

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Luke's Church Primary School
Tiptree, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique Reference Number: 115082

Inspection number 187243

Headteacher: John Wells

Reporting inspector: Michael Haynes
OIN: 8250

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707315

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
Type of control:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Chairman of governors:	Betty Martin
Date of previous inspection:	11 – 15 March 1996

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Douglas Binfield, Lay Inspector		Staffing, accommodation & learning resources The efficiency of the school Curriculum & assessment
Alan Andrews Team Inspector	English History Physical education & swimming	
Diana Powell Team Inspector	Design & technology Information & communication technology Music Provision for pupils under five	
Martyn Richards Team Inspector	Equal opportunities Geography Religious education Science	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social & cultural development

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Good or better teaching in six out of ten lessons, mostly satisfactory in the rest.
- Pupils are very eager to learn. Their behaviour and social skills are very good.
- Excellent provision in place for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Good curriculum with strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy leading to better standards.
- Very good leadership and teamwork because all staff aim to do their best for the pupils.
- Very good provision and teaching for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good thorough checks on pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Very good support and guidance for all pupils.
- Good partnership with parents and the community.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Teachers are working hard to improve standards in writing, mathematics and science, but are not as high as they should be by the time pupils are 11 years old.
- II. Brighter pupils and those in mixed-age classes are sometimes stretched insufficiently. By seven and 11 fewer pupils than might be expected attain above average standards.
- III. Pupils make too little use of computers to help their learning across the curriculum.

This is a school with many good features and its strengths far outweigh weaknesses.

Teachers know where some improvement is needed and are tackling it. These issues will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Satisfactory progress putting right weaknesses identified in the last inspection means that:

- IV. pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good;
- V. the school development plan includes reference to costs, time and success criteria. It is now a key part of the very good systems that drive the school forward;
- VI. good schemes of work are in place for all subjects, although some lesson planning still needs work to make sure it meets all pupils' learning needs;
- VII. very good systems in place, help subject co-ordinators to make regular checks and monitor what is taught.

Realistic plans, attainable targets and very good leadership show the school is in a very good position to continue improving.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar* schools	Key
			A well
			B above
			D average below
			E well
English	C	E	
Mathematics	D	E	
Science	E	E	

The table shows, for example, that standards are average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Standards are well below average in comparison with similar schools. Over several years standards have been close to the national average, but in 1999 fell in English and mathematics. This is mainly due to a higher than average, four out of every ten pupils, in the year group with special educational needs. Inspection findings show standards by pupils now in Year 6 are about average and that more pupils are reaching the standard of work expected for pupils of their age. Improvement is due to rigorous teaching and fewer pupils in the current year with special educational needs.

Apart from Years 5 and 6, pupils make insufficient use of computers across the curriculum and standards in information and communication technology are average by the end of each key stage. In relation to the standards expected in the Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus, by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are good and at Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Across all subjects pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2.

By five years of age most pupils make good progress across their nationally expected range of work to reach good standards in language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development and satisfactory standards in other areas. By age seven pupils' results are average in the national tests in English and mathematics and in the teacher assessments in science.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Mainly good	Good	Satisfactory

* Similar schools are defined on the basis of the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information and communication technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education		Good	Good
Other subjects	Mainly good	Mainly good	Mainly good

Teaching is very good or excellent in 18 per cent of lessons, good in 38 per cent, satisfactory in 42 per cent and unsatisfactory in two per cent. The best teaching is evenly spread in each key stage. *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 in lessons and playtimes. Pupils have very good positive attitudes and try very hard in lessons. Main strength.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils arrive at school on time.
Ethos*	Very good. Pupils very eager to work and teachers keen to improve their attainment. Relationships are excellent.
Leadership and management	Very good leadership to guide and improve the school. The headteacher and staff work very well as a team. Governors give good support. Very good checks on teaching and learning.
Curriculum	Good, broad and lively for infant and junior stages. Satisfactory for pupils under five, but more creative and physical activities needed. Strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Good range of out of school clubs and sport.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good organisation so that pupils get the extra help they need to make very good progress in improving their basic skills and learning.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Excellent. Filters through to most aspects of school life. Social and cultural developments are main strengths.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Sufficient staff but many recent changes. Very good provision of support staff. Satisfactory resources, very good accommodation. Insufficient reference books for the under fives
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What a few parents are not happy about
VIII. Pupils achieve good standards of work.	XIV. They would like more information

<p>IX. Very high standards of behaviour. X. The school's values are good. XI. Help and guidance for their children. XII. They find staff are very approachable and are made to feel very welcome. XIII. Their children enjoy school.</p>	<p>XV. The quality of pupils' annual reports.</p>
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The level of parents' satisfaction and praise for the school is exceptionally high. Inspectors agree with their very positive views and that there is a need for more information about the curriculum. Inspectors, however, find that pupils' reports are good. Parents are encouraged to talk to teachers at any time so there is plenty of opportunity to get extra information about their child.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To continue to improve the school's effectiveness, the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to:

1. Improve attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. This is already in hand, but particular attention should be made to:

XVI. make sure teachers set pupils high expectations, to use and reinforce their writing and presentation skills to record their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum;

XVII. extend the chance for pupils to apply their number skills to solve problems in mathematics and in other subjects;

XVIII. extend the range of work in science so that pupils, particularly in mixed-age classes, have challenging work, with distinctly different tasks to match their ability and understanding that leads to an improved pace of progress.

(Paragraphs: 5-12, 15, 19, 22-23, 26-28, 35, 48, 54, 124, 130-133, 138-140, 144)

2. Make sure that brighter pupils and those in mixed-age classes are stretched sufficiently. This is already in hand, for example in mathematics, but:

XIX. thorough checks should be made of lesson plans to make sure work builds pupils' existing skills and sets them new challenges.

(Paragraphs: 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 35, 46, 54, 84, 124, 138, 140, 144)

3. Provide more opportunity for pupils to use computers to extend their learning and improve presentation of work across the curriculum. This is a current priority in the school development plan, but teachers should give attention to:

XX. identify in all subjects the appropriate opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology;

XXI. make sure that pupils have regular opportunities to use computers to present their work, for example word processing in English and data handling in mathematics;

XXII. provide pupils with increased opportunities to use computers to find information for themselves.

(Paragraphs: 19, 29, 128, 133, 157-165)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

XXIII. broaden the curriculum for pupils under five to give more opportunity for practical, creative and physical activities in the classroom and outside;

XXIV. improve the provision of reference books for pupils in infant classes;

XXV. provide parents with information each term about the work planned for their children.

(Paragraphs: 52, 78, 98, 114, 118, 123)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 This is an average size primary school with 274, four to 11 year old, pupils on roll. There are about 17% more girls than boys. Three part-time and 11 full-time teachers, including the headteacher teach them. Since its previous inspection the school roll has risen by five per cent.

2 Children aged four join one of the two mixed-age reception and Year 1 classes at the beginning of the school term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, four pupils under five had been in full-time education for about nine weeks. Most pupils have attended a pre-school nursery or playgroup and their attainment on entry is about average. They are confident socially, ready to learn and have average early literacy and numeracy skills.

3 0.3% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is much less than in most schools. One child has English as an additional language. The school has 49 pupils on its register of special educational needs, mainly for literacy, numeracy and difficulty in settling to work, which is above the national average. Five pupils have a statement of special educational need.

4 The school is close to the centre of Tiptree. About half of the pupils come from the immediate locality and the remainder from nearby villages. Pupils' home backgrounds are mainly above average compared with the national picture. Almost all come from privately owned housing and parents have high expectations for their child's education. However, the headteacher reports that currently about one in four pupils are from single parent or economically disadvantaged homes. Four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the national average.

The main aims and priorities of the school

The school has a mission statement that puts a Church of England Christian education and ethos at the heart of its work. To achieve this the aim is to provide:

XXVI. close links with the parish and with the pupils' parents;

XXVII. a welcoming atmosphere for all;

XXVIII. a wide range of curriculum and broad opportunities out of classrooms;

XXIX. opportunities for children to fulfil their academic potential and be positive members of a caring Christian community.

Over the past year or so the school has worked to put in place:

XXX. home and school agreements;

XXXI. a clear assessment framework and to introduce target setting;

XXXII. the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks;

- XXXIII. improved resources and staff training to extend pupils' use of information and communication technology;
- XXXIV. regular homework to help improve pupils' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics;
- XXXV. improved systems for subject co-ordinators to check standards of teaching and learning.

Several issues are a result of national initiatives and some stem from the previous inspection in 1996.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	20	23	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	18	22	20
	Total	34	37	38
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	81 (67)	88 (94)	90 (75)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	20	20	20
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	42	42	42
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (78)	90 (86)	93 (89)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 For latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	22	20	42

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	14	12	12
	Total	30	28	29
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71 (90)	67 (71)	69 (69)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	16	17	16

at NC Level 4 or Above	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	30	29	30
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71 (76)	69 (76)	71 (93)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (69)

1 and 2 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:				%
	Authorised	School		4.2
	Absence	National comparative data		5.7
	Unauthorised	School		0.1
	Absence	National comparative data		0.5

Exclusions

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

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	18
	Satisfactory or better	98
	Less than satisfactory	2

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Standards in national tests and teacher assessments

5 Most pupils' achievement when they start school is about average. By age five when they begin National Curriculum subjects, they have made good progress to achieve good standards that exceed the nationally expected learning outcomes¹ for children of that age. Their standards in language, reading, numeracy, personal development and social skills are good.

6 The 1999 test results show that by age seven standards are average in English, mathematics and are average in the science teacher assessment. By age 11 standards are average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science.

7 By age seven pupils' attainment in the 1999 national tests and assessment, is close to the national average of level 2 or above in English, mathematics and science. Girls attain slightly higher standards than boys do. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher level 3 is well below average in English, below average in mathematics and in science.

8 By age 11 pupils' attainment in the 1999 national tests is close to the national average of level 4 or above in English, but a below average number attain at the higher level 5. Attainment is below the national average in mathematics and well below average in science. In mathematics the number of pupils' attaining the higher level 5 is well below the national average and in science it is below average. Contrary to the national picture, overall in 1999 boys did slightly better than girls in the school.

9 The school's results in 1999 fell in English and mathematics compared to previous years. This is mainly accounted for by a higher than average four out of every ten pupils in the year group with special educational needs, and by insufficiently thorough teaching over time. Current standards by 11 year olds are better. This is due to rigorous teaching and fewer pupils with special educational needs. In turn, more pupils this year are reaching the standard of work expected for their age.

10 Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in the 1999 national tests at Key Stage 1 are well below average in reading, and below average in writing, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 2 standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science. This indicates that brighter pupils are stretched insufficiently and achieve less than they should.

11 Over several years, at Key Stage 1 taking account of a fall in results two years ago, pupils attain as well overall in the national tests at age seven as most children. Taking the three years until 1999 at Key Stage 2 pupils' performance in English was well above the national average and close to the national average in mathematics and science. Over time

¹ These are presented as six areas of learning and provide a foundation for later achievement. They include personal and social development; language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; creative development.

there is little difference between boys and girls performance at Key Stage 1, although at Key Stage 2 girls attain slightly better than boys. That said, far fewer pupils than might reasonably be expected at each key stage, attains above average results. This shows that brighter pupils are insufficiently stretched and should be capable of attaining higher standards. This is a similar picture to standards at the time of the previous inspection in 1996. Standards then were satisfactory and sometimes better. Since then, standards have improved broadly in line with the national trend. This shows that whilst standards have varied a little either side of the national average, the school has made similar progress to the national trend in improving standards since the last inspection.

