

INSPECTION REPORT

Clockhouse Infant School
Romford

LEA area : Havering

Unique Reference Number :102291

Headteacher : Mrs Sonia Hyams

Reporting inspector : Mrs Patricia Davies
22460

Dates of inspection : 8th - 12th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707000

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Infant

Type of control : County

Age range of pupils : 4 to 7

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Clockhouse Lane
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Telephone number : 01708 745972

Appropriate authority : The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mr S Chandler

Date of previous inspection : 1st - 4th May, 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Patricia Davies (Registered Inspector)	English; Art; Religious education; Special educational needs.	Attainment and progress; Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Teaching; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; The efficiency of the school.
Elizabeth Dickson (Lay Inspector)		Attendance; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Partnership with parents and the community; Accommodation.
Michael Milton (Team inspector)	Mathematics; Geography; History; Information technology; Equality of opportunity.	Curriculum and assessment; Staffing and learning resources.
Susan Rogers (Team inspector)	Areas of learning for children aged under five; Science; Design and technology; Music; Physical education.	Leadership and management.

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The test results for reading and writing and mathematics in 1999 were an improvement on the results of seven year olds in 1998, with a significant improvement in spelling;
- The quality of teaching is good and this helps pupils make good progress in their learning;
- The very strong leadership of the headteacher and governing body help raise pupils' standards and improve teaching;
- Support for pupils' social development is very good, and relationships between all who work in school are strong;
- Procedures for promoting pupils' well being and attendance are very good;
- There is very effective support for pupils with special educational needs and these pupils make good progress;
- The school's effective collaboration with a speech and language therapist is helping all pupils improve their speaking and listening skills;
- The best possible use is made of resources and accommodation to help pupils learn;
- There are effective systems for the administration of the school's finances which help to ensure good stocks of learning resources and a large number of well qualified staff;
- There is high quality information for parents, including a very good reading record for each pupil in some classes.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Although pupils' progress in speaking has improved, standards are still lower than in other aspects of English;
- II. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to cover all aspects of information technology and practise their skills.

Overall the school's strengths far outweigh the weaknesses and the overall capacity for improvement is very good. The school is already working to improve the development of speaking skills, and the weaknesses in provision for information technology are also being addressed. The weaknesses will form part 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

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, and continues to care very well for its pupils. Strengths identified in the last report relating to quality of leadership and management and relationships with parents have been sustained. The quality of teaching and procedures for promoting good attendance have improved. Substantial improvements to the accommodation are underway for a new nursery and dining hall. Standards of achievement have largely been maintained with improvements in geography and history, and in the overall rate of progress in mathematics. Results of the most recent national tests in 1999 show improvement in reading, writing and mathematics on tests in the previous year, with significant improvement in spelling. The school has successfully tackled all the key weaknesses identified in the last inspection report, with very good improvement in relation to special educational needs. The school has successfully continued to develop its assessment and record keeping systems, and they are particularly good for English and mathematics. There has been less development in relation to assessment systems for the other core subjects of science, information technology and religious education. The present capacity for improvement is very good.

Standards in subjects

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

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
Reading	B	A	very high	A*
			well above average	A
			above average	B
Writing	C	A	average	C

			below average	D
Mathematics	C	A	well below average	E
			very low	E*

Standards in reading for Year 2 in 1999 were above the national average, whilst they were in line with national averages for writing and mathematics. Standards in all three areas are well above the national average for similar schools. The attainment of current Year 2 pupils is in line with national expectations in all aspects of English, except for speaking where it is below. There is a slightly larger number of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2 which explains why standards are a little lower in reading than those for the Year 2 pupils who took the national tests in 1999. Attainment is in line with national expectations in mathematics. Standards are below average in information technology because pupils do not have enough opportunities to cover all aspects of the subject or to practise and apply their skills. Pupils' attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. By five years of age, most children reach satisfactory standards overall across the range of their work.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years
English	good	good
Mathematics	good	good
Science		good
Information technology		insufficient evidence
Religious education		insufficient evidence
Other subjects	good	insufficient evidence

Teaching is satisfactory or better in almost 98 per cent of lessons. In just over 54 per cent it is good or better, of which almost 24 per cent is very good. It is unsatisfactory in 2 per cent of lessons seen. There is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching for children aged under five than at Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching for those pupils with special educational needs is good overall and helps them make good progress against targets in their individual education plans. Little teaching was seen of other subjects, and it was not possible to make an overall judgement for information technology and religious education.

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	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and are often keen to take part. Relationships are also good throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school works hard to promote good attendance and there is very little unauthorised absence. Pupils generally arrive at school on time.
Ethos*	Very good. Relationships are good throughout the school, and individuals are valued. There is a high commitment to improving standards.
Leadership and management	Very good. The headteacher is highly effective and has very clear vision. The governing body ably support the school's work and staff work well as a team.
Curriculum	Good overall. Broad and balanced with appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy. Very well structured curriculum planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	A strength of the school. Provision is very good overall, and pupils make good progress against the targets on their individual education plans.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Social development is very good. Moral and cultural development is good, although opportunities for pupils to learn about the richness and variety of other cultures are more limited. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Teaching staff have good experience to meet the needs of the curriculum. Learning support staff are very good. Accommodation and resources are good and well support pupils' learning.
Value for money	Good. The pupils' attainment is below average overall when they enter compulsory education at five years of age and they make good progress as they move through the school.

* 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 some parents are not happy about
III.parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school; IV.it is easy to approach the school with questions or problems about their children; V.children are enabled to achieve a good standard of work; VI.the work children are expected to do at home; VII.values and attitudes have a positive effect on the children VIII.children like coming to school.	IX.the school does not give a clear understanding of what is taught.

Most parents are supportive of the school. Inspection findings confirm parents' views with regard to what they like about the school. Inspection evidence also shows that the school generally provides good information for parents, and gives opportunities for parents to find out about the curriculum, particularly for English and mathematics.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

To improve standards of work and the pupils' learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- X. Continue to develop pupils' speaking skills in order to improve their performance in all areas of their learning by:
- XI. creating more planned opportunities for discussion in lessons to allow pupils to explore and express ideas and concepts;
 - XII. further developing and extending the use of role-play areas and opportunities, including drama;
 - XIII. developing assessment systems which track and monitor pupils' needs and progress in the development of their speaking skills;
 - XIV. continuing the effective collaboration with the speech and language therapist.

(paragraphs: 8, 9, 11, 33, 38, 39, 40, 45, 61, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 99, 121)

- XV. Improve standards in information technology by:

- XVI. ensuring that the scheme of work is fully implemented;
- XVII. ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities to practise their skills;
- XVIII. developing assessment system to monitor progress.

(paragraphs: 17, 39, 54, 72, 73, 116-120)

(Numbers in brackets refer to the paragraphs in which these weaknesses are discussed.)

Other minor weaknesses which the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan are:

- XIX. extend provision in design technology to include designing and evaluating;
(paragraphs: 19, 41, 72, 126-128)
- XX. ensure that learning objectives are clearly identified for independent activities in weekly planning for under fives;
(paragraphs: 29, 38)
- XXI. develop more effective assessment systems for science and religious education;
(paragraphs: 45, 54, 73, 113, 122)
- XXII. further develop the monitoring and management roles of subject co-ordinators;
(paragraphs: 66, 100, 122, 128)
- XXIII. further develop the recording of longer-term strategic planning;
(paragraph: 80)
- XXIV. fully formalise systems for judging the success of spending decisions and initiatives;
(paragraph: 80)
- XXV. provide more opportunities for spiritual development and for pupils' knowledge of the richness and diversity of other cultures;
(paragraph: 52)
- XXVI. increase the amount of taught time at Key Stage 1 to the recommended minimum.
(paragraph: 39)

Characteristics of the school

1. Clockhouse Infant school is situated three miles from the centre of Romford town centre, and serves the smaller “village” community of Collier Row. It is a three form entry school, currently educating 271 pupils aged from four to seven years, with a very slightly higher proportion of girls to boys. It is about average for an infant school. Pupils enter the reception classes as under-fives in the September. Those with birthdays between September and March attend full-time, and those with birthdays between April and August attend part time for the first three weeks to accustom them to school life more gradually and then also attend full time. Pupils are admitted according to the local education authority’s standard criteria. At the time of the inspection there were 59 children present under the age of five. Since the previous inspection, a building programme is now well underway to provide the school with a large nursery, and this is due to open in January 2000. At the same time, a new dining hall is being built which will be used by the community when it is not being used by the school. A local playgroup also has accommodation within the school. As an all wooden building, the school continues to face major maintenance difficulties, and this also affects provision for basic personal facilities, which the school has sought to improve. Access also remains a problem. The school continues to share its site with the Junior school, although from this term the schools have separate governing bodies.

2. Three newly appointed members of staff have joined the school over the last two years, one at the beginning of the current term. One is part time and the other two are full time appointments.

3. The characteristics of the school are broadly similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Much housing is local authority maintained, plus some private homes. Many pupils are from single-parent families, and some adults work intermittently. The school actively seeks to improve parents’ skills, and has run Family Literacy courses. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 23 per cent, which is broadly in line with national averages and slightly higher than was recorded during the previous inspection. Nearly 21 per cent of pupils are on the school’s register of special educational need, which is higher than most schools. There are eight pupils with statements of educational need in the current school year, which is higher than the number at the last inspection. There are just over 5 per cent of pupils belonging to ethnic minority groups, and these numbers have increased since the previous inspection. The school now also admits Traveller pupils. Results of the most recent baseline assessments, undertaken when children are four years of age, show that attainment on entry to compulsory education is below national expectations overall, although it is close to national and local expectations in mathematics.

