

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKLANDS INFANT SCHOOL

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114882

Headteacher: Mrs. Alison Widgery

Reporting inspector: Graham Soar
Rgl's No. 10153

Dates of inspection: 22-May-2000 - 26 May 2000

Inspection number: 188335

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	7 Vicarage Road Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM2 9PH
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. Paul John
Date of previous inspection:	03/06/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Soar Graham	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Geography	The school's results and pupil's achievements.
		Information Technology	How well are pupil's taught?
			EO
Ibbitson Ron	Lay inspector		EAL
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
Bull Philippa	Team inspector	Mathematics	SEN
		Art	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Design and Technology	
		Physical Education	
Lauder Moira	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		History Religious Education	How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
		Music	Under fives

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 146 pupils the school is smaller than most other schools of its type nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. However, the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is well below the national average. Currently, there are no pupils with statements of educational need. The school is popular, with a number of pupils seeking admission from outside the catchment area, resulting in a broad social mix but with socio-economic indicators generally favourable.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Attainment on entry is above average. Performance in the Key Stage 1 SATs is well above national average. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, as is their general behaviour around the school. Policies and general curriculum frameworks provide a sound basis for pupils' personal development and the staff are very committed to the school and the pupils. The quality of teaching is good and staff morale high. The structures for the curriculum planning are sound. Schemes of work are in place and there is a clear planning and assessment framework. Leadership is good and there is a focus for high achievement throughout the school. In the most recent end of key stage tests and tasks, there is clear evidence that the high standards seen in class are reflected in the test scores. Significant improvements are evident on the 1999 results, particularly in mathematics. There is a comprehensive development plan with effective consultation and careful budget controls linked to developments. The school keeps parents informed and encourages their involvement. The vast majority of parents are pleased with the quality of education the school provides. Arrangements for support and care for pupils are very good. The school is inclusive in its policies and outlook towards the learning and development of all involved in the school. The school is well resourced and generously staffed. It is effective but at a relatively high cost, nevertheless the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils show excellent enthusiasm for learning and are willing to take responsibility as independent learners. They get on with their work, handle resources well and work with confidence.
- The very good ethos and commitment to the holistic development of pupils is provided by all who work in the school. Children are allowed to be children and learning is fun.
- Pupils' attainment is consistently above average; reading and writing scores are high.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good;
- It is an inclusive school, recognising and celebrating the achievements of all pupils, regardless of background or ability.
- The senior management team work well together and with the governing body.
- Oaklands is a learning school where pupils and teachers work hard to improve. Good opportunities are provided where pupils can learn in a safe, secure and attractive setting.

What could be improved

- Curriculum planning and schemes of work, particularly in terms of short-term planning, to provide clear guidance on what to teach and to what level, ensuring that the learning intentions are shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of the tasks and what is expected of them.
- Improve the effectiveness of individual assessment and target setting to support and challenge both individual and school targets.
- Continue to develop the roles of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the quality of pupils' learning and subject provision across the school.
- The development of Information and Communication Technology and its inclusion to support other subjects by improving the confidence and competence of teachers in the use computers and software in a wider range of applications.
- Provide a coherent programme for personal social and health education.
- Extend curriculum links with the junior school to support progression.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. Since then, the school has improved its development planning process. Now there is a good development plan, which focuses effectively on those areas in need of development. It identifies a range of success indicators to enable the senior management team and governors to monitor the progress of issues as they are worked on. Parents, governors and staff are actively involved in the planning process and there is good consultation. Financial planning is good and effectively linked to the development priorities. Contingency funding is appropriately identified. The school has put clear emphasis on staffing and support provision to maximise pupils' learning. This is however, at a high financial cost. The quality of the curriculum and the planning process has significantly improved since the last inspection. Broad learning objectives are identified and provide a focus for medium-term planning. However, some objectives still lack clarity for short-term planning in relation to identified outcomes. There is insufficient detail in teachers' plans to identify the intended learning outcomes targeted to specific levels, although in practice teachers provide a range of activities that challenge pupils appropriately. Teacher assessments are generally accurate and provide a good basis for planning for future work particularly in the core subjects. Further development of assessment is needed to ensure greater consistency in the foundation subjects as well as to support monitoring and evaluation of subject provision and pupils' progress. The school has maintained high levels of attainment in reading and writing and there is clear improvement in the quality of provision and standards for mathematics since the implementation of the numeracy strategy last year. There has been a good focus on skill development in both art and design and technology, through the use of a range of tools and media. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	A	A	A	B
Writing	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	B	B	B	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Targets for 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics lacked sufficient challenge since they have all been exceeded. Targets for Level 3 in 2001 appear to be more realistic. The school has maintained standards well above national averages in reading and writing. The school remains above the national average for mathematics and the downward trend in the mean point score over the last three years has been addressed in the latest 2000 test scores. There is no significant difference between performances of boys and girls. Particular strengths throughout the school are in pupils' reading, their creative writing and in the development of subject vocabulary where pupils talk with confidence about a range of subjects using the correct terminology at an appropriate level. Skill development is good and the quality of work in displays and in pupils' project work is mostly above average across all subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and learning; their enthusiasm for school is excellent.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is very good. Some older pupils show considerable maturity in their approaches to work and each other.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. From an early age pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities and to show initiative. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others respecting each other's views and feelings.
Attendance	Overall attendance is good, with attendance rates of 95 percent in line with national average and there are no unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good	N/A

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

The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. In 5 percent of lessons, teaching is very good and in a further 55 percent, teaching is good with many very good features. Teaching of the oldest and youngest pupils in the school is consistently good. The key to successful teaching throughout the school is the clear focus on subject specific skills and knowledge set within the variety of contexts. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is mostly good and the introduction of these two strategies has had a positive impact on pupils' learning particularly in mathematics. Both literacy and numeracy skills are developed effectively in other subjects. The needs of all pupils in the school are met very well. Teachers work very hard. Lesson preparation, organisation and use of resources, as well as management of pupils are all strengths.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curriculum provision is good. There is a strong commitment to the development of all aspects of pupils' learning. Planning identifies learning objectives in broad terms. However, identifying clear expectations in all subjects would enhance the good provision overall.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those who are more able, is good. Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are 14 pupils for whom English is an additional language. They make good progress and provision for them is very good. Achievements of individuals, regardless of ability or background, are recognised and celebrated.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is very good, building on the strong positive ethos within the school. Spiritual development is good and that of social, cultural and moral development very good. A structured programme for personal, social and health education is being developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a secure, caring and supportive environment where children work and play hard and learning is fun. Procedures for monitoring and supporting good behaviour and personal development are very good. Procedures for monitoring pupils' learning are less well developed.

The relationship the school has with parents is very good. Regular curriculum information as well as pupil progress reports provide parents with opportunities for full involvement in their children's learning. The quality of this information provided for parents, is very good. There are effective links with the partner junior school to ensure smooth transition when pupils are seven. Further curriculum links between subject co-ordinators in the infant and junior schools would enhance the already good pastoral links.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good strategic leadership and a clear focus for the educational direction of the school. Planned developments appropriately address areas in need of improvement. Monitoring and evaluation by curriculum coordinators are underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its strategic and statutory roles effectively in holding the school to account and in acting as a critical friend. Governors are actively involved in development planning and in monitoring progress.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Detailed analysis of baseline test data, reading scores and national testing provide the senior management team with a sound basis for setting individual pupil targets and monitoring core subject performance.
The strategic use of resources	The governing body and senior management team make good use of funding available to focus on planned developments. The school is adequately equipped to enable full coverage of the planned curriculum.

The school is generously staffed and the management has provided a clear focus for supporting pupils' learning through additional classroom assistants. All those working in the school share a common purpose and put high achievement at the centre of developments. Senior managers and the governors are clear about the strengths and areas for development. All teachers share in the management of the curriculum. Most are clear about their responsibilities, although monitoring and evaluating subject provision and pupil progress is at an early stage of development, particularly in the foundation subjects. Financial management is good and governors seek the principles of best value in carefully considered financial decisions and in the appointment of staff. Pupils' learning is at the heart of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is a good community, very caring and individuals are valued; • The school is welcoming, safe and secure; • Standards are good; • Staff work hard and appear to enjoy their work and the company of pupils; • Staff are enthusiastic and committed; • Good family atmosphere; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split-age classes with some inconsistency in some of the mixed-year class provision. • Medical room facilities; • Reading tends to be encouraged more than maths; • The time spent gathering on the carpet for the whole class teaching tended to waste time and cause unnecessary fidgeting;

The inspection team agrees with parents that the school is caring, welcoming, safe and secure and that standards in the school are good. Staff work hard to provide good learning experiences for pupils to meet their needs and to challenge them appropriately. Although mixed-age classes are not ideal, the organisation currently adopted by the school is effective in meeting the needs and abilities of all pupils. There is some inconsistency between year groups but, overall, the group organisation and educational provision for pupils are good. The age and ability range in each of the mixed age classes is quite narrow. Most teachers manage pupils effectively, although some pupils tend to fidget when they spend too long on the carpet, at the start of the day, before getting involved in the main focus of the lesson.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of pupils when they first start the school is generally above average. There is a wide ability range in each of the year groups but the average attainment as identified by the baseline assessment tests is above average in all classes. The younger pupils in the reception class have made very good progress since they have been in the school. A significant number of them have achieved the Desirable Learning Outcomes and are working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Some more able pupils have already achieved this level in speaking and listening and in reading and writing. In mathematics most pupils are able to solve simple addition and subtraction problems and are aware of the number bonds to ten, recognising and writing numbers. Their social development is good. Significant progress has been made in their attitudes and skills towards independence, most are able to concentrate on tasks and work collaboratively, taking turns and sharing. The reception teacher provides a range of worthwhile activities that clearly have a subject focus yet enable pupils to develop basic skills to support learning. A good example of this is the development of information and communication technology skills in association with tasks linked to science and mathematics. Pupils were able to use an art package to design a butterfly as well as make symmetrical models from coloured blocks. The range of activities mutually reinforced learning and pupils were clearly challenged and able to talk knowledgeably about symmetrical patterns as well as identify and name the body parts of a butterfly. They can also discuss its life cycle. The arrangements for literacy and numeracy ensure pupils achieve a good background in these skill areas. Pupils, through the various practical activities in art and design and technology, make good progress and achieve above expectations, developing appropriately in both fine and gross motor skills through the various structured activities and play, with large apparatus and toys.
2. Attainment in the end of Key Stage 1 assessments in reading and writing has remained well above national average for the last three years. On average pupils at the school are maintaining progress ahead of other pupils nationally by about two terms worth of learning in both reading and writing. Attainment in the previous inspection report indicated that pupils' attainment overall was in line with national expectations and frequently above. Since then, the school has made significant improvements in pupils' overall attainment and in all subjects there is clear evidence that the majority of pupils are consistently achieving standards above average.
3. Very few pupils have reading ages below their chronological age. In 1999 end of key stage assessments, reading scores were well above national average and above average when compared to similar schools. The high standards identified in the test scores are mirrored in the work seen in the school; pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books that they have read, the characters and their favourite parts of stories. From an early age pupils are encouraged to read and share books at home and in school. Standards in writing are above average and by the end of the key stage most pupils are secure in their sentence construction and use a wide vocabulary. A major strength of the school is the development of creative writing. Pupils feel free to explore story writing, sharing their contributions with others. Pupils in Year 1 wrote their own versions of the story 'Jasper and the beanstalk' with some amusing and creative results showing how well pupils are developing as independent writers. The wide range of opportunities for writing for different purposes provided in various subject contexts, ensures that pupils' literacy skills in writing are consistently reinforced to a good standard, in all year groups. The main weakness is in pupils' spelling. The difference between the schools performance and performance of pupils elsewhere is less for spelling than for reading and writing. The school's results for spelling in 1999 are clearly above both the Local Education Authority and national figures at Level 2 or above, but at Level 3 the school is only in line with the Local Education Authority and below national figures. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading but some still have difficulty with spelling and

writing. Nevertheless, in most cases these pupils are performing in line with national age-related expectations. Those pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of English.