Standards seen in the inspection – improvement by pupils now in Year 6:

12 The inspection shows that standards by pupils currently in Year 6 are better than the last year's tests suggest. This is due to:

XXXVI. improvement in the way that subjects are planned. Good arrangements, for instance, means pupils have hour-long daily literacy and mathematics lessons, with work set at several different levels that meets the range of ability in each class. Most mathematics lessons are taught within ability sets so those pupils in mixed-age classes have very challenging work that meets their learning needs irrespective of their ages;

XXXVII. rigorous teaching. Improvement is due to some turnover of staff, the clear direction and high expectations that are made currently of teachers. This arises as part of the drive by the senior management and curriculum co-ordinators over the past year to check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in all subjects;

XXXVIII. the impact of thorough staff training and professional development, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In turn staff plan pupils' work together in year teams, that means the content and rigour of lessons is constantly improving. New or inexperienced staff gain confidence quickly and extend their expertise;

XXXIX. the change in composition of year groups. In the 1999 Year 6, four out of every ten pupils were identified with special educational needs in literacy or numeracy. This is much reduced, for example in the current Year 6. However, there is now a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 and 4.

These factors have also impacted positively this term on improvements in progress and standards across the school.

Standards in subjects seen during the inspection

13 Attainment overall is satisfactory and in line with national expectations by the end of each key stage. That said, fewer pupils than might reasonably be expected attain above average standards.

14 In English, standards are average and in line with national expectations by the end of each key stage. Appropriate to their ages, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. They explain their understanding enthusiastically, and often use specific subject language confidently. Pupils give clear and detailed answers to questions. Often their oral answers show more understanding and knowledge than their written work reveals.

15 Standards of writing, spelling and grammar are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and

include a basic understanding of sentence structure and the importance of presentation. Pupils are beginning to use dictionaries correctly but writing is sometimes slow and incomplete. Writing is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Pupils' standards are not high enough in using their writing skills to record their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. The content of what they write is sensible and imaginative, but ideas are sometimes not sustained and developed sufficiently. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough to develop a better understanding of style and audience. Reading is good in each key stage. Most pupils read fluently to a good standard. They talk confidently about their knowledge of fiction and reference books.

16 In mathematics, standards are average and in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, there are examples of well above average work by high attaining pupils in the mathematics sets in each year group. Appropriate to their ages, pupils add, subtract, divide and multiply numbers very confidently. Mental calculation skills are invariably strong. Pupils reinforce skills well in regular numeracy lessons, and their mental recall of number facts and arithmetical tables is good.

17 Skills in using and applying mathematics to everyday mathematical problems are improving and pupils have satisfactory understanding of shape. Pupils make some satisfactory use of numeracy skills to help work across the curriculum. In science or design and technology, for example, to record data in bar and frequency charts. They have few opportunities to apply their number skills to solve problems in mathematics and other subjects.

18 In science, standards are average and in line with national expectations by the end of each key stage. Appropriate to their ages, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of many aspects of natural and physical science. They are confident carrying out simple experiments and scientific investigations. Pupils know about living things, such as humans and plants. They explain characteristics of physical processes, such as sound, electricity and magnetism.

19 In information and communication technology, by the end of each key stage, standards are satisfactory and in line with national expectations. Pupils have satisfactory skills in using the keyboard, mouse and in following screen instructions. However, they make too little use of computers to help learning in every subject.

20 Attainment in religious education is above that expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with these expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils have good oral skills to explain their understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths.

21 Attainment in other subjects, where there is sufficient evidence, shows that standards are in line with that expected nationally for children of their ages. There are some examples of high attainment, for instance in Years 3 and 4 art and history lessons seen in the inspection. The school reports that pupils' attainment in swimming is in line with the nationally expected standard of 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

Progress

22 Over time samples of pupils' work, assessments and tests in infant and junior classes, show that pupils under five make good progress as do those at Key Stage 1. Over time, pupils make mainly satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2.

23 In Years 3 and 4 the pace of pupils' progress slows. This is seen in their test scores, assessments and work samples from the previous school year. Some pupils in these classes do mark time, until the pace improves in Years 5 and 6 with more rigorous teaching. The apparent 'dip' in progress is known to the school and strenuous efforts made to set it right. For example, the school is working closely with a higher education institution on a project to identify the reasons. Other actions, such as a change of staff, improving the rigour of curriculum planning and the provision for a higher than school average number of pupils with special educational needs suggest that teachers are starting to overcome the weakness.

24 In lessons inspected at Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress is good and satisfactory in almost equal measure. This is a similar picture to the findings of the previous inspection and is due to:

XL. good teaching with clear tasks and work set at appropriate levels to meet pupils' different learning needs;

XLI. teachers setting a brisk pace, and using oral questioning well to extend pupils' learning;

XLII. work building clearly on from what pupils have learned previously.

25 Most pupils under five make a confident start to their education. A strong emphasis on developing social skills, on language, literacy and numeracy helps them make good progress.

26 In English pupils' progress is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. However, the pace of progress in writing slows particularly in Years 3 and 4 where there is a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are well aware of this and are tackling it with some success. For example, by setting work at different levels to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Momentum improves and pace quickens due to rigorous teaching in Years 5 and 6, so overall in the junior stage progress is satisfactory.

27 In mathematics, pupils' progress this year is good in each key stage due to the impact of the daily mathematics lesson and rigorous teaching of numeracy skills in ability sets. Pupils build and extend their skills steadily, with some pupils in the higher attaining sets making very good progress.

28 In science, progress in lessons inspected is satisfactory. Over time at each key stage, pupils' progress is satisfactory but less than might reasonably be expected. This is because the work set, especially for older and higher attaining pupils, is insufficiently demanding. In turn, pupils find tasks too easy and their presentation is not good enough.

29 In information and communication technology, pupils' progress is just satisfactory in terms of their basic keyboard skills. However, over time, their progress applying these skills to their everyday work is less than it should be. This is because pupils use computers insufficiently, to present their work, to solve problems and to help them find information.

30 In religious education, progress is good at each key stage due to rigorous teaching. This is helped by pupils' good oral skills, which help them to articulate their understanding

and beliefs.

31 In other subjects, samples of work, teachers' records and lessons inspected show pupils' progress is at least satisfactory at each key stage, with year on year gains in their skills and understanding. There are some examples of good or better progress in lessons where teaching rooted pupils' learning in first-hand experience. In art, for example, in Year 3 where pupils applied their knowledge of landscape painting and skills in colour mixing to create large scale imaginative paintings. In a Year 3 and 4 history lesson, pupils made very good progress extending their knowledge of Victorian farming methods by talking about pictures and looking at tools as a follow up to a recent museum visit. In each case brisk progress arises from the teachers' enthusiasm and good subject knowledge being conveyed expertly to pupils, with high expectations for the content of their work.

32 Pupils with special educational needs, mainly for literacy and numeracy in the under fives' reception class and in each key stage, make good and mainly very good progress because work matches their ability. Very good records and frequent checks of what they know help pupils achieve their individual targets to improve their academic work and self-confidence. A particular strength is that teachers make sure that pupils have work that covers similar ground to their classmates, but is set at an appropriate level for them to understand.

33 Attainable literacy and numeracy targets are set for pupils to reach by the end of each Key Stage. Although met at Key Stage 1 in the 1999 tests they were short at Key Stage 2. However, progress to meet them is good so far this year, particularly in mathematics. This is a pleasing start and teachers now check pupils' attainment regularly so they can set more demanding targets for next year.

34 Across the school, pupils make the most progress when they have clear tasks and their teachers have high expectations for them to succeed. This is seen most often in the mathematics sets and in other subjects when work is set at several levels of difficulty. This gives all pupils demanding work that helps them take learning on from where they were and then challenges them to go forward to the next stage. It reflects the balance of good and very good teaching which helps pupils build on their skills and see the relevance of what they learn.

35 Pupils make the least progress, in lessons seen and over time, when work builds insufficiently on what they have done before and therefore lacks challenge. This is found, for example, in some mixed-age classes where similar tasks are set to all pupils with insufficient checks to make sure the work challenges pupils. There are times, for instance in some English and science lessons, where teachers expect too little in the depth and presentation of pupils' work, which means pupils produce less work than they should. These factors impact particularly on higher attaining pupils and means that over time they are insufficiently challenged by their work. That said, teachers are aware of this and improvements to teaching methods are well advanced this term.

· **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

36 Since the last inspection pupils' behaviour and attitudes have improved and are now

very good. There is hardly any inattention in lessons and pupils concentrate very well. More opportunities are provided for them to evaluate their work. Very good provision is made for their personal development. Pupils' social skills are very good. There is a very high level of parental satisfaction with the school's work in these aspects, which is a major strength in the school that makes a significant contribution to learning.

37 Pupils under five show great keenness to learn. They settle quickly into school routines and enjoy sharing their achievements with adults and one another. They work willingly together and participate fully in discussion. Pupils have the confidence to speak in front of the class, and collaborate well, readily sharing materials. They willingly take turns and show good understanding of the classroom rules. Pupils follow routines well, but because teachers invariably organise the classrooms, they have few opportunities to take responsibility for getting out equipment and putting it away. Nevertheless, the large majority of pupils show adequate levels of independence and self-reliance. Pupils' behaviour is very good with mature attitudes in lessons and around the school.

38 Infant and junior pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They listen attentively and join in discussions with interest. Pupils are eager to learn, enthusiastic and keen to get on with their work. This strength stems from the various ways teachers catch pupils' attention at the start of lessons, for instance with challenging oral questioning which makes pupils think. In turn, they work hard, show good concentration and collaborate well when working in small groups. Concentration and interest are usually sustained very well and often for long periods, such as in the hour-long daily literacy and mathematics lessons. Investigative and research skills are encouraged in all classes to help pupils find information for themselves. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils did well undertaking research at home about the life and work of Mother Theresa. Opportunities for pupils to assess their work are made in Years 4 to 6. This takes place, for example, through the careful assessment of special project work undertaken twice a year.

39 Pupils' behaviour is very good. They respond well to the school's high expectations. This means that high standards are consistently achieved during lessons, in the dining hall and in the playgrounds. The incidence of serious misbehaviour, including bullying, is very rare indeed. There have been no exclusions over the last three years. Pupils are trustworthy and help out around the school. For instance, in Years 5 and 6, they handle cash for the tuck shop and charity sales. Pupils help keep the school environment tidy.

40 Relationships throughout the school are excellent. All staff help to maintain a friendly and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils respond well to this when undertaking the full range of daily activities. Pupils are polite to one another and helpful to visitors. They work well together when pursuing special interests in the school clubs. The seating arrangements at lunchtimes are changed each day. This enables pupils to improve social skills by conversing with others from different age groups. In turn, pupils' social skills are very good. Co-operative working is encouraged in many lessons and by the school's team points system. This helps pupils to respect one another and to value each pupil's contribution to lessons.