4. The general aims and values of the school are: to be a happy and caring school where children and adults alike feel valued and where children can realise their potential, whatever their talents, and benefit from the best education it is the school’s power to give them.

5. The school’s current key educational priorities are: to consolidate the test standards achieved in 1999, and increase the number of pupils achieving at the higher levels; to tackle the under performance of boys; improve standards in information technology; encourage greater parental involvement in their children’s learning; and improve attendance.

6. The average targets set by the school for Key Stage 1 tests are: 85% in English, mathematics and science. Targets for Year 2 vary each year, based on the school’s assessments of individual pupils’ abilities.

7. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	41	41	82

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	36	37	37
	Girls	40	40	40
	Total	76	77	77
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (77)	94 (83)	94 (81)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	37	37	38
	Girls	40	39	40
	Total	77	76	78
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	94 (76)	93 (86)	95 (84)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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	6.9
		National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0.1
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	23.5	
	Satisfactory or better	97.5	
	Less than satisfactory	2	

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

8. Children aged under five years of age benefit from good provision in the reception classes. At the time of the inspection, there were 59 children under five in three reception classes. Although cohorts vary, attainment on entry into these classes is below national expectations, and many pupils have difficulty communicating verbally when they enter the school. However, these children make good progress and inspection evidence shows that by the time of entry into compulsory education the majority of children will have achieved the desirable outcomes in the six areas of learning, and many will be working on the National Curriculum areas of study. Children particularly benefit from the good emphasis given to the development of reading. Overall attainment is in line with national expectations in the reception classes, although speaking skills remain below national expectations.

9. Pupils' performance in national tests in 1999 was broadly in line with the national average in writing and mathematics, and above in reading. Standards in all three areas were well above national averages in relation to schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. This constitutes an improvement on test results in 1998, with significant improvement in English for spelling and assessed standards for speaking and listening. In mathematics, results have improved at the same rate as the national improvement. Assessed standards in science have also improved, particularly in relation to experimental and investigative work. The school's assessments indicate that this year group contained both fewer pupils with special educational needs and those at the higher stages. In addition, there has been a close analysis of test and assessment data to set targets and focus on those areas needing development, such as spelling. In consequence, the school has placed considerable emphasis on promoting phonic knowledge. A whole-school approach to the encouragement of listening skills has had a good impact, and the school is continuing to address standards in speaking. The good implementation of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been effective, and some extension grouping for English and mathematics for the older pupils have also helped to raise standards. The attainment of the current Year 2 pupils is in line with national expectations in mathematics and science, and all areas of English except speaking where it is below.

10. The relative attainment of boys and girls varies in different years. For example, in Year 2 in 1998 girls were better than boys at reading and writing, but their attainment was similar for mathematics. However, the school's analysis of data shows that the gap has narrowed in English in the 1999 tests, particularly in relation to reading. In science, girls significantly outperform boys, but again, the gap is narrowing.

11. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in speaking and listening skills. However, whilst listening skills are largely in line with national expectations, speaking skills are below, and many pupils have a limited vocabulary. Most pupils listen well in lessons, but some become restless and inattentive. There are limited opportunities for pupils to take part in discussion, however, and this inhibits progress in the development of their speaking skills. Role play is used effectively in some lessons, but this practice is inconsistent, and role play areas are insufficiently developed, particularly for pupils at Year 1.

12. Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills, particularly in relation to their knowledge and understanding of phonics. Their attainment is in line with national expectations. This is lower than the test results of the Year 2 pupils in 1999, but that year group had fewer pupils with special educational needs. Many read accurately, and clearly enjoy reading. Towards the end of the Key Stage, some higher- and middle-attaining pupils read with fluency and confidence and successfully tackle unfamiliar words, whilst lower-attainers have less confident skills. The ability to discuss text is more limited, and pupils are also less familiar with non-fiction texts and the associated skills of personal research. In response to this, the school has started to target this area for development.

13. Good progress is made overall in the development of writing, and attainment overall is in line with national expectations. Formal skills, such as spelling and punctuation are well developed. Towards the end of the Key Stage,

higher-and middle-attaining pupils use full stops and capital letters accurately, and their handwriting is legible but unjoined. The school is focusing on developing the quality of written content and, when given the opportunity, older pupils write interesting and evocative work.

14. Literacy skills are well developed across the curriculum. Pupils write extended pieces of work in history, sometimes empathising with the period. There are also good links with other subjects, for example with dance where stories are used as a stimulus. In music pupils use vocabulary from their work in literacy to make into musical compositions. There are some opportunities for speaking and listening, for example in history, but these are not consistently planned for throughout the school.

15. Progress in mathematics is good, and pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 matches national expectations. Towards the end of the Key Stage, higher-attaining pupils understand place value for hundreds, tens and units and work with numbers up to 1,000, while middle attainers understand two-digit numbers. Lower attaining pupils add objects and numbers to 10, but they are not secure when calculating mentally. Middle attainers can describe the properties of two-and three-dimensional shapes, whilst higher attainers classify shapes using more than one criterion. Good use is made overall of numeracy skills in other subjects, for example in collecting data and presenting graphs in science and geography work, and the use of positional language in physical education.

16. Pupils also make good progress in science and attainment is in line with national expectations. Good progress in lessons is supported by effective prompts which extend pupils' thinking, and by the use of interesting activities. Towards the end of the key stage, most pupils construct a simple electrical circuit and draw it as a diagram. They are also beginning to use some associated vocabulary. Some higher attainers know that if two batteries are used, the bulb becomes brighter. Many are able to make predictions.

17. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall in information technology, and attainment is below national expectations. During the inspection, the teaching of the subject was satisfactory, but pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to work on computers and practise or apply their skills. Some areas of the subject, such as control, do not receive enough focus. The school is aware of this and is planning improvement.

18. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and are satisfactorily meeting the learning objectives of the local Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions, and also have opportunities to explore feelings and deeper issues. Assembly themes run in tandem, and this helps to support and consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding. So too does the school's discrete planning for spiritual and moral development, and the good resources. However, opportunities to discuss deeper themes are sometimes limited in lessons, and the school has yet to form links with places of worship in the locality for a wider range of world religions.

19. Good progress is made overall in geography and history. There is satisfactory progress overall in art, music and physical education. Pupils make satisfactory progress with making skills in design and technology, but there are limited opportunities for designing and evaluating. Pupils develop a good range of skills and knowledge in geography. They consider other localities and complete map and field work. They are also involved with environmental issues. Pupils gain a satisfactory insight into the way of life of different periods in history, and use a variety of historical sources to extend their knowledge and understanding, including artefacts. Pupils experience a good range of media and skills in art, and also study the work of other artists. There are satisfactory opportunities for three dimensional work. In music pupils are given opportunities to sing and produce their own compositions using their voices and a variety of instruments. Recorder groups enhance provision for pupils at Year 2. In physical education pupils are able to produce controlled movement to music and are throwing and catching bean bags accurately.

20. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. The school targets a large amount of resources in support of these pupils which is well used, and they receive very good provision. There is good liaison

between all staff to ensure that work is well matched both to the needs of the pupils and to work being undertaken in the classroom. There is good teaching of small groups withdrawn from classrooms. The pupil for whom English is an additional language is making good progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

21. The school has maintained the positive picture outlined in the previous inspection report, and remains a happy, caring school where individuals are valued. Parents endorsed this view at their meeting before the inspection, and particularly drew attention to how well pupils have behaved in relation to the present building work. In all lessons pupils' attitudes were judged to be satisfactory or better. They were judged to be good or better in well over six out of ten lessons, and very good in over three out of ten. Unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons relates to restlessness and lack of concentration and to the challenging behaviour of some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are not always effectively managed.

22. The under-fives in the reception classes have good attitudes, and often they are very good. They behave very well and listen carefully to instructions. They are able to move round the classroom sensibly and collect equipment and resources when needed. They co-operate well with others and clearly enjoy school. Many are able to persevere with tasks, displaying good levels of concentration.

23. Pupils with special educational needs show very positive attitudes to their work. They respond very well to the good teaching and close support they receive. They are co-operative and interested, and often take part with a will. For example, a small group of pupils withdrawn from the classroom to share and sequence a story were excited by a word game to make sentences and keen to take part.

24. Most pupils are responsive and motivated, and are quick to answer questions and settle to their tasks. Most sustain concentration well. For example in an art lesson at Year 1, on repeating patterns, pupils persevered with their designs, even when they were complex, and completed their work to a good standard. When activities are particularly exciting, for example in role play, pupils are very keen to take part. Pupils show good levels of independence overall.

25. Behaviour is good overall both in lessons and around the school, and pupils behave sensibly even during more challenging and less structured activities, such as drama. They are also polite and helpful and fulfil tasks sensibly, such as tidying up after lessons. Sometimes in lessons, pupils become restless. Some are occasionally quietly disobedient during whole group sessions, and continue to chat. Relationships are good both with each other and with adults. In some classes pupils are confident with staff and respond well to humour and lively deliveries of lessons. They work well in groups and share equipment and resources well, for example in science at Year 2, pupils responded very positively when working in groups constructing electrical circuits. No pupils were excluded in the last year.

26. During question and answer sessions, pupils value each other's contributions, and this is well supported by many teachers praising and encouraging pupils' efforts. When given opportunities to show initiative, pupils respond well. For example, in a literacy session at Year 1, pupils took the responsibility to sort out books, and in another class at Year 2, pupils tidied up the cloakroom and class library. Pupils generally work well when not directly supervised by an adult.

