

# INSPECTION REPORT

**The Cathedral Primary School**  
Chelmsford

LEA area : Essex

Unique Reference Number : 115289

Headteacher : Mr M Spinks

Reporting inspector : Mr Michael Edwards  
13246

Dates of inspection : 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707329

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Primary
Type of control :	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils :	4 - 11
Gender of pupils :	Boys and Girls
School address :	The Cathedral School Victoria Road Chelmsford Essex CM1 1PA
Telephone number :	01245 354459
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Appropriate authority :	Governing body
Name of chair of governors :	The Very Reverend Peter Judd
Date of previous inspection :	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael Edwards, Rgl	Science	Attainment and progress
	History	Teaching
		Leadership and management
Fran Luke, Lay inspector		Attendance
		Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Diane Pilbro	Areas of Learning for Children Under Five	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	Geography	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Music	
Gillian Thumpston	Mathematics	The curriculum and assessment
	Physical Education	
	Design Technology	
	Equal Opportunities	
Jill Rankin	English	The efficiency of the school
	Art	
	Information Technology	
	Special Educational Needs	
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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is high in reading, in speaking and listening, in mathematics and in science and is above average throughout the school in physical education.

- The attainment of the under fives is above average, particularly in English and mathematics, reflecting very good aspects of teaching and a good induction programme.
- Staff work together as a team to support all pupils and make very good provision for their moral development.
- The school gets strong support from parents who support its values and there are effective links with the community.
- Excellent provision is made for extra-curricular activities and the quality of the choir and orchestra is good.
- The governing body has a good structure of sub-committees and the school is making good use of support from the local education authority.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The senior management team and co-ordinators do not have clearly identified roles.
- II. The structures and procedures for identifying strengths and weaknesses within the school and for checking the effectiveness of school developments and the quality of teaching need to improve.
- III. Pupils do not make sufficient progress at Key Stage 1 and the lower part of Key stage 2, partly due to the manner in which pupils are organised.
- IV. Some schemes of work do not provide sufficient guidance for teachers.
- V. The assessment of pupils' work and progress is not used to full effect to inform teachers' planning and whole school developments.
- VI. Standards of written English are too low throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.

The strengths of the school outweigh the weaknesses. These weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

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

The school has made some improvement since its last inspection. Its pupils now achieve higher standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. Very good progress has been made on keeping parents informed about the work of the school. Satisfactory progress has been made on addressing the weaknesses in teachers' planning. The school now has policy and schemes of work for almost all the subjects of the curriculum, but some of these do not provide sufficient support for teaching and learning. Unsatisfactory progress has been made on the issues concerning the assessment of pupils' work, the development of the monitoring role of the senior management team and co-ordinators and on ensuring the whole-school curriculum provides for continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The latter three areas remain key issues. The recent progress made on teachers' planning and target setting indicates that the school has the capacity to make further improvement.

## Standards in subjects

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

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

The information shows that the performance of pupils in the school in mathematics is well above both the national average and that for similar schools. Standards in English and science are well above the national average and above that of similar schools. Pupils' standards in reading are significantly better than in writing. The standards seen in lessons and pupils' books do not always reflect the standards achieved in the tests. There is evidence that, in written English in the lower part of the school, girls achieve at a higher level than boys. Pupils' attainment in physical education and music is above that expected for their age, but in history and art it is below. In information technology and design technology pupils are achieving in line with expectations.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	Good
Information technology		Good	Good
Religious education			
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of the lessons. The 13 per cent very good or excellent teaching is in the reception class and parts of Key Stage 2. No poor or very poor teaching was observed.

*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	Satisfactory throughout the school. The behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, is unsatisfactory.
Attendance	Good, above the national average.
Ethos*	Pupils' attitudes to their work and to school are good for the under fives and satisfactory in the rest of the school. Staff have good relationships with pupils. Not all pupils respond to this. The school is committed to high standards.
Leadership and management	Good governing body structures. The headteacher involves all staff in decision making. Satisfactory day-to-day management. Unsatisfactory strategic leadership and management at all levels. Management and leadership at all levels are underdeveloped. Lack of clarity of roles. Unclear educational direction for the school. The headteacher does not sufficiently monitor and evaluate the work of the school, including teaching and pupils' progress, to identify strengths and weaknesses.
Curriculum	Satisfactory overall, but needs better planning to ensure pupils make good progress in their learning, particularly as pupils are in split-age classes and ability sets for English and mathematics. The time allocated to subjects needs to be clarified. Excellent provision for out of school clubs.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision for individual and small-group support. Pupils make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, although provision for pupils' cultural development, particularly cultures other than their own, is unsatisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory provision. Very good use is made of the extra teacher. Available space well used.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>VII. Parents are kept well informed about the school and their child's progress.</p> <p>VIII. The hardworking nature of the staff.</p> <p>IX. The attitudes and values promoted by the school.</p> <p>X. The Christian character of the school.</p> <p>XI. The help and guidance provided to their children by the school.</p> <p>XII. The standards as pupils move to secondary school.</p> <p>XIII. The school seeks to promote good behaviour.</p> <p>XIV. Parents are encouraged to play a part in the school.</p> <p>XV. The school is approachable and has an open door policy.</p> <p>XVI. Teachers are always prepared to listen and assist wherever possible.</p> <p>XVII. Children enjoy going to school.</p> <p>XVIII. The induction arrangements for new pupils.</p>	<p>XIX. The mixed-age classes.</p> <p>XX. The homework policy is unclear.</p> <p>XXI. The procedures for child protection.</p> <p>XXII. The manner in which complaints are</p>

Inspectors support the parents' positive views. All staff are aware of the procedures for child protection and further training on this is planned in the near future. The school has appropriate procedures for dealing with complaints. The school recognises that homework is inconsistent and plans to remedy this. With regard to the mixed-age classes, the admission number of 39 pupils makes such classes inevitable, however, the school needs to address further how it ensures that all pupils make good progress in their learning as they move through the school.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve the school and raise standards further for all pupils, the governors, headteacher, senior management team, co-ordinators and staff should:

- I. Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels and provide a clear educational direction for the school by:
  - developing a clear role for each member of the senior management team and co-ordinators to impact upon their areas of responsibility and standards achieved, including the quality of teaching and its effect on standards and progress;
  - creating a school development plan that focuses on addressing the identified weaknesses and contains specific, measurable success criteria in terms of the standards pupils achieve and the quality of education provided;
  - Using assessment data analysis as a basis for curriculum planning and school target setting.
- I. Improve the quality and use of day-to-day assessment and assessment data by:
  - revising and implementing an agreed policy for assessment, including marking, to ensure that pupils receive useful feedback on their performance and understand what they need to do to improve;
  - improving teachers' understanding, ability and skill at using the National Curriculum level descriptions to assess pupils' level of attainment;
  - using in-class assessment to inform the next stage of learning and improve progress, particularly in Key Stage 1 and the lower part of Key Stage 2.
- I. Raise pupils' attainment in writing throughout the school by:
  - implementing a structured programme for teaching writing skills;
  - using the regular assessment of pupils' writing to identify and address weaknesses;
  - increasing the amount of time allocated to teaching writing and making better use of subjects other than English to develop the appropriate skills.

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

- improve the quality of pupils' cultural development, particularly cultures other than their own;
- ensure that statutory requirements are met regarding the induction of newly qualified teachers.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1.The Cathedral School is a voluntary aided school situated in the centre of Chelmsford, Essex close to shops, a leisure centre and other town facilities. There are excellent links with the nearby Chelmsford Cathedral. The school serves a wide area, with some pupils travelling a distance to attend the school. The pupils come from a wide-range of socio-economic backgrounds. They live mainly in owner-occupied homes, although some live in rented accommodation. There are 269 full time pupils on role with 16 pupils attending the reception class part time. Three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is well below the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Two per cent are from ethnic minority families. There are 48 pupils on the special needs register, with four per cent on Stages 3 - 5. There are 4 pupils with a statement of educational needs, which is in line with the national average.

2.The baseline assessment results for pupils entering the reception year show that pupils enter the school with above average standards.

3.The school's mission statement is to, "develop fully the knowledge, skills, faith and self-confidence of all our children in a joyful, enthusiastic and Christian environment." The school's intent is that through the blend of academic and personal development the children will leave having grown socially and with the skills needed for the next stage in their education.

4.The school's priority is to develop the school to its optimum potential, including educational, staffing, budgetary, building and site considerations.

5.To this end the priorities within the school development plan include:

- the revision of subject policies on a rolling programme;
- the production of new schemes of work for science, geography and mathematics;
- a review of short term planning;
- continuing to monitor the curriculum;
- continuing to develop information and communications technology through the school;
- support of the Bishop's Lent Appeal and other charities.

## Key Indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	19	21	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	16	16	18
	Girls	20	19	21
	Total	36	35	39
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	90(93)	88(93)	98(95)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	17	18	17
	Girls	21	21	20
	Total	38	39	37
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	95(93)	98(98)	93(100)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	18	21	39

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	35	36	37
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	90(77)	92(65)	95(84)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	34	35	37
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	87(90)	90(71)	95(90)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year  
<sup>2</sup> 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 Absence	School	3.9
	National comparative data	5.4
Unauthorised Absence	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	13
Satisfactory or better	92
Less than satisfactory	8

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

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

#### **Attainment and progress**

1. Almost all children entering the reception year have experienced some form of pre-school education. On entry to the reception and Year 1 classes most children's social, linguistic and mathematical skills are above average and, for some pupils, well above average. This is reflected in the autumn term baseline assessment. By the time they are five, the majority of children meet the nationally expected outcomes for their age and many are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. During the reception year children make good progress overall and very good progress in swimming. This positive start to education for the under fives was highlighted at the time of the last inspection.

2. At the age of seven overall attainment is broadly in line with, and at 11 it exceeds, national expectations and averages.

3. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in reading in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 statutory assessments is above the national average, but in line with the average for pupils of similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was well above the national average and that for similar schools. In writing in the same national assessments the pupils are achieving in line with the national average at the expected Level 2 or above, but below that of similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in writing is well above the national and the average for similar schools. A greater number of girls than boys achieves Levels 2A and above, and more boys than girls achieve at the Level 2C and below. This difference persists in the Year 3 and 4 classes for these pupils. Fewer pupils achieved Levels 2 and 3 in 1999 than in 1998. The trend in reading and writing since 1996 is slightly downwards. Evidence during the inspection shows that the level of reading is above average but that of writing is just average at Key Stage 1.