4. The introduction of the structured frameworks for both literacy and numeracy has had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and their learning. This is more marked in mathematics than in English. Improvement in mathematics results in the latest tests, most recently completed, are supported by evidence of standards above expectations from pupils' work in class and in the displays around the school. Attainment in end of key stage mathematics test over the last three years shows that whilst performances in the school remain above the national average there has nevertheless been a slight decline in the average scores for mathematics. Pupils on average are still ahead of pupils nationally by over half a term but this gap has narrowed from a lead of over one and half terms in 1996. Evidence suggests that significant improvements have been made on the 1999 mathematics results with fewer pupils achieving the lower levels. Over 95 percent of pupils in the current Year 2 attain the national expectation (level 2 or above), with a much higher proportion of pupils attaining the intermediate Level 2b or above (82 percent) and 39 percent attaining Level 3, higher than in previous years. This represents a significant improvement, which the school has put down to the improved focus on mathematics brought about as a result of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy.
5. Teachers provide a range of activities and contexts to support and develop numeracy skills. In general, pupils perform equally well across the attainment targets but there are some weaknesses in pupils' ability to interpret data in various forms. Pupils willingly talk about their work and there is some good investigative mathematics taking place particularly in Year 1/2. Opportunities for pupils to explain alternative strategies when discussing mental problems during the oral mental starter are not always explored in full. This aspect of the numeracy strategy is not consistently addressed in all classes. Pupils in the reception class have a good grounding in understanding and using numbers. Most of them are able to construct and solve simple addition and subtraction sums as well as write numbers clearly. The on-going development of mathematics vocabulary through songs as well as in question and answer sessions is good. Year 1 pupils make their own board games devising their own rules and involving simple mental mathematics and repeated patterns. They also have a sound grasp of capacity and are able to compare volumes, using non-standard measures, to identify which containers have the largest or smallest volume. Year 2 pupils confidently order and sequence numbers up to 100 and could talk about place value, number patterns and bonds as well as square numbers up to 100. A significant number of pupils clearly understood the concept of square roots. Whilst most of Year 1 pupils are working in line with expectations there is clearly an acceleration in pupils' mathematical understanding and learning by the older Year 1 and the Year 2 pupils. By the end of the key stage the majority of pupils are working above expectations and overall standards in mathematics are good. Progress in mathematics is often good particularly in reception and towards the end of the key stage. Progress for those pupils with special educational needs is sound.
6. Standards in science are good overall. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 end of key stage teacher assessments, show the school to be above the national average at Level 2 and well above at Level 3. Standards of pupils' work throughout the school reflect the commitment given by staff to the increased focus on investigative science. There is clear evidence that standards in the current Year 2 show significant improvements on the 1999 scores, particularly at the higher levels associated with 'Materials and their Properties' and 'Physical Processes'. Throughout the school, attainment in science is at or above national expectations for the majority of pupils. There has been a slight decline in the proportion of pupils attaining the national expectations of Level 2 or above between 1996 and 1999. However, whilst there is no significant difference between boys and girls, girls have tended to do slightly better at maintaining higher standards than boys. The school has maintained attainment above the national average over the last four years, although performance data for pupils scoring Levels 2 or above, is below average in 1999 when compared to similar schools, at Level 3 the school is well above that of similar schools.

7. School targets set for 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics appear to have been insufficiently challenging, since without exception, all targets have been exceeded. Initial analysis of the most recent test and teacher assessment data indicate that all pupils currently in Year 2 have achieved Level 2 or above in reading and writing and 95 percent of pupils achieved Level 2 in mathematics. The percentage of pupils targeted to reach Level 3 was also exceeded. The targets for 2001 at Level 2 or above are also low but at Level 3 for reading and writing in 2001 these appear to be realistic. Mathematics targets for 2001 lack challenge at both Levels 2 and 3, but the school plans to review these in the light of current assessment data in the autumn term.
8. In 54 percent of the lessons seen, attainment is above age-related expectations from a majority of pupils and in the remaining 46 percent of lessons attainment is broadly in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 2 consistently perform above expectations in all subjects inspected. Attainment of the youngest pupils in reception is also generally above expectations. For those in Year 1 attainment is generally in line with expectations. Attainment throughout the school in art, design and technology and physical education lessons is broadly in line with expectations, whereas in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, information and communication technology and religious education attainment is mostly above expectations. Overall, when taking account of displays and work in pupils' books, attainment of pupils by the end of the key stage is above average. Good standards in subject knowledge, understanding and skills are achieved by the majority of pupils, reflecting achievement above expectations in all subjects, except physical education, where most pupils perform in line with expectations.
9. Standards of work seen in class and around the school in English, mathematics and science are good and reflect the high levels identified in teacher assessments. These high standards are supported by the effective use and development of the basic skills associated with literacy and numeracy set within the context of other subjects. A key strength throughout the school is the development of subject specific terminology which pupils use confidently and correctly in their discussion and responses to teachers' questions. Presentation of pupils' work is generally good and in line with pupils' abilities. They take a pride in the various storybooks, project folders and displays of their work. Pupils with special educational needs perform in line with age-related expectations in reading. These pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to write simple sentences and spell words using letter patterns and sounds. They have a sound grasp of the basic concepts in maths, working within national expectations.
10. The progress pupils make in lessons and over time is mostly sound and often good and is influenced by the overall good quality of teaching. The good progress made by pupils of all abilities is due in part to the range of appropriately challenging activities provided. There is a close match between the standards attained in lessons, the quality of teaching and the degree of progress pupils make. The best progress is clearly seen in the younger reception pupils and those in Year 2. The progress made by those pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. These pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge and understanding is good. The majority of pupils, regardless of age ability or background, work at pace with sustained concentration and interest, and respond well to the support provided. They participate in activities enthusiastically, working co-operatively and share resources. Pupils work well, using resources provided effectively to support their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour now, as in the last inspection, are very good and they still remain a considerable strength of the school. In 70 percent lessons seen, pupils' attitudes are very good and in all lessons they were at least sound. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and the youngest children leave their parents confidently. The interest pupils show in the activities provided is very good and their enthusiasm for learning is excellent. The vast majority of

pupils work with a sense of purpose and concentration, many of the older pupils having developed a positive work ethic. The majority of pupils are very attentive in lessons, listen well and make positive contributions, and are keen to become involved in the tasks set. Satisfactory attitudes and behaviour tend to be in Reception and Year 1 classes, where some pupils find it difficult to settle and listen to the teachers' instructions. Pupils are attentive in assembly, becoming very involved in, and excited by a story told by the visiting headteacher of the junior school.

12. Behaviour of the pupils in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils are managed well by teachers who provide lessons that are challenging, interesting and in most cases, fun. Pupils work hard, independently and collaboratively and in the vast majority of cases, enjoy what they are doing. They are tolerant, caring and polite to one another, willing to share and work individually or in small groups. Pupils behave well in lessons, are enthusiastic and feel confident to express their own opinions in the knowledge that wrong answers will not be ridiculed. They behave well at play time and lunchtime, helped by an effective system of rewards and sanctions. Supervision whilst pupils are at play is very good and pupils turn readily to the assistants for help, relationships are very good. Pupils approach visitors confidently and are polite. There have been no incidents of exclusions either temporary or permanent.
13. Pupils participate positively in daily routines. They become involved and are given responsibility through the system of leaders and helpers. They take their responsibilities seriously, carrying out tasks sensibly. Pupils show initiative taking responsibility for their own learning, demonstrating high levels of independence particularly by the end of Year 2. This is considered a strength of the school by the partner junior school. Classroom organisation and management supports pupils' independence, enabling them to select resources and organise their learning. Children are confident and able to work on their own or in small groups from a very early age. Pupils in the reception class chose their own materials and designs for a butterfly or caterpillar and cleared up well after the activity.
14. Personal development and relationships in the school are very good. Pupils play well together and are supportive of one another in the classroom. They are sensitive to and respect of others' feelings, values and beliefs. Reception pupils listened attentively during a lesson about a Hindu shrine, showing pleasure when the candle in the shrine was lit. Reception/Year 1 pupils responded well to the visit of a blind person and his guide dog, asking relevant questions linked to the working relationship of the guide dog and his handler. The inclusive atmosphere of the school helps to encourage all pupils, regardless of ability or background, to be supported and respected. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language all have their individual talents recognised and celebrated.
15. It is an implicit part of the school ethos to promote right and wrong and pupils have a clear understanding of this. They are aware of school rules and codes and the vast majority abide by them. They are clear about the consequences of their actions and teachers use opportunities, as they arise, to reinforce values and encourage pupils to see the effect of their actions on others. Pupils treat each other very well, and in discussions, are aware of procedures should they have a problem. They are confident that they would be dealt with effectively by the teachers or teaching assistants.
16. Attendance in the last inspection was, and still is, good. The attendance rate in 1999 was broadly in line with national averages, and the rate of unauthorised absences in the same year was well below. The school has a good system in place for monitoring absences, which is updated daily.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching overall is good. All teaching in the school is at least sound. In 5 percent of lessons teaching is very good and in a further 55 percent teaching is good with

many very good features. These grades represent an improvement on the previous inspection. Teaching of the oldest and youngest pupils in the school is consistently good and it is for these pupils that their learning and the progress they make, is generally best. The key to the success of those lessons that have good and very good features is the focus given by teachers to time-limited activities where pupils are challenged to complete a piece of work and then, with the class, they discuss the outcomes. Activities are planned with clear objectives in mind, although they are not necessarily matched to National Curriculum levels. Different tasks are targeted to meet the needs of the wide ability range of pupils in the groups using resources, support and teaching strategies effectively, to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils. In the best lessons teachers respond spontaneously to pupils' needs or act on situations in order to maximise learning. For example, a teacher made sure that pupils were all prepared and packed ready to go home before she started an religious education lesson, knowing that the planned activity would result in a moving experience for all pupils. In this case pupils were visibly moved by the experience of setting up a shrine in the classroom and the development of spirituality was planned and delivered with very good effect. On another occasion older pupils observed water vapour forming a mist over the playground as the sun dried out the puddles following a shower. Teachers of these older pupils grasped this moment and gave their pupils an opportunity to observe and discuss what was happening as the water evaporated. This spontaneous moment would have been lost, but it was effectively used to build on pupils' previous science experiences. In the best lessons the learning intentions are clarified and shared with pupils so that they know what to do and what is expected of them, but this is not always the case.