41 Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake an increasing range of responsibilities as they move up through the school. A particular strength is the excellent School Council. Each class has representatives on it, which enables all pupils to begin to understand their responsibilities as a citizen in a small community. Other examples of pupils taking responsibility abound, such

as in Years 5 and 6, pupils plan and help organise a sports afternoon. Pupils participate in school clubs, educational visits and competitive sports. Shared class discussion time and a good range of visitors to talk to pupils mean they have very good opportunities to build their social skills and self-confidence.

- **Attendance**

42 Attendance is very good and consistently above the national average for primary schools. There is little unauthorised absence. A particularly good feature is the very good punctuality record. A prompt start is made in classes each morning. During the day, lessons and other activities start and finish on time. Such features make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress because they are in the right place and ready for work.

- **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

- **Teaching**

43 Good and very good teaching in six out of ten lessons and mostly satisfactory in the remainder inspected is a main strength in the quality of education provided. Teaching is very good or excellent in 18 per cent of lessons, good in 38 per cent, satisfactory in 42 per cent and unsatisfactory in two per cent. The two unsatisfactory lessons were found at Key Stage 2. The best teaching is evenly spread in each key stage. Teaching of pupils under five is mainly good. Much good, thorough teaching of English at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at each key stage are strengths. Teaching of all pupils with special educational needs is invariably very good.

44 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory in one in ten lessons. Overall it is now good. This improvement is due to changes in staffing, better lesson plans and to the headteacher's high expectations of the staff.

45 Teaching of pupils under five is mainly good. An important element contributing to attainment and progress is the calm, well-structured classrooms, in which the two teachers of the under fives work as a team. The quality of lesson planning is invariably good or better which makes a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make particularly in literacy and numeracy. This makes sure that the needs of individual pupils are met. Planning takes good account of the areas of learning, as well as the early stages of the National Curriculum. There is a strong ethos for learning with enthusiasm and commitment shown by staff. Classroom organisation is satisfactory. Use of questioning is well developed and this helps to assess pupils' understanding as well as to draw out their own ideas and extend them further.

46 The high proportion of good teaching in each key stage is because lessons include some or many of these features:

XLIII. teachers understand pupils' learning needs. Overall they have satisfactory subject knowledge but are most confident in English, mathematics and science. They are up to date and thoroughly trained, for example in the National Literacy and Numeracy

teaching Frameworks. Staff support one another very well and share ideas in each year group. This helps them to be clear about what they teach and is a particular benefit for new or inexperienced staff as it helps them gain confidence and understanding about the school's curriculum;

XLIV. teachers have mainly high expectations that each pupil will do their best, behave well and complete their work. This leads to a purposeful working atmosphere during lessons with very good behaviour and often a lively hum of activity. Expectations for attainment in lessons are mainly good and are improving this term as teachers set work in most subjects at different levels of challenge to meet the ability range in their class. However, expectations are highest in mathematics, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, because of the school's careful organisation of pupils into ability sets and groups. In turn, this impacts very positively on pupils' good and improved progress this term in the subject;

XLV. teachers are mostly skilled in providing pupils with targets and in encouraging them to work hard. This is seen at its best in Key Stage 1 where pupils have written targets in front of them as they work. In English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 some teachers use assessment results to set pupils suitably challenging work. This contributes positively to the efforts this term to improve progress and stretch higher attaining pupils;

XLVI. teachers' lesson plans are good. They mostly give clear detail about the work for pupils' of different ability in each class. Clear reference is made to national or commercially produced materials, for example in mathematics, to make sure that the expected breadth of work is planned. Appropriate work is mostly set to meet pupils' ability and experience so that they can build on what they have done before. This is seen at best in mathematics and English, but is improving this term across the curriculum as teachers include in their plans work to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and those in mixed-age classes. Teachers are aware that there is still more to do before this work is completed;

XLVII. classroom methods and organisation are good at Key Stage 1 and 2. Teachers are skilled in organising classrooms so that pupils have easy access to the materials they need in each lesson. The balance between whole class and group work is well considered. For example in English and mathematics, teachers give good attention to explanation, pupils' activity in large or small groups and to the value of pulling together learning in a plenary session at the end. All teachers establish good classroom routines, which mean pupils know exactly what is expected. Practical activity, paper and pencil tasks complement challenging oral question and answer sessions that are a feature of almost every lesson. This makes pupils think and, for example in the opening minutes of mathematics lessons, is a very good way to catch their attention. Placing pupils into well-formed ability groups allows them to work independently with pupils of similar ability and gives teachers the chance to help individual pupils.

XLVIII. teachers are mostly very good at managing their pupils. They have calm and consistent methods with emphasis on encouraging pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour. Brisk questions and new work, for instance in Years 5 and 6 mathematics or in Year 3 history lessons, is used well to keep pupils on task and attentive. In turn, pupils know what is expected and live up to their teachers' high expectations, which impacts positively on their progress in lessons and over time;

XLIX. teachers set a brisk pace and make good use of time. This is best in literacy, numeracy and some design and technology, art and history lessons. For example, in Key Stage 2 mathematics sets, teachers often give pupils quick, challenging questions and instructions, which takes their work forward very well. Teachers are skilled in asking pupils questions that probe their understanding and make them think. This is often found, for example, in numeracy lessons or in religious education and history lessons, when pupils are challenged to reason things out for themselves. In turn, the pace of lessons improves and pupils make rapid progress acquiring new knowledge;

L. good use of resources makes sure lessons are always well prepared so that pupils have the learning materials they need. Everyday items such as books, paper and pencil are used well. Teachers make good use of learning aids, for instance cards, number sticks and overhead projectors as part of their numeracy lessons. This helps pupils gain confidence and improves progress because they make good use of materials to help them in their learning. This has particular impact on pupils with special educational needs, for instance in mathematics lessons where they use a variety of different number cards and grids to help them calculate and check their answers;

LI. teachers make good use of day-to-day checks to see what pupils know and do. Questioning pupils about their work helps teachers to identify the next stage of learning. This helps in English lessons, for example, teachers give pupils much oral guidance and comment about their work in other subjects as the lessons progress. It means pupils see what they do well and where they need to improve. A useful system of marking in exercise books is better this year than last. However, it is usually limited to ticks and some words of praise or suggestions for improvement. This is satisfactory, but in the best examples, for instance in Year 2, teachers' written comments give pupils some idea of their next step of learning. In all lessons, teachers praise pupils for good work, improved progress and often set targets for their next stage of work;

LII. all teachers, starting this term, set pupils regular homework to extend, for example, literacy skills when pupils take home books to read or spellings. This is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers find that when parents hear pupils read at home there is a positive impact on standards. The school's reading assessments, for example, show this to have a marked impact on progress particularly in infant classes. The recent introduction of a homework diary for pupils in each stage gives pupils and teachers a clear way to record and check on work. Some homework links directly to lessons. For instance in design and technology, in Years 3 and 4, pupils designed a pizza in school and then cooked it at home. However, although the initiative looks very promising in the short term, there is insufficient evidence to judge its effect on pupils' progress or attainment over time.

47 Some very good teaching, most often at Key Stage 2, builds on the above features. It arises when teachers give pupils that extra help which makes all the difference to their learning. Sometimes this comes from teachers' very good subject knowledge and lesson content, with work set at different levels or based on first-hand experience in the subject. This is seen, for example, in mathematics, and in some Key Stage 2 art, design and technology and history lessons. High quality teaching arises from the range of learning materials pupils use, for instance providing pupils with several alternative types of apparatus to calculate and check answers in mathematics lessons about area. In some lessons, such as history or art lessons in Years 3 and 4, teachers use real things or pictures

to catch pupils' interest and tune in to their wavelength. Talking about objects and pictures stimulates pupils' thinking and questioning. This makes the content, for instance about Victorian farming methods or eighteenth century landscape painting, come alive for them. This leads to brisk progress and gains in knowledge.

48 When teaching is unsatisfactory it is because:

LIII. the pace of lessons is slow because teachers' explanations are unclear and there are insufficient learning materials. This means pupils are unclear about what they have to do and mark time whilst waiting for their turn. This holds back progress.

49 Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is invariably very good as part of class lessons. Rightly, there is emphasis on inclusion, so that teaching by teachers and support staff focuses on giving pupils appropriate help to do similar work to their classmates. This stems from:

LIV. very good provision and communications between the special educational needs co-ordinator, classroom support staff and all teachers, so that they are sure what each pupil needs.

LV. daily literacy and numeracy lessons, when teachers provide very well for pupils. This helps, for instance, to improve reading and writing skills;

LVI. focused support and confidence building work, set at appropriate levels that makes sure pupils invariably do similar subjects in each year group. A good range of work planned means pupils work at a level that is right for them, which leads to very good progress to meet their targets;

LVII. all staff knowing pupils well and giving them the social support they need to build confidence and self-esteem. This means pupils can learn and benefit from the same opportunities as all other pupils.

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The curriculum and assessment

50 Curricular provision is good. A broad curriculum is provided which covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is rightly a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. A good programme is in place for the teaching of health, sex education and alerting pupils to the danger of drug misuse. Setting right a weakness identified in the previous inspection, statutory requirements are now met as swimming is provided. The curriculum meets well pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development needs. It has good balance as it meets the school's aims and the amount of time planned for each subject is appropriate to cover the nationally expected content.

51 The last inspection highlighted the need to have schemes of work for all subjects, to secure the building of new skills upon pupils' previous learning. There are good detailed schemes in place for all subjects. These provide sufficient depth of coverage so that pupils

systematically build new skills and increase their understanding as they move through the school. A further weakness was a need for greater opportunity for pupils to learn about computer control and to design and evaluate products in design and technology. Plans indicate that these areas are covered well during the year.

52 The school makes satisfactory curriculum provision for pupils under five years of age within two mixed-age reception Year 1 classes. A structured programme enables pupils to experience the nationally expected areas of learning, mainly through a programme designed for the National Curriculum subjects at Year 1. Over half of teaching time is given to language and literacy and numeracy. This is a strength to develop skills but also means that during each day there are insufficient opportunities for practical, creative and physical activities incorporated into the other areas of learning, both in and out of doors. Planning is invariably good and with a strong focus on spiritual, moral and social development provides a good context for learning.

53 Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. This meets the requirements of the National Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. There is a clear and comprehensive policy and pupils have individual educational plans, which are well tailored to meet their identified needs. Targets and planning to support them are of very good quality. Very good emphasis on inclusion in class lessons makes sure there is the necessary support for all pupils to work alongside their classmates. This works very well to provide pupils with the means to access the full curriculum and meet their needs. Most of the focus is on literacy and numeracy skills, although where needed, staff support pupils in other subjects. Individual educational plans for some pupils include numeracy targets as well as literacy targets. Planning for the use of support staff in lessons works extremely well and is a particular strength of the provision.

54 The full curriculum is available to all pupils and they all have satisfactory equality of opportunities. Teachers work hard to make sure that all pupils can benefit from the taught programme, and from after school clubs. They make certain that any pupils with particular needs feel fully a part of the school community. That said, higher attaining pupils particularly in mixed-age classes have in the past been challenged insufficiently by their curriculum. However, this year improvement is in hand, particularly in mathematics and English, to put this right.