Attendance

27. The school's annual rate of attendance is in line with the national average. There is very little unauthorised absence. Pupils generally arrive at school on time and the school day begins punctually. Registers are completed appropriately and efficiently at the beginning of each session.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

28. The overall quality of teaching is good, and has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory or better in well over 75 per cent of all lessons. In just over 40 per cent teaching was good or very good. During the present inspection, almost 98 per cent of all lessons were judged to be at least satisfactory or better. In just over 54 per cent of lessons, teaching was good or better, and it was very good in nearly 24 per cent. It was judged to be unsatisfactory in only 2 per cent of lessons. The teaching is effective in helping pupils to make good progress during Key Stage 1. There is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching in the reception classes for children aged under five, where nearly 80 per cent of teaching was good or better, of which 43 per cent was very good. The strengths outlined in the previous report have been well maintained, particularly with regard to ethos and consistency of approach. The key issue in relation to problem solving activities has been appropriately tackled and is no longer a significant issue. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in extension groups for higher attaining pupils at Year 2, and is sometimes good. The teaching in these extension groups makes a good contribution to the progress of these pupils in English and mathematics.

29. The overall standard of teaching is very good for those children under five years of age in the reception classes. The whole class sessions and the use of questioning are particularly good. Support staff are well used. Teachers have high expectations of what all children can achieve and the children respond well to this challenge. The most effective sessions are lively and well paced, and make direct links to the children's own experience, for example in learning how to care for babies, or being encouraged to close their eyes and imagine stars shining in the night sky. Relationships are fostered well and the children's contributions are valued. For example in an art session, a child's piece of work was used to exemplify how thick and thin brushes could produce different strokes. In addition, the child herself was encouraged to explain how she had achieved this. Children are managed well and routines and expectations are clearly established. Lesson planning is generally good, but learning objectives are not clearly defined in shorter-term planning for independent activities and this limits the children's progress.

30. At Key Stage 1, most teachers have good subject knowledge, and sometimes it is very good. For example, in a mathematics lesson at Year 1, very good subject knowledge enabled the teacher to use effective strategies to explore and encourage different methods of calculation for addition and subtraction. This significantly contributed to the pupils' good overall progress. Subject related vocabulary is also often used well, for example in English to support pupils' phonic understanding. Sometimes, however, lack of confidence with subject content inhibits the exploration of ideas in more depth.

31. Teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve is generally satisfactory, and this reflects some improvement on the last inspection. A particularly significant factor is the whole-school approach to the sharing of the learning aims with pupils at the beginning of lessons. In some sessions, pupils are particularly well challenged. For example, in literacy at Year 2, role play was used to devise questions about Victorian schools in preparation for a museum visit. Pupils were effectively encouraged to think of follow-up questions to explore answers further. This good preparation enhanced the quality of their writing in the follow-up activity. However, in some lessons tasks are not effectively matched to the needs of all pupils, including higher-attainers. Sometimes pupils are not able to fully participate in whole group sessions and their ideas are not sufficiently encouraged or explored to extend their understanding.

32. Lesson planning is good overall, with few weaknesses. It is generally detailed and learning objectives are clear. This results in well organised and taught lessons, and contributes to pupils' good progress overall.

33. Teachers employ a good range of methods and strategies to support learning, and they are often lively and interesting. Focused teaching of whole-class groups is frequently effective, for example in English and mathematics. Pupils ideas are often well-used in question and answer, and demonstration sessions. For example, in an information technology lesson at Year 2, pupils were effectively encouraged to make suggestions about how the background colour and the size of the pencil might be changed in a painting program. There is good understanding of the needs of

pupils, and teachers often employ little practical devices to encourage pupils to learn and remember, such as “phoneme fingers” in English and number fans in mathematics. Weaknesses in teaching are the lack of opportunities for discussion and exploration of ideas in depth.

34. Pupils with special educational needs receive an effective mix of in-class and out-of-class support. The overall quality of teaching for these pupil is good, and significantly contributes to their good progress, particularly in relation to their literacy skills and understanding. Support staff work with considerable initiative, but liaise closely with class teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs to ensure that work is effectively matched to the needs of the pupils and linked to work taking place in the classroom. Relationships are very good and praise is effectively used. A good variety of activities combined with open questioning and good body language, for example eye contact, all help to keep pupils engaged and interested. There are particularly good strategies for gathering pupils for their work outside the classroom during lesson time, so that sessions are not disturbed.

35. Pupils are satisfactorily managed in lessons and this contributes to their overall good behaviour. Relationships are good and pupils are praised and encouraged. Teachers respond positively to examples of good behaviour, and reinforce their expectations. However, in a significant minority of lessons the restlessness and inattention of some pupils is not successfully tackled, and there are insufficient strategies in some classes for managing the particular needs of some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

36. Resources are well used. Lessons often have a brisk and vigorous pace, particularly whole group sessions. Support staff are very well-briefed and deployed. Practical resources are generally well used to support pupils’ learning, for example in a history lesson at Year 1, where pupils effectively used old toys and games to increase their knowledge and understanding of how these had changed over time. They had also used the experience of their parents and grandparents by asking questions at home. In some lessons, however, sessions over run, and pace is slow.

37. The quality of the day-to-day assessments of pupils’ learning is generally satisfactory. For example, in a mathematics lesson at Year 2, the teacher’s good informal assessment allowed her to use the pupils’ mistakes to correct and promote their learning about recording subtraction sums. Evaluations of lessons often give useful information about the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. Provision for home work is satisfactory overall.

The curriculum and assessment

38. The curriculum for children aged under five is good. Medium-term planning is very good and includes the desired learning outcomes for the under-fives but learning outcomes for independent activities are not always tracked through to weekly planning and this inhibits progress. Although the curriculum prepares pupils well for the National Curriculum, there are not enough planned opportunities to develop speaking and collaborative skills.

39. At Key Stage 1, there is a broad and balanced curriculum, with an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy, together with the worthwhile study of other subjects. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and includes religious education and sex education. However, the teaching time each day is ten minutes short of the recommended minimum teaching time which does not include the time for the act of daily worship. Also, there has been insufficient emphasis in the past on all aspects of information technology, and on speaking as part of literacy. The school’s liaison police officer visits the school regularly and teaches topics such as personal safety in each class.

40. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and it is a strength of the school. Good progress has been made against the key issue in the last inspection report. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early, and those pupils with the most severe learning problems are appropriately supported through the stages of the Code of Practice. Individual education plans contain detailed specific targets, mostly for literacy, but the school is developing the formulation of targets for other areas such as mathematics. Planning is very good, as is liaison between support staff, classteachers and the co-ordinator to ensure that activities are closely matched to the needs of individual pupils and support work in lessons. Frequent and regular work in small groups withdrawn from classrooms makes a very valuable contribution to the good progress made by these pupils. The school also provides a very effective scheme of specialist support for pupils with particular speech and language difficulties. Advice and

whole staff training given by the speech therapist has had a significant impact on the progress all pupils make with speaking and listening. Whilst there is often good support for pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural problems, including liaison books with home, some staff have not received sufficient support in how to manage some difficult behaviour during lessons. In Year 2, the school groups pupils by their levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy for one lesson each week, and this helps to match the work to pupils' needs and helps the pupils make better progress. The school liaises well with the local education authority's service for supporting pupils for whom English is an additional language. Relationships with outside agencies are very good.

41. The curriculum planning is very well structured. The school has made good progress in response to the key issue from the previous report. There are clear long-term plans for year and medium-term planning for each subject. The school uses national schemes of work where they are available. Teachers' lesson planning is good, it is well structured and includes learning objectives, assessment and evaluation. There is consistency of work between classes in the same year as teachers plan together at least once every week. These plans are monitored by the headteacher. There is also some good medium and short-term planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are still some weaknesses in the planning for music and design and technology.

42. The school's development plan targets the need to develop closer links with the adjacent junior school. Some useful steps have been taken to improve the curricular liaison but these have yet to be developed further. Last summer, for example subject co-ordinators in the two schools have started to make links, and both schools worked together on a geography project to study and promote walking to school.

43. There is good extra-curricular provision. Many pupils attend a gym club which is helped by a parent with an appropriate qualification. There is also a weekly recorder club which is well attended. The curriculum is also enriched by the use of the local environment. For example, pupils in all year groups visit the local library and those in Year 2 spend a day with park rangers studying the environment.

44. Overall, there are effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment, and the school has made good progress with the key issue from the previous inspection, particularly in relation to systems for reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers complete records twice each year for these areas which include clear identification of current attainment and the next steps of learning for each pupil. These records are based on very good notes that teachers make about progress of individuals and groups of pupils following each Literacy and Numeracy Hour. This information is used to plan subsequent learning to help ensure that work matches pupils' needs, and this contributes to the pupils' good progress. Tests on entry are used appropriately to inform planning in reception classes and ongoing individual assessments to inform planning are good. There is an excellent dialogue system developing in "take home books" where the teachers are extremely thorough in their records of children's achievement in reading. Induction procedures are good and parents are well supported and informed through a series of leaflets and booklets.

45. Systems for assessment in science are less well developed, and duplicate medium term planning where coverage of the subject is already recorded. There are no records for the core subjects of information technology and religious education, or for speaking skills. A satisfactory system is in place for other subjects, where teachers make useful notes on lesson plans for individual pupils or groups against the lesson's learning objectives, as well as an evaluation of the lesson. However, this practise is inconsistent.

46. There is the sound use of assessment to inform curriculum planning. For example, the school analyses the results of the national tests for reading, writing and mathematics. These analyses are used to agree targets for each year group, and contribute to action plans for improvement such as the teaching of spelling after low test results. There is also target setting for all pupils in literacy and numeracy which also give suggestions for work that can be done at home. These are shared with parents at parents' evenings.