18. Preparation and organisation of activities and pupil groupings is good and in most cases effective use is made of teachers' knowledge of pupils' abilities and previous experiences. The use of learning resources is good throughout the school. Effective use is made of teachers' expertise to support each other in terms of joint planning or with curriculum guidance. Staff work very hard to provide a range of activities that support pupils' learning. In most cases, good use is made of adult support from teaching assistants, parents, governors or students to free the class teacher to give more focused support or direct teaching to other groups. The policy of the school to maximise the use of support staff is having a positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school.
19. The introduction of the both the literacy and numeracy strategies has had a marked positive impact on both teaching and the quality of learning in the school. The school uses the literacy hour flexibly, building in plenty of opportunities to support creative writing, which is a significant strength of the school. The quality of teaching numeracy is mostly good. Lessons follow more closely to the structured framework, although there are some inconsistencies in the development of the oral mental starter where not all staff use this time to maximum impact to support pupils' learning. The opportunities for teachers to probe pupils' mathematical understanding, challenging them to think of different strategies to solve numerical problems are not always taken. In the best lessons, teachers challenge and question pupils to think for themselves rather than to provide the answers for them, which sometimes occurs in an attempt to save time.
20. A key strength in teaching in all classes, is the ability of staff to maintain the focus on specific subjects yet at the same time integrate and develop other skills. The planned development of literacy and numeracy in the context of other subjects occurs naturally and pupils use literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) skills in a variety of contexts. However, the range and use of ICT programs has been identified as an area for further development by the school. Teaching promotes learning across the ability range and pupils with special educational needs and those that have English as an additional language are supported effectively through a range of strategies. The school has given particular attention to promoting the learning of more able pupils and the range of activities provided for them ensures that these pupils are challenged effectively.
21. Teachers in general have high expectations of pupils. In most cases these high expectations are put to good effect to plan appropriate activities. There is however, some inconsistency in

the rate of progress in pupils' learning across the school, largely due to the variation in the focus of planning. Whilst all teachers identify objectives in their medium-term planning these are often too broad and not shared consistently with pupils. Therefore, in those lessons that are sound overall, not all pupils know the purpose of the tasks or what is expected of them. Where both teaching and learning are very good, teachers make these points clear to pupils. Staff intuitively use a variety of strategies to support pupils' learning, even though the identified objectives are not always clear.

22. The framework for planning is not consistently implemented across the school, and with the lack of clarity in relation to expected outcomes, this makes it difficult for subject co-ordinators to monitor pupils' learning to ensure that the level of work is appropriate. In a significant number of lessons, teachers focus on planning activities to cover content or skills as defined in the scheme of work. They tend to focus on what they are to teach, without giving sufficient emphasis in the planning to the impact of the approaches they adopt on pupils' learning, by considering the level to which pupils are expected to respond. In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge of the pupils to focus support, resources or change of activities to enable pupils of differing abilities and needs to make progress at an appropriate pace.
23. The quality of learning is good in 53 percent of lessons and sound in 47 percent. Where learning is good, pupils acquire new knowledge and skills at an appropriate pace. The vast majority of pupils show very good intellectual and creative effort particularly in creative writing, science and geography. In most other subjects pupils show good effort and work productively. The key strength in pupils' learning across the majority of subjects is the interest, concentration and independence they have. However, where there are variations in strategies for pupil management, sometimes pupils lose concentration. There is a measurable difference in the rate of progress that pupils make in terms of the quality and quantity of work between some classes containing pupils of the same year group. This is directly related to the variation in planning, the clarity of the expected outcomes, the differing styles of teaching and strategies for pupil management. Team-teaching strategies adopted throughout the school are effective. Spontaneity of response to pupils' needs, including the development of spirituality through awe and wonder, is clearly met through the close co-operative work between teachers and between teachers and their teaching assistants.
24. The quality of teaching in the majority of core and foundation subjects is good. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology and in physical education. Nevertheless, pupils make appropriate progress in both these subjects and achieve well, particularly in design and technology.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

25. A broad, rich and relevant curriculum is provided which meets statutory requirements, including those for pupils aged five and under. The skills, expertise and interests of the teachers enhance the quality of the curriculum provided. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are planned and taught to support and challenge the needs and interests of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those who are high achievers. The curriculum has good breadth and balance across all subjects and a broad range of motivating, stimulating and relevant activities and experiences is offered in all subjects. Breadth and balance in the curriculum is reflected in class work, in classroom displays and around the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well through the curriculum and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
26. The National Curriculum is the basis for the school's curriculum, which is generally well planned. The curriculum subject guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been used as the structured framework to give an overview of what is to be taught during the year, term by term and in which year groups, in most subjects. Appropriate attention is given to the planning for mixed year classes to avoid gaps or repetition in provision. There have been good improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. Schemes of work have been established for all subjects, and a programme of review, to ensure the

requirements of the revised National Curriculum 2000 are being addressed, is almost complete. The move towards stating broad learning objectives in termly plans has been a positive development. There are very good strategies to ensure all pupils' learning needs are met through skilled teaching, effective support from other staff and of well-planned activities and tasks. However, the specific learning objectives for groups or individuals are not always noted on teachers' written plans. An area for development, therefore, is to identify specific objectives in the written weekly plans for all subjects, and to indicate the related National Curriculum levels of attainment applying to the targeted groups of pupils.

27. Both the National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies are implemented appropriately and are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in the development of mental mathematics, although in some cases more could be made of this aspect of the numeracy strategy. There are good literacy and numeracy links with other subjects, most notably in history, geography and science.
28. The school does not provide extra-curricular activities. This is not considered to be a weakness by parents. However, arrangements to have visitors and visits out of school are very well planned and are particularly effective and enriching in their support of the curriculum. Visitors include storytellers, musicians, staff from museums and the Essex Wildlife Trust. Visits are made to the supermarket, local places of worship, local museums and other places of historical interest. Although no formal homework is set, there are high expectations from both parents and the school that pupils read regularly at home. The school is very focused in encouraging and supporting parents to assist their children's learning at home, especially the regular sharing of books to read and enjoy, as well as playing mathematical games, and in the holiday, carrying out some investigative or research work.
29. The school is very successful in ensuring that the curriculum is inclusive of and equally accessible to all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age or ability. The full range of curriculum activities and experiences is made available to every pupil, generally within the classroom environment with some provision for short sessions of targeted support in quiet areas outside the rooms. Pupils benefit from what the school provides to meet their individual needs and interests.
30. There is no structured programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), but the school has already identified this as an area for development in the school development plan. However, very good support for pupils' development exists in the everyday life of the school. Very positive staff-pupil relationships enable appropriate intervention by teachers to address sensitive or difficult issues as they arise, including sex education, frequently using opportunities that occur naturally in topic work. Attention is given to drug misuse through references to keeping safe and healthy. Due reference is made by teachers to the age and maturity of the pupils. The school works effectively to the principles of a health-promoting school in which pupils' self-esteem is paramount.
31. The local community contributes significantly to pupils' learning through the well-planned programme of visits and visitors, including using the local streets, shops, houses, places of worship and residents, to support history, geography and science studies. Pupils take an active role in the local arts and music festivals, enhancing their creative learning further. There are links with local pre-school settings, and with the elderly in the community. There is good liaison with the local college of further education, with student placements being a regular feature in relation to early years education. A particularly positive link is the opportunity for pupils to take part in physical education sessions led by students following a sports leader course. Effective and productive links have been established with the junior school to which the vast majority of pupils transfer. These links have tended to focus largely on supporting pupils during transition from the infant to junior school but more in depth curriculum links are planned to support subject progression. The headteacher of the junior school makes regular visits to lead assemblies and has supported pupil learning, for example, with design and technology workshops. Pupils have a range of opportunities to visit and share in the life of the junior school.

32. Despite the lack of a structured programme, for PSHE, the provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is, in practice, a significant strength of the school. Thus, the very good provision identified in the last inspection is being maintained. The provision actively promotes activities, experiences and interventions to enhance pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. In addition, it promotes opportunities for pupils to develop the ability to reflect on and understand relationships and feelings, the social skills required to communicate and work with others, and the values and beliefs of self and others. The mission statement and aims of the school help to create a secure, caring and purposeful ethos, in which all pupils are valued, respected and treated with courtesy. The aims of the school are reflected in the life and work of the school. The calm and orderly atmosphere in and around the school supports all aspects of pupils' personal development very well.
33. Provision for spiritual development is good. Through the daily life and work of the school, religious education, assemblies and collective worship, pupils are effectively supported in their development and understanding of values and beliefs. In assemblies and religious education lessons for example, there are opportunities to reflect on values such as the importance of friendship and belonging to a group, and caring for and being considerate of others, including their feelings. Pupils are provided with opportunities to consider what people believe, in particular, developing their knowledge and understanding of a range of world faiths, customs and traditions. In lessons, teachers are skilled in creating a sense of awe and wonder. For instance, in a science lesson when Year R class were preparing a fruit salad, their attention was drawn to the fact that they were the first people ever to see inside that particular piece of fruit.
34. High standards are set for pupils' moral development, with high expectations of appropriate and acceptable behaviour. Very good provision is made to promote pupils' moral development, in helping them to know right from wrong. A very good understanding of morality is established with pupils. When moral issues arise, they are discussed with sensitivity. Staff and pupils share a clear understanding of the agreed code of conduct and behaviour, resulting in very good behaviour in class, around the school, in the playground and on visits. Pupils know and understand how and when sanctions are applied and when praise is offered and deserved. They are made fully aware of the importance of being fair and reasonable, and being respectful of others, living organisms, class resources and their school environment. These values and attitudes are successfully developed and demonstrated in their everyday life and work at school; for instance, during School Grounds Week.
35. Provision for the social development of pupils is very good, within the caring and supportive school ethos. There are clear expectations of pupils to treat people, including visitors, in a respectful, polite and friendly way, and these are understood and followed. Adults in school, including parent helpers, are good role models in their dealings with pupils. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work both independently and together, to share and take turns, and to accept responsibility through the daily system of being 'leaders and helpers'. Class rules have been developed and are displayed for reference.
36. The school has a very positive and active approach to the aspect of cultural development, using the planned schemes of work, and a range of interesting and enriching activities and experiences, including the good feature of having a programme of visits and visitors. The school is very successful in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural customs and traditions of their own community and of the cultural and ethnic diversity of their multicultural society. For example, a Muslim parent demonstrated to the whole school, through role-play, the traditional celebration of the festival of Eid. Religious celebrations of major world faiths are recognised and celebrated. The pupils work with visiting artists, musicians, writers and storytellers. There are very useful sets of curriculum resources and artefacts reflecting European and other cultures. The school book collection provides good information about different cultures and traditions and reflects positive images of different ethnic groups. These resources enhance the work of the pupils.
37. The support for personal development overall is highly effective in promoting and developing