4. The end of Key Stage 2 national test results in English show that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above and the higher Level 5 was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools the percentage achieving the expected Level 4 and above was above the average for such schools, but in line for those achieving the higher Level 5. There is a significant difference in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and above in reading, 54 per cent, compared with that in writing, 93 per cent. Girls performed significantly better than boys in both reading and writing at both the expected Level 4 and above and the higher Level 5. The standard of reading at the end of the Key Stage 2 during the week of the inspection was well above average, but the standard of writing was average, with a significant number of pupils not yet achieving at the expected level. There is no evidence of a significant difference in boys' and girls' attainment in Years 5 and 6.

5. The school has made progress in raising standards in mathematics since the last inspection at both key stages. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 statutory assessments is well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is above both the national average and the average for pupils in similar schools. The end of Key Stage 2 mathematics national test results for 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above is well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. This is a significant improvement on the 1998 results and on those at the last inspection. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is well above both the national average and that for similar schools. However, attainment across both key stages is variable and the level of attainment in pupils' books and observed lessons does not reflect consistently the level of attainment in the end of key stage tests. In both key stages attainment in lessons ranges from below national expectations to above.

6. Statutory assessments in science made by teachers for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999

show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above is above the national average but below the average for similar schools. This is in line with the assessments at the last inspection, but below those for 1998. The percentage of pupils assessed as at the higher Level 3 is above the national average, but at the average for pupils in similar schools. The level of pupils' work in lessons shows that pupils are broadly achieving at the expected level, although some of the work in the Year 2 pupils' books reflects a level below national expectations. Pupils throughout the key stage are not attaining at the appropriate level in the area of scientific enquiry.

7. At Key Stage 2 the school has made steady progress in raising standards in science over the last three years with the end of Key Stage 2 national test results for 1999 showing an improvement on the 1998 results and on those at the last inspection. The percentage of pupils reaching both the expected Level 4 or above and the higher Level 5 is well above the national average and above average for similar schools. In lessons and from the scrutiny of pupils' work higher achieving pupils in the lower Key Stage 2 classes are achieving nationally expected levels for their age. In the lessons and books of the Year 5/6 classes there is evidence of achievement above the level expected being achieved by a high proportion of pupils.

8. At both key stages progress in English is satisfactory overall. Progress in reading and oracy is good at both key stages, but the progress made over time in writing through both key stages is unsatisfactory. Overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress over time in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and in the lower part of Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in the upper part of Key Stage 2. Within the lessons observed the average and below average attaining pupils in each of the sets, other than those pupils with special educational needs, do not always make satisfactory progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the science lessons observed at Key Stage 1. However, progress over time is less than satisfactory for the Year 2 pupils. At Key Stage 2 pupils make sound progress in the lower part of the key stage and at the upper part of the key stage they make very good progress. Excellent progress is made when pupils are involved in open-ended practical investigations within a structured programme.

9. In the foundation subjects pupils attain appropriately at both key stages in design and technology, information technology and in geography at Key Stage 1. Attainment in music and physical education is above and in history and art is below expectations at both key stages.

10. At both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology, information technology and good progress in music and aspects of physical education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography at Key Stage 1. Progress in art and history is unsatisfactory at both key stages.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages. The school has still to ensure that the procedures adopted for the provision for the more able pupils are consistently applied in all classes in order to raise the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. The school needs to improve the provision for the teaching of writing to ensure that pupils make progress in this area of English comparable to that in reading.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall. At the previous inspection pupils' attitudes were found to be very good. The majority of children under five have very positive attitudes to their work. They are eager to learn and settle quickly and happily into the reception class. Most infant and junior pupils sustain concentration and persevere with tasks over periods of time. They listen attentively to their teachers, respond well in whole-class discussions and are eager to offer their views. They exchange ideas with one another and address issues collaboratively. When required, the majority of pupils works well in pairs and groups and settle quickly to tasks. The majority of pupils undertakes research both in school and at home and generally works sensibly on tasks without close supervision. However, a significant minority of pupils, does not always display positive attitudes in lessons and does



not display the high level of motivation seen in the majority. In some lessons they do not pay attention whilst the teacher is addressing the class. This has a negative affect on their learning and at times affects the work of the whole class.

13.Overall, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. At the last inspection behaviour was found to be very good. The school operates generally as a happy and harmonious community. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons, but some older pupils are noisy and talk when the teacher is speaking. In assembly, behaviour is very good and contributes to creating an atmosphere conducive for collective worship. Pupils behave well in the canteen, in the playground and generally around school where there are good levels of staff supervision. Movement in the corridors between lessons and in cloakrooms is sometimes noisy and disruptive. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and respond well to the systems of rewards and sanctions. Bullying is not a significant feature of school life. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils show respect for property and their environment.

14.Boys and girls collaborate well in working groups. Pupils support each other when difficulties arise and older pupils help younger pupils at lunchtime. Teachers have very good attitudes towards the pupils and there is a high level of support and encouragement. Staff care for pupils and provide a secure environment for their personal development. Most pupils respond well to this, but there is a minority of pupils who do not accept that they have responsibilities in this area and this has a negative affect on relationships. Consequently relationships are satisfactory compared with the very positive relationships reported at the last inspection.

15.Pupils respond very well to collective worship and the clubs and other opportunities provided by the school and the wider community. Pupils are keen to be involved with the work of the Cathedral, and Cathedral staff and the congregation appreciate their contributions to Sunday services. They participate in musical and other events in the wider Chelmsford community. Good support is given to charities. Many pupils take part in events organised by the local library. The school's support of the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chelmsford Celebrations was recognised by the visit of the mayor during the week of the inspection. Such activities are much appreciated by parents and help to broaden children's experience and develop their self-confidence. The school council provides an effective arena for informing whole-school decision making. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. Pupils do not have extensive opportunities for undertaking routine duties or for accepting increasing levels of responsibility as they move through the school.

## **Attendance**

16.Attendance is good and well above the national average. This is similar to that in the school's previous inspection report. The level of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Registration takes place promptly at the beginning of each session. The pupils are keen to attend and arrive punctually at the start of the day. During the day, lessons generally begin on time, except following collective worship, which often overruns into the next session.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

17.The teaching in 92 per cent of the lessons observed was satisfactory or better, with 32 per cent having good and thirteen per cent very good or excellent teaching. No poor or very poor teaching was observed. The overall quality of the teaching of the children under five in the reception class is a strength of the school. All the teaching in the lessons in this class was satisfactory or better, with 44 per cent being very good or excellent. At Key Stage 1, 92 per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better, with over a third of the teaching observed throughout the key stage being good. Overall, 91 per cent of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory or better, with 28 per cent being good and 14 per cent

very good or excellent. The excellent and very good teaching observed in the school is present in the reception class and Key Stage 2. This high quality teaching is mainly in teaching physical education and in the teaching in the upper part of Key Stage 2.

18. In the lessons for the reception children, activities are prepared well and appropriately matched to children's needs and interests and provide a good context for learning. Detailed planning for the directed teaching is good but is less obvious for the structured play. There are good demonstrations and clear explanations of concepts. There is a high proportion of direct teaching with good reinforcement of language and vocabulary. However, activities are at times over-directed with inappropriate use made of worksheets in the literacy session. Expectations of what children can do are high, but the work is well tailored for the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. Good routines have been established and children are organised and managed very effectively. Relationships are very good. The teacher and classroom assistant work together very effectively and consequently pupils make good progress.

19. The good quality of teaching in the reception class enables the children to make good progress and provides them with a good start to their schooling. The overall quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The evenness in the quality of teaching at this key stage results in pupils making satisfactory rather than good progress in the lessons observed and unsatisfactory progress overall. The greater percentage of higher quality teaching at the upper end of Key Stage 2 has a positive effect on pupils' progress. There are elements of good and very good teaching in most lessons observed. In order for the teaching to have a greater impact on the progress pupils make, the school now needs to agree the elements of teaching that contribute to good progress, identify individual strengths and weaknesses and enable the elements of good practice to be disseminated across all classes.

20. Most teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, although aspects of the literacy hour are not fully understood or used effectively. In geography and history, for example, where teachers have a secure knowledge, their teaching provides a good balance between giving information and providing opportunities for pupils to seek their own information. Good subject knowledge, as in science lessons with older pupils, physical education and music, enables teachers to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding.

21. In some English, mathematics, science and physical education lessons, where teachers have high expectations linked to work well matched to the pupils' level of attainment, pupils are appropriately challenged and strive to succeed.

22. Assessment at the beginning of the session in the form of questioned recap on previous learning, as in a history and science lesson seen, provides the teacher with an appropriate understanding of where pupils are and forges a link between the previous learning and the new. Where practice is of the best, as in a science lesson, purposeful feedback on marked work encourages pupils to improve their performance. Good feedback focused upon improving performance during lessons, as in some science and physical education sessions, raises expectations and standards in the class. The use of assessment to plan the next stage of learning is underdeveloped. Too often plenary sessions, in English for example, are limited to pupils sharing what they have done rather than teachers reinforcing or assessing the pupils' learning from the lesson, and using that information to plan the next stage of learning. The underdeveloped use of assessment leads to pupils' progress being hindered where tasks of an inappropriate level of difficulty are provided. Marking is inconsistent in quality and rarely identifies strengths and points for development.

23. The school has made good progress in developing a common format for its short-term plans. Although these have only been in use since the beginning of this term they are having a beneficial effect on teaching. In those lessons where teaching is good or better, the planning has assessable learning objectives giving a focus to the teaching. In some lessons, including design and technology, these objectives are shared with the pupils in language that they can understand, enabling the pupils to concentrate on the main focus of the lesson. However, where the teaching is less satisfactory, the

learning objectives in the planning lack clarity and are not shared with the pupils, as in some English and mathematics lessons. Teachers do not always make clear to pupils what is expected of them or indicate what they are looking for or what would count as a good piece of work.

24. Relevant activities, such as those in a science lesson, motivate and involve pupils in their own learning. In the best lessons the whole-class sections of the lessons are well paced, with a balance of open-ended and closed questions, as in some mathematics lessons. Pupils grasp what is required of them when, as in information technology, teachers give a good demonstration of a skill followed by supported practice. However, in some cases, for, example, mathematics, there is a lack of variety of teaching methods and learning activities and an over-dependence on undifferentiated work sheets. In English and mathematics, worksheets are not always used profitably and are, at times, unconnected with the learning objectives. In some lessons, such as history and science, opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding are missed as the lesson is too teacher focused and does not allow pupils to discuss in pairs or in groups.

25. In most lessons there is a satisfactory use of time and there is an appropriate balance between teacher input and pupil activity. However, in a significant number of lessons, including English and mathematics, this balance is not kept. In some cases pupils are kept too long sitting on the carpet before engaging with their activities. Pupils do not always make sufficient progress because there is a lack of urgency to complete their work and teachers do not inform pupils how long they have to complete a task. Consequently, as in a history lesson, lessons drift and pace drops, particularly where pupils are working independently and the teacher is involved with a group or other activity. Strategies which are employed in the best lessons to remedy this, for example, the setting of short-term time limits for pieces of work or for parts of an assignment, and the use of learning assistants to check on all pupils' work, need to be adopted throughout the school.