47. Assessment is good for those pupils with special educational needs. Baseline assessments are used to identify pupils with potential difficulties at an early stage. Targets on individual education plans are reviewed termly. The co-ordinator releases class teachers to review progress for those pupils on the lower stages of the Code of Practice, and she reviews those of pupils at the higher stages in conjunction with teaching staff. Parents are appropriately involved.

Support staff maintain detailed ongoing notes about pupils' attainment and progress, and all assessments are used to inform the planning of future work. The assessment of pupils with English as an additional language is maintained to a similar standard.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

48. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Provision is good for moral and cultural, whilst it is satisfactory for pupils' spiritual development. Staff are strongly committed to the personal development of each pupil, and this is reflected in good relationships and the positive attitudes displayed by pupils. Most parents feel that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children, and inspection evidence supports this view.

49. The school has a well-considered policy for collective worship, and now meets statutory requirement in providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. Class and whole-school assemblies make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development and to their social and moral development. Pupils are quiet and attentive in assemblies and enter and leave the school hall in a quiet, controlled way. Topics such as friendship and caring for others are well illustrated, although opportunities for quiet reflection are often cursory. In its subject policies, the school has identified areas for promoting pupils' spiritual development, but in practice there are few occasions during the school day when teachers draw pupils' attention to the spiritual element of their experiences and help them to explore the meanings and purposes of the things around them. There has been little significant progress in this area since the last inspection.

50. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' sensible behaviour, sense of fairness and care for others. They are encouraged to be careful in their use of resources and to have respect for other people's property and the school environment. Adults set a good example in the way they treat pupils with respect and consideration, demonstrating high levels of care and concern for developing pupils' self-esteem. Good work and behaviour are reinforced through encouragement and praise, and through awards presented at the weekly celebration assembly. Pupils are made aware of the necessity for sanctions in cases of poor behaviour.

51. The provision for social development is very good and is given high priority. The school has developed a secure and friendly environment in which all the staff value and respect each pupil. Pupils take on any responsibilities willingly, visit the community and welcome those who visit the school. Older pupils have good opportunities to develop social skills through involvement in extra-curricular clubs. There are established routines in all the classes and in lessons pupils are expected to share, take turns and to listen to each other and to adults with interest and respect. From an early age pupils are encouraged to be independent in many ways including children in the reception classes coming into school and organising themselves for the day. Pupils often work in pairs and groups in the classroom and are encouraged to work and play well together. The pupils who have special educational needs are fully accepted and integrated. Raising money for charities is a strong feature of school life. In recent years the school has given substantial amounts to local and national charities, particularly those where children are the focus. Through these fund-raising activities, pupils are made aware of the predicaments and needs of others.

52. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. Visiting theatre groups and musicians provide pupils with opportunities to learn about cultural traditions and to develop their knowledge of literature and music. A range of visits, for example to the Queen's Theatre and Braintree museum with its Victorian school, is also effective in raising pupils' cultural awareness. Good use is also made of the local environment. Provision for developing pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures in society is less well defined, but their studies in religious education contribute to developing their knowledge of different faiths and cultural traditions. Pupils' appreciation of art and music from other cultures is fostered through for example, having the opportunity to make Nigerian prints in art lessons and listen to African music in assembly. A recent study of St Lucia provided older pupils with an insight into life in another country.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

53. In keeping with the findings of the previous inspection report, the support for pupils' welfare continues to be a high priority, and provision is very good overall. The headteacher and staff know the pupils' well and conscientiously seek to address all their needs. This is particularly strong for pupils with special educational needs.

54. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress support pupils well from the very beginning. There are good links with local pre-school groups and this information together with baseline assessment data is effectively used to plan work and identify children likely to have learning or behavioural difficulties. Assessment systems overall are satisfactory, with good ongoing and developmental assessments taking place in relation to reading, writing and mathematics. The school plans to extend the use of the excellent reading diaries for children in the reception classes throughout the school. These give detailed information about progress from both home and school. There are no assessment systems in place, however for information technology and religious education, or for supporting the development of speaking skills. Science assessments provide insufficient information.

55. Systems for monitoring personal development are strong, well supported by very good informal systems, in which the headteacher takes a prominent role. Some written records of personal and social development are maintained in the reception classes, and class records are maintained of pupils' particular difficulties and needs. All adults provide good role models, and relationships with pupils are good overall. Staff deliberately seek to raise pupils' self esteem through encouragement and praise, and there is discrete planning for social and moral development.

56. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are encapsulated in a consistent whole school focus, and are good overall. School rules are conspicuously displayed and each class has a behaviour book to record instances of misbehaviour. When problems occur, parents are quickly involved and appropriate programmes of support are put in place for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Award assemblies support positive behaviour as well as academic success and achievement. Some staff would benefit from more advice about managing challenging behaviour.

57. The school plays close attention to health and safety issues. Comprehensive risk assessments and health and safety checks are carried out on a termly basis, and any concerns reported back to the governors of the school. Fire drills are also held termly and all equipment and alarms tested regularly. There are appropriate policies and procedures for child protection. The headteacher is the named co-ordinator and all teachers are aware of the procedures. All staff, including support staff, have undergone training in child protection issues, which is good practice. Pupils were well prepared for the potential dangers of the present building programme.

58. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and have been actively developed since the last inspection. Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Registers are checked each week and any unexplained absences are quickly followed up.

Partnership with parents and the community

59. Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop and strengthen its partnership with parents and the community, which is good in all respects. Parental support for their children and for the school is good. A considerable number of parents help in the classroom and with visits, and have been trained by the school for their tasks. The school provides good guidance on how parents can help their children's learning and most parents give their children some support at home. The Parent Teacher Association raises around £2,500 each year through a wide range of social and fund-raising events. The school regularly consults parents on relevant matters such as the Home School agreement. The school's good partnership with parents and its good links with the community make a positive contribution to the life of the school and give good support to pupils' attainment, progress and personal development.

60. Overall, parents are provided with very good information about the school and their children's education.

Opportunities are provided for parents to gain insight into what the school teaches, particularly in English and mathematics. A well-presented prospectus provides parents with clear information on school life and, on a day-to-day basis, parents are kept well informed in a variety of ways about events, including newsletters from the Headteacher and governing body. The end of year reports to parents are, for the most part, informative about the work that has been covered and on the ways that the child can improve. In some cases, however, the information they contain is general and not specific to each pupil, and does not therefore give a clear picture of individual pupils' attainment and progress. Information evenings and afternoons on reading, writing and mathematics have been run by the school and have been appreciated by those who have attended. Parental consultation sessions are well attended, and parents are encouraged to approach the school at any time if they have concerns about their child. The headteacher is readily accessible to parents, and staff are available to see parents each day after school. The majority of parents report that they find the school welcoming and approachable and feel that any suggestions or complaints are dealt with positively. Recognising that many parents in the area would appreciate support in managing their children, the school is for the second time hosting a 'Confident Parenting' course run by educational psychologists. The school collaborated with the Basic Skills Agency to run a Family Literacy Course and there are plans to repeat this early next year.

61. The school works closely with a speech and language therapist, who spends one day each week in the school. The therapist works directly with some pupils who have special educational needs. The benefits of this are that there is minimal disruption to pupils' other learning, pupils attend all of the planned sessions and class teachers are able to liaise regularly and closely with the therapist. A major advantage of this collaboration is that the therapist has provided staff with training, and effectively contributed to the development of whole-school approaches to improving pupils' speaking and listening skills.

62. The school has good links with the local community. A broad range of visitors give talks in assemblies and about curriculum subjects. These regularly include representatives from local churches, the police and the road safety officer, and there are occasional visits by representatives of charities. During the recent 'Book Week' the school welcomed both the local councillor and Member of Parliament. Good use is made of the local area to enrich the curriculum. Classes visit the local library, supermarket and Havering Country Park, and there are visits further afield, for example, to Braintree Museum and Godstone Farm. The school recently enjoyed coverage in the local press and on local radio for its impressive 'Millennium Tapestry' created by pupils, staff and parents. Links with the neighbouring junior school are strengthening, and both schools have recently collaborated on the local 'Walk to School' campaign for which each won an award. There are occasions when older pupils from the infant school and Year 3 pupils from the junior school meet together for shared reading. There are close links with the on-site playgroup and good relationships with other local playgroups. The school recently received some sponsorship from a local estate agent.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management.

63. The headteacher continues to lead the school very strongly, and is highly effective. She has very clear vision and achieves a great deal for the benefit of all the pupils. This is shown clearly in the school development plan. She is ably supported by the governing body and by the whole staff, who work very well as a team. There is close liaison with the two teachers who form the senior management team. There is no deputy headteacher and the management team takes it in turns to lead the school when the headteacher is absent. They support the headteacher very effectively and are equally industrious.

64. Since the last inspection the infant and junior schools now have separate governing bodies, and a number of governors are very newly appointed. Governors are very supportive of the school, and are extremely well informed by the headteacher. Their contribution effectively helps to improve teaching and raise standards. They meet regularly and fulfil all statutory requirements, taking considerable time to discuss issues. They are also active in participating in the many useful links the school provides for parents, such as parenting courses. Governors with curriculum responsibilities, such as literacy and numeracy, play an appropriate part and visit the school in connection with their

responsibilities. They are less actively involved however, in strategic planning and monitoring developments and decisions. Where possible, they attend the training day for drafting the development plan, and take a full part in discussing the draft plan at committees and full meetings. However, although they are kept well briefed about the school's monitoring of its work, they have a limited involvement in taking part. This reflects the findings of the previous report.