55 Curricular planning is good in both key stages. As a result, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to extend the previous planning frameworks. These are well conceived and promote detailed, coherent planning. There are useful long-term outlines in all subject areas. These effectively help to guide teachers' medium term planning which is linked well into the schemes of work. Planning to make sure of pupils' year on year development of skills, knowledge and understanding is good, although several subject schemes are in their first year of implementation. This is particularly the case in design and technology, music and information and communication technology. Planning for literacy and numeracy rightly focuses on use of the national teaching frameworks in each subject.

56 The school has made good progress in implementing the nationally expected daily literacy hour over the past four terms because of a good strategy to guide action. Gaining experience setting this in place has led this year to a very good strategy and smooth implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This impacts very positively on the improved progress pupils are making in numeracy this term.

57 There is good provision for after school clubs. Pupils are taken regularly on educational trips and visits. The wide range of clubs and after school activities includes seasonal and competitive sports, art and French. These are available to pupils of all ages and have good take up rates.

Assessment

58 The assessment provision made is good in both key stages and for the pupils under five. Since the last inspection the school has put in place a series of well considered policies and initiatives to establish assessment as a key factor to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is consistency in their implementation and they are beginning to impact upon standards and progress. Each subject co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring the assessment in their subjects and this has sharpened practice.

59 Very good attention is being given to pupils' self-assessment and target setting. Progress folders are maintained each term for pupils, that include dated and annotated samples of their work. These systems are effective in tracking individual pupils' progress as they move through the school, and make it easy to see how well they make progress.

60 Very good systems ensure the accurate assessment of pupils' work, with teachers working together to agree standards. Assessment comment lists, for instance, are used for all subjects to make sure judgements are consistent. In English and mathematics regular tests and assessments give a very comprehensive picture of what each pupil can do. A particularly good feature, for example, is that the headteacher checks every Key Stage 2 pupil's reading standard twice a year, and also a sample from Key Stage 1, twice a year. Pupils complete tests and assessments at the end of each aspect of their work. This helps teachers to set targets and decide on priorities for their teaching using the comprehensive records of assessments and tests. In English, for example, reading records are used adequately by teachers to show the stage of development of each pupil to set their targets for the term. Home-school records contain some evidence of developmental comments from which a picture of progress can be built

61 There are good systems in place to make early identification of pupils' special educational needs, so that action to secure improvement can be quickly identified. These include the very good communication between staff, from the time pupils join the reception class to Year 6. Staff are alert to pupils' needs and assess them with a good range of informal and formal tests. Teachers and classroom support make regular observations of what pupils do in lessons. In turn these are used to monitor progress against each pupils' individual assessment and where appropriate, education plan. Very good record keeping shows clearly what each pupil has achieved during their time in school, which means it is easy to check up on particular pupils to identify when and where extra help is required.

62 The Local Education Authority assessment scheme is used to check what pupils under five can do shortly after they join the reception class. This gives the teacher detailed knowledge of each child. Very good procedures mean staff are informed about what each

pupil can do. They assess, for example, pupils' learning each week and use the information to plan specific work to help their progress. Detailed information about each child is included in Year 1 records. The very good procedures and use of assessment in the reception classes enable those with potential learning difficulties or other special needs to be identified at a very early stage.

63 The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning in the under fives' classes and at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. The school makes comprehensive use of national tests and commercially produced materials to supplement the information provided by teachers' assessments of pupils. Other tests, such as reading tests, are used to build up a helpful record of information. The analysis of results from such tests is put to good use to highlight particular weaknesses. This is helping to identify and set right shortfalls in standards, such as the dip in progress at the start of Key Stage 2.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

64 The last inspection found the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to be a major strength, with a significant impact on standards and quality. In the intervening period the school has developed this strong provision even further so that the overall provision is now excellent for pupils under five and at each key stage. Its arrangements for promoting pupils' spiritual and moral development are very good, and arrangements to promote social and cultural awareness are excellent. The school provides an exceptional programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for its pupils, which filters through into most aspects of school life.

65 In many areas of the curriculum, pupils have the chance to reflect on their own beliefs and values, and on those of others. In religious education lessons, for example, they learn about their own uniqueness as individuals, and about how they change as they grow. They come to realise what they have in common with others, and what is distinctive about them as individuals. They learn about the beliefs and values of Christians, and of people of other faiths, with interest and respect. Across the subjects they study, teachers make sure that pupils can reflect on their world and about their work. In stories and poems, for instance, about the natural world they express wonder at the beautiful things around them. For example, in art they explore the feelings associated with the works of various great painters, and in literacy they write movingly about the plight of others, such as those who perished on the Titanic shipwreck.

66 Parents are right in their strong appreciation of the attitudes and values the school promotes. Values of fairness, honesty and integrity are reinforced in all aspects of school life and the teaching and support staff give a consistently good example. In assemblies the pupils learn about the importance of kindness, caring and politeness to others, and display these in their school behaviour. They learn about how to make wise choices during their lives, and to resist pressure to do what they know to be wrong. They learn that others too have the right to exercise choice without undue pressure. In religious education, stories from world faiths illustrate the struggle of good against evil. All these opportunities help pupils consolidate their knowledge of right and wrong.

67 Social development is rightly given a very high priority in the school. Pupils learn from their early years about the duties of friendship. They write about a secret friend, and try to match names to the descriptions. They make a Friendship Book, identifying what they

particularly value in their friends. They agree class rules, and learn about their responsibilities for environmental protection.

68 Pupils are encouraged to take a significant role in the running of the school. This goes well beyond practical classroom duties. The excellent School Council brings pupils and staff together in a democratic forum to discuss school affairs. They learn at first-hand about voting, about representing others and reporting back, and about accepting majority decisions. Even the younger council members represent their classmates forcefully, and politely argue their points of view with staff when appropriate. This is an excellent introduction to citizenship.

69 The school is careful to ensure that pupils accept social responsibilities beyond the immediate school community. The annual residential visit to Cromer gives older pupils a valuable opportunity to grow in independence by experiencing communal living away from home. They support charities such as the Southend Children's Hospice, and the Bone Marrow Trust. Speakers from charities sometimes talk to them about their work in assemblies. Overall, a very strong sense of social responsibility is instilled in the pupils.

70 The school makes a rich and varied provision for the pupils' cultural development. The internal environment of the school is visually of a high quality. Displays of pupils' work, art reproductions and books set a good aesthetic tone. Literature is prized, and children's authors and illustrators, for example, are regular visitors to the school's annual Book Week. Theatre groups and professional storytellers visit, and music also plays an important part in school life. Visits such as those to Barleylands Farm, Stansted Norman Castle and to a London Hindu temple add to pupils' broader cultural understanding. The school has a valuable link with an inner city primary school, giving a further opportunity for the pupils to appreciate cultural diversity.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

71 Very good support and guidance is provided for all pupils from the time they begin aged four to the point they transfer to secondary school aged 11. Parents indicate that their children feel secure and happy at school. This provides a firm foundation that helps academic progress and personal development.

72 The systems for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development are very good. A number of improvements have been made in response to the previous inspection report. Good quality records are maintained showing each pupil's progress and achievements. An individual target system has been successfully introduced for pupils in Years 4 to 6. Progress in reading is carefully monitored throughout the school. In Key Stage 2 there are now regular tests to measure attainment in English, mathematics and science. The school's results in national tests are carefully analysed to formulate plans for improvement.

73 There are very good procedures to promote discipline and good behaviour. Teachers and other staff show a consistent approach to pupils' behaviour management. There is an effective reward system that includes stickers and badges for the younger pupils and team points for those at Key Stage 2. There are appropriate and effective sanctions for dealing with misbehaviour, bullying and racial harassment should they occur. In the 1999 summer term, a scheme for the issue of yellow and red cards was introduced. This is proving very successful and the number of recorded incidents this term is very low.

74 The procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are very good. Parents

are well advised about the school's expectations. Registration work and follow-up procedures are efficient. There is good co-operation with the education welfare officer who visits twice each term.

75 The arrangements for pupils' well-being, health and safety are very good. Child protection issues are dealt with competently and there is good liaison with the specialist agencies. Governors and staff give a high priority to health and safety issues. Regular safety inspections and monitoring take place, including fire drills. Illness and accidents are well handled by trained staff. A good health education programme is in place, including aspects relating to drugs education.

Partnership with parents and the community

76 The level of parents' satisfaction and praise for the school is exceptionally high. This reflects the priority which governors and staff give to sustaining an effective partnership with parents.

77 The quality of information given to parents is very good. Teachers and support staff are readily available to meet parents for informal discussions about their child. Parents feel, most welcome in the school. Good information is provided about recent literacy and numeracy initiatives. The prospectus and governors' annual reports are of a high quality. Regular newsletters are sent about forthcoming events. Parents receive good information about their child's progress at regular consultation meetings with teachers. The pupils' annual written reports are of good quality. They give full information on attainment and progress in each subject and identify areas for improvement.

78 A small number of parents are not happy with the annual written reports whilst others would like more information about what is to be taught. Inspection evidence does not support the reservation expressed about the reports. However, there is a need for parents to be better informed about planned work in the curriculum.

79 Parental involvement with pupils' learning is good. Many parents undertake voluntary work to help in lessons with reading and other activities. Parents are consulted about important developments such as literacy, numeracy and the home and school agreement. There is very good attendance at open evenings and special presentations. The Parents' Association organises a full programme of social and fund raising events.

80 Revised arrangements for homework were introduced at the start of the autumn term. Homework clubs were also established on two afternoons per week for pupils in Years 5 and 6, but attendance has been disappointing. Inspection evidence shows there is good parental support to homework. Early signs show this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially with reading and numeracy.

81 The school has good links with the community, which help promote educational standards and pupils' personal development. The rector of St. Luke's Church takes an assembly and visits a class each week. Pupils benefit from contacts with the Catholic and the United Reform Church in Tiptree. Each week in the spring term a different local resident attends an assembly to talk about a specialist interest. There are other contacts with organisations in Tiptree and a major local company is very supportive.

82 Pupils benefit from the well-planned programme of educational visits. Theatre groups and artists give performances. Pupils' multi-cultural awareness is enhanced by a link with a Newham Primary School. Very good support is given to charities; especially those concerned with sick or needy pupils. The school is a very active member of the local schools' consortium. This brings benefit in terms of teachers' professional development and co-operation between schools serving the same area. In turn, good links with the secondary school to which most Year 6 pupils transfer at age 11, assist a smooth transfer. For example, the headteacher occasionally leads an assembly and samples of former pupils' work completed at secondary school are displayed in the Year 6 classrooms.

· **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

· **Leadership and management**

83 The school has very good leadership because staff and governors work together and share a strong commitment to raise standards. The headteacher and his deputy are a significant force in driving the school forward. They and the senior management team have a clear vision of where improvement is needed and are aware that standards by high attaining pupils are not as high as they should be.

84 Leadership is underpinned by very good planning and management, which gives the school a very clear way forward. The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection but other senior staff are new. The need to form a new senior management team is a significant factor in the satisfactory response to set right weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Now a team is in place, it results in improved planning, teaching and sustains the school's strengths. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress to put right weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Planning, monitoring and curriculum planning are now strengths. Very good leadership is driving the school forward and shows that the school is in a very good position to continue improving. This means the school is better than it was, although there remains a need to improve attainment of higher attaining pupils.