pupils' self-esteem, in their having positive feelings of self-worth, self-image and self-confidence and seeing themselves as special members of their community and the wider multicultural society. 'Circle Time' has been introduced since the last inspection and, although it is at an early stage of development, it is proving an effective strategy in supporting pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The provision of support given to pupils and the concern for their welfare is very good and is much appreciated by parents. The school has continued to maintain its caring ethos commented on in the previous inspection report and this aspect of the school's life and work continues to be a noticeable strength. The encouragement, care and support given by staff and adult helpers enables pupils to feel secure in the school environment and to concentrate on their studies. There is a mutual respect between teachers, support staff and children that contributes greatly to pupils' learning and personal development.
39. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting both good behaviour and regular attendance. Parents are diligent in advising the school when children cannot attend, but where there are no explanations for absence, the school contacts parents promptly. A close link is maintained with the Educational Welfare Officer who investigates cases of pupils having a record of irregular attendance. The importance of good attendance is promoted effectively through letters to parents, the Governors' Annual Report and the school prospectus.
40. Health and safety measures within the school are very good. The school reinforces, through its policies and action, a health-promoting focus as part of its holistic approach to pupils' education and personal development. All measures associated with pupils' welfare, health and safety, including arrangements for child protection are very good. Supervision of pupils whilst they work and play is very good. There is a qualified first aider on the staff, and parents welcome the support and care given to their children if they are ill. Road safety is taught to enable children to acquire the knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes necessary for their safety. This aspect is seen as being a joint role between school and parents and is a further example of the school's care for its pupils and joint working with parents. Governors have taken reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of staff and pupils. Site maintenance staff are very supportive and provide an environment where adults and pupils working in the school are able to enjoy clean and attractive surroundings.
41. Child protection arrangements are very good. The headteacher, as the named person responsible for child protection, ensures that all staff have received appropriate training. Staff are vigilant in the care and concern they show to pupils. Good relationships are maintained with the appropriate external agencies whose assistance is sought when necessary. There are very good procedures for the support of children with special educational needs and for those who do not have English as their first language. The school's assessment procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils with special education needs are good. Teaching assistants are given weekly targets for each pupil and are responsible for monitoring their progress. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are reviewed regularly by the class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), and time allocated to pupils is changed according to individual need. Pupils' needs are identified by the class teacher and referred to the SENCO who carries out further assessment and draws up an IEP in consultation with the class teacher and parents. Assessment information is used effectively to inform planning and monitor pupil progress. Teachers effectively build individual targets into the differentiated activities offered to the pupils.
42. The development of a structured programme for personal, social and health education is part of the school's current development plan and although there are no formal curriculum arrangements in place to provide a planned programme of activities at present, provision for this area is good. Most teachers, through their everyday contact with children, address many of the issues associated with this aspect of pupils' development. Teachers know their pupils well and monitor their personal development on a day-by-day basis as well as through class records. Staff are fully aware of the individual needs and strengths of pupils in their care.
43. Formal arrangements for assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are variable. They are good in the core subjects and towards the end of the key stage, but assessment information in relation to foundation subjects is not so detailed. In English and mathematics,

there are good on-going assessment arrangements with regular target setting procedures building on evidence from initial baseline and other testing. Pupils are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and their individual targets are displayed in the main hall. This information has yet to be acted on by class teachers, in order for them to build into teaching programmes activities that promote and monitor the progress individual pupils make against their identified targets. Arrangements for standardising teacher assessments are good and teacher assessments and test scores in mathematics, reading and writing have been in close agreement for a number of years. Some cross key stage standardisation takes place but this aspect of progression in assessment is an area which could be further developed along with other curriculum links to complement the already very good pastoral links the school enjoys with the local junior school.

44. Transfer of information between key stages is good, particularly in terms of information related to those pupils with special educational needs and those that do not have English as a first language. Planned discussions also take place with class teachers about the programmes of support for these pupils. Transfer of information for other pupils between year groups at present lacks consistency. Records of reading scores, tests and reports to parents are generally clear. However, details of progress that pupils make against individual targets or in different aspects of foundation subjects are less clear. Some teachers provide dated examples of work with annotated notes identifying the context and areas for development but this is not always the case.
45. Some teachers have a good understanding of the quality and quantity of work required of each National Curriculum level, particularly in the core subjects. Knowledge of National Curriculum level descriptions and their use in identifying both teaching objectives and learning outcomes is not consistently understood by all staff in all subjects. Hence, the links between assessment and planning are not readily made. In practice, most teachers plan activities to challenge and meet the needs of pupils. However, identification of learning objectives in medium and short-term planning is not sufficiently clear to enable subject co-ordinators to monitor effectively the quality of learning taking place in their respective subjects. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made in this aspect of the school's work in setting up procedures to monitor pupils' academic attainment and progress since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school strives to improve further the very good links already forged with parents. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in parents' perceptions of the school as noted from the large number of positive responses to the parent questionnaire. Their views are sought regularly about the on-going developments of the school. Parents are very positive about the recent consultation and involvement in the shared process of developing the school's mission statement and aims. They value the welcoming, caring and inclusive environment where there are high expectations of children to be independent, have good behaviour and a good attitude to work, and to show respect, tolerance and care for others. Parents are very supportive of their children being expected to work hard, but equally, that 'they are allowed to be children and play hard too'. Parents are well aware of the broad, educational curriculum on offer and are very pleased that, in the main, their children are eager and enthusiastic about learning, particularly reading, creative writing and areas of termly topic work. Since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, parents have noted a marked development of a positive attitude to mathematics at home and in school. A home-school agreement, signed by parents, identifies the expectations for the school's responsibility to value, respect and develop the pupils, while the focus for parents is an encouragement to work in partnership with the school. Workshops and handouts for parents are provided as guidance on curriculum support at home, especially for reading. Most parents are very responsive to the school's encouragement to support their children's learning by, for instance, sharing books, carrying out science experiments and by talking about mathematics. The school encourages parents to help in the school and several do so on a regular basis, mostly by assisting pupils in the classroom. For example in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, a parent

helped pupils working on a computer to do graphs of a road traffic survey. Parents provide good assistance in classes and on visits out of school. During the inspection, parents and pupils from the reception class visited the local Tesco's shopping store to see how fruit was packed and cared for.

47. The opportunity to choose early entry to reception class for younger four-year-olds is welcomed and parents believe that it has been a good investment in terms of children's progress. Overall, parents are very pleased with their children's progress and believe that the school has high standards.
48. Parents are provided with a range of very good information about the school, its curriculum developments and their children's work and progress. The home-school reading diary gives effective, on-going feedback to parents and provides a very productive and consistent two-way communication link. A planned time each Friday when parents can speak with class teachers is useful. Parents of children with special educational needs or other needs, including having English as an additional language, are supported well and are fully involved in identifying and reviewing individual education programmes. Class assemblies and an annual summer term open evening are effective in providing opportunities for the work of all classes to be viewed and celebrated by the children, families and friends. Parents like the comprehensive annual written reports that include outlines of the termly topics and activities. The reports give an overview of attitudes and progress in all National Curriculum subjects and in personal and social development. There is clear evidence of improvement in the reporting process as targets are now set as 'ways forward' for English, mathematics and science. Children and parents are invited to reflect and comment on work, progress and targets. The reports provide a very useful framework for discussion about progress and how parents can support at home. Parent-teacher consultation evenings are arranged for the autumn and spring terms.
49. The thriving Parents and Friends Association regularly organises social, fun and fund-raising events which both promote a sense of community and give good financial support to the school. The financial contributions have a positive impact on learning through the purchasing of learning resources; for example, two computers and printers have been supplied recently.
50. There is a very strong commitment by the school to involve parents in their children's learning and life in school, with a clear and very positive response from parents to support learning at home. This partnership of parents and staff working together is invaluable in contributing to the learning of all pupils. In particular, parents felt reassured over the transitional arrangements made between the infant and junior schools where regular contacts and visits are made by staff to ensure smooth transition.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The school aims, through its mission statement and policies, to secure a caring family atmosphere as a base from which the children in the school can confidently continue to develop as self-reliant individuals. The school values the rights of individuals to be unique, to excel in different ways and to progress at different rates. Children in the school are equally valued regardless of gender, background, ethnicity, belief or ability and it seeks to guide every child to achieve to his or her full learning potential. The school is very successful in meeting its stated aims. This has been achieved through the strong leadership shown by the headteacher. She provides a clear focus for educational developments with appropriate priorities given to curriculum developments that ensure the school maintains its current lead in overall standards when compared to both the Local Education Authority and schools nationally. The headteacher, senior management team, governing body and staff, work very effectively together as a team. The senior management builds on the strengths of individuals to support and maximise the potential of all to achieve the high quality of education for the pupils at Oaklands Infant School.
52. There is a clear and well thought out development plan. The development plan has been

constructed with consultation of both parents and governors. This practice is very good and ensures that both parents and governors are fully involved in the decision making process and are aware of the major issues to be addressed and the relative costs of development in terms of time and finance. This development plan addresses the main areas in need of improvement and/or development. It identifies a range of success indicators to enable senior managers and governors to monitor the progress. Governors monitor progress effectively through a programme of regular focused visits and commissioned reports from the staff on the progress in key areas being developed. The governing body fulfils its statutory role effectively. Analysis of the school's performance in the national testing programme and in the regular assessment of pupils, matched against standardised scores, ensures the school has adequate information on which individual and school targets can be judged. However, the targets set so far, appear to be under valuing the work of pupils, since all targets for 2000 have already been achieved.

