together well to compose and perform their musical pieces.
157. Teaching is good, overall, with some very good teaching observed. Teachers have high

expectations of what pupils can achieve. Nearly all teachers are non-specialist teachers but the subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and support. The school also employs a part-time music specialist who works with particular year groups; she provides good teaching and a good role model for class teachers. Teachers' lesson planning is good. They have clear learning objectives and often share these with their pupils at the beginning of the lesson.

158. The subject is very well led by a knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator. She has excellent subject knowledge and a very good understanding of how to teach the various components of the programme of study for music. The co-ordinator provides a very good scheme of work which is supplemented by a commercially produced scheme which teachers use appropriately.

159. There are adequate resources to teach the National Curriculum programme of study and they are used efficiently.

161.

161.

### **Physical education**

160. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of attainment and soon begin enjoying a broad curriculum which is clearly designed to promote their physical development and social interaction. All aspects of physical education are covered through the year.

161. Lessons in games, gymnastics and dance were observed during the inspection. Pupils attend swimming in the school's pool during the summer term and records show that they make very good progress. Pupils throughout the school make good progress, overall. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the less able pupils, who also make good progress.

162. Pupils have good knowledge and control of their bodies. In gymnastics and dance, pupils compose and combine basic actions by varying shape, size, direction, level, speed, tension and continuity. Pupils in Year 1 were observed making very good progress in travelling at different speeds using good body shapes and pupils in a Year 2 lesson were making very good progress in balancing on three body points and in linking their balances. They show an increasing ability to evaluate their performances. In games lessons, pupils practise a variety of ways of sending, receiving and travelling with a ball and other similar games equipment. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson were seen making good progress in receiving and pushing a ball using a bat and working with a partner. The main features influencing the good progress that pupils are making are teachers' very good control in lessons, the direct coaching of skills and pupils' own very good attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject.

163. Pupils' response in lessons is very positive and they enjoy all aspects of the subject. They are always appropriately dressed for lessons. Pupils work energetically in lessons and respond well to teachers' directions. They show commitment, are able to sustain effort and have a very good understanding of the need for safety. Behaviour in lessons is very good and boys and girls work well together. Pupils appreciate each other's efforts and are always willing to demonstrate technique.

164. Teachers have very positive relationships with their pupils. They show awareness for safety and all set a very good example to pupils by being properly dressed to teach the subject. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good, overall. The high quality teaching is characterised by secure knowledge of the subject, very good planning with clear learning intentions, very good warm-up and cool-down sessions and well-paced lessons which motivate pupils and add to their enjoyment. In these lessons, skills are progressively taught and teachers'



high expectations ensure a sustained effort by pupils. Teachers' very good control and direct coaching of skills ensure that pupils make very good progress. In a small minority of lessons where effective pupil management strategies are not used, the pace of learning is slow. Assessment of pupils' abilities is generally effectively used within lessons to ensure a greater rate of progress.

165. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and very effectively promotes the subject throughout the school. She has identified dance as an area for further development. There is a good scheme of work, which offers good advice to teachers and supports planning for different ages and abilities. This helps to ensure continuous progress as pupils pass through the school. There is a very good range of equipment which is readily accessible to pupils and efficiently used. The accommodation, both indoor and outdoor, is good and is well used for lessons. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development and sense of achievement. Links with a local tennis club, taking part in local dance festivals and opportunities for pupils to consider the effects of exercise on health during Health Week, further enhance the curriculum.

167.

167.

### **Religious education**

166. The sound standards identified at the time of the last inspection have been improved upon. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are now good in relation to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which meets statutory requirements.

167. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand the basis of various Bible stories and have a sound grasp of the meaning of events and actions within them. They have a good understanding that each person is special and that people celebrate a range of occasions that are special to them. Pupils understand, for example, how different faiths celebrate their major festivals, such as Christmas, Advent, Diwali, Ramadan and Hanukah. They have a good awareness of right and wrong and are able to discuss good examples set by people such as Jesus, Mother Theresa and Guru Nanak and how they might apply to everyday life. Their awareness of personal relationships is well developed and they understand the importance of sharing, helping others and being kind. Pupils develop an appreciation of the natural world and their place and responsibility within it. Through themes and questions such as 'Why?' and 'Who am I?', pupils are encouraged to recognise their own value and importance and to consider their responses to moral issues. The subject is effective in fostering feelings of awe, wonder, delight, joy and mystery and helps pupils to order and pattern their world.

168. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the key stage. The very good ethos, the strong relationships, assemblies, collective worship and circle times all very effectively support pupils' religious development and help them form their own beliefs and values. There is a good scheme of work, linked to the agreed syllabus. This effectively supports teachers' planning and helps to ensure continuity in pupils' learning. Very good links are made with other subjects of the curriculum, such as writing, poetry, design and technology, science and history, which successfully promote pupils' progress in religious education. For example, when engaged in a letter writing exercise with pupils in the Junior School, they reflect upon the feelings of Jesus and Mary in the stable at Bethlehem and develop skills that help them respond imaginatively to religious ideas. In this way, the subject also makes a good contribution to pupils' progress in literacy. However, when learning intentions are more focused on the link subject, pupils' progress in religious education is more limited than their progress in the other subject.

169. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and reflect their attainment in the subject. They show no

signs of intolerance towards those whose beliefs differ from their own. During whole class sessions, most pupils listen attentively and try hard to think about their answers. Very good relationships exist; mutual respect is apparent both amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers.

170. The quality of teaching seen during the week of inspection ranged from very good to satisfactory. This, together with the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans, indicates that teaching is good, overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was sound. Teachers, through their own personal research, have become confident in teaching the subject. Special features of the teaching are the sensitivity and sincerity with which teachers approach Christianity and other faiths. Teaching is used well to reinforce moral values and to provide recognition of pupils' own value as individuals.
171. The subject co-ordinator effectively promotes religious education throughout the school. The importance of equality of opportunity and the need to encourage respect for and understanding of other faiths is emphasised appropriately in lessons. The school is developing a good range of stimulating artefacts to promote knowledge and understanding of this area of the curriculum. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

172. The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors, including a lay inspector. Sixty lessons or parts of lessons were observed and discussions held with many pupils about their work. Inspectors spent time looking at samples of work the school had chosen; these included samples of work in all subjects and from all age groups and from pupils of different attainment. Inspectors heard a sample of readers from all year classes. The time taken for all these activities totalled 63 hours.
173. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, all teaching staff, some non-teaching staff, the caretaker and the Chairman of the newly elected governing body. A representative group of parents also came into school to talk to inspectors. The school's social worker was interviewed.
174. Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents which included the school development plan, all school policies and schemes of work and a sample of teachers' planning. Information from a questionnaire sent to parents, which 111 returned, was analysed. A meeting was held for parents before the start of the inspection and twelve attended.

## 177. DATA AND INDICATORS

### 177. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y2	330	1	60	96
Nursery Unit/School 'Early Bird' Classes	18	0	0	0

### 177. Teachers and classes

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

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	13.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	21

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

Total number of education support staff:	17
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	299.5

### 177. Financial data

Financial year:	1998
	£
Total Income	615456
Total Expenditure	576542
Expenditure per pupil	1633.26
Balance brought forward from previous year	18375
Balance carried forward to next year	57289

177. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 347

Number of questionnaires returned: 109

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	32	61	6	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	49	48	2	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	17	54	17	6	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	25	60	9	6	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	25	61	5	9	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30	66	3	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	22	64	7	4	2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	30	57	6	5	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	30	62	6	1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	27	61	9	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	50	44	3	1	2

<sup>1</sup>. 'Similar' schools are those with similar proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.