85 The headteacher and his deputy give strong guidance that leads to clear daily routines for staff and pupils. This makes certain that everyone understands what he or she has to do. Staff take pride in their work and support one another very well. This benefits pupils' learning and progress in all subjects because it means that, for example, teachers share planning and teaching approaches. For inexperienced staff this makes sure they gain in confidence to extend their skills and become effective team members.

86 The school has tackled well the weaknesses identified in the last inspection to plan the curriculum and extend the role of subject co-ordinators. This is still relatively new in place because of a significant change of staff since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, much has been done to set in place a good management framework. The result is that all teachers take their roles as part of the team very seriously. They all have responsibilities to

co-ordinate subjects or aspects of the curriculum, know what they want to do and have in place clear plans to do it. Doing this is very much a team effort. Co-ordinators of subjects and for provision of pupils under five, have a key role to drive up standards and do this well.

In mathematics, for example, where the co-ordinator makes sure that lessons stretch pupils because work is set at several different levels. Teachers work hard to improve co-ordination of the curriculum and are growing in confidence in their role to plan and develop subjects.

87 Co-ordination of special educational needs provision is very good. The co-ordinator gives staff a very good structure and frequent guidance about where improvement is needed. This helps make certain the provision is of a high standard.

88 The headteacher and his deputy have put in place a very good, thorough system to check the quality of curriculum and teaching. This supports the improvement of classroom practice very well. Co-ordinators and senior management all play a part in checking what is taught and reporting where improvement is needed. Teachers use time out from their class each term to check what is taught and report findings to the senior management team and governors. Although only begun in the summer term, early indications show it helps improve the quality of the curriculum. Teachers have a good over view of their subject responsibility and know clearly what is needed to improve standards. Arising from this monitoring, some improvements are already in hand as part of the school's planned review cycle. This is a good approach, and means a weakness identified in the previous inspection is being put right.

89 Governors have great trust in the headteacher. They are rightly, very proud of the school. Their regular meetings make sure routine matters are in place and their business is conducted properly. Several committees give them chance to debate issues in detail before passing them to the full governing body for final decisions. This shows a good commitment to the school and is constantly being improved. For example, to tighten up their role to check on the school's work. This action is typical of ways that governors seek to work with the school to improve performance. Communications are good and many governors visit regularly. They are aware of what goes on in the school and give it good support. This makes the partnership between staff and governors productive.

90 A very good system of school development planning is in place, which is a key part of the systems that now drive the school forward. It gives a clear view of priority issues for improvement, development and maintenance. Prepared by the headteacher, staff and governors it replaces an unsatisfactory version used at the time of the previous inspection. The plan explains where improvement is needed, includes means to judge its effect on improving standards and of the expected costs. This means that the headteacher and governors are alert to the issues they face in the near future. These actions and others in response to the previous inspection show there is a very good commitment to continue improving the school and the likelihood it will meet or exceed its targets.

91 Secure and sensible aims give good guidance to the school's work. These hold the Christian ethos at the heart of the school, but emphasise a strong commitment to provide all pupils with equal opportunities to learn. In turn, relationships are excellent, expectations high and the learning environment very good. This all makes a very good school ethos.

92 Governors are aware of their legal responsibilities. With the headteacher, they make sure that statutory requirements, including provision for a daily collective act of worship, are met.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

93 Staffing is satisfactory. As in the previous inspection report, there are sufficient teachers to deliver the curriculum for pupils under five and in each key stage. They are appropriately qualified and collectively have a satisfactory range of expertise. Part-time teachers support the work of pupils with special educational needs and the teaching of music. In addition, they provide some opportunities for co-ordinators to be released from class teaching in order to monitor work in their subject.

94 There has been a high turnover of staff recently, including a number of teachers who have moved on to additional responsibility in other schools. Currently, six of the full-time teachers have been at the school for two years or less. Two of the teachers are in their second year of teaching. Rightly, considerable time and effort has been given to enabling all of them to settle quickly into their new posts and to come together as a team. The school's induction programme is good. It includes opportunities to gain an understanding of routines and the aims of the school. The benefits of this are clear. Teachers are confident about their roles and work together effectively.

95 The previous inspection found that the professional development of staff was given a high priority and this continues to be so. Good arrangements make sure training is appropriately linked to priorities identified in the school development plan. The main focus has rightly been on literacy and numeracy, but there has also been a good emphasis on training for information and communication technology. Formal appraisal procedures are in place and meet statutory requirements satisfactorily. As part of this process there are annual reviews for teaching and support staff which include targets for improvement.

96 There is a very good number of teaching assistants who work mainly with pupils with special educational needs. They receive satisfactory training to enhance their skills. They are briefed well about what they have to do and they carry out their duties sensitively and efficiently. They contribute significantly to the progress made by pupils.

97 The school is set in pleasant surroundings. The outside environment is good and looked after well. The previous report described the accommodation as a strength and this is still the case. Overall very good accommodation supports a good broad curriculum. Classrooms are of adequate size for the numbers on roll. There is a new work area for design and technology and two new networked computer suites, one shared by Years 5 and 6 and one used for class lessons by all pupils. These enhance the opportunities for pupils' learning. Overall, the premises are well-maintained and furnished. Staff have created a very good lively learning environment with good displays which celebrate pupils' work.

98 The overall provision of learning resources is satisfactory for the curriculum, but there are some strengths. Resources, for example, are very good for design and technology, particularly with regard to consumable items. Resources are good for religious education, information and communication technology and for special educational needs. The stock of pictures and photographs to support religious education are very good. Resources are satisfactory for all other subjects, including literacy and numeracy and for the pupils under five. However, the quantity of reference books is insufficient for the needs of Key Stage 1 pupils. In addition to facilities within the information and communication technology suites, all classrooms have computers. The overall provision of resources for information and communication technology is much improved since the previous inspection.

Resources throughout the school are well-cared for and accessible to staff and pupils, which has a positive impact on teaching and learning in lessons each day.

· **The efficiency of the school**
·

99 As in the previous inspection, financial planning is good. The needs of the pupils are kept uppermost. The process of setting the budget is effective and governors are fully involved. Actions are rightly driven by the school development plan. Recent priorities have included the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy initiatives and the development of a technology area. Costings are realistic and some indicators have been identified to allow management to check the effectiveness of measures taken. The overall carry forward figure within the budget is appropriate. Funds received for the education of pupils with special educational needs are properly applied and targeted effectively.

100 The finance committee of the governing body takes its responsibilities seriously in administering the school's budget. It meets regularly and is kept well-informed by the headteacher. It monitors expenditure carefully and has good oversight of the budget. In planning for the future, governors rightly give due consideration to possible developments, such as new housing in the area.

101 There has been no financial audit by the local authority since the previous inspection. However, financial control is good. There are clear procedures to ensure that financial transactions are handled with due probity. The school is part of a local consortium and employs the services of a budget manager. Both school and governing body values this input. The day-to-day administration contributes positively to the calm organisation of the school and enables everyone to get on with their tasks.

102 There is good use of learning resources and accommodation and good deployment of teaching and support staff. Taking into account the:

- LVIII. average attainment of pupils when they enter the school;
- LIX. the progress pupils make and their very good personal development;
- LX. pupils' satisfactory overall attainment;
- LXI. overall good quality of teaching;
- LXII. the cost of provision for each pupil which is slightly higher than the national average.

103 The school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

104 Most children begin school, with about average attainment. However, some are already beginning to read whilst others have little knowledge of letters or sounds. Similarly whilst some have well-developed counting skills for their ages, others have little knowledge or recall of numbers. Personal development and social skills are generally good when children start school. By age five when they begin National Curriculum subjects, they have made good progress to achieve good standards that exceed the nationally expected learning outcomes¹ for children of that age. Their standards in personal and social development are very good and in language, reading and numeracy are good.

Personal and social development

105 Pupils make very good progress in this area and develop very good personal and social skills. They show a great keenness to learn and enjoy sharing their achievements with adults and one another. They work willingly together and participate fully in discussion. They have the confidence to answer number questions aloud, and collaborate well when they work together. When engaged in activities, pupils co-operate well, readily sharing materials. They willingly take turns and have a clear sense of right and wrong, showing good understanding of the classroom rules. Routines are followed well. As teachers set up the classroom, pupils have few opportunities to take responsibility for getting out and putting away equipment. The majority of pupils show adequate levels of independence and self-reliance. For example, they dress and undress without help when changing for physical education. Pupils behave in a mature way in lessons and around the school, responding well to older pupils at lunchtime. They attend daily assemblies with older pupils, sustaining concentration very well. There are frequent opportunities for spiritual and moral development through assemblies and religious education lessons. Pupils develop a good understanding of moral and spiritual values through discussions about friendship and how to be helpful. The high standards maintained in their personal and social development have a good effect on pupils' learning in other areas of work.

106 The quality of teaching in this area is very good. Teaching in all other areas incorporates attention to personal and social development well. It is effective in establishing a good understanding of routines and class conventions as well as learning about how to get on with one another. A calm, well-ordered atmosphere is successfully promoted.

Language and literacy

107 Pupils make good progress gaining skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing and their attainment is above expectations for five-year-olds. They listen attentively and talk about their experiences confidently with increasing competence. They effectively develop clear speech and use a wide range of vocabulary for their age. Most are confident about asking questions and have good recall of new words they have learned during the literacy hour. A minor weakness is that practical role-play sessions are insufficiently incorporated into the programme. Pupils have few opportunities for making up their own stories or to enact those that have been read to them. Opportunities to develop skills in

¹ These are presented as six areas of learning and provide a foundation for later achievement. They include personal and social development; language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; creative development.

speaking and listening are mostly derived from the literacy hour activities with the five-year-olds. They readily share books with adults and show an increasing understanding of the meaning of print. The majority of pupils learn to recognise a good range of vocabulary by sight by the time they are five, taking words and books home so that parents can help them with their reading. Pupils' make good progress in associating sounds with patterns in rhymes and enjoy learning and repeating rhyming words. They make good progress in reading through systematic and regular reading with an adult. Pupils are beginning to form letter shapes, and many write well with complete words within rows of well-formed letters. By the time they are five, many begin to show awareness of capital letters and simple punctuation such as full stops.

108 The quality of teaching is mainly good, in this area of learning. Pupils participate fully in the literacy hour, which provides good opportunities for enjoying books and developing language skills, particularly their knowledge and use of words. Teaching provides a wide range of good opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their use of language. Activities are well-planned and structured to maximise opportunities for pupils to develop their skills.

Mathematics

109 Pupils make good progress promoted by the very good range of well-structured experiences across all aspects of mathematics that build rapidly and constructively on their prior achievements. They make good progress in learning to count, and as they grow older, in learning to add and subtract using numbers below ten. By the time they are five years old, the majority have met national expectations and many have exceeded these. Their overall attainment is above expectations for pupils aged five. Pupils count confidently and in correct sequence to ten and beyond by the age of five. They have well-developed skills in solving simple addition and subtraction sums using practical equipment to help them arrive at the answer. A few correctly identify a range of repeating patterns. Many pupils write numbers to ten or above correctly.