26. Good relationships between the teacher and the class, good pupil management and high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour are features of almost all lessons observed. In a small number of lessons inappropriate behaviour management leads to interrupted progress and teachers do not always insist on pupils giving attention whilst they are being addressed.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, both in the classroom and small-group situations promotes good progress. The work of the support assistants is of a good quality, although their use during the whole-class sections of lessons needs to be better managed. Too often they are uninvolved at these times, rather than providing support and encouragement to enable pupils to access the lesson.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

28. The school is committed, through its aims and the governing body's statement on the curriculum, to providing a broad and balanced education for all its pupils. The school meets the statutory requirements for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is an appropriate programme for health, drugs and sex education.

29. On entering the school children are placed in two different classes. This results in a different curriculum for each group of children. The older children placed in the split year class with Year 1 pupils are deemed to have begun the National Curriculum. The present organisation and management does not always support the youngest pupils in this class at this stage of learning. For example, there is a full literacy hour and designated mathematics lesson designed to meet the needs of the Year 1 pupils rather than the younger pupils. These curriculum arrangements need to be reviewed following close monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress. There is good curriculum provision for children under five in the reception class. This includes all the nationally expected areas of learning for children of this age. However, there is no scheme of work to inform planning and the programme is dependent on the good early years knowledge and understanding of the staff.

30. The school has adopted split-aged classes based upon age to accommodate the admission number of 39 pupils in each year. A number of parents expressed concern about the arrangements. The school is not complacent concerning the difficulties created by the complexity of pupil numbers and has tried a number of different systems as it actively seeks to provide a curriculum that takes into account the age and capability of the pupils and provides for continuity and progression of learning. However, although some of the major changes to class organisation are recent, they do not form part of the school development plan and there is no formal programme to monitor and evaluate the content of teachers' planning for these pupils, nor the effect of the new arrangements on their work, progress and attainment.

31. The adoption of a two- and four-year rolling programme for covering the foundation subjects is proving a useful means of ensuring curriculum coverage. A number of schemes of work and policies have been written and revised since the last inspection. However, these are variable in quality, with the best, for example, physical education, art and history, providing guidance to teachers on the content to be taught and the skills and concepts to be developed in each unit of work for each age group. The school recognises that it has yet to come to terms fully with the progressive development of skills and concepts within all subjects. The school development plan identifies a rolling programme for developing such schemes of work.

32. Currently, at Key Stage 1, the new Year 1 pupils are split among three classes, one containing newly arrived reception children, and the other two containing the Year 2 pupils. In mathematics and English at Key Stage 1 the school pitches the work at the expected level of the older pupils. Evidence suggests that the Year 1 pupils do not receive a good grounding in the Year 1 curriculum. Consequently, in mathematics, there is evidence that the average and below average attaining pupils are being provided with work that is too advanced for them. In science some Year 2 pupils are working at too low a level.

33. The school has adopted a new organisation of pupils at Key Stage 2. Split-aged ability sets for mathematics and English have been created. Good use is being made of an extra teacher to ensure the size of the sets with the below average attaining pupils is kept small. However, the organisation of pupils into sets results in the higher attaining Year 3 pupils who had previously been in a mixed ability class with Year 1 pupils, attempting work pitched at the level of the higher attaining Year 4 pupils. Evidence suggests that these Year 3 pupils are not making the progress they should, as they are not receiving grounding in the Year 3 curriculum.

34. The situation at both key stages is made more complex because there is no detailed scheme of work for mathematics and English to direct teachers in the implementation of the literacy hour and mathematics lesson within the current situation of both the class structures and the sets. The school plans to revise the mathematics scheme of work in the summer term and that for English during the next academic year.

35. There is some lack of clarity as to the agreed time allocation for each subject and no formal monitoring of teachers' timetables and planning is carried out. Consequently there are anomalies in use of time and the balance of subjects during the week, particularly at Key Stage 2. For example, mathematics and literacy are not taught each day in all classes, some classes have both swimming and games on the same day and same age pupils in different classes have different time allocations for some subjects. Lessons in literacy and numeracy are too long in some cases, with some mathematics lessons for younger pupils lasting over one hour and 15 minutes. The stated time allocated to physical education is far less than that provided in the timetables. This means that the subsequent lesson is shorter than planned and that the setting arrangements for Key Stage 2 are disrupted because some pupils use the stage in the hall for one set. Consequently time for those pupils is not profitably used. The actual time spent on the curriculum is less than the recommended time at Key Stage 2.

36. The provision for pupils on the school's special educational needs register is good. Appropriate targets for pupils are set for pupils within their individual education plans and these are reviewed

regularly. There is a structured programme for appropriate pupils including small-group and individual support.

37.The school has made too little progress on the key issue at the last inspection concerning the need to carry out a review of the whole-school curriculum in order to ensure progression and continuity for all pupils.

38.The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities including orchestra, hockey, football, netball, Bible, chess, art and Morris dancing clubs. Parents express their appreciation of the provision, which is excellent and is a strength of the school. Teachers and parents make a significant contribution to the quality and breadth of provision. A very good range of educational visits including museum visits and, for older pupils, residential visits, including travelling to Holland, provides pupils with a good breadth of experience.

39.Although not a priority within the school development plan, assessment has received considerable attention recently and further developments are planned. The local education authority has provided a good level of support in these essential developments. The school rightly identifies the production of a new assessment and marking policy as part of the plan to improve the use of assessment within the school and to reflect current practice. Currently the senior management team does not monitor or evaluate the quality of marking and the use of assessment through the scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' planning. This results in differences of practice and expectation through the school.

40.Baseline assessment checks on what children can do when they enter school have been completed and provide the school with information on which to plan suitable work. There are procedures for recording children's attainment against National Curriculum criteria, but this fails to take account of the Government's 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' for children on entering compulsory education. Assessment information on the under fives in the reception class is used to inform planning for provision but children's progress is not yet systematically recorded against explicit criteria appropriate to this stage of education.

41.The school recognises that the process whereby teachers use assessment information to inform planning at an appropriate level is not embedded in teachers' day-to-day practice. The new short term planning sheets teachers are using identify learning objectives for each lesson but these learning objectives are not yet used effectively for assessing pupils' performance in lessons or for giving them feedback on their performance in order to enable them to improve.

42.The very good practice of feeding back to pupils on their marked work was observed in a Year 6 science lesson and the analytical marking and assessment of pieces of Year 5 and 6 writing, with clear points for development, provide models of good practice for the school. However, it is unclear how the results of such analytical marking are being used to guide the teaching of writing within the classroom context. Too often, marking contains little comment and few indications to the pupils of areas in which they are doing well or need to improve. Consequently pupils are often unsure why a piece of work with a star is good, or how they can improve on their work. Similarly, the marking of pupils' work does not often result in errors being used as teaching points. Teachers correct spellings in books but in too many cases pupils are not required to do anything with them. Teachers do not always check that their comments are acted upon and unfinished work remains unfinished and some pupils' work is unmarked. The levelled pieces of writing in Years 5 and 6 show a good understanding of assessment against the National Curriculum level descriptions. However, the significant difference between the statutory test results and teacher assessment indicates that some teachers do not always have sufficient skill in using the level descriptions and end of key stage statements contained in the National Curriculum to make an appropriate and consistent assessment of the standards of pupils' work.

43.With good support from the local education authority, the school has begun to analyse test results and papers and has developed a sound system for tracking individual pupils' and cohorts' performance through the school. Although recognising the potential for school improvement in this venture, the

school is at too early a stage of development in this area to be able to exploit it fully as a vital instrument in improving progress and standards. For example, although the analysis of statutory test results has identified weaknesses in writing, no coherent plan has been produced to address this issue through modifying the curriculum and time devoted to the area or developing a structured programme of work for teaching the skills. Again, the analysis of the Year 6 1999 science test papers has influenced some of the work in Year 6, but the school has not yet used the information to modify the curriculum or teaching styles lower down the school. The school is using the optional Qualification and Curriculum Authority's tests for Years 3, 4 and 5 and individual pupils' results from these are now being recorded and used to project targets for the end of Key Stage 2. However, the school has not yet used the results to identify individual pupils making either very good or unsatisfactory progress through the key stage, or to modify the teaching and curriculum in classes. Given the complexity of the setting arrangements, the school needs to ensure that all those teaching a particular group of pupils are familiar with the test the pupils have taken and are aware of their previous test results and records.

44. The very recent developments in tracking pupils' progress show that the school has the capacity to improve. However, insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection on the key issue from the last report concerning the establishment of co-ordinated and effective arrangements to ensure that assessment informs teaching and learning programmes. The school has recently addressed appropriately the key issue from the previous report concerning the coherent whole-school approach to teachers' planning so that it identifies the short-term intended outcomes.

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

45. Overall the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils. The provision for the moral development of pupils is very good, and for the spiritual and social development is good. The provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory.

46. Pupils' spiritual awareness is fostered through the daily programme of assemblies. Time is given in assemblies to enable the pupils to reflect upon their experiences. The calm atmosphere created in collective worship and the themes chosen by staff and visiting speakers are conducive to the pupils' spiritual development. The use made of the Cathedral enhances the pupils' awareness of values and beliefs and the sense of wonder and awe. The opportunities for spiritual development in all areas of the curriculum now need to be exploited.

47. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good, as noted in the previous inspection, and is a strength of the school. The school promotes very strongly the difference between right and wrong and pupils have a clear understanding of the distinction. There are rules for behaviour in classrooms. Pupils understand the need to respect the rights and property of others. Moral issues are considered in assemblies and are thoughtfully discussed.

48. The school makes good provision for the social development of the pupils. A sense of citizenship is fostered through the school council and the school's links with the local community and the Cathedral. Pupils are involved actively and with enthusiasm in raising money for charities and providing entertainment and giving harvest gifts to the local community. Social development is further promoted through pupils' participation in a wide range of extra-curricular and sporting activities such as netball and hockey.

49. The overall provision for the cultural development of pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to explore and enjoy their own cultural traditions through, for example, visits to museums, the choir, orchestra, and Morris dancing. Provision is made for some attention to cultures other than their own through, for example, links with a London school, the visit to Holland and visitors to the school. However, there is a need to build into the curriculum, through art for example, more opportunities for pupils to gain a greater awareness and appreciation of the richness and diversity of cultures other than their own and the contribution these cultures have made to areas including mathematics and science.

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

50. Overall, the school makes satisfactory arrangements for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils and successfully promotes their health, safety and general well-being. All members of staff show concern for the needs of the pupils and work hard to meet those needs.