53. The staff development programme builds on the identified needs of individual staff and whole school issues. The headteacher has been on the OFSTED self-evaluation programme and has used this knowledge to provide a support programme to develop co-ordinators confidence in monitoring and evaluating curriculum provision, quality of pupils' learning and standards attained in the respective subjects. Monitoring and evaluation at co-ordinator level is currently under developed but there is some effective practice on which the school can build. Nevertheless, the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development.
54. The leadership, management and co-ordination of the programme to support pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is a strength of the school. The co-ordinator is currently following an Advanced Management Skills course, which is impacting positively on the work of the school. Resources are good, particularly those for language development, and they are managed efficiently and effectively to support learning. A draft action plan is in place, which clearly identifies priorities for training and development. Teaching assistants are well managed, trained and deployed. Procedures for the identification of pupils' needs and monitoring progress are good, and individual education plans are in place for both individuals and groups of pupils. Training provided by the co-ordinator is beginning to ensure a consistency of approach across the school. Since the last inspection there has been significant progress in the development and management of special educational needs in the school. The number of teaching assistants has increased; they are well trained and work effectively as a team. The attitudes in school towards those pupils with special education needs, according to the senior staff, are more positive. Pupils' needs are more effectively identified and monitored, and new resources and ideas have been introduced. In-service training in behaviour management and reading skills has been provided for all staff.
55. Resources for learning in other areas are good. The school is well provided for, with good quality books in classrooms and in the library and there is a wide range of reading material in the early years and throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is a satisfactory ratio of computers to pupils, which is expected to improve later this year when the school qualifies for a grant from the National Grid for Learning. Improvements in the range of software to extend pupils' referencing and research skills, would enhance provision. There is a very good selection of resources in other subject areas that is sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. Learning resources are well used and easily accessible.
56. Accommodation is sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum and is generally satisfactory. Most classrooms are suitable for the class sizes with the exception of the two demountable classrooms where accommodation is cramped. The main building is in a good state of repair but the demountable classrooms require attention and money has been allocated for this. The school is fortunate in being situated on the site of an old vicarage garden, containing many mature trees, which creates a very pleasant learning environment. The playground is large and attractive and there is a smaller grassed area. The school hall is well equipped with apparatus for physical education and is sufficiently large to accommodate

the whole school. There is an attractive library, which houses a variety of reference resource materials to enhance pupils' learning through the use of a range of different media. The wild life area complete with pond is used to enhance work in the curriculum and the school is involved in 'Learning through Landscapes' during the annual 'School Grounds Week'. Reception children enjoy a separate play area with a new cushioned surface. The school is well maintained, clean and free from litter and is a pleasant environment in which children can learn and play together. The school lacks a medical room and although ramps and handrails are in place for pupils with physical disabilities, there is no disabled persons' toilet.

57. Overall, provision for learning resources and accommodation effectively supports pupils' learning. The governing body works hard to seek the best for the school and financial matters are carefully controlled, managed and monitored. Priority is given to staffing, particularly teacher assistants, to support pupils' learning. Although this is done at a cost, there are clear educational advantages in the decision to enhance learning support. The principles of best value are applied in most of the decision-making processes.
58. The school has a very good reputation with its parents and the local community. Attainment is above average and performance in end of key stage assessments is well above the national average. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, as is the standard of behaviour around the school. Policies and curriculum frameworks provide a good basis for pupils' personal and academic development. Spiritual moral, social and cultural development is very good. Leadership and management are good. The overall quality of teaching and learning are good and there is a strong commitment in the school to improve further and build on the already high standards achieved. The overall effectiveness of Oaklands is good and although this is at a relatively high cost in comparison to national figures, the funding provided is in line with other similar schools in the Local Education Authority. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The school has significant strengths in many areas. The key issues for development have already been identified in the school development plan and both the senior management team and the governing body are aware of the strengths and areas for development. In order for the school to continue to maintain the high standards of attainment already established and to further build on the good progress made since the last inspection the headteacher, staff and governors of the school should:

1. Continue to develop schemes of work and curriculum planning particularly in terms of short-term planning by:
 - providing teachers with clear guidance on what to teach and to what level.
 - ensuring that the learning intentions are shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of the tasks and what is expected of them.

Paragraphs :- 21, 22, 23, 26, 69, 83, 84, 89, 94, 98, 111, 120,

2. Improve the effectiveness of individual assessment and target setting to support and challenge both individual and school targets by :
 - ensuring all staff understand the quality and quantity of work required of individual levels in all subject areas.
 - that displays and pupils' work and are dated and matched to specific objectives consistently in order to provide an on-going record of pupils' achievements.

Paragraphs :- 7, 43, 44, 45, 52, 79, 83, 84, 89, 111, 120,

3. Continue to develop the roles of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the quality of pupils' learning and subject provision across the school, building on existing examples in English.

Paragraphs:- 53, 79, 84, 104, 120, 125,

4. Provide a coherent programme for personal, social and health education.

Paragraphs:- 30, 32, 37, 42,

5. Continue the development of information and communication technology and its inclusion within the curriculum to support other subjects by:

- improving the confidence and competence of teachers in the use of IT in a wider range of applications.
- ensuring a wide range of resources to cover all aspects of the programmes of study.

Paragraphs:- 20, 55, 84, 98, 106 to 111,

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

1. Extend curriculum links with the junior school to support progression.

Paragraphs:- 31

2. Improve standards in physical education in line with other academic developments.

Paragraphs:- 8, 24, 116 to 120,

3. Improve standards in spelling.

Paragraphs:- 3, 67

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	5.3	55.3	39.4			

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	146
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.0	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	23	24	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	21
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	44	44	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94	94	91
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	43	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91	91	94
	National	82	86	87

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	86
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	29.2

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	94

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	272867
Total expenditure	268723
Expenditure per pupil	1841
Balance brought forward from previous year	10174
Balance carried forward to next year	14318

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	146
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76.0	24.0	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71.0	27.0	0	0	2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56.0	38.0	2.0	0	5.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48.0	41.0	10.0	0	2.0
The teaching is good.	73.0	24.0	2.0	0	2.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52.0	44.0	3.0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68.0	25.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57.0	33.0	5.0	0	5.0
The school works closely with parents.	56.0	38.0	3.0	0	3.0
The school is well led and managed.	68.0	27.0	0	0	5.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58.0	32.0	2.0	0	8.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19.0	32.0	24.0	5.0	19.0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. The school provides a seamless curriculum linking the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the National Curriculum. Attainment of most pupils when they first start at the school is above average and although there is a wide ability range in the reception class, the average standard attained on the baseline assessment is above average. Many pupils in the reception class are already working at Level 1 in relation to the National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, all pupils in the reception class would be five years old before September. All these children follow a curriculum that closely links the areas of learning experiences and skill developments associated with the Desirable Learning Outcomes to specific subject knowledge and skills of the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. The quality of the curriculum experience for these younger pupils is good. The attainment and progress they make in the various activities are reported under each of the separate subjects throughout the report.

ENGLISH

61. Overall, attainment in English is above average. The school works hard to maintain the high standards achieved. Attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing tasks as identified on the baseline assessment when pupils first start school is above average. Pupils in the reception class quickly make good progress and by the end of the foundation stage many pupils are working at National Curriculum Level 1 in most aspects of English.
62. In 1999, in the standard assessment tasks at the end of the key stage, pupils' performance in both reading and writing were well above the national average and have remained so over the last three years. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' results were above average. There was no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment in either reading or writing.
63. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards achieved in speaking and listening are above average for the majority of pupils. They express ideas thoughtfully and articulately, give clear explanations about what they are doing and why and make confident and eager responses to teachers' questioning. They formulate their own questions carefully, relevant to the context of the lesson. Pupils are keen to share ideas and suggestions. They speak within a large group with confidence. For instance, in the plenary at the end of a literacy hour, Year 2 pupils read aloud poems they had written about a snail and explained why they had chosen certain descriptive words. Pupils listen attentively and respond well to teachers' instructions and explanations. They listen carefully and respectfully to contributions made by other pupils and they listen quietly to poems and stories. Teachers provide a good variety of speaking and listening opportunities; for example, they plan for pupils to speak to a range of listeners, both adults and children, in class and assemblies. They organise the use of audio and videotapes, and have storytellers in school. As a result, pupils make good progress in the development of speaking and listening skills.
64. Standards in reading are above average. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils read aloud with confidence. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and expressively. Throughout their time in school, pupils gain a good knowledge of letter sounds and blends and are familiar with key words met in their reading and writing. Most pupils use that knowledge in attempts to read unknown words. Some pupils at the early stages of reading and older pupils who are lower attainers use picture and phonic cues successfully to help them understand the text. Whilst the average attaining pupils are reasonably confident in tackling unfamiliar words using a range of strategies, lower attainers read hesitantly and tend to wait for help. Many pupils recognise and self-correct their reading errors. By the end of the key stage, pupils talk with enthusiasm about the book they are

reading, their favourite character and important parts of the text. They enjoy talking about favourite types of books, although only the higher attaining pupils could refer to their knowledge of different authors. Pupils of higher and average ability know how the library is organised and how to access information books, with an understanding of contents pages, an index and glossary.

65. Teachers plan a good range of opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate reading skills, including effective and enjoyable paired reading sessions. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on the development of skills through the use of a wider range of teaching methods and with more enjoyable approaches to phonics. There are higher expectations among staff resulting in clearer and appropriately differentiated work to meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able. There is a high expectation from both parents and teachers that pupils read regularly at home. Posters promoting reading in school and at home are displayed around the school. Pupils make good progress in reading overall as a consequence of the effective teaching.
66. Writing standards are above average. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are secure in constructing sentences with accuracy and using correct punctuation. They understand the structure of story writing. They have good vocabulary, which helps them to tackle extended writing in an interesting and creative way. They write for a variety of purposes and audiences, as demonstrated, for example, in the class book of poems 'My Magic Box' by Year 1/ 2 and the reports written by Year 2 describing the vicar's visit. They use a range of strategies to help them spell and, generally, their handwriting is well formed, supporting sound presentation skills.
67. Throughout the key stage, there is an appropriate emphasis on the practice and consolidation of handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills. Strategies for the learning of spelling are taught routinely, with pupils encouraged 'to have a go', allowing them to take risks without fear of failure. Although spelling is the weakest aspect of Attainment Target 3 - 'Writing'; standards in spelling are nevertheless broadly in line with expectations. The structured framework of the Literacy Hour has enabled teachers to be more focused in planning appropriate activities and tasks to support writing skills. Stimulating, exciting and appropriate contexts are provided for creative and imaginative writing in all classes. For example, Reception pupils made up a class story about 'Charlotte's Piggy Bank', and Year 2 pupils wrote individual stories entitled 'Meet the Giants'. Creative writing across the key stage is impressive and is a strength of the school. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of writing, supported by good teaching. Overall, standards in all aspects of English are good, with pupils making good progress as they move through Key Stage 1.
68. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their work in reading and writing, with an obvious interest in books and in writing stories and poems in a creative and imaginative way. They behave very well in lessons, listening carefully to the teacher. They work productively together, helping each other and sharing ideas. Pupils treat the spoken and written contributions of others to lessons in a considerate and respectful way.
69. In the main, the quality of teaching is good. This is evident when teachers adopt a suitable range of teaching styles and methods to enthuse pupils, ensuring a balance between whole class and small group work and teacher-directed input. Lessons are well managed and organised, with resources prepared in advance and easily accessible. A variety of motivating and relevant differentiated tasks is provided to involve, support and challenge all pupils in their work. However, although broad learning objectives are now identified on the termly plans, teachers' written weekly plans do not state clearly the specific learning objectives for the targeted groups or individuals. There are inconsistencies in the written weekly plans, with variations in planning that give different emphasis to content coverage, activities, teaching objectives and learning outcomes. Procedures are in place to assess and to record individual attainment and progress in all aspects of English year on year, but all teachers do not complete the records consistently and effectively.