110 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. The quality of planning is very good and makes a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make. The development of mathematical ideas is effectively promoted through a range of well-organised practical activities linked into the daily mathematics lesson.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

111 Pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. By the age of five, their attainment is in line with national expectations. Through practical activities such as learning how to make jelly, pupils show good understanding of scientific and technological ideas such as the concept of "cooling" and appreciate the time needed for substances to cool. The majority also show good understanding about how to use a recipe. Attractive thumb pots on display show that pupils have developed good skills in moulding malleable materials ensuring they fulfil the purpose of holding candle lights. Computers are used regularly in the computer suite and this enables pupils to develop good skills in information and communication technology. For example, they control the mouse well and, when using a simple program, direct it accurately in order to place objects and teddies on the screen in the correct places. They also produce pleasing designs using a paint program.

112 Pupils develop a good sense of history through observing and talking about how people used to live. This is stimulated by an excellent display of Victorian garments. They talk confidently about places, think carefully about going on journeys and use the school grounds to develop a good understanding of their environment. They remember their walk to the church through recording features within the local environment, which they reproduce in a simple map.

113 The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well and make sensible use of some practical activities to develop pupils' understanding in a wide range of areas in the world around them. Use of questioning is well developed and this helps to assess pupils' understanding as well as to draw out their own ideas and extend them further.

Physical development

114 Pupils make satisfactory progress in this area and, by the age of five, reach standards of attainment in line with national expectations for their age. They have weekly sessions in the hall and outside which help them to develop good techniques for warming up correctly, using space and controlling their body movements. In a dance lesson they demonstrate good use of space and variety of body movements at different speeds to express different moods in the autumn music of Vivaldi. An opportunity for daily development of physical co-ordination and control is lost as the outdoor-enclosed space is rarely used.

115 Good opportunities to make use of tools, materials and equipment such as scissors in lessons ensure that pupils reach good standards in skills such as cutting and handling malleable materials.

116 The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. The expectations of pupils are appropriate to their ages. Pupils are managed well and listen attentively so that they follow instructions obediently. Evaluations of the movement of each other assists pupils' understanding of what they are expected to do and how they should do it.

Creative development

117 Pupils make satisfactory progress in this area and their attainment is in line with national expectations for children by the time they are five years old. In the classrooms and around the school there are many attractive and colourful displays of the pupils' work. By the age of five, pupils work confidently with a wide range of materials and show a well-developed sense of colour, shape and space. The majority paint well, making independent choices of colour. They have produced, for example, a good wall display making very effective use of self-portraits and portraits of their teachers. They have illustrated the books they produced. In music, pupils perform with vigour but very little tune. They are learning simple songs by heart.

118 The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. Although pupils have opportunities to take part in creative activities, insufficient time is given to teach them enough about the fundamental craft skills and have too few chances to express their

feelings and ideas practically, in art, craft and music.

- **Other aspects of provision for children under five**

119 An important element contributing to attainment and progress is the calm, well-structured classrooms, in which the two teachers of the under fives work as a team. A strength is that pupils under five are drawn from the two mixed-age classes for specific teaching, such as some numeracy lessons. Details from the assessments of pupils made on entry to school are used well to ensure that the needs of individuals are met. There is a strong ethos for learning, and enthusiasm and commitment are shown by all those involved. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Organisation is good. Curricular planning takes good account of the areas of learning and the early stages of the National Curriculum, so that when pupils are ready, they move easily from one to the other.

- **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

- **English**

120 Pupils' attainment in English at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is average in relation to national expectations. This is in line with the findings of the previous report.

121 In the 1999 national tests, the performance of pupils in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average. However, the number of pupils reaching higher levels was well below average. When compared to similar schools, the results in reading were well below average and in writing they were below average. At Key Stage 2, pupils' performance in the English tests was again close to the national average, but the number of pupils reaching higher levels was below average. When compared to similar schools, the results were well below average.

122 During the three-year period of 1996 to 1998 the school's results at the end of Key Stage 2, as measured by national tests, were above average and showed a steady rise, slightly better than the national trend. The 1999 results represent a fall over the performance of previous years. This is mainly due to the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group.

123 Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress during lessons and over time. They respond well to the structures and routines of the daily literacy hour. Their listening and speaking skills are good. They join in discussions sensibly and recall experiences with enthusiasm. They explain their understanding enthusiastically, and often use specific subject language confidently. Pupils give clear and often lengthy answers to questions. Often their oral answers show more understanding and knowledge than their written work reveals. Pupils enjoy reading and using books, although the school's stock of reference

books for Key Stage 1 is insufficient. Their knowledge of letter sounds is good and they tackle new words with growing confidence. By the age of seven, many read fluently and to a good standard. Writing skills are generally satisfactory and include a basic understanding of sentence structure and the importance of presentation. Year 2 pupils are beginning to use dictionaries correctly. However, writing is sometimes slow and incomplete.

124 Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time, except in writing. They respond positively to the daily literacy hour but even so their progress in writing is unsatisfactory over time. There is a fall in performance in Year 3 and, although this is redressed to some extent by Year 5, it remains unsatisfactory overall. The skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation emphasised in the literacy hour are reinforced insufficiently across the curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to write for a range of purposes. The content of what they write is sensible and imaginative, but ideas are sometimes not sustained and developed sufficiently. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough to develop a better understanding of style and audience. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. Standards are good. They respond to questions and take part in discussions with increasing confidence. Pupils' standard of reading is good. Many of them read with fluency and understanding of the text, though little expression. They have a good knowledge of books and authors and are able to express likes and dislikes. Higher attaining pupils discuss complexities of plot and character, but their individual reading programmes are not always monitored closely enough to ensure that they draw upon a wide range of different kinds of reading.

125 Pupils with special educational needs make good and often very good, progress towards targets set for them. Occasionally, they find the group work within the literacy hour too difficult. However, they are very well supported and their self-esteem is maintained.

126 At both key stages, pupils' response and attitude towards their work is consistently good and this makes a positive contribution to their progress. Pupils work hard and want to do well. They show respect for adults and for one another. Ideas are shared sensibly and they undertake responsibility with care.

127 The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 where almost three-quarters of the lessons observed were good and is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teachers have secure subject knowledge that is shared effectively with pupils. They explain clearly the purpose of lessons and pupils know what they have to do. Resources are organised efficiently and a calm working atmosphere is created. Planning of activities is based essentially on the National Literacy Framework that supports teachers in consolidating and building up key skills. The literacy hours are organised carefully and with due regard to the needs of the pupils.

128 In the best lessons, work moves forward at a good pace and teachers have high expectations of the progress pupils can make in the time available. There is a strong emphasis on acquiring knowledge and understanding, which builds systematically on previous learning. A thorough programme of testing and assessment underpins this. Texts are chosen well and questions are used effectively to check what pupils know and how they can improve. An example of this was seen in a lesson with pupils from Years 1 and 2 in which they considered instructions for making mashed potatoes. The activity was presented well with good emphasis on the need for instructions to be in the right order and to use clear language. Another example was a lesson with Year 5 and 6 pupils which

extended their understanding of rhyming words, synonyms and plurals. As part of this activity the teacher made good use of a poem written by one of the pupils for homework. Teaching is less effective when tasks are undemanding, particularly for higher attainers. In addition, not enough regular use is made in lessons of information and communication technology to extend, help with presentation and enrich pupils' learning.

• **Mathematics**

129 By the end of each key stage, pupils' attainment is average and in line with national expectations, with examples of well above average work by higher attaining pupils. This is broadly in line with the findings of the school's previous inspection. However, standards are improving this year because of the impact of daily mathematics lessons with pupils working in ability groups.

130 At age seven, pupils' attainment in the 1999 national tests and assessment, is close to the national average level 2 but at age 11 is below average at level 4, with a well below average number attaining the higher level 5. At Key Stage 2 results fell this year due to a higher than average number of pupils in the year group with special educational needs. However, pupils' current work shows improvement and is comparable to the school's trend of results at age 11, which over time is close to the national average. Current standards are better and there is inspection evidence that a much higher proportion of middle and higher attaining pupils now in Years 2 and 6 are on course this year to meet or better the national average if they maintain their current good progress. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in tests at age seven are below average and at age 11, are well below the national average. At both stages, therefore, fewer pupils than might reasonably be expected attain above average standards. This means that standards are not yet high enough by the end of each key stage.

131 Over several years, the trend in pupils' national test results is stable, although due to the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs, it fell at Key Stage 2 this year. This means that improvement over several years is a little less than found nationally, particularly in terms of pupils achieving the above average level 3 at Key Stage 1 and level 5 at Key Stage 2. Teachers are alert to this shortfall and clear targets and changes in the way that numeracy is taught are in hand. Very good arrangements, for example, mean pupils have hour long daily lessons with work set at several different levels that meets the range of ability in each mixed-age class. At Key Stage 2, pupils work in one of three different ability sets which provide a very good match to different needs, particularly as within each set their work is at several different levels. This means that teachers can challenge and stretch all pupils. These lessons help pupils gain good skills in numeracy because they use oral methods reinforced with practical tasks.

132 At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress over time and in lessons inspected is good. Appropriate to their age, pupils have strong mental skills to add, subtract and multiply numbers often up to 50 or one hundred. Pupils are confident and have good skills in mental recall of number facts, addition and arithmetical tables with numbers up to 100.

Number facts are reinforced orally and by using number lines. Pupils practise number skills by counting on and back, recognising doubles and by solving simple problems for example, about money. Pupils recognise simple shapes, use standard measures and sometimes record data in simple charts or bar graphs. Skills in using and applying mathematics to everyday problems are satisfactory and improving. Pupils make satisfactory use of numeracy skills to help work across the curriculum, in science, for example, to record data.

133 At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress this year is good. There is strength in their ability in mental calculation. By Year 6 they use numbers up to 1000, with two decimal places, and above in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums. They understand place value and are beginning to make approximations and solve problems. They have good mental recall of addition and subtraction facts up to 100 and beyond. Many know by heart, for instance, up to the 8, 9 and 10 arithmetical tables. Pupils recognise negative numbers and have confident mental recall to give accurate answers to problems to calculate area and perimeter of shapes. Pupils know the properties of everyday geometric shapes including how to calculate perimeter and area. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 and 6 are beginning to use formulae and to calculate the area of circles. Satisfactorily, pupils understand and use time and length measures, gather and interpret data in simple graphs. However, at each key stage pupils have few opportunities to solve problems and make insufficient use of computers to present their work or handle data.

134 In lessons seen, pupils' immediate progress is invariably good or better. Some higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make very good progress because work challenges them. This means pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make clear gains in their numeracy skills. They do what the teacher asks in a brisk way that helps learning. Building on their skills, good progress is due to regular teaching of numeracy skills each day with work at different levels. This helps all pupils take their understanding on from where they were and reinforces their ability to calculate number sums quickly in their head.

135 Pupils have very good attitudes. They are very enthusiastic and concentrate well for long periods. In most lessons there is a good balance between prompt oral answers to questions and a silent hum of concentration as pupils wrestle with sums or calculate the perimeter or area of compound rectangles! Oral work, in particular is a major strength. It holds pupils' attention and catches their interest. At the start of lessons, for example, lively 'warm-up' questioning makes pupils think and realise what they have to do. In turn, pupils are confident and eager to give oral answers. However, their written work, although mainly correct, is not as neat or well set out, as it should be, particularly at Key Stage 2 when pupils are expected to work accurately. Pupils readily help one another, settle quickly to tasks and their behaviour is invariably very good.