51. The school has developed satisfactory structures for monitoring the progress of pupils, but the use of these to identify and track those pupils who are not making appropriate progress are not yet fully developed. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and monitored effectively. The monitoring of personal development is less structured, and relies more on the individual teachers' knowledge of the pupils.

52. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are satisfactory. There is a behaviour policy in place, which is understood by the pupils. There are effective structures for dealing with all forms of harassment and bullying. Pupils are aware of what they should do if they feel they are bullied but they could not recall any instances of bullying. All staff record any instances of unsatisfactory behaviour as well as behaviour to be celebrated.

53. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are good. The registers are checked regularly, and any absences not authorised and persistent late arrivals are followed up. The school operates an effective policy of first day contact, and telephones parents if their child has not arrived in school by a certain time.

54. There are very good induction procedures for children starting school, which include visits to school before admission, as well as a home visit. Parents indicate they valued these procedures. There are good links with a number of local secondary schools.

55. The school provides a safe and caring environment for all its pupils. The designated officer for child protection has ensured that all members of staff are aware of the child protection procedures and further training is to be provided. A sound health and safety policy is in place and regular checks are made to grounds, buildings and equipment. However, the school needs to ensure that full safety considerations are taken into account when planning to use different parts of the school building for pupils' lessons and activities. The provision for first aid is good, with a number of staff trained in the administration of first aid.

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

56. The partnership built up with parents and the community is a strength of the school. The adoption of a comprehensive policy towards keeping parents informed about the work of the school was a key issue at the last inspection. Very good progress has been made on this key issue since the last inspection. The current headteacher has developed an extensive programme to keep parents informed. Parents find the systems useful and informative and appreciate the efforts made to enable them to feel part of the school community. Parents are kept informed about what is happening in school through weekly newsletters and information provided at the beginning of term informs parents about what their children will be taught. The governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements, but the school prospectus does not advise parents of their right to withdraw their children from religious education and the act of collective worship.

57. Good quality reports provide parents with a useful account of their child's progress through the year. There are good opportunities for parents to discuss their child with teachers both informally and at the regular formal meetings throughout the year. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed of their child's progress and are invited to regular review meetings. Comments made by parents and pupils are taken seriously, recorded and kept with the individual education plans.

58. Parents have appropriate opportunities to become involved in their child's learning. Parents are

able to help out in school and many do so on a regular basis. Their work is valued and appreciated by the school. The school is well supported by a very active Parent Teacher Association, which raises significant funds on behalf of the school as well as organising social events. Parents value the school's open-door policy and many say that the school listens well to complaints. A number of parents felt that the school did not deal with complaints well. However, the structures the school has for dealing with complaints are satisfactory.

59. Parents generally take part in the home-school reading scheme and support their children at home with reading and other homework. However, parents felt unclear about the school's policy on homework and felt that homework was not regular or provided consistently across all classes. There is evidence to support their view and the school has identified that it will be reviewing its approach to homework.

60. Pupils benefit from the school's excellent links with the community, particularly those with the Cathedral. Pupils gain from providing entertainment to senior citizens and giving musical recitals in the community. They enthusiastically take part in activities provided by the local library. Visitors from the community enhance the pupils' awareness of the wider world. The pupils are gaining a greater understanding of their role as responsible citizens through supporting local charities and learning about those who are helped in such ways.



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

### **Leadership and management**

61. The school has a clear and appropriate mission statement that has been broken down into key objectives. These express the shared values, including a commitment to high standards and achievement and the provision of an effective learning environment, which are reflected in the Christian ethos within the school. They promote good relationships and equal access for all pupils to the opportunities for achievement. Parents express their approval for the values and standards promoted by the school. Pupils enjoy school and feel they belong to the school community.

62. The leadership of the school has some strengths, particularly in the structure and composition of the governing body, and the day-to-day management of the school is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in the strategic leadership and management of the school. Consequently, although all staff work hard and are committed to enabling pupils to achieve well, the leadership of the school is not providing a sufficiently clear and defined educational direction to channel these efforts to optimum effect. These weaknesses need to be addressed urgently.

63. The governing body is very supportive of the school and sees itself as "critical friend". The planned visits of governors, including that of the special educational needs and literacy link governor, are purposeful and the subsequent reporting back to the appropriate committee is evidence of its acting as both critic and friend. The governing body is aware of its statutory responsibilities and has developed a strong committee structure to address pertinent issues. It has demonstrated its capability to provide a strategic view through devising and pursuing a detailed and informed plan concerning the relocation of the school. It recognises its need to address other areas of the school life with the same foresight and vigour. The governing body's request for success criteria to be placed in the school development plan and the detailed information it considered before setting targets demonstrates its awareness and commitment to hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of education it provides. The governing body recognises that it must now develop its strategic role further by closely monitoring the implementation of its decisions such as the timed actions in the school development plan and the targets it has set the school. In addition to monitoring such decisions, the governing body recognises the need to begin to evaluate the effectiveness of its decisions on raising standards and improving the quality of education provided by the school. To enable the governing body to carry out this function the headteacher and other appropriate staff need to provide, on a planned basis, the necessary detailed, focused and analytical information arising from the headteacher's own audit, monitoring and evaluation activities.

64. The headteacher has been in post for two years. During that time he has successfully achieved his intention to develop a collaborative style of management in which all members of staff feel they can contribute to discussions and the decision making process. However, decision-making often lacks focus because there is not always a clear understanding by all staff of the underlying educational direction in which the school is travelling. This is partly due to the headteacher not having yet made explicit his priorities with regard to the standards pupils achieve and the quality of education provided by the school. It is not always apparent how he intends to address, in a determined and focused way, the essential issues facing the school. Consequently the school has an underdeveloped capacity to reflect critically on what it is doing and how it can improve.

65. The headteacher has delegated to his staff a number of key areas, including target setting, the curriculum and financial areas. However, the headteacher states that only three members of staff have job descriptions. Consequently, there is no structure for accountability and the delegated management and other roles and responsibilities of curriculum co-ordinators and individual members of the senior management team lack coherence. Similarly the headteacher's own role within the school lacks clarity and focus. As a body, the senior management team has usefully addressed a number of day-to-day issues but, as yet, does not have a clearly stated purpose or brief.

66.The headteacher has, together with the governing body and special needs co-ordinator, promoted an active policy of integration for pupils with special educational needs. This leadership has led to all pupils being valued and a good programme of support being provided. The special needs co-ordinator manages the area well, with an up to date register and effective structures for monitoring, review and support in place.

67.Subject co-ordinators have been developing schemes of work and provide advice for colleagues. Teachers value the support given by co-ordinators, but too few opportunities are provided to enable them to disseminate good practice. In-service training on aspects of management, including monitoring and evaluation of their areas, is necessary for curriculum co-ordinators and members of the senior management team to enable them to fulfil their function appropriately. The school has not satisfactorily addressed the key issue from the last inspection related to this area of the school's work.

68.The school does not yet have an effective system for monitoring and evaluating its work in terms of the quality of teaching, pupils' standards, progress and work or the effectiveness of the curriculum. Consequently support for and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is unsatisfactory. Too much evaluation is on an informal basis, lacking the rigour required for a detailed analysis. The school development plan correctly identifies the monitoring of the curriculum as a priority for development but action needs to be taken before the projected introduction of a permanent system in July 2000. The school does not always take determined action on those areas where some monitoring has taken place. For example, some good work has been done on the analysis of the statutory test results identifying writing as a weakness. However, raising standards in writing is not identified as a priority within the school development plan and the school has not produced a planned and focused whole-school programme to address the weakness.

69.The school's approach to development planning and the monitoring and evaluation of its implementation is unsatisfactory. The informal approach to monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school has resulted in a school development plan that addresses some of the major issues, but omits others, such as the expressed difficulties for teaching and managing the curriculum posed by the 39 pupil admission number. A new and valuable innovation is for all staff to be involved in formulating the school development plan, although the governing body is not formally involved at an early enough stage to have an effective input into the decisions made. The new format for the school development plan introduced for this year is much improved on that used previously. The plan has programmes of action to achieve its priorities and in some cases, resources, including finance, are linked to the actions. However, although there are success criteria, these lack sharpness and in some cases are not measurable or quantifiable. Too few of the success criteria, including those for the development of schemes of work, are in terms of the effect on pupils' learning and standards. The school's targets for English and mathematics and the steps the school will take to achieve them are not included in the plan.

70.Although there has been insufficient progress made on a number of key issues since the last inspection, during the past two terms the school has demonstrated its capacity for improvement. This is particularly the case in those areas such as medium and short term teacher planning where the school has appropriately drawn upon the expertise and support provided by the local education authority. Continued focused in-service training for the leadership of the school is needed to ensure further progress and improvement.

71.The school is not meeting the requirements of DFEE Circular 5/99 to provide appropriate release time and support for the newly qualified teacher on the staff.

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

72.The school is well staffed with a balance of experienced and less experienced teachers. Staff are well qualified for all age groups and levels of turnover are low. Additional part-time teachers, including one for special educational needs, and the peripatetic music staff provide valuable support for pupils.

There is good provision of support staff, including six classroom assistants who work alongside teachers. The large number of administrative staff provide a friendly service and along with the caretaker and catering staff provide a service that supports the education of the pupils. Midday assistants work closely with teachers and provide good support to pupils. A particular strength of the school is the collaborative way in which all staff work as a team and learn from and support one another.

73. Arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are sound overall. A recently produced and comprehensive staff handbook supports day-to-day organisation. However, the school is not yet meeting the recently introduced statutory requirement to provide an induction programme and a reduced teaching timetable for newly qualified teachers. The arrangements for the appraisal and professional development of staff are generally sound and contribute to the effectiveness of learning. Teaching and support staff take advantage of the access to a wide variety of professional training courses. However, the effectiveness of staff training is not yet systematically evaluated. The school has focused mainly on numeracy training in recent months and this has provided effective in-service training for staff.

74. The school makes best use of available space and accommodation. The accommodation has recently been improved by the provision of a well-designed reception area, facilities for disabled pupils, improved library facilities and security fencing. The school buildings are well maintained. The outdoor environment is well developed with adequate grassed and hard surface areas, a well-equipped adventure playground area, and attractive seating and quiet areas to encourage pupils to sit and talk. These facilities are used to good effect to enrich the curriculum and bring further interest to learning.

75. The quality and quantity of resources are generally satisfactory for most subjects, for children with special educational needs and for children under five. Storage space is limited within classrooms and corridor areas but resources are easily accessible to staff and children. The school library contains selections of suitable reference and fiction books to support learning. Resources for information technology and physical education are good. Good use is made of visits to museums, the local community, the surrounding area and further afield to enrich the curriculum. The use of external resources has a positive impact on teaching and motivates pupils to learn.