65. The senior management team meets weekly to discuss issues and day-to-day planning, as well as to make management decisions. Although they have job descriptions these do not as yet include any whole-school management responsibilities. Most such responsibilities are held by the headteacher who is responsible for assessment, staff development and appraisal, and the review of all teachers. However, one senior manager has responsibility for establishing and co-ordinating the new nursery, due to open in January 2000. The other senior manager is developing her role in promoting quality teaching and learning throughout the school, and the work of both senior managers is helping to raise standards. The school is profitably working to achieve Investors in People status and, as a result, has made a good inclusion of all support staff in review schemes. Staff motivation has been enhanced as a result and senior staff have taken a lead in the review work. One senior teacher is in charge of staff pastoral development, but this aspect of the role has yet to be clearly defined.

66. All subject co-ordinators have well defined responsibilities. They work hard to maintain resources in their subjects, have produced clear policies and generally support their colleagues appropriately in planning. The senior management team, and the co-ordinators for English and mathematics support the head in monitoring lessons through observation, and the current school monitoring policy provides appropriate support for this work. Most co-ordinators look at planning and sample pupil work. The work of some co-ordinators, such as for mathematics, is very effective in helping to raise standards and improve teaching. However, the contribution of other co-ordinators to the development and monitoring of standards and the teaching of their subject is under developed, and staff have received little training in the development of monitoring skills. In addition, most co-ordinators have a limited involvement in the analysis of data for their subject, or in managing a subject budget.

67. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed, and the co-ordinator is very effective. She liaises well with a large number of support and teaching staff both for planning activities, and for assessment and drawing-up targets for individual pupils. The governor responsible for this area of the school's work is also fully involved and highly supportive.

68. There is a conspicuous commitment to high standards and attainment has been enhanced by the considerable amount of work that has gone into target setting both at individual pupil and at whole-school levels. These targets are very well linked with success criteria in the development plan. The plan is an extremely thorough and clearly written document which securely underpins the recent successes in the school. However, the recording of longer-term planning is more limited, and there is little guidance or indications of timescales for monitoring to ensure that potential problems are identified and contingencies made, for example in relation to behaviour management. Curriculum development is very good. It is explicit and appropriately biased towards current government initiatives and towards raising standards in core subjects.

69. The school has appropriate aims which underpin the development plan. They are exemplified in policies which cover every area of school life. These are generally very well written and consistent, and are easily available to parents. The ethos of the school is very good and clearly reflects the support of staff for these aims, and the particular emphasis on personal development and the importance of the individual pupil. Displays of children's work is excellent, providing a stimulating working environment. Attention is paid throughout to high standards in work and behaviour, and is reinforced within lessons and by prominently displayed notices.

70. There is a comprehensive policy for equality of opportunity, which is reflected in the aims of the school. The school monitors the attainment of boys and girls, and has identified that in some years girls achieve higher standards than boys. The school has started to take action to improve the attainment of boys, especially in reading and writing, and is a priority in the school's development plan.

71. In response to the findings of the previous inspection report, statutory requirements are now fulfilled in relation to the daily act of worship. All other statutory requirements are met except in information technology where pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to cover all aspects of the subject or to practise their skills.

72. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection, and it continues to care very well for its pupils. The quality of teaching has improved. Procedures for promoting good attendance have been vigorously developed. The accommodation is currently being substantially improved with the addition of a newly-built nursery and dining hall. The school has also made considerable effort to improve the toilet facilities, but with limited success. The quality of leadership and management remains very high overall, and this contributes significantly to the good progress made by pupils. Good relationships with parents have been maintained, and information for parents has been improved. Standards of achievement have also largely been maintained, with improvements in mathematics, geography and history, and in the results of national tests and assessments for 1999. However, the provision for design technology has had limited development since the last inspection. Issues relating to systems for judging the success of budgetary decisions by governors have yet to be sufficiently formalised.

73. Good progress has also been made overall in response to the key issues identified in the last report. Training has been provided for staff so that teaching gives more opportunities for problem solving, and this is no longer a significant issue. Schemes of work are now available for all subjects, although their use in some subjects, for example in information technology, is at an early stage. Standards have been raised in geography, and co-ordinators appointed for both design technology and religious education. There has been very good progress in relation to special educational needs. Pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties are identified early and given the necessary support to ensure that their needs are met. The school has successfully continued to develop its assessment and record keeping systems, and they are particularly good for English and mathematics. There has been less development in assessment systems for the other core subjects of science, information technology and religious education. The school is now meeting requirements with regard to collective worship. The present capacity for improvement is very good.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

74. There is a good match of the teachers' experience and qualifications to the needs of the curriculum. In addition, there is a very good number of well qualified, effective education support staff. They have all benefited from considerable training and six classroom assistants are undertaking National Vocational Qualification courses. The management of staff is thorough and systematic. It has improved since the previous inspection, and makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of all staff. There are good policies for professional development and the induction of new staff. A very good system for the annual review of all staff identifies both the professional needs of individual staff as well as the training needs connected with the priorities of the school development plan, and targets are set for future development. Staff attend many in-service training courses including the weekly in-school staff development meetings. Training sessions are thoroughly evaluated to ensure that the school receives maximum benefit from this expenditure. The school is in the process of seeking Investors in People status. Since the previous inspection co-ordinators have been appointed for both design technology and religious education.

75. The standard of accommodation is good overall, and despite having major difficulties related to the maintenance of older wooden buildings, the school is clean, well maintained and welcoming. Everyone in the school community takes pride in the building. Classrooms are generally of sufficient size, and they are tidy and well-organised. The corridor areas are well-used throughout the day by teachers and support staff working with small groups of pupils. Part of the library is used for small groups of pupils to work with the special needs co-ordinator. Although the library is easily accessible to pupils, its use as a learning resource is not fully exploited by pupils and staff. The standard of display throughout the school is high and reflects a commitment to valuing pupils' work and encouraging interest and enquiry. The garden courtyard and environmental area provides an attractive learning environment, currently housing two rabbits and a variety of pond life.

76. Although they are kept clean, the boys' toilet area has an unpleasant smell and, because of its location, is not easily supervised. The condition and location of the toilets were mentioned at the last inspection, but despite

strenuous efforts, the situation is not greatly improved. The unsatisfactory dining arrangements, also mentioned in the last inspection report, are about to be resolved as a new canteen is currently being built (due for completion in January 2000). Also under construction, as part of a building programme, is a nursery due to open at the same time. The playground provides limited space for the whole school and, when possible, classes are scheduled for separate playtimes. As was the case at the last inspection, the hard play areas could be better developed with sheltered spaces and activity areas to provide more attractive and stimulating surroundings. The school is fortunate to share the use of an extensive playing field with the junior school.

77. There are good learning resources for all subjects, and these contribute strongly to pupils' good progress. For example, there are wide ranges of equipment stored in the hall for physical education and music. These resources are very well organised so that they are readily accessible to teachers. The library is satisfactory, and its ongoing improvement is a target in the school development plan. Resourcing for those children aged under five is very good. The school has maintained the good provision at the time of the previous inspection. The number and quality of computers have been improved, and most now have CD-ROMs.

The efficiency of the school

78. The school has maintained the strengths outlined in the previous report with regard to the management and use of its finances and resources, and the deployment of classroom support staff is now very good. The school is very clear about its priorities, particularly in relation to the raising of standards for all pupils, and effectively targets resources to fulfil these priorities. In consequence, this area of the school's work is very good overall, and makes a significant contribution to the overall good progress of pupils in their learning.

79. The school development plan is comprehensively and carefully reviewed each year, and the thoughts and ideas of staff and governors are conscientiously sought by the headteacher. The school aims to directly benefit the pupils in its care at all times, and in consequence allocates most of its financial resources to immediately prioritised spending areas, such as learning support staff and learning resources. The identified overspend on last year's budget was due to a billing error in relation to staff costs and a claw-back relating to pupil numbers. Recent financial constraints caused by a smaller year group moving through the school were well and realistically managed.

80. Although the governing body clearly considers longer-term issues, particularly in relation to maintaining the number of pupils on roll, and presenting the school well within the local community, there is limited formal planning recorded for a longer term view of development. Neither are governors sufficiently involved actively in directing the school's financial priorities, although they are kept well informed and take a full part in discussion. Strategies for judging the success of spending decisions have yet to be fully formalised, in keeping with the findings of the previous inspection report.

81. Financial systems are very well organised and maintained. The secretary is efficient and hard working, and closely supported in her work by the headteacher. Expenditure is well monitored by both staff and governors. Systems for checking and balancing day-to-day expenditure are very good, particularly in relation to the ordering of goods and resources, where a good range of staff are involved. The few items identified for improvement in the most recent auditors' report have been fulfilled. The funds the school receives for special educational needs are used efficiently to help the pupils make good progress.

82. The school makes good use of all its staff overall, and the quality of teaching has improved overall since the last inspection. Staff training is carefully evaluated to ensure that the school fully benefits from this expenditure. Staff are well used to supervise outside areas during playtimes. The nursery teacher has been well used with regard to all aspects of planning and preparation for the large new nursery whilst awaiting its completion. Also she has provided very effective support in classes for teachers during numeracy sessions, and has allowed staff time away from the classroom to develop their subject. The caretaker is particularly effectively used to keep the school well maintained

and clean, despite the limitations of older buildings. The school is attractive and interesting, enhanced by good quality displays. The school has done all it can to improve toilet areas. It will soon have a new dining hall and nursery, but in the meantime uses every available space well including the provision of accommodation for the local playgroup. The accommodation is particularly well-used for the teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs, although this restricts the day-to-day use of the library by all pupils. The quality of learning resources is good overall, and the school makes good use of them to enhance learning. They are very well stored and easily accessible. There needs to be more opportunities to use resources in information technology for pupils to learn new skills and practise them.

83. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average overall. The quality of teaching is good, and this enables pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. Standards are in line with national expectations when they leave at the age of seven. The pupils have good attitudes to their work, and behave well. Very good use is made overall of the school's resources. The unit cost per pupil is high. In keeping with the findings of the previous inspection report, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

84. There is good overall provision made for children under five years of age reflecting the very effective management of this part of the school. The school has three reception classes and children enter at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. Those born between September and April attend full time, and children born between April and August attend part time for the first three weeks before also becoming full time. There is good communication with local pre-school providers, and the school presently accommodates the local playgroup, with whom they have strong links. A large new nursery is planned to open in January 2000, and the playgroup will then move to permanent premises at the adjacent junior school. The classrooms are of a suitable size and pupils benefit from a secure outside play area with a marked track. Cohorts vary each year, but baseline assessments taken early in the school year of their entry into the reception classes show that overall children's attainment is below what might be expected of children of a similar age. In addition, many pupils have difficulty communicating verbally when they enter the school. However, inspection evidence shows that by their entry into compulsory education at the age of five the majority of children will have achieved the desirable outcomes in the six areas of learning and many will be working on the National Curriculum areas of study. Overall attainment is in line with national expectations in the reception classes, although speaking skills remain below. Children make good progress overall, and made very good progress in over 40 per cent of lessons during the inspection. A significant contributory factor is the overall very good quality of teaching in the reception classes.

Personal and social development

85. Children make good progress in the development of their personal and social skills, and this is well supported by positive reinforcement from staff for attitudes, such as respect for others. The children are very well supported in lessons where they move about confidently and work well independently. When working with others, they share equipment appropriately and take turns, and even applaud each other's efforts, for example when singing and laying instruments together. Collaborative language is effectively promoted in groups working with adults.

Language and literacy

86. Overall children make good progress in the development of their skills in language and literacy. Many children enter the school with speaking and listening skills which are below average and have difficulty communicating verbally with adults and each other. However, the progress in this area is satisfactory overall and children benefit from the whole school approach to developing good listening skills. In consequence, children listen very well and are beginning to develop their speaking skills, particularly when staff reinforce language during group activities. They do less well in some independent group work where the quality of teacher explanation and feedback is more variable. Role play areas are, however, well used to support speech development. The foundations for the National Literacy Strategy are being laid in whole class work. Excellent questioning skills, demonstrating high expectations and appropriate pace lead to very good progress in these sessions. Children also benefit from the good overall emphasis given to developing reading. Most children can recognise a number of initial sounds and name letters. They clearly enjoy books, they handle them correctly and are able to find and recall text from the class story. Many are already beginning to read with good expression. Higher attainers are beginning to build up a vocabulary of words they can recognise on sight. Children benefit from daily shared writing activities with an adult. Most children can write some letters and their own names, though some mix up upper and lower case letters and a substantial number can write simple words. An appropriate mix of approaches is used to develop good progression in writing and opportunities to reinforce literacy across the curriculum are planned very well. This was demonstrated in a science lesson, where some challenging vocabulary and questioning was integrated into a lesson about growing bulbs.

Mathematical development

87. Children make good progress overall in mathematics. Some higher attainers make very good progress and are able to count to 30 and recognise properties of plane shapes. Children are introduced to simple mathematical vocabulary such as "more than" and "fewer than" and some are able to recall these words. They sing number rhymes and most are able to record digits. Progress in whole-class oral sessions is often very good due to exceptional teacher enthusiasm, a fast pace and questioning skills designed to promote interaction and consolidate knowledge.

Progress in groups where children are working independently is less pronounced because the quality of support and instruction is inconsistent, for example during activities such as threading beads and making repeating patterns.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

88. Children are making good progress overall in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through activities such as discussing plants and their root systems. They are able to talk about events in their own lives and learn how to care for babies. During computer activities children were observed using the computer, manipulating the mouse and using construction apparatus confidently. Some demonstrated good cutting skills when making a cardboard pig and they were able to discuss the best means of joining the parts. Children also listen to Bible stories and are learning to express their feelings. One class, for example, was encouraged to think about “the specialness of a baby”.

Physical development

89. Good progress is made in the development of pupils’ physical skills. All children have access to an outdoor area, where they ride bicycles and develop target practice skills using hoops and skittles. They are given many varied opportunities to develop fine motor skills through use of different tools and activities such as threading, construction, and jigsaws. The children benefit from the use of the school hall for more formal physical education lessons.

Creative development

90. Children in all under five classes make good progress in all areas of creative learning. They effectively explore textures and media as they paint, model and draw, although opportunities for them to undertake three dimension work such as modelling with junk materials, are limited. They play percussion instruments with great enjoyment and in one lesson they were able to improvise a tune using kitchen utensils. They engage in imaginative play in role play areas.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

91. Results of the national tests in 1999 show pupils’ attainment at Key Stage 1 to be well above average nationally in reading and in line with the national average in writing. In relation to those schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals results are well above the national average in both reading and writing. Results have shown improvement over time since they dipped in 1997. Results this year show significant improvements in spelling in comparison with results in the 1998 tests, and in assessed standards in speaking and listening. Results in reading and writing have also improved on those of 1998. The school’s data shows however that this cohort had fewer pupils on the register of those with special educational needs and at the higher levels of the special needs Code of Practice. The performance of boys in English has been lower than girls overall, but the school’s analysis of data shows some improvement in the 1999 tests, particularly in relation to reading. The school closely analyses tests and assessment data to set targets and focus on areas requiring further development, for example in relation to phonic knowledge, and this has supported the rise in standards. So too has the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy. Evidence gained through inspection reflects this positive picture and shows attainment to be in line with national expectations in both reading and writing. It is also in line with national expectations with regard to pupils’ listening skills, but speaking skills are below expectations overall, although some higher attainers are in line. These findings reflect those of the previous inspection report.

92. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress over time and in lessons. Sometimes progress in lessons is very good. Many pupils have a limited knowledge of books beyond school and make good progress in their awareness and enjoyment of reading and in reading accurately. This is because the school successfully gives emphasis to the development of both these areas. Pupils also benefit from a whole-school approach to the development of listening skills and make good progress in this area. However, although the school works to address the improvement of speaking skills, this has not yet had such a marked impact on pupils’ progress. Progress in writing is good overall, and particularly in relation to formal skills such as spelling and punctuation. The school is also focusing on improving the quality of the written work, and pupils are beginning to respond, and some higher and middle attainers

are making good progress. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The school makes very good provision for developing the literacy needs of these pupils and targets well-planned and focused support both in lessons and in small groups withdrawn from the classroom.

93. Listening skills are generally satisfactory throughout the school. Most pupils are attentive, but some become restless and lose concentration during whole-group sessions, and sometimes distract others close to them. However, many pupils are not able to express their ideas clearly and have a limited vocabulary. In some classes pupils benefit from opportunities to engage in role play and drama, for example in a literacy session at Year 1 pupils acted out the part of the mouse in “A Dark, Dark Tale”. Subsequently, one pupil took that role so other pupils could ask questions about how the character felt. In response to this activity, pupils made very good progress in their speaking skills. However, role play areas in classrooms, particularly for the younger pupils, are under-developed and although pupils take part in question and answer sessions, there are insufficient opportunities for discussion.

94. Many pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of phonics, and this well supports their ability to read accurately. Towards the end of the Key Stage, some higher-and middle-attaining pupils read confidently and fluently and can successfully tackle unfamiliar words, whilst some lower attainers have limited strategies. Many pupils chat about illustrations and some make simple predictions about the story, but overall pupils’ ability to discuss text is limited. The pupils are less familiar with non-fiction material, and the school is beginning to use it more often to support the development of research skills and capture the interest of boys, for example in connection with their work on the Victorians in history at Year 2.

95. Pupils receive a satisfactory range of opportunities for personal, extended writing, and formal skills are well developed. Towards the end of the Key Stage higher-and middle-attaining pupils use full stops and capital letters accurately and have legible unjoined handwriting. When given the opportunity to extend their vocabulary and present their work in interesting ways, pupils respond well, for example when writing about Autumn at Year 2 many pupils produced good quality evocative poems.

96. Pupils’ response to English is good overall, and shows an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection report. Generally they behave well in lessons and are often eager to take part in whole-group sessions and in subsequent activities. For example, pupils at Year 2 were keen to contribute words when brainstorming ideas for their firework poems and took a full part in answering questions. As a result, very good progress was made and some poems were excellent. Pupils are often responsible and self-disciplined in their work, for example when engaged in drama activities. They work well independently and with sustained concentration. However, in some lessons pupils are restless and sometimes noisy when not fully involved in discussion, or behaviour is not effectively managed.

97. The quality of teaching has also improved since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good, with 25 per cent being very good. The strengths have largely been maintained, and in particular the good use of support staff who make a significant contribution, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. Expectations are generally satisfactory overall, with work often well matched to pupils’ abilities. Sometimes expectations are high, for example in a literacy session at Year 2, pupils were encouraged to think of supplementary questions to ask about Victorian schooling as part of their study of a non-fiction text and in preparation for their museum visit. A significant feature of effective teaching is the sharing of learning objectives with pupils, and this happens consistently. So too is the use of a range of interesting strategies to involve and engage pupils’ interest, particular with more formal phonic and word work. Often lessons are vigorously delivered and work is linked to current events and pupils’ interests, for example Bonfire Night. Unsatisfactory elements relate to limited opportunities for pupils to be involved and contribute their ideas. Sometimes ideas or tasks are not sufficiently explored to extend pupils’ ideas, and sometimes behaviour or inattention is not effectively tackled.