70. At present, the management of the subject is well led by two members of staff. The English policy has been reviewed recently but has still to be approved by the governing body. The scheme of work based on the National Literacy Strategy, offers the teachers a focused framework for planning while allowing them to adapt the use of the literacy hour structure to best meet the needs of their pupils, particularly in extended writing. Monitoring of teaching and learning is achieved through the checking of termly and weekly plans and reviews, lesson observations, discussions with teachers and pupils, and looking at pupils' workbooks. There are very good resources for English in terms of range, quality and quantity of books and other materials and equipment. There is a good collection of texts organised efficiently to reflect the term by term needs of the literacy strategy. Stereotyping of gender, disability or ethnicity is carefully and deliberately avoided in all resources. Dual language books and dictionaries are available for all pupils to use.
71. Book areas are an important and well-used feature in all classes and contain a listening-centre, audiotapes and a good variety of fiction and non-fiction books, including those written by pupils. A well-organised and well-stocked library is used to allow pupils to browse among a good collection of fiction and information books. The resources are organised in a simple Dewey system for easy retrieval.
72. Secure and effective links for English with other subjects are established, for example, in science, mathematics and design and technology. Cross-curricular links are evident in the wide range of written material made available, in discussions, on displays in classrooms and around the school, and in books created by pupils. A very positive contribution is made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is achieved, for example, through planned experiences of visits to the theatre, inviting visiting theatre groups, writers and storytellers into school, and using the school grounds and the local area to stimulate writing.
73. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of improvements; a more structured planning framework adopted, learning objectives identified in termly level plans, higher teacher expectations of pupils, resulting in more focused and appropriate differentiation to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able.

MATHEMATICS

74. Attainment in mathematics at the end of the key stage is above national expectations. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 assessments, pupils' attainment was broadly in line with the national average at Level 2 and above, but above average at Level 3. Early analysis of the tests carried out this year, show a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving the intermediate Level 2b and above, rising by 13%. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 2a and Level 3 has also increased, and there has been a reduction in the number of pupils scoring at the lower levels. In the current Year 2, 95 percent of pupils achieved the national expectation. Evidence from lessons and work seen indicates that many pupils across the key stage are working above expectations. Some weaknesses were observed in pupils' interpretation of data. Pupils in the reception class are able to construct simple sums, have good number recognition and are developing the concept of symmetry. Year 1/2 pupils are able to recall multiplication facts for 4, 6 and 8 and link this to repeated addition. Some Year 2 pupils were observed manipulating large numbers effectively, demonstrating good problem solving skills and were able to understand the concept of square roots when raised in the lesson by a pupil during the oral/mental starter.
75. The quality of teaching overall is good, with some very good features. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use the appropriate mathematical vocabulary and are implementing all aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy. This supports the effective teaching of numeracy skills. However, more could be done to promote the oral mental

starter. Teachers plan to the framework, which provides a sharp focus for lessons. In the majority of lessons, learning objectives are communicated well to pupils and lessons are concluded effectively, reinforcing key points and consolidating learning. Teachers provide well-organised, structured activities for all pupils, encouraging individual and group working. The activities focus on learning, building on pupils' previous experience, and are differentiated effectively, targeting the needs of all pupils. Teachers manage pupils well, have high expectations and challenge them through differentiated questioning. Good use is made of teaching assistants and available resources enabling pupils to work at pace. On-going assessment is used to inform planning, and is being developed to include National Curriculum levels. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used well to support pupils' learning, for example, Year 2 pupils interrogating a database, and reception pupils creating symmetrical patterns using an art package. The school provides parents with practical ideas to support children at home, but no formal mathematics homework is set, a point made by some parents at the parents meeting.

76. Pupils' acquisition of numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding is good. Pupils respond well to the challenges set, work with sustained concentration, commitment and enjoyment. Pupils in Year 2 are eager to answer questions and are keen to offer alternative strategies to solve mental problems. They are confident and enthusiastic and have a clear understanding of the work set. Pupils are creative in their approach to problem solving, and work with perseverance and enjoyment. Reception pupils used coloured blocks effectively to create a symmetrical pattern, which they then copied and coloured. Whilst solving a problem involving repeating squares, Year 1 and 2 pupils demonstrated well-developed investigative skills, working systematically to find the number pattern. Pupils make sound progress over all with some in the reception class making very good progress during lessons. Progress in Year 2 is good. Pupils with SEN work positively, are well supported and, make sound progress.
77. In the majority of lessons pupils' behaviour is good and often very good. They are attentive and interested in the activities and concentrate well. Pupils work well independently becoming fully engaged in the work set. They work collaboratively, sharing ideas and resources well.
78. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided are good. Pupils are given activities covering the full range of attainment targets ensuring breadth and balance. Cross-curricular links are good, particularly with art, science, ICT and design technology, providing a context for the activities. Pupils in Year 1/2 worked on multiples of numbers looking at the number of legs on mini beasts, and the symmetrical patterns in the reception class linked with their work on the life cycle of a butterfly. Equality of access for all pupils is very good, achieved through the effective management and organisation of activities and teacher support.
79. The subject is well managed, and the co-ordinator provides good leadership in mathematics. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively and has impacted positively on pupil achievement. The policy for mathematics has recently been reviewed and the scheme of work and the numeracy framework support teachers' planning. Staff are supported well, guided and trained. The subject is monitored effectively through teachers' plans and classroom observations, although further work is needed in monitoring the quality of pupils' learning. Resources are good and accessible to all pupils. Analysis of pupil outcomes is used effectively to identify areas for development, which are prioritised in the school's action plan. There is a commitment by all staff to improving standards and this year's results indicate that strategies implemented have been very effective. However, targets set may have been insufficiently challenging as most pupils achieved them. Targets set for 2001 appear to be more in line with pupils' current level of achievement.
80. There has been a marked improvement in standards since the last inspection particularly at the higher levels. The implementation of the structured framework of the National

Numeracy Strategy has clearly impacted on the quality of provision. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved and planning is more sharply focused.

SCIENCE

81. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 or above in the 1999 end of key stage teacher assessment for science are above national average, whilst for Level 3 they are well above average. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils with free school meals, it is only at Level 3 where Oaklands' pupils are well above average. In the most recent assessments of pupils now in Year 2, there is clearly an improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 and above across all attainment targets. In all aspects of science, all the current Year 2 pupils achieved the national expectations. Significant improvements have been made particularly in the number of pupils achieving Level 3 in Materials and their Properties and in Physical Processes. These high standards are reflected equally in the work seen in the classroom displays, in lessons and in pupils' project folders. Overall, attainment in science throughout the school is good and above average, particularly towards the end of the key stage.
82. The major strength in the school is the ability of pupils to talk about their science and to use the correct terminology from a very early age. It is impressive to hear reception children talking about the life cycle of a butterfly and to name the body parts correctly. These young scientists are able to talk about the things needed to keep a caterpillar or a tadpole alive, showing respect for living things and an understanding of the need for warmth, food and protection. Pupils in reception and Year 1 working on sound could explain how they hear sound and use terms such as vibrate to explain the formation of sound. Pupils show a keen interest in science lessons and are clearly excited when the teacher uses a guitar to show the variation in loud and soft sound, high and low notes and pupils were able to classify instruments according to the ways in which the sound was produced. Pupils in Year 2 are able to group animals according to observable features and are able to clearly state what plants or animals would be found in the school grounds, pond, in bushes, trees and under logs. Pupils could sort and organise pictures of various animals for different habitats and climates and to construct keys to support identification. This complex task they carried out very well and most could provide good reasons for their classification. Pupils in this class are also able to produce some good observations from their investigations into the effects of the height of a ramp on the distance that a buggy they had made could travel. For example, one pupil clearly stated the steeper the ramp the further the buggy goes, and if the surface is rough then this slows the buggy down and it does not go so far. Teachers use a variety of strategies to support and develop pupils' scientific understanding, including opportunities for pupils to show how their ideas link together. An example of this is the work on ice and its properties, which clearly shows that pupils understand the effects of heat on different substances.
83. The rate of learning is generally good and the vast majority of pupils make satisfactory progress. Those pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language, make good progress. Learning is best where pupils are clear about what they are doing and what is expected of them. This is not always the case when learning objectives for each ability group or activity are not clearly shared or appropriately matched to National Curriculum levels. Pupils' attitudes to science are mostly good and where there are very good relationships, good management and organisation and a range of challenging tasks, pupils' response is very good. These pupils show sustained interest and concentration with most able to work productively at an appropriate pace. In general, pupils show respect for each other's feelings and work co-operatively in small groups. From an early age pupils are taught to share and by the end of the key stage, pupils work collaboratively in groups. A key feature of the older pupils when they transfer to the junior school, as identified by the junior school headteacher, is the ability of pupils from

Oaklands Infant School to show initiative and act as independent learners. This characteristic is clearly evident in the science investigation work that the older infant pupils carry out. They work both independently and in groups, set within the supportive framework provided by teachers and their assistants.

84. The quality of science teaching is mostly good. It is never less than sound and there are lessons with significant strengths where teaching is very good. The quality of questioning by teachers, particularly from those that have a good science background, along with the range of activities provided, promotes effective learning. Preparation and organisation of resources is very good, although in a few cases class room assistants are not always used efficiently during whole class teaching. The science curriculum is based on the guidance given from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and ensures appropriate coverage of all aspects of the programmes of study. Further extension of the use of ICT to support investigations and referencing would enhance the provision. The medium-term planning framework is effective and identifies in broad terms the teaching objectives but these are not clearly translated in short-term plans to identify the expected outcomes of different ability groups matched to National Curriculum levels. Such an approach would save time and provide a secure basis for ongoing assessment opportunities, which are sometimes missed. The management of the science curriculum is sound but the role of co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and the rate of pupils' learning is underdeveloped. The contribution science gives to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good. Teachers actively plan situations, which hold pupils spellbound; a good example being when reception pupils were cutting up fruit to observe the seeds. Year 2 teachers took the opportunity to observe the play ground drying after a shower; pupils were clearly excited and interested in the swirling mist as the water evaporated. These opportunities are taken by teachers to promote science to children's everyday experiences and this helps them to see the relevance of science to their lives.
85. There has been good improvement in science provision since the last inspection. Standards are now consistently above expectations and the school has clearly put greater emphasis on investigative approaches to science. The scheme of work is in place and the identified objectives give a focus for overall medium-term planning.