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

76. The school has efficient administration systems. There are clear procedures for managing the budget, with effective support given by the school bursar. The governing body's sub-committees, including a finance sub-committee, effectively report back to the full governing body each term. In this way the governing body maintains a suitable oversight of the school's initiatives linked to income and expenditure. Because of the recent transfer from grant maintained to voluntary aided status the governing body does not yet possess the necessary information to enable it to make firm projections into the future. The school employs a private firm to carry out an independent annual audit to ensure that the accounts are accurately maintained. An independent financial consortium provides an adviser who visits regularly to ensure value for money, checks the expenditure for errors and provides ongoing advice. This regular independent check combined with a strictly adhered to division of responsibility within the management team ensures efficient financial control.

77. Although not appropriately involved in the production of the school development plan, governors are involved in the budget setting process. Here they liaise with the headteacher to ensure that the budget supports the plan. The priorities identified in the school development plan are not always linked to an effective audit of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but they are costed in terms of resources in some cases, although the cost of planned supply cover is not always included. Curriculum co-ordinators are responsible for a budget allocated on the basis of a yearly development plan for their areas of responsibility. These plans tend to be resource based and do not often involve strategic development. The headteacher and governing body do not monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of spend in terms of its impact on standards and the quality of education provided by the school. This is partly because the success criteria contained in the school development plan do not lend themselves to

this function, but also because there is no effective structure, including the gathering and sharing of appropriate information, for doing this.

78. Class teachers are deployed satisfactorily. From the delegated budget the school augments specific grants and funds for pupils with special educational needs. This allows the school to employ a special needs teacher for two days a week plus four part-time teacher assistants to support the four pupils with statements and the 14 children on stages two and three of the special needs register. This provision is very effective and pupils make good progress.

79. Compared with similar schools a high proportion of the budget is spent on clerical support. The school enjoys the support of a bursar, an office manager and two part-time clerical assistants. The cost effectiveness of this level of provision should be evaluated.

80. Accommodation and learning resources are used efficiently to enhance the overall quality of teaching. Limited space in the school building is well used. The building is very well used for extra-curricular activities and by outside agencies during evenings and weekends. This enhances the very strong links the school enjoys with the community.

81. The office manager and administrative staff ensure that the school's organisation supports staff and pupils in their work. All visitors receive a warm and friendly welcome. The midday assistants effectively promote good behaviour and the efficient taking of meals. The school-keeping staff efficiently maintains high standards of repair and cleanliness, enhancing the learning environment of the pupils.

82. The school provides satisfactory value for money, taking into account the full range of criteria, including pupils' attainment and progress, attitudes to learning, behaviour, personal development and attendance, the quality of education provided, and the effectiveness with which staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used and the cost effectiveness of major decisions.

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

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

83. At the time of the inspection the majority of children under five had been in school since September. When they start school, the youngest children in the age group attend on a part-time basis prior to full-time attendance in the Spring term. The older children attend full time from September. Children are admitted into two separate classes, with the older children sharing a class base with Year 1 pupils and beginning the National Curriculum. The school holds open places for children whose parents wish for them to start formal schooling nearer to the child's statutory age for the start of formal schooling and this policy of staggered entry is appreciated by parents.

84. The Induction programme is well structured and children can attend for sessions, prior to starting at the school. Home visits, together with meetings organised at the school, ensure that parents and children are well informed about the start of school. Parents are justifiably appreciative of induction arrangements at the school.

85. Children under five make a very confident start to their education. Almost all of them have experienced some form of pre-school education. On entry to the reception and Year 1 classes most children's social and linguistic skills are above average. This is also indicated by the autumn term baseline assessment. By the time they are five, the majority meet the nationally expected outcomes for their age and many are working towards Level 1 of The National Curriculum. Children make very good progress in swimming. This positive start to education for the under fives was highlighted at the time of the last inspection.

### **Personal and Social Development**

86. Children settle quickly and happily into the reception class. They make very good progress in personal and social development, learning to behave appropriately as pupils in a class environment. A few children are demanding of attention, but they respond well to clear expectations, firm management and consistent rules and routines. The majority of children shows enthusiasm for new experiences and has very positive attitudes to school. They are eager to learn and participate enthusiastically in activities. They listen well and pay attention to instructions. Children join in whole school activities, such as assembly, and sit quietly watching. In swimming, children make good progress when working with support staff who foster their self confidence.

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

87. Progress is good in all aspects of language and literacy and children quickly begin working towards Level 1 in the National Curriculum English. Children listen carefully to instructions and ask and answer questions to get the information they need. The majority speaks confidently and has a good vocabulary for their age. They are able to describe the characteristics of objects and talk about their own experience, for example, when comparing similarities and differences in school kitchen equipment with familiar equipment in their own homes. All children recognise most of the letters of the alphabet and their associated sounds and are developing good phonological awareness. They read common words, phrases and simple sentences and enjoy selecting books from the school library to share at home. They handle books well and have a positive attitude to reading. In handwriting, the majority of children form letters correctly and are developing a legible script. They recognise and write their own name and enjoy writing letters and writing over and under the teacher's script.

### **92. Mathematics**

88. Mathematical progress is good, particularly in counting, matching and sorting. Most children can count confidently to 20 and recognise large numbers in the environment. Higher attaining children explore one more than and use comparative language to investigate number relationships to ten.

Many have a good understanding of repeating patterns and can recognise when the pattern is wrong. They are beginning to use the mathematical vocabulary of pattern, shape, sequence and position correctly to describe their activities. Higher attaining children enthusiastically make up their own recognisable patterns in two- and three-dimensional shapes, based on three colours. They are able to continue a pattern, say what comes next and accurately record their patterns on graph paper.

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

89.Children make reference to past and present events in their lives and can compare photographs of themselves along a simple time line. Previous work has included identifying body parts, discussing healthy food and exploring the inside and outside of the school building. Some children have well developed information technology skills. They can control the mouse effectively and assemble images on screen and tessellate with regular and irregular shapes.

### **Physical development**

90.Children have good opportunities for developing physical skills. They have above average ability to move confidently on indoor climbing apparatus and outdoor adventure playground equipment and manoeuvre wheeled vehicles in the outdoor play space. They demonstrate a high level of skill in controlling jumps and landings from frames and co-ordinating their body movement along mats in the school hall. They learn to put apparatus away and carry out safety instructions carefully. Progress in swimming is very good. Children are taught to use tools and handle small equipment such as brushes and manipulate materials effectively. They build confidently using large blocks and bricks.

### **95. Creative development**

91.Children show a developing ability to observe and use their imagination through art, music and role play. They effectively use duplo, lego, blocks and bricks to create imaginary environments for collaborative role play. Past work shows evidence of careful observation in their paintings of themselves and their friends, and three-dimensional models of faces. The children confidently explored colour and pattern, printing with vegetable shapes. They also demonstrated the ability to clap a rhythm and sing a range of simple songs.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

92.The standards achieved at Key Stage 1 in reading are broadly in line with, and those in writing are slightly below, those noted at the previous inspection, although in both areas the national average has risen since that time. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in reading in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 statutory assessments is above the national average, but in line with the average for pupils from similar schools. In writing, in the same national assessments, the pupils are achieving in line with the national average at the expected Level 2 or above, but below that of similar schools. A quarter of those pupils achieving a Level 2 achieved the lower Level 2C, indicating that only approximately two thirds of pupils achieved a secure level 2. A greater number of girls than boys achieve the higher Levels 2A and above, and more boys than girls achieve at the lower Level 2C and below. Fewer pupils achieved Levels 2 and 3 in 1999 than in 1998. Although the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in reading and writing is well above the national and the average for similar schools the trend since 1996 is slightly downwards. Evidence during the inspection shows, that the level of reading is above average but that of writing is just average at Key Stage 1.

93.The standards achieved at Key Stage 2 in English show a significant improvement on those recorded at the previous inspection and on those attained in 1998. The end of Key Stage 2 national test results show that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above and the higher

Level 5 in English was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools the percentage achieving the expected Level 4 and above was above the average for such schools, but in line for those achieving the higher Level 5. However, only 54 per cent of pupils reached Level 4 in writing compared to 93 per cent in reading. Girls performed significantly better than boys in both reading and writing at both the expected Level 4 and above and at the higher Level 5. The standard of reading at the end of the key stage during the week of the inspection is well above average, but the standard of writing is average, with a significant number of pupils not yet achieving at the expected level.

94. Most children enter Key Stage 1 with well-developed speech, good auditory discrimination and good fine motor control. They understand that print has meaning and many can read or re-tell the story from simple books.

95. By the end of Year 2 most pupils listen carefully and many have developed a polite and friendly manner of speaking. At Key Stage 2 pupils build successfully on earlier speaking and listening skills and most listen attentively to teachers and to each other during whole-class lessons and discussions. At both key stages there is a significant minority with poor listening and concentration skills, particularly during whole-class sessions. Pupils continue to gain in confidence in public speaking and enjoy performing in front of their class or in school assemblies. By the end of the key stage some pupils are able to argue a case cogently.

96. Pupils have good phonic knowledge and make good progress in spelling with all pupils achieving Level 2 by the end of Key Stage 1 and 43 per cent achieving the higher Level 3.

97. Most Key Stage 1 pupils are independent readers and enjoy reading both at home and at school. They make good progress in reading with very few pupils struggling to master the necessary skills. Those who experience difficulty are given regular additional support by the special needs staff. At Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in reading. Most pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction books matched to their ability. They use phonic knowledge or contextual and picture cues to decode unknown words. They have the skills to use the books in the library to retrieve information. They read and discuss texts in depth during the literacy hour when the material is well matched to their ability or they are supported by the whole-class structure.

98. When the pupils enter Key Stage 1 they can make marks and some are beginning to write for meaning. Although the progress made by pupils in lessons observed is satisfactory, the good progress made in the reception year is not continued, so that progress in writing for the majority of pupils, over time in the key stage, is unsatisfactory. By the end of the key stage the average pupil can write simple sentences and accurately use capital letters and full stops. A significant number can write in sentences using adventurous vocabulary and with some appreciation of the audience. Some higher attaining pupils write confidently and effectively about everyday occurrences. Further progress is hindered as there is not as yet a detailed, planned programme for teaching writing skills such as the organisation of writing according to its purpose and the development of a story-line. Joined script is not taught at Key Stage 1 so pupils' handwriting is usually printed. Most pupils have good hand control at the end of the key stage but work is not always well presented. At Key Stage 2 pupils write poems, book reviews, letters and personal and factual accounts. A sense of style is emerging in some writing, as is the use of paragraphs. Although this work can be lively and engaging it is rarely extended. Although the progress made in lessons observed is satisfactory, because there is no clear programme for teaching the skills of writing, pupils make unsatisfactory progress over time. Too often teachers accept written work of an unsatisfactory quality and do not encourage pupils to strive for higher attainment. This is particularly apparent during the group-work sessions of the literacy hour. Pupils spell well.

99. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English at both key stages.

100. Pupils respond satisfactorily during lessons. Most pupils behave well and maintain concentration throughout lessons, although a significant minority does not maintain concentration during independent

group work or whole-class teaching sessions. Pupils are able to work collaboratively and to good effect. A Year 6 class, working in groups, effectively wrote and illustrated some books to share with Year 1 pupils using animations created on a software package to make them more interesting. Independent work skills such as the use of dictionaries still need further development, with many pupils still preferring to ask the teacher or their peers for spellings rather than using a dictionary. Nearly all pupils enjoy reading and read at home for pleasure, visiting the local libraries and owning good collections of books. However, pupils do not have the same motivation towards writing. Where fully involved with a relevant activity, as when writing a book for younger children and designing a poster during a topic lesson, pupils respond well to the challenge

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better with few exceptions. At Key Stage 1 the teaching in almost all the class lessons is satisfactory, but in only one lesson was the teaching good. At Key Stage 2 the teaching in lessons ranged from unsatisfactory to good, with 60 per cent satisfactory and 30 per cent good. No very good or excellent English teaching was observed in lessons. Lessons are carefully planned with a clear learning objective but this is not always shared with the pupils. Good whole-class teaching maintains a brisk pace. However, in some lessons the pace is too slow, with pupils sitting on the carpet for extended periods before engaging with activities. The word level aspect of the literacy hour is rarely included in the whole class teaching section and during the independent section of the hour teachers rarely use guided reading techniques. The whole-class text is not used well in all classes to model good or different writing styles nor to teach punctuation and word level work. Where group work is well organised pupils are involved in work well matched to their ability and so make sound progress. However, some lessons include inappropriate tasks and worksheets being set for pupils in group work. In one lesson the teacher made good use of the plenary session to assess the progress made by the pupils during the lesson and to share pupils' achievements in order to assist them to move on in their learning. However, in too many lessons the plenary session is undervalued and rarely linked to the learning objectives of the lesson to assess the progress pupils have made during the lesson.

102. The assessment of pupils' work is variable through the school. In too many cases marking consists of a tick or a general comment and identifies neither specific achievement nor points for development. Some books have not been marked regularly. Good, detailed marking of writing has been carried out in Years 5 and 6 and could form a model for the school.

103. There are no long-term plans for English showing an agreed time allocation for the subject nor how the literacy hour is to be used or where and how other aspects of English like extended writing, handwriting and spelling should be taught. Consequently the English curriculum is not taught in a systematic way throughout the school and the development and use of English across the curriculum has not been exploited. The implementation of the literacy hour is not yet satisfactory and its current delivery will not cover all the aspects of learning necessary to ensure pupils make good progress through the school. Pupils in all classes do not experience a literacy hour on each day since there are four lessons of 75 minutes timetabled instead of five lessons of 60 minutes. Although the school has identified writing as a weakness too little has been done to address this, consequently provision for extended writing is variable. One class has had just one session since the beginning of term, others have one a month. Few have regular weekly slots to develop the ability to plan, organise and write for an audience using a wide variety of genre.

104. The co-ordinator is collating the current literacy hour medium-term plans to form the basis of permanent whole-school medium-term plans to assist in progression and continuity through the school. However, this will not include the areas of English outside the literacy hour.

105. The English co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that all staff have received the full training for the literacy hour but she does not have a job description to guide her in her roles and responsibilities. Consequently, the monitoring and evaluation of English in the classroom and in pupils' books has been informal and is not part of a regular structured programme.



106. A new home-school reading programme is in operation, which is providing a good link to maintain progress in independent reading skills. Better use could be made of the comments made by parents in the diaries. Other homework is set, but not systematically. Resources are adequate, but some pupils share group reading texts and the classrooms are not rich in literature.

## **Mathematics**

107. The school has made satisfactory progress in raising standards in mathematics since the last inspection at both key stages. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 statutory assessments is well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils assessed as at the higher Level 3 is above both the national average and the average for pupils in similar schools. The end of Key Stage 2 national test results for 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above is well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. There is a significant improvement on the 1998 results and on those at the last inspection. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is well above both the national average and that for similar schools. Attainment across both key stages is variable and the level of attainment in pupils' books and observed lessons does not reflect consistently the level of attainment in the end of key stage tests. In both key stages attainment in lessons ranges from below national expectations to above.

108. The majority of pupils in Year 1 are able to read and write numbers to 20 and above and have a good understanding of odd and even numbers. They are able to use the vocabulary of comparison. Higher achieving pupils in Year 2 can use Venn diagrams to sort according to two criteria such as odd and tens. Those achieving at an average level and below struggle to identify number cards according to the criteria given, such as less than 50 and odd. Most pupils can count in twos, fives and tens, but find difficulty in relating this to 2p, 5p and 10p coins. Attainment in calculation at Key Stage 1 is hindered by the premature introduction of vertical presentation that can impede the development of mental calculation strategies. Within the Years 5 and 6 sets the higher achieving pupils can calculate area and perimeter, and make sensible estimates of these to judge the reasonableness of their answer. They use notation well and use symbols correctly. Those pupils in the average achieving set can use numbers to investigate ways to make 24. The higher achievers in this set can use inverse operations to check results and can use whole numbers and decimal numbers such as  $96 \times 0.25$ . The majority of pupils can use brackets and carry out multiple operations when they are clear that this is what they have to do. A significant minority of pupils relies on finger counting to calculate multiples.

109. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress over time at Key Stage 1. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. However, progress over time is unsatisfactory in the lower part of the key stage. Unsatisfactory progress is mainly because the school has not yet come to terms with implementing coherently the National Numeracy Strategy in order to take account of the different needs of the pupils in its mixed year situation. In lessons the pupils make satisfactory progress when the work is pitched at an appropriate level and there is an appropriate level of support, such as the use of real coins in a lesson about money.

110. Although over time pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in upper Key Stage 2, the average and below average attaining pupils within the lessons observed in each of the sets do not always make satisfactory progress. Too often tasks are provided inappropriate to the level of attainment of these pupils and often they fail to finish tasks in the lesson, thus slowing their progress. Where progress is good, new work builds carefully on pupils' previous experience. Thus, in a lesson on perimeter and area the links with previous work on rounding numbers provided a strategy for checking the results of calculations enabling pupils to gain and consolidate their skills.

111. The pupils' attitude to mathematics is satisfactory and sometimes good, although there are instances when the behaviour of a small group of pupils is less than satisfactory and detracts from the teaching and learning. The majority of pupils work well as a whole-class group, in groups and in pairs. They are able to talk about their work and are confident when they explain how they carried out

calculations as well as asking for further explanation if they are uncertain. Pupils in the upper part of Key Stage 2 are able to identify aspects of mathematics they feel they need to address in order to reach required standards. Pupils become restless and lose their focus and application to their work in lower Key Stage 2 lessons when they are too long.

112. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 ranges from unsatisfactory to good, but overall is satisfactory. The progress pupils make is directly related to the quality of teaching. The school needs to ensure that the elements of good teaching seen in lessons are shared across the school. Where teaching is good, teachers' knowledge is secure and they use a balance of open and closed questions. The lessons have clear objectives that specify clearly the knowledge and skills pupils are to acquire. In these lessons the planning and provision of activities of different levels of difficulty enable all pupils to make appropriate progress. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson about fractions, all pupils had the same starting activity – a fraction wall – which they completed as a set and then went on to work with different fractions within their groups according to their ability. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the lack of clear learning objectives within the planning results in a lack of focus and the provision of inappropriate tasks that do not meet the range of ability and hinder progress. In a number of lessons there is a lack of variety in teaching methods and learning activities and an over-dependence on undifferentiated worksheets. Some teachers make good use of resources and teaching aids, as in a lesson where a large 1 – 100 grid is used when developing understanding of the properties of numbers. However, in too many lessons reference is seldom made to number lines, table squares and vocabulary lists, even when these were displayed in the classroom. The use of resources such as individual number lines, digit cards and number fans is underdeveloped throughout the key stages. Teachers recognise the need for developing the instant recall of number facts and the use of known facts to work out new facts. However, the effective teaching of mental, written and part-written methods of calculation needs to be developed further.

113. The school's planning for implementing National Numeracy Strategy is unsatisfactory. Neither the mathematics audit nor the mathematics action plan is complete. Although identified as a priority in the school development plan there is no coherent, formalised and appropriately monitored and evaluated programme for the implementation of the strategy. There has been some informal monitoring of mathematics lessons but there is no structure in place for planned focused monitoring. The school is not providing a daily mathematics lesson for all classes. To ensure that pupils are taught mathematics for an appropriate amount of time each week, lessons are often an hour or more on the days when they take place. This results in many pupils in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 losing concentration and motivation as the lessons are too long. However, all teachers are implementing the three part lesson and the oral and mental starter is having a positive affect on the pupils' ability to calculate in their heads.

114. The school development plan rightly identifies the development of a scheme of work and an updated policy for mathematics as a priority. The newly appointed co-ordinator and other staff have begun work on these and recognise that there is an urgent need for the policy to reflect the changes to the strategies for teaching and learning and clarify the setting arrangements in Key Stage 2. The developing scheme of work will need to include guidance on the use of the framework, strategies to ensure continuity and progression, given the school's mixed-age classes and the contribution that other curriculum areas can make to raising standards of attainment in numeracy.

115. Currently, there is no scheme of work showing how the needs of the pupils in split-age classes are to be taken into account. Consequently there is unsatisfactory planning for continuity and progression in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Provision does not take adequate account of the development of pupils as they move from Reception to Year 1 and then to Year 2. Similarly, too little account is taken of the development of pupils as they move from Year 2, where they have been working with Year 1 pupils, to the sets in Years 3/4 where they may be working with high attaining Year 4 pupils. In accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy, teachers with mixed age sets and classes are using the planning grid for the older age group to plan the progression of topics. To ensure progression of understanding so that pupils do not omit the essential Year 1 and Year 3 materials

teachers need to improve the quality of their short-term planning so that the level of work reflects the needs of all the pupils in their class or set. However, there is not yet a clear understanding as to how the National Numeracy Strategy can be used to support the development of the same objective at appropriate levels for the level of attainment, experience and maturity of the different age pupils. This is important in those sets where some pupils have already worked on the topic and others are meeting the topic for the first time.

116. Too little use is made of assessment in lessons to inform planning for the next stage of learning. Numeracy is underdeveloped in other areas of the curriculum, although there is evidence of the use of Venn diagrams in Key Stage 1 science and measuring and timing in science in Key Stage 2. The homework policy does not appear to be implemented consistently across the school. In Key Stage 2 homework is frequently unmarked.