136 Teaching is good at each key stage. Teachers know their subject well and understand what they need to do to help pupils learn. Recent thorough training in numeracy teaching is paying off as teachers have an obvious enthusiasm and confidence to teach mathematics. They convey this very well to their pupils, by infectious comments, lively presentation and brisk pace. Teachers make very good checks on pupils' progress, both at the end of studying particular topics as well as each day during the oral sessions. This gives teachers a very clear idea of what pupils know, and what their next step is. Thorough teaching stems from clear lesson plans. Teachers make very good use of the national Numeracy teaching Framework and rightly supplement this with some commercially produced textbooks. Their plans take very good account of pupils' different abilities,

particularly those in mixed-age classes or with special educational needs. Teachers give pupils much praise, clear explanations and prompt comment about their work that improves their progress.

137 A very good feature is the careful structure each day of a focused mathematics lesson. Lessons include a regular oral sessions to extend and reinforce pupils' mathematical understanding. Good use of regular and thorough tests and assessments, underpinned by the use of graded exercises and tests supports the teachers' aim to give all pupils challenging work. This very good strategy to improve standards stretches equally the higher and lower attaining pupils. Very good oversight by the school mathematics co-ordinator makes certain provision is consistent in all classes, which in turn helps improve standards.

Science

138 At the time of the last inspection, overall attainment in science was found to be above average, although very variable in Key Stage 2. The subject was generally well taught, but there were some marked inconsistencies from class to class. Attainment by the end of both key stages is now average in relation to national expectations, and the standard of science teaching is consistently satisfactory. However the number of pupils reaching standards above national expectations is lower than it should be.

139 The 1999 national test and assessments show that the number of pupils reaching the nationally expected level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 was average. At the end of Key Stage 2 however, the numbers reaching the comparable level 4 was well below average. The number reaching higher levels was also average at Key Stage 1 but was below average at Key Stage 2. Over the years from 1996 to 1998 attainment in science was close to the national average. The 1999 levels of attainment, demonstrated in these tests and assessments, are below average at Key Stage 1 and well below average at Key Stage 2 compared with schools with a similar pupil intake. The evidence of the present inspection is that the dip in performance seen in 1999 has been corrected.

140 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Over each key stage however, the pace of progress, particularly for higher attaining and older pupils, is slower than expected. This is because their work in the mixed-age classes is insufficiently demanding in the level of challenge it presents. This means that higher attaining pupils often do not reach the levels of attainment of which they are capable. Much of pupils' written work in science does not show the care for accurate spelling, handwriting and presentation that it should. Skills learned in literacy and numeracy lessons are inconsistently applied. Information and communication technology skills are too rarely used in the course of pupils' science work.

141 The school's science programme covers all the required elements of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn about ways of classifying plants and animals, and how seeds grow. In later years they extend this knowledge by studying the structure of

plants, and of the human body. They learn about materials in daily use, and how they can be grouped according to their properties. They learn that heating and cooling change the state of many materials, and that some cannot be returned to their previous condition. At Key Stage 2 they discover the magnetic properties of some materials, and ways in which mixtures can be separated. Early learning about pushing and pulling develops later into an understanding of forces and friction. The pupils also learn how to set up simple experiments, observing, measuring and recording their results. By the time they are 11, most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of controlling variables in an experiment.

142 Pupils' attitudes to their science lessons are satisfactory. They work particularly well in pairs and small groups. They enjoy their lessons and are confident in putting forward their own ideas. They make intelligent predictions about experimental outcomes, and discuss their results perceptively.

143 The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Eight lessons were seen. None were unsatisfactory, and two were good. This consistency is an improvement since the last inspection. In the good lessons, teachers set work, which challenges all levels of ability in the class. They achieve a good balance between teaching scientific concepts and helping the pupils develop experimental skills. Lessons are briskly taught and a lot of ground is covered. In one good lesson, for instance, Year 5 pupils had learned that bulbs lose power when connected in a series circuit. Guided by their teacher, they speculated on the reason for this. They then worked in groups to find a way of overcoming the problem. Some groups, to their very vocal delight, discovered a new wiring system, a parallel circuit, which met the requirement.

144 A weakness in several otherwise satisfactory lessons is that the teachers do not always set distinctly different tasks for the pupils' ability levels in their class. They do not hold sharply enough in mind the nationally expected levels of work for each year group. As a result, pupils who learn science quickly do not move ahead as fast as they could. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge, but occasionally some are uncertain in their knowledge of aspects of the subject, which results in some inconsistency in the levels of work the pupils tackle.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art, design and technology, geography and history.

145 Teachers' plans, samples of pupils' completed work and lessons inspected shows that over time pupils have some worthwhile experiences in each subject. Although more work is planned in each subject for later this year, only a limited amount of work was seen during the inspection because of the focus this term on literacy and numeracy.

146 No geography and only two design and technology lessons were seen because the subjects are taught alternately with history and with art. In turn, the balance of the curriculum, this year and in the inspection week, means that it was only possible to see a few lessons in art and history. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to show that over time pupils mainly make satisfactory progress over Key Stage 1 and 2, to gain skills and knowledge in each subject. Where seen, samples of pupils' previous work and lessons show that pupils' attainment is at the level expected nationally for infant and junior age pupils, with some work of high quality. This is broadly in line with the findings of the last

inspection.

147 Pupils have mainly good or very good attitudes in each subject. They invariably work hard and think for themselves. Pupils are keen and eager to learn, particularly enjoying practical activity. They sustain concentration well and take obvious pride in their work. Pupils of all ages enjoy working together, for instance in design and technology or art, and sharing their success with their classmates. In history they are developing historical research skills effectively and this enables them to find information for themselves. Scrutiny of past work, for example in history and geography, shows they undertake tasks with interest and involvement. However, some writing and factual accounts are briefer than they should be and pupils make insufficient use of information and communication technology to research information or to present their work.

148 Teaching is mainly good in the lessons inspected, although the few seen means it is not possible to judge overall teaching quality in each subject. There are, however, good features common to the teaching. In every lesson, clear plans explain what pupils are to do and teachers make certain appropriate materials are to hand. Classrooms are organised in a sensible way to make the best use of the available space and materials. In each subject, teachers ask pupils challenging questions that are often expressed in the particular subject terminology. For instance, in design and technology, in Year 3, when pupils design and make a pizza, their teacher talks of evaluating the product for fitness of purpose. Teachers are careful to give pupils sufficient time and space in which to work. They emphasise the need for careful, safe work and provide pupils with useful practical help. This takes lessons forward and often leads to a lively hum of activity.

149 Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. Tasks are often presented in an imaginative way. The teaching sometimes is excellent, for example a history lesson in Years 3 and 4 about farming. Work rightly focused on the kind of evidence historians need in order to build up a clear picture of the past. The level of thinking expected was high, and good links were made with science.

150 In art and design and technology lessons, teachers encourage pupils to generate ideas, and consider their work carefully. Emphasis on thinking imaginatively and planning creatively helps pupils to make good immediate progress in lessons. The benefit of successful teaching of skills in using tools and materials in previous lessons, enables pupils become more accurate and to take pride in their work.

Pupils' progress and standards indicates positive features in each subject:

Art

151 Teachers' plans and some samples of work show that at Key Stage 1 pupils are taught basic skills in painting and drawing. Lively paintings on display for example, show pupils painting from imagination and learning to use bold, strong colour. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils experimented with line and tone using pastels to create a variety of marks. This helped them to discover what the material could do, before planned progress to a more formal drawing activity. Samples of pupils' drawings at each key stage show that they develop satisfactory skills to observe and record what they see. Using pencil sketches, for example, as part of their work to illustrate religious education or history, as well as develop skills as seen in formal drawing lessons in Years 5 and 6. Examples of completed

drawings, show that pupils record carefully what they see using pencil line well to convey shape and texture.

152 Strength arises in the programme from the emphasis on pupils looking and talking about art from different periods and cultures. For example, in Key Stage 2 when pupils look at reproductions of pictures by the eighteenth century artist Constable, before painting their imaginative landscapes based loosely on his work. Some completed examples of this activity and of work inspired by the Dutch artist Van Gogh, shows that pupils mix and match colours well. Talking about pictures, they show appreciation of colour and technique and make sensible comments about their understanding.

- **Design and technology**

153 Teachers' plans and some samples of work show that pupils develop skills using an appropriate variety of materials and tools. At Key Stage 1, for example, shaping clay into pots to hold candles. There are some examples of good work at Key Stage 2. In Years 5 and 6 pupils designed and made a prototype for a cam-powered toy. In Years 3 and 4, they designed and made a pizza. In each case, the teachers' emphasis on the design process helped pupils evaluate the success of their work and consider how they could improve it. This puts right a shortfall in design and technology identified by the previous inspection.

- **History**

154 Pupils improve their knowledge of the past through the study of national and local history. They study other eras of British history, such as the Saxons and the Victorians, and successfully compare life then with the present times. Good use is made of trips to support pupils' learning in the subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in a residential visit to Cromer, for example. They study the buildings, and research life in past times. Years 3 and 4 recently visited Barleylands Farm, and are considering how farming practice has changed over the years.

- **Geography**

155 Teachers' planning, and the school's collection of past work, point to a balanced geography programme in which pupils make satisfactory progress. They learn about local and distant places, comparing environments such as Tiptree and Cromer. They study weather, climate and the seasons, noting the effect they have on daily life.

156 The main strength of the programme is in developing pupils' mapwork skills. The high quality of this work, noted in the previous inspection, has been sustained. These skills are built up systematically through both key stages. For example, the youngest pupils walked down a local street, noting the uses of different buildings, and making a wall picture putting them all in the right order. They make simple plans of their routes to school. Some have taken birds-eye views to draw plans of their classroom, and of how playground layout might be improved. Older pupils produce more detailed sketch maps, and compare these with aerial photographs of the locality. They begin to use recognised map symbols and scale, and understand four-figure map references.

- **Information and communication technology**

157 Attainment is satisfactory, in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage

1 and 2. Pupils use computers frequently enough to develop the range of skills expected and progress throughout the school is just satisfactory.

158 Scrutiny of their previous work, however, indicates pupils make insufficient use of information and communication technology within the curriculum. Over the last few months this situation has improved due to good leadership by the subject co-ordinator. The range of coverage is good in learning computer skills, but their application to subjects is unsatisfactory.

159 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have satisfactory technical skills. For example, they have effective control of the mouse and familiarity of the keyboard. The use of word-processing programs to communicate information is of an adequate standard. Most pupils successfully produce written work using word processors and edit their work well using special keys such as the delete key and the spacebar. They use an electronic word bank well to improve their use of language.

160 At the end of Key Stage 2, occasionally, some pupils make satisfactory use of information and communication technology such as creating borders for their written work and composing stories using word processors. This is improving this term due to the impact of improved subject planning and leadership. Most pupils have knowledge of the keyboard and the facilities offered by standard programs such as word processors. They are well-versed in the use of CD-ROMs to search for and extract information. Most can do this independently. Several pupils use spreadsheets and simple formulae appropriately. Many are familiar with control procedures and make them work as required.