ART

86. Attainment in art at the end of the key stage is above national expectations. The standards of work seen in lessons and on display across the key stage are above expectations. Pupils are able to use a wide range of media and tools effectively and can explain their methods. They can evaluate and modify their work. They are creative and imaginative, and are able to present their work in two and three dimensions, an example being Year 2 three dimensional masks, and puppets made from tissue and tap water paste.
87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and often good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, demonstrating an understanding of a range of materials and media. They provide many opportunities for pupils to consolidate learning, and teach the basic skills well. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, which are reflected in the good quality of work displayed. Teachers manage pupils well, providing opportunities for them to make choices and select their own materials, developing independence. Support staff are used well, targeted to individual pupils' needs. Teachers' planning is sound, supported by a scheme of work that indicates the expectations for each year group. Procedures are in place to develop continuity and progression of skills across the key stage further.
88. Pupils have developed good skills and knowledge of a range of media. They are very creative, working with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils concentrate well and produce work of quality and quantity. They are aware of the focus for learning and are able to express

themselves clearly. They work conscientiously with pace and enjoyment, showing pride in their work. Progress made by all pupils is good. Pupils behave well, are enthusiastic and supportive of one another. They are attentive and listen well to instructions. They are well motivated and work well independently and collaboratively, staying on task.

89. The management and leadership of art are good. Resources are well maintained, and new ones introduced, providing training for staff in their use where appropriate. The draft policy, currently under review, and the scheme of work are beginning to support continuity and progression. Further developments are planned to enhance this area, and to improve the assessment of pupils' work. It is planned to introduce sketchbooks to help teachers track pupil progress. Systems of assessment in place at present to inform planning are underdeveloped.
90. Standards achieved in art are now above average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are now offered a wider range of activities and opportunities to use different media and tools.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Attainment in design and technology at the end of the key stage is above national expectations. The standards of work seen during lessons, and on display across the school are good. The school display on 'carrier bags' shows good continuity and progression, reception pupils making simple designs for a bag, to Year 2 pupils working to specific criteria, looking at a range of fastenings and modifying and changing designs. Pupils use a range of skills linked to designing and making. They can select materials, use a variety of tools effectively, sequence the design process and use simple finishing techniques to improve their products, for example, in Year 1, using rubber bands on the sole of a shoe to improve grip and replicate the ridges.
92. The quality of teaching is good. The judgement is based on evidence from lesson observations and the quality of work seen throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the basic skills well. There is evidence in the work on display around the school that teachers plan across the programmes of study, covering a range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide well-prepared, interesting activities, and ensure resources required are easily accessible. Pupils are managed effectively and lessons are well structured. Tasks are explained clearly enabling pupils to get on quickly. Support staff are well deployed supporting pupils according to need. There is a strong emphasis on sharing and turn taking as seen in Year 1, when pupils shared the felt to make roof tiles for their buildings. Opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are planned for by some teachers and effectively delivered, as seen in the reception class lesson on food technology. Pupils expressed awe and wonder on seeing the fruit being cut open and the seeds inside. The assessment of pupils' work is beginning to be used by teachers to inform the next step for learning.
93. Pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge are good. They are clear about the focus of the tasks set, and work with understanding and enjoyment. They are creative, using their initiative to develop designs and solve problems. Pupils work independently, selecting their own materials and tools. Year 1 pupils selected appropriate materials to build houses, and chose different hinges to make opening doors using tape or folding techniques. Pupils work with interest and concentration and make good progress in lessons and over time. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is also good. Pupils behave well demonstrating enthusiasm for the subject. They work co-operatively, supporting each other and sharing resources. They are confident and attentive, listening well to instructions.
94. Leadership and management are good. The subject is well balanced offering pupils a range of experiences and opportunities to use materials and tools for different purposes.

The curriculum has been reviewed and now offers food technology. The policy and scheme of work are in place and further development is currently taking place to ensure effective continuity and progression of key skills and knowledge. The quality of teaching is monitored through medium-term plans and the discussion of pupil outcomes. Training is provided to address school and staff needs, one example being the technology day organised with the junior school for Year 2 pupils. Staff from both schools plan and work together, sharing expertise and resources. This year it was extended to all classes, providing a good opportunity to develop skills across the school and focus on continuity and progression. The subject is well resourced, with materials and the appropriate tools to deliver the curriculum effectively.

95. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards in the subject are now above average and a programme of activities has been developed that enables pupils to work with a wide range of tools and materials.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Only two geography lessons were visited during the inspection and judgements on attainment are based on these and the work of pupils in their project folders or on classroom displays. The standards achieved by the end of the key stage are above average with a significant number of pupils in Year 2 working at Level 3 able to describe and compare different localities and offer explanations for some of the features. This is exemplified by a Year 2 lesson where pupils made comparisons between Tenby in South Wales to an aerial photograph of another coastal town. Pupils are able to identify the difference between the seaside in summer and winter and consider the impact of the sea on cliffs and the movement of sand along a coast. The correct use of geographical terms by pupils during this lesson was impressive. Pupils are also gaining in confidence using a range of ways to record their observations. Year 1 pupils doing a traffic survey record the number and types of transport and represent this information using a simple computer programme to show the data they collected graphically. Pupils are able to discuss their findings, working out the total number of vehicles and the most and least common form of transport using the road outside the school. Pupils in Year 2 can interpret weather symbols and relate weather charts to the type of weather they experience in the area. The school makes very good use of the local environment to complement classroom experiences. During the inspection reception pupils were able to follow a map showing the route from the school to Tesco's store and identifying key features such as underpass or subway which several pupils could describe and point out why it was needed. Later in the day pupils were to visit the store. They were clearly excited at the prospect of the visit and, as with other work linked to geography and the environment in the school, pupils show a keen interest from an early age. In this lesson the teacher effectively made good links between the science topic work on fruit and geography. Pupils were given the opportunity to buy food and to observe how the store takes care of fruit and vegetables.
97. Standards overall in the displays, the pupils' work seen and in the quality of pupils' responses to questions indicates that the majority are working above expectation throughout the school. Maps in Year 1 class show the wide travel experiences made by 'S. B. Bear' who accompanies pupils and staff on their various trips. Comments from pupils about the places they have visited, along with photographs of their holidays add to the excitement of geography and are a mechanism for widening pupils' cultural experiences. Pupils are making good progress and learning effectively developing both subject skills, knowledge and the use of geographical terms. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and their enthusiasm for the subject and the various planned activities is excellent. They work very well together supporting each other, sharing ideas, books and other resources. They show very good independence, are able to show sustained concentration, remain on task and ask sensible questions.
98. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to probe pupils' understanding. The quality of

questioning is very good and teachers make very good use of adult helpers and other learning resources. There is good development of literacy, numeracy, science and ICT skills within the context of geography. However, a wider range of ICT support packages, would add to the good quality of provision. The curriculum for the youngest children links effectively the areas of learning matched to the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the National Curriculum making it clear to pupils the main focus for their learning. Organisation and management of the subject is good. The scheme of work is based on the latest guidance provide by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and teachers work to a standard medium-term planning framework. Short-term planning is sound but would benefit from a clear focus on learning objectives targeted to specific levels for each ability group rather than to give an overall lesson objective which does not always clarify the expected outcome across the range of abilities in each class. There is an appropriate range of resources to support curriculum delivery and good use is made of these and the local environment.

99. There is clear progress since the last inspection; particularly in the standards attained. The quality of displays shows a balance given to geography in relation to other learning experiences. A good coverage of all aspects of the programmes of study is identified in teachers' medium-term plans.

HISTORY

100. Attainment in history by the end of the key stage is above average and the majority of pupils perform above expectations. Pupils' attainment in history, throughout the school, is good, being in line with and sometimes exceeding national expectations. For those pupils close to the end of the key stage they have a good understanding of chronology and of similarities and differences between past and present times. They use terms such as 'now' and 'then' and 'old' and 'new' correctly, related to the passing of time, and are beginning to understand why events happened in the past and why people in the past acted in certain ways. Pupils, as 'history detectives', use a range of sources, including photographs and artefacts, effectively to find out about the past. For example, they have brainstorming sessions using a set of photographs of a seaside holiday and handle kitchen equipment, both depicting aspects of Victorian times. They use posters, books and information technology readily to add to their knowledge and understanding.
101. The quality of teaching is good, with effective use of well-prepared resources and probing questioning to challenge pupils' thinking. In addition, the experiences and activities for pupils are very much enhanced by the planned use of visits to museums, places of historical interest, the local area and input from visitors such as the 'Victorian lady' with her toys. These experiences have a positive impact on learning. The activities planned by enthusiastic teachers who are secure in their subject knowledge are both motivating and stimulating. The video character 'Magic Grandad' captures the interest and imagination of pupils as he carries them back in time. The use of this material is a good teaching tool.
102. Younger pupils develop their understanding by considering their personal 'timelines', using photographic evidence, to follow their own passage of time and development from babyhood to the present. Pupils make good progress over time, through a programme of structured topics. The various topics studied enable them to acquire knowledge and understanding of the life and times of different historical periods and events at an appropriate pace. Older pupils can discuss and explain reasons for similarities and differences between housing and family life in Victorian times and those of today. Year 1 pupils' study of 'Our Toys' is recorded in a class book showing their ability to compare old and new in a historical way. They are now developing that learning further through an investigation of houses in the local area.
103. Pupils settle well, listening attentively and carefully to teachers and other pupils during discussions and explanations. They behave very well and are considerate and respectful of others' ideas and opinions, learning from each other. Interest, concentration and

enthusiasm are evident as boys and girls work together in their investigative tasks. Teachers are careful to involve and support all pupils in activities and tasks.