117. A formal and planned programme of monitoring pupils' work and progress and the teaching of mathematics needs to be developed to ensure that all pupils make maximum progress as they move through the school.

## **Science**

118. The school has made steady progress in raising standards in science over the last three years. The end of Key Stage 2 national test results for 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above is well above the national average and above average for similar schools. This is an improvement on the 1998 results and on those at the last inspection. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. In lessons and from the scrutiny of pupils' work, higher achieving pupils in the lower Key Stage 2 classes are achieving nationally expected levels for their age. In the lessons, books and discussions with the Year 5/6 classes, there is evidence of achievement by a high proportion of pupils, above the level expected.

119. Statutory assessments by teachers for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or higher is above the national average but below the average for similar schools. This is in line with the assessments at the last inspection, but below those for 1998. The percentage of pupils assessed as at the higher Level 3 is above the national average, but at the average for pupils in similar schools. The level of pupils' work in lessons shows that pupils are broadly achieving at the expected level, although some of the work in the Year 2 pupils' books reflects a level below national expectations. Pupils throughout the key stage are not attaining at the appropriate level in the area of scientific enquiry as too few opportunities are provided to investigate and record their own ideas and suggestions.

120. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons at Key Stage 1. They gain knowledge of choosing foods according to health criteria and are able to explain their choices. Lower achieving younger pupils make good progress, being able to name and identify vegetables and fruits. Progress over time is less than satisfactory for the Year 2 pupils, as there is little required of Year 2 pupils that is different from those in Year 1, for example, both year groups in a class are required to name the major parts of the body.

121. At Key Stage 2 pupils make sound progress in the lower part of the key stage. At the upper part of the key stage they make very good progress. They are articulate in explaining what they have been investigating and what they have learned from their investigation. Pupils make excellent progress when they are involved in open-ended practical investigations within a structured programme.

122. Pupils' response and attitudes towards science are good at both key stages. Where they are involved in practical activities the pupils respond well and concentrate. However, there are a few pupils, mainly boys, who do not apply themselves to their work and come off task frequently. Pupils cooperate well and share equipment. Older pupils discuss their work perceptively and make suggestions

and ask questions readily. In the lessons for the oldest pupils the nature of the activities provided encourage them to respond with zest and vigour, pursuing their ideas with alacrity.

123. There is a direct link between the progress pupils make in the lesson and the quality of teaching. At Key Stage 1 most teaching is satisfactory and some is good. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is never less than satisfactory and is very good or excellent at the top of the key stage. Planning is focused with clear learning objectives. Where teaching is good or better, there is a link with previous lessons. Excellent practice includes the purposeful feedback provided by the teacher both on the marked work as the pupils' books are returned and also during the lesson as they carry out their investigations. In the best lessons the teachers encourage and challenge through the pertinent use of both open and closed questions. Activities are relevant and based upon the learning objectives, involving the pupils in their own learning and creating enthusiasm and delight. Examples of good quality teaching were observed in lessons where pupils were testing the effectiveness of parachutes of various sizes and investigating the grip of the soles of shoes in a friction experiment. Skilled teaching in the upper part of Key Stage 2 enables pupils to understand fair testing and the control of variables, and provides the opportunity for pupils to design their own methods of recording their results. Unsatisfactory elements in teaching in other parts of the school include the lessons being too teacher-focused and lacking in pupil involvement in discussion or investigation.

124. The subject is well lead and managed by a committed co-ordinator who is making significant improvements to the provision for science. The schemes of work are a good basis for developing science through the school, although the planned review is timely and will enable scientific enquiry and investigations to be built into the scheme as a planned and assessed requirement. Planned monitoring and evaluating of provision, including a programme to assist in improving the quality of teaching to that of the best, needs to be developed to ensure pupils make consistently good or better progress in science throughout the school.

125. Records of assessments are in an early stage of development and further work needs to be done to ensure that they form and are used as a strategic means of tracking pupils' progress and attainment across all science attainment targets. Good use at upper Key Stage 2 is beginning to be made of the analysis of statutory test results. This now needs to modify practice at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

126. The school alternates the teaching of art and design technology. During the week of the inspection very little art teaching was observed because design and technology took precedence on the timetable. From displays on the walls and work in pupils' portfolios, the attainment in art at the end of both key stages is below national expectations.

127. At Key Stage 1 pupils work on display showed observational drawings of fruit with some colour matching using paint, line work, self portraits and three-dimensional faces using modroc, although very little three-dimensional work is in evidence. Pupils study examples of Mondrias' work in a book and use a computer art package to produce work in an appropriate style. However, there are few examples of work by famous artists about the school, little evidence of considering art from a wide range of cultures and art appreciation is not incorporated in the curriculum.

128. At Key Stage 2 there is evidence of collage work, wax resist, three-dimensional pyramids and pipe-cleaner figures linked to the history work on Egyptians. Some pupils design posters using felt tip pens and colour pencils and sketches of a local house of historical interest have been carefully drawn. Pupils have sketchbooks but these are not well used to collect ideas and patterns from the world around them, compare them and decide which ones would best suit their current piece of work. Pupils

do not use shading or colour-mixing techniques to enhance their work.

129. Unsatisfactory progress is made at both key stages. None of the work seen showed an appropriate development of skills, including the ability to choose the best media for the desired result or a knowledge of methods and approaches gleaned from previous experience or artists. There is little evidence of pupils having reflected on their work to identify ways in which they could improve or develop it. In Years 5 and 6 where the skills of using space and shape effectively were being taught to good effect, pupils produced some careful line work. However, the pupils had little previous knowledge to build upon and consequently the results were at an early stage of development.

130. Pupils are interested in art and discuss the work they have completed in some detail. However they are not interested in ways to improve their work. Some work on display shows a lack of care and attention to detail.

131. The teaching is good in the limited number of art lessons observed during the week of inspection. Where pupils are taught skills during the art lesson their standard of work improves and their attitudes are good.

132. A new co-ordinator for art has been appointed this term, on a temporary contract. There is no job description to ensure the systematic implementation of strategic planning or to guide the co-ordinator in her roles and responsibilities. However, she has a clear idea of the way forward and is already running a good art club for older pupils where art skills and appreciation are developed and enjoyed.

133. The school is well resourced to provide the variety of experiences expected in the national curriculum programmes of study, including a kiln to fire pots, batik equipment and the full range of papers and mark making textures.

134. A comprehensive policy document states that three hours a week is devoted to art, craft and design at Key Stage 1 and two hours a week at Key Stage 2. However, it is unclear how this is to be allocated through the year. The recently approved scheme of work gives teachers clear advice and support to deliver this area of the curriculum but it needs to be implemented systematically to enable pupils to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to appreciate and produce good quality art work. Currently there is no system for monitoring the implementation of the scheme of work through teachers' planning or pupils' work.

## **Design and technology**

135. Standards achieved by pupils in design and technology at both key stages are in line with expectations for their age and often above at Key Stage 2. Pupils are able to talk in detail about how to join different fabrics and the use of different stitches for different purposes. They are able to use appropriate vocabulary when discussing the process of designing and making. They are able to listen to the ideas of others and use these to evaluate their own work.

136. Progress is generally satisfactory, particularly when the pupils are involved in designing and making. The rate of progress slows when too much time is spent with the whole-class listening to each pupil's evaluation of their own product.

137. Pupils' attitudes in design and technology are satisfactory and often good. Pupils co-operate well, sharing resources and offer suggestions to overcome problems when making the product. They are proud of their finished results and in one lesson made reference to their original designs and photographs of the product to evaluate their work.

138. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Where teaching is good there are clear objectives, which are shared with pupils, indicating the knowledge, skills and techniques they will be developing. Provision of resources is good. Pupils are able to access the resources they need and

use them sensibly with due regard for safety issues.

139. The school is using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's suggested scheme of work. All staff have a copy. In order to ensure a whole-school approach to using the materials, the co-ordinator plans to incorporate the school's own design and technology policy statement in each teacher's scheme of work. Currently, there is no programme to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the scheme of work or to evaluate the pupils' progress and attainment.

## **Geography**

140. Few lessons were observed during the week and judgements are based on observation lessons at Key Stage 1, a scrutiny of pupils' work at both key stages and evidence from documents, displays and discussions.

141. Pupils' attainment in geography at Key Stage 1 is in line with expectations for their age and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils are developing a basic understanding of their local environment. They can record in sequence their own observations collected on a journey to school, use appropriate directional vocabulary and draw simple ground plans of the classroom and the route followed to school. Younger pupils make good progress in identifying the main physical and human features of the indoor and outdoor environment at home and at school. Pupils ask their own questions, evaluate the quality of the environment, identify the characteristics that make places special and present their findings as to how it can be improved.

142. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about pupils' attainment and progress in geography at Key Stage 2. Planning shows that it is to be taught later in the school year. Pupils in different year groups have covered an appropriate range of topics and developed geographical skills through the use of mapwork and fieldwork. There have been more detailed studies of the physical geography of parts of Britain, the Caribbean and Africa. The past written work of pupils, in all year groups, provides evidence of pupils' gains in factual knowledge and shows increasing understanding of the significant differences between locations, both in Britain and abroad, and the effects of landscape and climate on people's jobs and lives.

143. Pupils' response in lessons is good. They are interested in geography and take an active part in class discussions. The standard of presentation in written work, including tables and maps, is good. Pupils are attentive and maintain good concentration.

144. Teaching is at least satisfactory and is sometimes good. Where teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, their teaching provides a secure balance between giving information and providing opportunities for pupils to seek their own information. This was demonstrated when pupils in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, through role play, interviewed their peers in order to investigate the quality of environments. Teachers actively check on pupil progress during lessons and provide good learning support, especially for children with special educational needs.

145. Geography is adequately resourced. The school makes effective use of its buildings and grounds and the local environment for first hand practical learning. Fieldwork studies are an area of strength in the geography curriculum. The school has made good progress in geography since the last inspection. A detailed scheme of work, that indicates the work to be covered and the key skills to be taught at each stage, supports lesson planning. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment have been established. However, the practice of monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, including teaching, is still at an early stage of development.

## **History**

146. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 during the week of the inspection due to the timetabled arrangements for the subject. Judgements are based upon the lessons observed and evidence

obtained from documents, discussions and work in books and displays. Overall, attainment in history in both key stages is below that expected for pupils of their age.

147. From the work produced at Key Stage 1 pupils are able to sequence how their own lives have developed since they were born. They are aware of the distinction between the present and the past in their own lives and in the lives of others. However there is very little evidence of pupils' making progress through the key stage as pupils from both years do the same work.