98. The school has developed a broad and relevant curriculum, and is constantly seeking to improve it in direct response to the needs of the pupils. Planning overall is satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented and suitably modified, for example for whole-class activities related to their text work for Year 2 pupils, and is having a good effect on progress. Extension groups for higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 in reading and writing actively seek to extend these activities, for example in relation to the quantity and the quality of writing, and

are beginning to have an impact on standards. There are good opportunities across the curriculum for the use and development of literacy skills, for example in extended and empathetic writing in history. There are also good links between subjects. For example, pupils studying the book “Funnybones” used its theme in a dance lesson. Some good examples were also seen of opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for instance in history at Year 1 where pupils were interviewing their parents and grandparents about toys in the past. However, these opportunities are not consistently planned for across the school.

99. Assessment is also good. There is a careful analysis of test and assessment data which is used to influence planning and target resources. There are detailed termly assessments for reading and writing skills, but nothing is yet in place to track attainment and progress in speaking and listening. The school plans to extend the format and use of the very good reading record used by the reception classes throughout the school. Planning and assessment for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

100. The subject has been well co-ordinated. The new co-ordinator has already begun to develop assessment sheets for group reading, and is keen to develop the subject further. Her monitoring role has yet to be fully developed, and she has yet to be fully involved in planning the further development of the subject. Resources are good and well-organised. Every bit of accommodation is well used to support learning, including corridor areas. The library is spacious, but under-used regularly by all pupils.

Mathematics

101. In both 1998 and 1999, pupils’ results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 matched national averages. In 1999, pupils’ results were well above average for similar schools. School data indicates, however that this cohort had fewer pupils on the register of those with special educational needs and at the higher levels of the special needs Code of Practice. Results have improved at the same rate as the national improvement. In 1999, the results of boys and girls were similar.

102. Pupils’ attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 matches national averages. Higher-attaining pupils understand place value for hundreds, tens and units and work with numbers up to 1,000, while middle attainers understand two-digit numbers. Middle attainers are secure in their use of mental calculation facts to 10, whilst higher attainers work confidently with numbers to 20 in solving problems, and count in twos and fives. Higher attainers add three single-digit numbers accurately and explain their methods well. Middle attainers add three numbers with the help of apparatus. Many successfully identify odd and even numbers. Lower attaining pupils add objects and numbers to 10, but mental calculation facts are not secure. Middle attainers describe the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and higher attainers classify shapes using more than one criterion.

103. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, and numeracy is well integrated across the curriculum. For example, pupils collected and presented data in their study of walking to school, and in science they draw bar charts. Pupils engage in measuring activities in art and when making in design technology. Positional language is reinforced in physical education.

104. Pupils make good progress overall over time, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. They also make good progress in lessons. For example, higher attainers in Year 2 made good progress when taught in a group with pupils drawn from all three Year 2 classes and were able to identify how numbers change when 10 is added or subtracted. In another lesson, some lower-attaining pupils made good progress when they learnt to accurately count money using 1p and 2p coins. Occasionally, pupils do not make enough progress, for example when lower attainers are not given enough opportunity to work practically with numbers, or when higher attainers learnt a general principle through working out a series of sums which were too easy for them. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. Pupils carry out a variety of work and there is a balance between practising skills already learnt and acquiring new skills. Work is well organised and presented.

105. Pupils’ response to lessons is good in general. In a lesson where their response was very good, several pupils were keen to explain how they had carried out calculations, and they all got on quickly with their work. They worked

well in pairs and completed their tasks with speed. Occasionally however, pupils lose their concentration during the whole-class teaching. Sometimes, this is because of a lack of pace in the teaching.

106. The quality of teaching is good, and teaching was sound or better in all of the lessons seen. There are well-structured numeracy lessons. Mental mathematics is taught effectively, and pencil and paper strategies are based on mental calculation strategies. Plenary sessions are well used, although occasionally pupils re-practise a skill they have already used effectively without improving their understanding. Strengths of the teaching include sharing the learning objectives with the pupils, constant reinforcement of strategies for calculation and effective support from learning support assistants. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work, and clear explanations in the direct teaching. A particular strength of teaching is the taking of notes about the progress of individuals and groups during lessons. The use of this information to plan future lessons ensures that work is well matched to pupils' needs. Occasional weaknesses in the quality of teaching occur when whole-class teaching is sometimes too long or repetitive, and in not securing silence during the mental mathematics sessions.

107. Very good assessment records are completed twice each year, and these identify the next steps of learning for each pupil. The National Strategy for Numeracy is well planned and implemented. Parents are given useful information about the mathematics to be taught in each year, and possible activities to be carried out at home. The subject is very effectively managed, and the co-ordinator works with teachers in their classrooms and provides school-based in-service training for both teachers and learning support assistants. In addition, she carries out effective monitoring of teaching. The management of the subject is helping to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.

Science

108. Teacher assessed results for 1999 have improved on those of 1998, when results were just below national averages. School records also show that this cohort had fewer pupils on the register of those with special educational needs and at the higher levels of the special needs Code of Practice, and that whilst improvements will be maintained they will not be maintained at this level. The percentage of pupils achieving level 3 has improved slightly and girls significantly outperform boys, although the margin is narrowing. Evidence gained through inspection shows that the attainment of the current pupils in Year 2 is in line with national expectation.

109. Observations in lessons and scrutiny of work indicate that, since the last inspection, there has been a marked improvement in the standards attained in experimental and investigative science. Pupils reach their best attainment in the study of life and living processes and achievement in other areas of the curriculum has evened out, although knowledge and understanding of physical processes is still slightly weaker. Towards the end of the key stage, pupils are able to construct simple circuits, understanding that bulbs will not light if there is a break in the circuit. Most pupils are able to record the circuit as a diagram, and are beginning to use associated vocabulary such as battery and bulb. Lower-attaining pupils make simple drawings of their circuits. Some higher-attaining pupils know that if two batteries are used the bulb becomes brighter. When studying materials and how they change, many pupils are able to make predictions, for example what will happen to the ingredients when a cake is baked.

110. Pupils' progress over time is good, whilst it was satisfactory overall in lessons seen during the week of the inspection. Good progress was facilitated by prompts to extend thinking, asking for example, why changes occurred. Interesting tasks such as testing crisps for flavour were effective in motivating the pupils. Progress was only satisfactory in other lessons due to factors such as inappropriate use of apparatus, like crocodile clips and batteries that would not easily join together.

111. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. They are enthusiastic, listen well and work well together. Behaviour is sometimes over noisy and demanding in lessons where tasks are too open-ended and where there are insufficient adults to support the children during investigations.

112. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons seen, and is satisfactory overall. The most effective lessons include clear instructions, good cross-curricular links, effective use of terminology, clear linking of the task to the

objective and effective use of the plenary to consolidate knowledge. Most of these factors were evident in lessons on the senses at Year 1, where pupils were well supported in developing an understanding of each sense and their purpose. This was achieved through the use of a range of interesting tasks, such as tasting different foods to identify likes and dislikes, and spotting differences in pictures.

113. There is an extensive and balanced coverage of the curriculum, delivered in a variety of interesting approaches. There is an appropriate scheme of work, which underpins the good coverage of the curriculum. Planning is generally good with learning objectives made clear and explained to the children in order to improve progress. However, there is sometimes insufficient attention to planning work for the differing needs of pupils. This particularly affects lower-attaining pupils when they are not supported by adults. Lower attainers are, however, sometimes supported by being given alternative methods for recording their work. There has been some particularly beneficial extension teaching in Year 2, which has improved standards for some higher-attaining pupils. These sessions have concentrated well on experimental and investigative approaches. Science lessons are related well to every day life, with lessons on electricity, for example, stressing dangers and uses of electricity. Every opportunity is taken to relate scientific enquiry to literacy with vocabulary, questions, recording and instructions all taking written form. This is well modelled by the teachers. Assessment is used well to inform planning on a daily basis. Records of children's achievement are less satisfactory as no assessment is made of achievement in investigational science. Most marking of pupil's work takes place verbally.

114. The co-ordinator has worked hard to organise resources and these are generally of a very good standard. Moderation of work has taken place in liaison with the junior school and this has made an obvious contribution to the teacher's understanding of pupil achievement. However, these samples are not annotated to allow for easier interpretation. The headteacher carries out useful analysis of science results. This and the conscientious work done by the co-ordinator in offering advice to her colleagues has contributed to the good improvements in standards in science since the last inspection.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

115. During the inspection it was not possible to see enough lessons taught in all subjects to be able to make valid judgements about all aspects. In some subjects, for example, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of pupils' response or teaching, although some conclusions are drawn from the few lessons seen.

Information technology

116. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below national expectations. Pupils complete a range of work with computers but this does not include the necessary work to control devices purposefully and describe the effects of their actions. The school knows that this is a shortcoming, and resources have been improved and plans are being implemented to provide in-service training to teachers. The scheme of work shows that this aspect will be taught later in this school year. During the inspection, there was sound teaching of information technology knowledge and skills to classes, but pupils had insufficient opportunities to work with computers and to practise and apply these skills.

117. Pupils collect data and then use information technology to present this in the form of bar charts, for example, of eye colour or types of mini-beast. They often use computers to practise numeracy skills, and write words and short sentences. Occasionally, pupils write at greater length, for example for a story, an account of some fieldwork or for a poem. There are a few examples of pupils linking graphics and text to make for example, an Easter card. A more frequent use is of a graphics program for drawing, for example fireworks.

118. During the lessons seen, all pupils made sound progress as they watched and contributed to the demonstrations of software. Software was demonstrated to the pupils who would use it independently during the following weeks. Strengths of teaching include involving the pupils, for example asking them for their ideas about using the mouse and the icons. Correct terminology is used, and pupils are given useful practical advice. A weakness in one lesson was that the demonstration was over long and pupils lost their concentration towards the end. In one lesson, pupils'

responded very well. They showed great interest in the software and concentrated well for the last period of the school day.