104. Co-ordination of the subject is good, with two members of staff presently sharing the responsibility to support on-going developments. The adoption of the structured scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority gives a breadth and balance of topics that are relevant and of interest to young pupils. History is well resourced with a good range of quality materials for staff and pupils. Links with other curriculum areas are evident and include science, reading, writing, art and information technology. A positive contribution is made to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the collaborative studies of famous people, historical events and periods, investigating and understanding their local heritage, making visits and having visitors in school. Monitoring and more importantly evaluating history provision throughout the school is underdeveloped, particularly in monitoring the quality of pupils' learning.
105. Since the last inspection high standards have been maintained. There have been improvements in the planning framework for teaching and learning. The school makes more and better use of museum services, visitors and artefacts, and the introduction of sets of history books is proving popular with pupils in group reading sessions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106. The standards attained by pupils close to the end of the key stage are above national expectation and throughout the school there is clear evidence that pupils are working above age related expectations. More able pupils can use information and communication technology (ICT) to save and store information and are beginning to follow lines of enquiry. Pupils in Year 1 are able to generate and amend their work, share ideas in different forms including text, tables, graphs and images. Opportunities for them to explore real and imaginary situations are restricted because of the limited range of programs currently available. There is a planned programme of activities designed to provide a wide range of coverage of the programmes of study. Pupils are encouraged to seek information independently from a variety of sources and thereby develop research and referencing skills; older pupils are gaining in confidence in the use of reference books contents, index, and glossary. Most pupils in Year 2 can confidently find out information or know where to look.
107. Throughout the school the use of ICT is improving as a result of the focus given to this area for development in the school development plan. Staff are beginning to use ICT, not only as a separate subject with its associated skills and knowledge, but also as a tool to support learning in other curriculum areas. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to develop keyboard skills and use a mouse to control art programmes such as 'Colour Magic' and to click on icons as part of a drop down menu to enable them to work in a 'Windows' environment. The youngest reception children are able to draw a symmetrical butterfly and colour in the wings and body symmetrically. They quickly learn that if any part of the outline was not closed up, this causes problems with colouring in. By the end of the lesson most pupils could correct mistakes that they made, the more able could do this unaided. This activity, linked to others such as mathematics patterning and science work on insects, provided suitable extension work in an appropriate context yet extended pupils' skill development using a computer art package. Other associated ICT skill areas are similarly developed across the school for example sequencing the life cycles of a frog or butterfly, finding out facts. For example, Year 1 pupils found out that ants leave a scent trail for other ants to follow. Year 1 pupils also used simple pictograms to show modes of travel and transport and these pupils could analyse the data, organising and classifying information entering and saving files. This work builds on the data base work of younger pupils who had looked at data on the types and number of pets they owned.
108. There are good examples of skill based reinforcement as pupils move through the school they become more confident and skilful at extending their ideas and making more complex

patterns or use of data and word processing. Year 2 pupils working with a simple data base collected information about themselves and presented the information through various pictures. The older pupils were able to store data involving measurements of body parts and some could answer questions about collective data for the whole class for example, "How many pupils have blue eyes?" "Whose hand span is 12 or 13 centimetres across?" Until recently the school had a working 'Roamer' which pupils could programme to move according to instruction to form various geometric shapes. This operation involved sequencing instruction to control the device. This and other aspects of word processing and use of pictures with text, shows that a significant number of pupils are working towards Level 3 work, above national expectation.

109. The quality of learning in ICT is good and the physical and creative effort pupils put into their work is very good. The interest and concentration is best where work is more effectively targeted and work is at an appropriate pace to challenge pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in both skill and knowledge of ICT. Pupils' attitudes to ICT are very good. They work with enthusiasm and enjoyment, keen to have a go and are willing to support each other. They show respect for the equipment and when in difficulties, seek guidance appropriately.
110. The quality of teaching in the few lessons seen is mostly good and effectively supports pupils' learning. There are insufficient computers to support whole-class teaching but the organisation and management of pupils with good teacher demonstration and effective support from adult or student helpers, ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. Tasks are effectively matched to meet pupils' varying needs mostly by support but also by the range of questions and the complexity of control required with the various functions. The staff are gaining in confidence with the use of ICT and there is a planned programme of in-service training to support teachers and teaching assistants' skill development through the New Opportunities Funding. The school has yet to receive all the new computers and programs linked to the National Grid for Learning but at present there are sufficient resources available to enable pupils to experience a broad range of the ICT curriculum.
111. Management of ICT is good and the curriculum guidance based on the QCA documentation provides a framework for medium-term planning. Learning objectives tend to be broad and insufficiently focused to enable short-term planning to be effective, particularly in supporting assessment. In most cases teachers provide activities which are common, relying on a limited range of strategies to support differentiation. There has, nevertheless, been significant progress since the last inspection, computers are used more often and there is a wide range of planned activities matched to pupils' age, abilities and experiences.

MUSIC

112. Standards of attainment in music throughout the school are good and by the end of the key stage the majority of pupils perform above expectations in all aspects of music. Pupils are enthusiastic in their music making and singing from the earliest age. In the one class lesson observed, the pupils played a range of percussion instruments with keen involvement. They name them correctly and describe the sounds they make. They select instruments appropriately to match and follow the musical score they are developing. In the main, pupils listen attentively and respond well to signals to play loudly, softly and to stop. They are eager and confident to offer ideas when improvising and composing their music. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with teacher and pupils sharing the enjoyment of composing and playing together 'the caterpillar's walk' on their pictorial score. In assemblies, pupils sing tunefully and rhythmically with spontaneity and

enthusiasm. They match their singing to the mood of songs with good effect, as demonstrated in their renditions of 'Tiny Caterpillar' and 'I Went To The Cabbages'. They listen quietly and attentively to a range of incidental music. Pupils are well behaved and considerate of others during musical activities.

113. The good standards established in reception year are developed effectively so that there is good progress throughout the school. Most pupils in Year 2 are able to play an instrument, read musical notation and sing in tune. All Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a recorder with a peripatetic music teacher. The tuition is effective, increasing pupils' access to music at a pace and interest level to meet their abilities. The good standards and quality of learning are well supported by the interest and expertise of the co-ordinator who encourages and supports her colleagues. Music is well resourced, with a wide range of instruments to be used by pupils and a good range of recorded music to develop their listening skills. The resources reflect music from different cultures and times.
114. Music links well with other subjects; for example, in Year R and Year R/1 classes there are links to their topic on senses. There is a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils perform their musical skills in school productions. Parents and members of the local community are invited. Older pupils are preparing to take part in the local music festival.
115. The good standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved due to an increase in commitment, confidence and enthusiasm among staff. The learning experiences for the pupils now have more breadth and are more effective in their impact, in that there is now a better balance across the aspects of singing, composing, playing and performing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. A limited number of lessons were seen in physical education (PE) during the inspection and attainment in these lessons was in line with expectations. Standards across the key stage are sound with pupils performing in line with their age and ability and by the end of the key stage pupils perform in line with expectations in a range of physical educational activities. Physical co-ordination is good and pupils are developing skills in handling and using equipment related to a variety of sports and athletics activities. The regular contact with the local college gives pupils the added opportunity to work in a sports hall with physical education specialists. A video of a recent sports day meeting at the college show Year 2 pupils throwing, jumping and running in a number of athletic events. Standards of performance in this and in the lessons seen are broadly in line with expectations.
117. The quality of teaching is mostly good. Teachers have high expectations, demonstrate sound subject knowledge and the teaching of basic skills is satisfactory. Short-term planning identifies key activities and lesson organisation and resources. Learning objectives are broad and are not always clearly communicated to pupils which limits their understanding and progress in developing skills. Long-term planning is based on guidance provided by the Local Education Authority and the Top Play guidance, and is used as a basis for identifying year-by-year and term-by-term activities. However, planning lacks a clear structure, making it difficult to ensure continuity and progression of key skills and knowledge across the key stage. Curriculum coverage is satisfactory, including all three areas of activity, gym, games and dance. Where pupils are managed well the lessons are organised to provide opportunities for practice and development of skills, using pupils' own work as a model. Equipment and support staff are used effectively to ensure all pupils are able to access the curriculum. Staff have undergone training in 'Top Play' and use activities and resources to develop a range of skills at different levels.
118. Pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge is sound. They participate positively in activities

set, but are not always clear how to develop skills further. Year 1 and 2 pupils respond well to the teachers instructions, showing initiative and creativity developing their own activities that challenge their skill level, for example throwing a ball higher or clapping a number of times before catching it. Pupils are interested in lessons, work with purpose and a sense of enjoyment. They are co-operative and support one another. Progress of all pupils across the age range is sound.

119. Pupils' behaviour in lessons ranges from sound to very good. Where it is very good, teachers provide clear guidance and structure. Pupils are attentive, enthusiastic and hard working. Where management is less effective pupils become inattentive and disengaged in the planned activities.
120. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory, and fulfils statutory requirements. The curriculum co-ordinator ensures the appropriate curriculum is in place and that all pupils have equal access. Some monitoring of teachers' medium and short-term plans takes place to ensure coverage. The use of assessment to inform future planning is underdeveloped. The school has developed good links with the local college, which provides an opportunity for staff training and a different learning experience for the pupils. The school uses the available resources and the environment well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Only two religious education lessons were observed during the inspection period. Additional evidence was gathered from displays of pupils' work, school documents, discussions with teachers and observation of assemblies. Religious education (RE) is described in the school prospectus as being part of the whole ethos of the school 'linked with caring, tolerance, consideration for others and awareness of right and wrong'. The school's ethos promotes good relationships, the care and respect for others and for the natural environment. It is a sound basis on which teachers plan to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the links between their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and religious education.
122. Standards in religious education are good. By the end of the key stage, pupils are acquiring the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes outlined in the locally agreed syllabus followed by the school and their attainment in these areas is above average. Pupils are developing well their knowledge and understanding of ideas, stories, festivals and celebrations of Christianity and other world religions. They have a clear appreciation that they live in a multicultural society with different types of people who have different religious beliefs and different customs and traditions.
123. The quality of teaching is mostly good in both assemblies and lessons, which are well organised, with interesting resources well prepared. Teachers use resources effectively to stimulate discussion and the sharing of ideas and feelings. They give clear explanations and information and tell stories to arouse interest or to deal with sensitive subjects such as bereavement. Religious education is taught with the main focus being on the religions of the school's own community of Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims. The celebration of festivals is thoughtfully planned to include Christmas and Easter from the Christian calendar and Divali, Eid and Rosh Hanukah from other faiths. Teachers now plan lessons using a published scheme of work, compatible with the locally agreed syllabus, ensuring a structured framework for teaching and learning across the key stage. The planned range of visits to places of worship and having visitors such as the local vicar and parents to talk about their religions have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
124. All pupils make good progress during their time in school. In each year group, displays of pupils' work related to the celebration of the Muslim festival of Eid are good examples of their developments over time. They also develop attitudes such as being fair, forgiving and responsible. Pupils in Year R/1 class showed caring and sensitive attitudes during a visit from a blind visitor and his guide dog. These attitudes were heightened when the

visitor spoke of the friendship and care shared between himself and his dog as a two-way process. Pupils have developed a sensitive appreciation of the school's own natural environment of trees, plants, birds, mini-beasts and pond creatures which was reflected in their singing of 'Hurt No Living Thing' during Year R class assembly. There is a positive attitude to religious education. Pupils are well behaved, interested and motivated, and respond readily to planned activities, concentrating and listening intently.

125. The co-ordinator has recently taken on responsibility for the management of the subject. She is leading and supporting her colleagues constructively in the on-going development of religious education. There is a very good collection of quality resources, including books, videos, audiotapes, photographs and posters, and a range of religious and multicultural artefacts. The resources reflect the Christian and world faiths, identified in the planned programme for religious education.
126. There are cross-curricular links with science topics, artwork on displays, speaking and listening skills and with the literacy skills of writing and reading, including poetry. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments. This was evident when an opportunity was planned effectively to increase pupils' sense of spirituality; younger pupils helped to create a Hindu shrine within a quiet, solemn atmosphere. The beauty of the artefacts was admired as a candle was lit during a time of reflection. Assemblies provide good opportunities for the school community to come together to share thoughts, feelings and ideas in a collective act of worship.
127. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a more structured planning framework, there has been an increase in the collection of resources and more focus on the implicit aspect of religious education.