148. At Key Stage 2 pupils are able to talk about aspects of the life of Ancient Greece. Older pupils are developing a satisfactory knowledge of the differences between aspects of life then and now and can explain the difference between a wealthy boy's life and that of a wealthy girl. Younger pupils are interested and able to talk about the difference between life in Sparta and that of Athens. However, the older pupils are only just beginning to give reasons for events. They are unable to identify connections between the Ancient Greek way of life and the gods they worshipped, even after prolonged prompting by the teacher. The level of work in books and folders is below the standard expected and shows that pupils make too little progress through the school. Too often the activities for the older pupils, such as colouring work sheets, make little demands upon them and do not lead to the development of the key elements of history. Where the activities made appropriate demands of the pupils, as in a lesson on the life of Ancient Greek boys and girls, they rose to the challenge and made good progress in developing their opinions and giving reasons.

149. The teaching observed ranged from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. In all the lessons observed planning showed clear learning objectives and in one lesson there was a good recap on what had taken place in an earlier lesson. Good elements in the teaching included the provision of activities that encouraged both research, as in the lesson about Athens and Sparta, and empathy, as in the lesson concerning boys' and girls' lives in Ancient Greece. Unsatisfactory features include a slow pace and lack of urgency to encourage pupils to complete their work and a lack of intervention by the teacher to improve the quality of the pupils' work. Other unsatisfactory features include not making clear to the pupils what they are to learn in the lesson, exactly what was expected of them and what would count as a good piece of work. In one lesson there was too little opportunity for pupils to discuss questions among themselves.

150. Most pupils behave well in class, although the behaviour and attitudes of some older boys causes disruption and hinders the flow of the lesson. Pupils do not maintain concentration during the writing part of the lesson.

151. The co-ordinator is part-time and does not have the opportunity to monitor work in lessons. She provides sound support for colleagues and has developed a useful scheme of work that includes the key elements. Monitoring the implementation of the scheme of work and pupils' work at both key stages to ensure it is taught well is a priority. There is a satisfactory resource bank for most of the history units and good use is made of external resource loans. Visits to places of historical interest and importance enhance greatly the history curriculum. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in history are underdeveloped.

#### **156. Information technology**

152. At the time of the inspection from lessons observed, evidence in files and displays around the school it was judged that pupils' overall attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations at both key stages.

153. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress with support. Pupils in Year 2 are able to use an art package to draw straight lines and in-fill sections with colour in the style of the French artist Mondrian. They then save and print their work. Year 3 and 4 pupils can highlight and drag text to enable them to edit their poem successfully. However, pupils are very slow in their use of the keyboard, which hinders progress in writing skills and slows the pace of their response. In Years

5 and 6 pupils make animated books. They are able to design the layout and then import text and graphics, some of which were animated by the pupils. It is planned to use the newly purchased digital camera to add short video clips to these books before they are completed. Pupils at Key Stage 1 use Roamers to learn the basic principles of programming and control. Key Stage 2 pupils are able to write programmes to control a series of light bulbs and sound thus producing a presentation on the connection between certain towns in Greece and the gods from Greek mythology. A series of bulbs light up the towns on a map of Greece, drawn by the pupils, while an animated voice explains the connection to each god in turn. Data handling is used successfully throughout the school to aid work in science and mathematics.

154. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Pupils practising their newly gained skills with support from the teacher or learning support assistant as required follow good whole-class demonstrations. Teachers and support staff have a sound understanding of the skills being taught and are able to support the pupils in their work. Software is used appropriately to reinforce basic numeracy and literacy skills during group-work sessions and there is evidence of pupils retrieving information from the internet and CD-ROMs to enhance work across the curriculum. In some classes pupils copy type hand written work onto the screen to save and print out. This is not a worthwhile activity and pupils should be encouraged to work straight onto the screen to facilitate editing as an ongoing process.

155. All staff and groups of children have their own e-mail addresses and use them both to import information and to link with other centres around the world. They are in contact with a children's hospital in Croatia, and a school in Seattle and Hong Kong.

156. Information technology has been a priority of the school since 1998. The school development plan clearly identifies the way the school is moving. The co-ordinator has made good use of the national initiative to improve the quality and quantity of computers available for the pupils and enable staff to reach a basic level of competence before starting the official training in September 2000. Following a successful bid for National Grid for Learning funding, the governing body and the Parent Teacher Association supported the initiative with additional finance resulting in a very successful upgrade in facilities. The classrooms have all been networked and linked to shared colour printing facilities. A good range of software is available on the hard drive. The new hardware and other facilities have raised the level of provision to an acceptable level within the school. It is well used to teach pupils age appropriate skills and then apply them in meaningful activities.

157. A new and appropriate whole-school scheme of work based upon guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is at an early stage of implementation. The co-ordinator works hard to support the delivery of the new scheme of work, working with class teachers on the best way to fit the appropriate skills training and software into the topic work. She discusses expectations for the age group and levels the resulting work. Staff have received training to increase their confidence to use the new facilities, including three staff meetings and a whole day's training with input from the local education authority's advisory service. There is good liaison with local secondary schools.

158. The co-ordinator has no job description to ensure the systematic implementation of strategic planning or to guide her in her roles and responsibilities. Currently there is no structured and systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' planning, use of hard and software and pupils' work. It is important, with such a heavy financial investment, that such a programme of monitoring and reporting to the governing body is implemented to ensure pupils are making good progress and the financial investment is having the desired impact on raising standards. A sound basis has been established to enable the school to make further progress and take full advantage of future national initiatives.

## **Music**

159. The overall attainment of most pupils at both key stages is above that expected for their age. The progress pupils make is also good, but for over a third of the children in the school who take advantage



of specialist tuition in instruments, or join in the extra-curricular recorders, orchestra and choir, progress is very good.

160. Pupils make particularly good progress in composing and performing. All have the opportunity to play a range of percussion instruments and many learn the recorder. Younger children learn to record their music using simple graphic scores. Many of the older pupils read formal musical notation competently and develop the quality of sound in their music-making with accuracy and expression. Pupils listen to and appraise music covering a wide variety of styles and from different times. There is a strong focus on European music, but less emphasis is placed on music from different cultures. The quality of singing in the school is of a high standard. Singing is at its best when the choir sing a well-practised song with enthusiasm, accurate intonation and incorporate a two-part harmony.

161. Pupils show very positive attitudes to the subject as demonstrated by their enthusiasm to participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Music plays an important part in daily assemblies and dance. Pupils concentrate and persevere when practising their skills and are proud of their performance. They are generally well behaved in both lessons and extra-curricular activity, and work well with one another.

162. The quality of teaching in music lessons is good at both key stages. Music specialists within and outside of the school undertake much of the class teaching. The school also makes considerable use of peripatetic music specialists offering tuition in violin, guitar, clarinet, trumpet and flute to examination standard. Liaison with specialist teachers is good. Planning for individual lessons is good and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Resources are adequate. Good use is made of the music room for small group work, but this is less satisfactory for class sessions when the space available often limits the opportunities for musical composition.

163. The large number and quality of extra-curricular activities in music, including the many performances for parents at local schools and music festivals, for charities and in the Cathedral make a very valuable addition to the school's curriculum in the subject.

164. The school has yet to produce a scheme of work, to ensure that teaching and learning builds on prior learning, as pupils move through the key stages. This was an issue raised in the previous inspection of the school. The school has identified its intentions to produce a scheme of work in the school development plan for 2000 – 2001. The role of the co-ordinator is not clearly defined and this also remains as a weakness since the last report.

## **169. Physical Education**

165. Attainment in physical education at both key stages is at least in line with expectations for pupils of this age and often better. Overall, it is a strength of the school. Pupils make satisfactory to very good progress. They are able to describe stretching exercises and to identify which stretches work which muscle groups. Pupils develop good games skills with balls and other apparatus through hockey and other games. Dance skills are developed, with pupils able to move appropriately to music and develop sequences. Pupils swim well and are able to develop the correct approach to different strokes. Pupils can evaluate their own work and the performance of others using appropriate vocabulary.

166. Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of physical education are good; they are enthusiastic and well motivated. Occasionally a few pupils become over-enthusiastic which can lead to inappropriate behaviour. Teachers deal with this in an appropriate manner.

167. Teaching is always satisfactory and often good with very good aspects. Lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations of the pupils. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject enables them to focus on developing pupils' skills by providing good activities and encouraging improvement. Pupils are challenged appropriately and good use is made of pupils' demonstration to raise standards. Teachers pay attention to ensuring safe practice.

168. There is a satisfactory whole-school curriculum plan that indicates which activities take place for each class during the year. The co-ordinator has produced a clear policy statement for the subject and an appropriate scheme of work for all the aspects of the physical education curriculum. However, the school needs to agree the time to be allocated to physical education within each year group. The activities provided include gymnastics, games, dance, athletics, swimming and outdoor and adventure activities. All pupils receive swimming instruction. Generous staffing and the ability grouping that this facilitates are fundamental to the pupils' success at swimming. The monitoring of teachers' timetables would ensure an appropriate balance of activity during the week so that swimming and games are not provided for pupils on the same day.

169. There is a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities that enriches the curriculum. Good links with the wider community, including those with Essex Cricket Club and The Saracens Rugby Club have been fostered through this area of the curriculum.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

170. During the inspection:

- 77 lessons or part lessons were observed, covering all subjects, classes and teaching groups.
- Approximately 70 hours were spent observing teaching activities, hearing pupils read, interviewing pupils and scrutinising work.
- Observations were made during assemblies, extra-curricular activities, registration, playtimes, lunchtimes and before and after school.
- Interviews were held with the chairman of governors, other governors, teachers, support staff, administrative staff and pupils.
- Representative samples of work of pupils from all year groups were examined in detail.
- Teachers' and the school records of pupils' progress, individual education plans and copies of reports were scrutinised.
- Representative pupils from all year groups were heard to read, discussions on mathematics and science were held with some pupils.
- A comprehensive range of documents was analysed, including policies, schemes of work, the school development plan and governors' reports.
- Budget figures were analysed.
- Attendance records were checked.
- Questionnaires were sent to all parents and their responses analysed.
- A parents' meeting was held prior to the inspection.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	277	4	48	8
Nursery Unit/School				

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	11.08
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.28

#### Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	195

Average class size:	30.77
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## Financial data

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	569,354
Total Expenditure	577,797
Expenditure per pupil	2,057
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,973
Balance carried forward to next year	31,530

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	284
Number of questionnaires returned:	84

### 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	51	45	2	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	52	43	4	1	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	33	35	10	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	19	61	13	2	4
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	36	52	6	6	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	46	11	4	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	46	44	7	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	44	11	5	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	61	38	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	46	42	11	1	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	60	36	2	2	0

### Other issues raised by parents

The split aged classes.  
Child protection issues.