161 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make just satisfactory progress in each key stage. The teachers' planning and records indicate gradual development of key skills and knowledge as pupils move through both key stages. This is beginning to have impact upon improving standards. An appropriate system tracks pupils' progress effectively. The results of this are beginning to be used to inform planning and drive forward the pupils' development of skills and knowledge.

162 Pupils have positive attitudes to information and communication technology and work well when they are given the opportunity to use it. They co-operate well with one another, both in mixed and single gender groups. Most cope well with mistakes, overcoming frustration, and having sufficient perseverance to complete tasks. There is general enjoyment amongst pupils of the new computers and appreciation of the good quality software.

163 Teaching is satisfactory at each key stage. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge in terms of computer skills. They plan thoroughly and provide the pupils with good prompts to assist their progress. They use direct teaching to demonstrate skills and explain various features of the programs. In most lessons explanations are clear and demonstration of computer programs effective. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the steps to follow to open and use a program were introduced to the group, illustrating what can be done using multi-media software. Written instructions and points for re-enforcement of key points then supported this. Good use of questions helps pupils to improve their understanding.

164 At the moment a weakness in both key stages, is that pupils and teachers do not make frequent enough use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Improvements are in hand in the school

development plan. However, there is little evidence of regular use of the computers in the classrooms apart from the networked suite in Years 5 and 6. Very few computers were in use in the classrooms during the inspection. In one lesson inspected, a weakness arose when 'hands-on' computer time was lost because pupils were insufficiently prepared before starting the task. For example, when sending an e-mail, pupils had not decided what they wanted to say, what picture they would use from the computer's clipart to illustrate their text, and to whom they would wish to send it. This inhibited progress in learning to send an e-mail.

165 Good training and support from the subject co-ordinator has improved teachers' knowledge and confidence in the use of information and communication technology. Recent purchase of computers is beginning to have a good effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Using a national scheme of work, teachers have sufficient guidance from planning to build pupils' skills systematically year by year. However, there is insufficient guidance on using information and communication technology in other subjects. Pupils, for example, do not use computers regularly in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and geography. That said, overall, the school has made sufficient progress in developing the subject since the last inspection.

• **Music**

166 Pupils' progress at both key stages is satisfactory. This is similar to the previous inspection finding. There are strengths, however, in their composition and instrumental playing although singing is less secure. The main reasons for the strengths are that the pupils are now being presented with a regular, balanced music curriculum, with a clear scheme of work in place to ensure that they develop key skills and ideas gradually and systematically as they move through the school. They also receive good teaching in this aspect.

167 Pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. They sing well from memory, with accurate recall of the words of a song, although volume is emphasised rather than a pleasant tone. They learn a further verse very quickly, before the tune is introduced. Pupils compose their own simple music. They explore the sounds that percussion instruments make, know the names of several untuned percussion instruments and whether they are usually struck, scraped or shaken. They listen to and describe differences in sound and relate these to different moods.

168 There is satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 in listening to and appraising music. Again in singing, volume is emphasised rather than melody or singing with a pleasant tone. Pupils have good opportunities to compose music and to evaluate their own work. These factors impact upon progress. They compose by creating sound and rhythmical patterns using tuned and untuned instruments. They are depicting mood, and structure a composition to have a beginning, middle and an end. Their compositions illustrate good variety in dynamics and tempo. They are producing and reading from their own form of notation which consists of appropriate pictures or symbols to represent when and how each instrument in a small group should be played. Pupils describe which of the sounds is responsible for particular feelings.

169 Pupils in both key stages have good attitudes. They enjoy singing and sing with great enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy music lessons and are eager to take part. Behaviour is good and pupils' lively enthusiasm is a strength. Good motivation is provided through opportunities to play for an audience.

170 The quality of teaching seen is mostly good. In all lessons, planning shows clear steps and outcomes for learning. Clear explanations made pupils aware of the aims of the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of composition and notation and there is good pace. Resources, such as percussion instruments, are well organised and good teaching is seen as pupils are all given opportunities to use them. Pupils have good opportunities to comment on their own work or that of others and improvement in performance and appreciation is evident. Only satisfactory teaching in the singing lessons is evident as insufficient attention is given to improving melody and tone.

Physical education

171 Games and dance lessons were observed during the period of the inspection. Teachers' planning and records show that gymnastics, athletics, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities are also included in the pupils' annual programme.

172 In lessons, pupils mostly make good progress, including those with special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the findings of the previous report. At Key Stage 1, pupils show appropriate awareness of space and each other. They sustain activity well and are able to devise movements that successfully depict the mood of music. Their actions show increasing control, co-ordination and balance. An example of this was seen when Year 1 pupils built a sequence of movements in response to music related to autumn. Their movements successfully included changes of speed, direction and shape. In games, pupils' work hard to develop ball skills. They pass, receive and strike a ball with growing confidence and accuracy.

173 Key Stage 2 pupils build well on their previous learning. In dance, they link movements with growing poise. They listen carefully to music and compose and control their movements by successfully varying shape, direction, speed and tension. They practise, improve and refine their performance and are able to repeat accurately a series of movements performed previously. In games, pupils show growing skill in positioning hands and feet when passing, throwing or receiving a ball. They work well in groups and understand the importance of fairness when competing with others. Examples of this were seen in Year 5 and 6 lessons on developing football and netball skills.

174 Pupils' response and attitude at both key stages is good. This has a positive effect on their progress. They are enthusiastic and consistently do their best, often out of breath through effort. Their behaviour is good and they gain satisfaction from the activities. They listen attentively, follow instructions and want to succeed. They are mindful of safety factors and show consideration for others. All pupils wear appropriate kit for lessons.

175 The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are planned well with activities matched appropriately to pupils' needs. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and organise resources effectively. Directions and explanations are clear and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their performance. This is an improvement on the previous inspection findings. In the best lessons, the emphasis is on the systematic development of skills, as when older pupils were learning to dodge and defend in netball practise. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and give constructive comments to help them

improve still further. Time is used well and activities have a sense of purpose.

176 The school participates regularly in local sports matches. It also provides opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils to take part in a good range of after school competitive sport, including football, netball, hockey, rounders and athletics. These are supported well and help to widen pupils' experience of sporting activities.

- **Swimming**

177 The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming, which is reported below.

178 Lessons are provided for Year 6 pupils during their summer term physical education programme. It was therefore not possible to see any lessons during the inspection. Pupils' lessons are planned to take place at a nearby pool. The school employs a qualified swimming instructor supported by a teaching assistant who has also undertaken training in the subject. The programme includes opportunities to develop confidence in the water. Pupils are taught a variety of means of propulsion using either arms or legs or both. The school reports that last year some 98 per cent of pupils could swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. It predicts a similar performance rate for the current Year 6 pupils. This is in line with national expectations.

- **Religious education**

179 Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is good in relation to the expectations of the Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus. At the end of Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory in relation to the expectations. At the time of the last inspection attainment was average at both key stages, so the school's current performance represents an improvement at Key Stage 1.

180 A number of changes have taken place since the last inspection. In particular, new schemes of work for the subject are being set in place, and a new co-ordinator has taken responsibility for it. The previous co-ordinator, now retired, teaches in the school on a part-time basis. Her continued contribution to the religious education programme helps to ensure its smooth running during the changes. Throughout this time a good programme has been sustained with most pupils making good progress in their religious education lessons. This is equally true for pupils with special educational needs, who also benefit much from the strong oral component of the work.

181 The emphasis in Key Stage 1 is on the implicit strands of the Agreed Syllabus. By the time they reach the end of the key stage most pupils have learned about the characteristics which make each person unique. They have discussed how they change as they grow older, yet remain essentially the same person. They know about people in the community who help and guide them, and about particular places, and celebrations, which are important to people. They know some of the main part of a Christian church, and how

these are used for baptisms and weddings. By the age of 11 they have added a wider explicit knowledge of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. They know some of the main events of Christ's life and teaching, and can interpret these in terms of their own daily lives and experience. They know something of the beliefs and religious practice of Hinduism, and have visited a Hindu temple as well as Christian churches. Some older pupils are beginning to discern elements of spirituality, which are common to different faiths.

182 Pupils' attitudes to their religious education work are very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. They are at their best in class discussions where good oral skills help pupils to articulate their understanding and belief. They listen very well indeed, to their teachers and to each other. They are courteous and articulate in presenting their own points of view, and invariably respectful in considering the faith or practice of others.

183 Teaching is good at each stage, and three lessons seen at Key Stage 1 were very good. Among the many strengths of the teaching is the skilled use of pictures, photographs, religious artefacts and visits to bring learning alive for the pupils. Class discussions are very well led, and teachers are skilled in linking new ideas to the familiar daily-life experiences of the pupils. Teaching is enthusiastic and energetic. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils learned about marriage. Using excellent photographic materials, they analysed the costume and setting of a Christian church wedding. They spoke eagerly about weddings they themselves had attended. They went on to compare these with photographs of a Hindu wedding. The teacher had brought her own wedding dress to show the pupils, together with a ceremonial Indian sari. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject, together with such excellent methodology, brings about good standards and progress in religious education.

184 One lesson was unsatisfactory because the pupils' late return from an earlier lesson left the teacher with too little time to implement her plans properly.

· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

185 A team of five inspectors carried out the inspection over four days, making 19 inspector working days. 84 lessons were seen in whole or in part, representing over 56 hours observation across all classes. This included all National Curriculum subjects except geography and swimming. Owing to the balance of work over the school year and inspection week, very few lessons were seen in art, design and technology and history. In addition:

LXIII. 15 per cent of pupils were heard reading individually or in their daily literacy lessons. Discussions were held with many pupils, about their attitudes, subject knowledge and understanding in mathematics and science;

LXIV. samples of pupils' current work were inspected in all classes and 15 per cent of pupils' completed work examined in detail;

LXV. samples of about 20 per cent of pupils' completed work from the previous academic year, including that of pupils who have now left the school, was examined in detail;

LXVI. assemblies and registration periods were inspected;

LXVII. school documents, resources, records kept on pupils, teachers' planning and policies were scrutinised;

LXVIII. meetings and discussions were held with all the teaching and support staff and with five members of the governing body;

LXIX.a meeting was held with 15 parents of pupils registered at the school and 135 replies to the parents' questionnaire sent out by the school were analysed.

- **DATA AND INDICATORS**

- **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 – Y6	274	5	49	11

- **Teachers and classes**

- **Qualified teachers YR - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	23:1

- **Education support staff YR - Y6**

Total number of education support staff:	8
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	95
Average class size:	27

- **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	488059
Total Expenditure	487539
Expenditure per pupil	1722
Balance brought forward from previous year	16337
Balance carried forward to next year	27048

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 274
 Number of questionnaires returned: 135

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	33	59	5	0.8	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42	51	3	2	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	18	58	17	4	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	28	59	9	3	0.7
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	28	59	9	4	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33	61	6	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	30	57	10	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	23	65	5	5	0.8
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	44	48	7	0.7	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	40	56	3	0.7	0.7
My child(ren) like(s) school	49	47	3	0.7	0