119. However, their progress during Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. The national guidance framework has only been introduced recently so pupils have not had the opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge and skills steadily over the two years of the key stage. An improvement since the previous inspection is that the school now has an overall plan for teaching information technology. Teachers' use learning objectives to make assessments of pupils' progress, but this approach is at an early stage of development, and there are no assessment records other than the annual reports to parents. A portfolio of pupils' work has been started but this is in an early stage of development

120. Since the previous inspection, the number and quality of computers has improved and most have CD-ROMs. In addition, one is linked to the internet. However, the school has two types of computer and pupils have to learn how each are worked. Another improvement relates to the training of learning support staff so they can work more effectively with pupils. The school development plan has appropriate targets for information technology, including to raise standards of attainment.

Religious Education

121. Pupils are satisfactorily meeting the learning objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus and make satisfactory progress. Standards are in line with national expectations overall. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions. For example, pupils at Year 2 learn about Ramah and Sita, and make comparisons between Hindu and Christian festivals. Artefacts are well used to increase their understanding both of the story and the Hindu faith, and they handle them with care and respect. Pupils also have opportunities to explore feelings and deeper issues such as friendship. These topics are linked with themes in assemblies, and this effectively supports and consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, in some lessons deeper themes are not explored in enough depth and opportunities are not taken to sufficiently encourage pupils' ideas and experiences.

122. Pupils are generally responsive to the subject. Most listen well, particularly when engaged by stories and artefacts, and take an interest in discussion. There is a good scheme of work with detailed coverage of the subject and guidance for staff for individual lessons. There is also separate planning for spiritual and moral work. The school has good links with local churches which enhances pupils' experience. The new co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject further, especially in relation to forging links with places of worship for other faiths in the locality, and in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. There are limited systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Resources are very good and support learning well.

Art

123. Pupils' work is close to that expected of pupils of a similar age overall, particularly in relation to two dimensional activities. They use a good range of media including paint, pencil and pastel. They complete observational work as well as working from their imagination, and study the work of other artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Van Gogh. Pupils at Year 2 design and print with relief tiles and paint portraits. Opportunities for three-dimensional work are less frequent, but pupils at Year 2 for example, complete clay tiles to a good standard.

124. Work is often linked with other subjects, for example mathematics, where pupils at Year 1 completed prints of repeated patterns. The school is also developing an awareness of art from non-western cultures, and pupils

at Year 2 have undertaken textile work using a Nigerian style of starch resist. Computer generated painting programs are well-used, for example to produce firework pictures. Of particular note is the school's Millenium Tapestry in which all pupils played a part. Sketch books are well used for drawing and colour mixing activities, although they often contain final presentations, rather than preliminary work in preparation for further work. In addition, the school has very usefully introduced a twice yearly whole-school task to check progress in each year group.

125. The co-ordinator is conscientious and enthusiastic and has produced a good scheme of work to support planning. She also supports staff well on an informal basis. Resources are good and make a good contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

Design and technology

126. In keeping with the findings of the previous report, little taught design and technology was seen during the week of the inspection and weaknesses identified in design in the last inspection have not been addressed.. Scrutiny of pupils' work from the previous year suggests that whilst pupils making skills are close to those expected of pupils of a similar age and they are making satisfactory progress in this area, they have a limited experience of the elements of design and evaluation.

127. Pupils use skills such as cutting, scoring and joining when making jack-in-the-boxes at Year 2. They cook and model in various media, including dough and also make finger puppets. These pupils also design, shop for and make a fruit salad. However, there was little evidence of designing to initiate their work, and where it occurs its use is under developed. There is little recorded evidence of how their work might be improved. Many of these activities are closely directed and give pupils few opportunities to develop their own ideas. Whilst work in design technology is often linked to other subjects, skills are not progressively developed, and are sometimes repeated in different year groups with little development, for example in relation to joining and cutting.

128. Since the last inspection, a co-ordinator for the subject has been appointed. She has worked hard to produce a detailed scheme of work based on national guidance documents. There is a good policy document and the subject is very well resourced. The co-ordinator recognises the need to develop design and technology further and the school has plans in place to do this. The co-ordinator is collecting samples of work as records and as models for colleagues, but does little monitoring.

Geography

129. The work seen was of an appropriate standard for the pupils' ages. A key issue at the previous inspection was to raise pupils' attainment in geography and this has been successfully achieved. As a result pupils make good progress. The medium-term planning gives a sound basis for progression in pupils' learning. Pupils compare the school's locality with both Southend and St Lucia. Fieldwork includes a visit to a farm, and the follow-up work includes some longer pieces of writing including a letter to the farmer. Work on saving the rain forests also gives useful opportunities for longer writing. Pupils in both years have produced good maps of their routes to school as part of some successful work linked to a campaign to promote walking to school. As well as work on the school's site, including the improvement of the playground, pupils complete work on a global scale following a visit to Colchester Zoo. The good resources are very well organised. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

History

130. Pupils' work is above the standard expected for their ages. For example, pupils show a good understanding of Queen Victoria's childhood and write sensitive accounts of the life of a Victorian orphan. Last year, pupils wrote books about the life of Guy Fawkes, and there are good links between history and literacy. Pupils use a variety of historical sources including many artefacts and photographs. For example, they play with old toys before comparing

them with modern ones. Good use is made of a visit to Braintree Museum and a role play of a Victorian classroom. There is well-structured medium-term planning for appropriate history topics. The excellent resources are well organised.

Music

131. Pupils' work is similar to the standard expected for their age, and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils are given opportunities to sing and to compose, for example pupils in Year 2 composed songs about Guy Fawkes using firework words. They used their voices and then include instruments. The co-ordinator has produced a detailed series of plans to support the progressive development of skills and understanding in music, and children are taught in smaller more appropriately sized groups than they were at the last inspection. However, during the week of this inspection the content of lessons in both Years 1 and 2 was very similar. The same song was used and similar links were made with composition. In lessons good links are made with literacy as children discussed the meanings of words and learn to spell them, although at times this distracted too much from the leaning of music.

132. The best teaching was enthusiastic with good pace, resulting in a good standard of tuneful singing. Learning intentions, however are not always clearly explained. Opportunities are well taken to introduce music from other cultures in assembly, and the recorder club enhances provision for pupils at Year 2. The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce planning and the policy is good. A recorder club is run weekly for Year 2 pupils and is a good early introduction to formal notation and the playing of tuned instruments. Resources are good and are very well organised. Overall there have been improvements since the last inspection.

Physical education

133. Pupils work in physical education meets those expected of pupils of a similar age, and are sometimes exceeding this. Progress was good and very good in those lessons seen, particularly where staff had good subject knowledge. Pupils at Year 1 were observed producing controlled quality of movement to exciting dance music and practising throwing and catching skills using bean bags.

134. Where pupils are making the most progress, teachers are enthusiastic. They give good demonstrations of the possible movements and provide effective feedback on pupils' performance. In the dance lesson at Year 1 pupils' imaginations were captured and they were clearly enjoying moving in rhythm to "skeleton music". Useful links were made with literacy as the teacher first read the story from a book. Pupils are proficient in handling and laying out apparatus. Support staff participate in lessons and effectively support pupils with co-ordination and behavioural problems.

135. There is a very effective physical education co-ordinator who has produced a series of lesson plans for all year groups and sets a good example through her infectious enthusiasm. There is a clear policy document that supports the subject and it is explicit about health and safety and correct clothing. With the help of a qualified parent, the co-ordinator runs a weekly gymnastics club for Year 2 pupils, which is very well supported. Pupils are keen to take part and are happy to arrive well before school in order to participate. Here the children achieve a high standard of movement and control which is very beneficial to their progress in lessons. Resources are excellent and are very well organised and accessible. Physical education has continued to maintain good progress since the last inspection.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

136. The inspection team consisted of four inspectors attending for a total of 16 days over a four-and-a-half day period. During the inspection, 51 lessons or parts of lessons were observed, together with assemblies and a sample of registration times, and a range of other information was scrutinised. The team spent a total of 62 hours observing lessons, attending assemblies and hearing pupils read. The registered inspector and team members interviewed representative members of the governing body, including the chair, during the course of the inspection. Subject co-ordinators were interviewed. Some members of the non-teaching staff were also interviewed about their work. Considerable documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection. The inspectors scrutinised the work of many pupils. Discussions took place with many pupils during the course of the inspection. Prior to the inspection, 3 parents attended an evening meeting held by the registered inspector to seek their views. There were 88 responses from parents to a questionnaire, seeking their views on specific school issues.

137. 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 - Y2	271	8	56	62

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.14

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked each week	236.3

Financial data

Financial year:	1999/00
	£
Total Income	512715.00
Total Expenditure	503530.00
Expenditure per pupil	1892.00

Balance brought forward from previous year	-2990.00
Balance carried forward to next year	6195

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	271
Number of questionnaires returned:	88

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	42	54	3	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42	53	5	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	64	20	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	30	54	5	10	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29	56	8	6	0
The school enables my child(children) to achieve a good standard of work	32	58	10	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	52	16	5	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(children) is/are expected to do at home	29	61	4	5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(children)	33	63	4	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	29	59	8	3	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	58	39	1	1	1

Other issues raised by parents

- XXVII. many parents did not complete question 3, or remarked that they had had no occasion to complain so could not comment;
- XXVIII. a number of replies from parents with children in the reception year for only a short time, and who felt unable to comment;
- XXIX. few comments made were mostly positive, and including those about the headteacher;
- XXX. one parent felt school did not give enough information about what was taught.