

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BIRCH CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Birch, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115138

Headteacher: Mr J Graham

Reporting inspector: Mr M Newell  
10638

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 188347

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Hill  
Birch  
Colchester  
Essex

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Telephone number: 01206 330224

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Gill Moncaster

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M Newell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information Technology Physical Education Provision for the under-fives	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
Ms B Sinclair	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mr A Andrews	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Ms S Russam	Team inspector	Science History Geography Music Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a smaller than average voluntary aided Church of England primary school for boys and girls aged four to 11 years. It has 93 pupils on roll; 42 boys and 51 girls. Assessment data clearly shows that pupils' attainment on entry is below that found nationally. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is presently 12 per cent. This is below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is 23 per cent. This figure is above the national and Essex County averages.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Standards have improved over the last four years and significantly so in mathematics, but still need to improve further in English and science. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is at least satisfactory and much is good. However, on occasions it is not sufficiently demanding. The school supports and cares for its pupils well. There is a good partnership between the school and parents who value the quality of education provided. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together and are committed to raising standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning needs to be more focused and rigorous to help raise standards. Taking all factors into account the school is effective and providing satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in information technology and music are above average by the time pupils leave school;
- Pupils are keen to learn and this makes an important contribution to the progress that they make;
- Behaviour in class and around the school is good as is the quality of relationships between pupils and with teachers;
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- The good range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' personal and social development;
- Pupils are well cared for and good provision is made for their moral and social development;
- There is a good partnership between the school and parents, who clearly value the quality of education the school provides;
- Financial planning is of a good standard.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards need to be higher in English and science;
- Not all lessons have sufficient pace or challenge to further enhance pupils' progress;
- The monitoring of teaching and learning needs to be more rigorous and focused;
- All available test and assessment information is not always used to set targets and to guide future curriculum planning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made an expected level of improvement since its last inspection. Although the school rightly identifies the need to continue to improve standards in writing and science as its main focus, there has been a significant improvement in standards in mathematics. The quality of teaching has been maintained. A consistent homework regime is now in place. The headteacher monitors teaching but there is a need for a more rigorous approach by curriculum co-ordinators. Although the school is presently reviewing curriculum

documentation in light of national initiatives, there is certainly a better quality of policies to support the work of the school than at the time of the last inspection. The school has worked very hard to improve the partnership with parents and this is now a developing strength. The willingness and commitment of staff and governors to raise standards indicate that the school is appropriately placed to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E	C	C	well above average A
mathematics	E	D	B	C	above average B
science	D	D	C	D	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The above table shows that the 1999 test results were the best the school has achieved in recent years. Due to the small size of the school, only a small number of pupils are assessed each year. This means that comparisons with national averages are not always reliable. Inspection findings indicate that the present level of attainment for Year 6 pupils is average in mathematics and speaking and listening but below average in reading, writing and science. This does not suggest a fall in standards from 1999 but does reflect the differing ability levels of different groups of pupils. The attainment of the present Year 5 pupils indicates that standards are set to rise again. The school is making satisfactory progress towards the targets it has set itself in literacy and numeracy.

The 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds show attainment in reading and mathematics to be below average and attainment in writing well below average. Inspection findings show a more positive picture as attainment is currently in line with the level expected nationally in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics and below average in writing and science. By the time pupils leave school attainment in information technology and music is above average. Attainment in other subjects of the curriculum is at an expected level. At both key stages, pupils make satisfactory progress in terms of their earlier attainment but there is scope for greater challenge.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and they take a full and active part in the range of activities that the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They work constructively and co-operatively in groups and productively on their own. There have been no exclusions during the past twelve months.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are kind and considerate and show a healthy respect for one another and a willingness to listen. They show a willingness to take responsibility and have a high regard for their teachers.

Attendance	Good. The attendance figures for the school are above the national average. Pupils are punctual to lessons and really enjoy coming to school.
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### TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	Satisfactory	satisfactory

*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 at least satisfactory with much of it good. During the week of inspection, 6 per cent of lessons observed were very good, 47 per cent good and the rest satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. Teachers manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour. Specialist teaching in music and for pupils with special educational needs is often good and, on occasions, very good. When teaching is not as effective as it could be, lessons lack pace or work is not demanding enough. However, on the whole the quality of teaching is resulting in pupils making steady progress in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills across all areas of the curriculum.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a relevant curriculum for its pupils and a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported and benefit from specialist teaching and good quality support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff know individual pupils very well and respond to them in a positive and supportive manner. The working environment is safe and pupils are well supervised at work and at play.

The school has forged a strong and effective partnership with parents and values the contribution that parents make to the educational development of their children. The school promotes good behaviour and attendance through agreed and successfully implemented procedures. These make an important contribution to the effective learning environment that is prevalent in the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management overall is satisfactory. The headteacher and staff all have a commitment to raising standards and have established a clear programme of action for school improvement. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are active in monitoring the work of the school and show a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has accurately identified areas for development through its school improvement plan. All staff show a willingness to reflect critically on what they do to secure improvement. The school has already identified the need to use test and assessment data more rigorously to set targets and guide future curriculum planning.
The strategic use of resources	All available staff and resources are used in an effective manner to ensure they make an important impact on helping to raise standards.

The school has enough teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. The level of support staff is good. The standard of accommodation is satisfactory. The quality and quantity of resources is satisfactory, with a good level of resourcing in information technology and mathematics. The school applies the principle of best value in a satisfactory manner in its management and use of available resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents feel that the quality of teaching is good and that their children make good progress;</li> <li>• Parents are happy with the amount of work their children are expected to complete at home and with the range of extra-curricular activities;</li> <li>• The school is seen by parents as a caring, welcoming place which they feel comfortable to approach with questions and problems;</li> <li>• The management of the school is perceived as being effective;</li> <li>• The parents feel that the school helps children to become mature and responsible and that expectations are at an appropriate level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small percentage of parents would like more information about how their children are progressing;</li> <li>• A minority of parents feel that links between the school and parents could be stronger.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support the positive views expressed by parents. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve the quality of the partnership between home and school. It has been successful. Inspection findings show that in general, parents are kept well informed about the children's progress and the school works closely with parents. The headteacher sends out questionnaires to gauge parents' views on different aspects of school life and acts upon any issues that are raised. The school is to continue

with this initiative to ensure that the partnership between home and school remains a strength.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Assessment data covering the last four years show that the overall trend of attainment on entry to school is below average. Although a minority of children are at a higher level than expected nationally, this is offset by the fact that an equal number of children are well below average. All children, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Teaching of children under the age of five is never less than satisfactory and on occasions is good. This, however, is unable to compensate fully for the low baseline at which the children start and by the age of five children's attainment in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world remains below average. Attainment is at an expected level in the areas of physical and creative development.
2. National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 1999 show that attainment in mathematics is above average and in English and science it is average. When compared to similar schools, attainment in science is below average and in English and mathematics it is average. Taking the three subjects together, there is clear evidence that over time levels of attainment are improving. The school's rise in standards is broadly in line with the national trend. In the period 1996 to 1999 boys achieved at a higher level than girls across all three subjects. Due to the size of the school, only a small number of pupils are assessed each year and so comparing the school's performance to national results and similar schools requires a certain degree of caution. Inspection findings show that at present attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is at an average level in mathematics and speaking and listening and below average in reading, writing and science. This does not suggest a fall in standards but more accurately reflects the fluctuating natural ability levels of different groups of pupils. No significant evidence was found to indicate differing levels of attainment between boys and girls that could not be explained by natural ability. The attainment of the present Year 5 pupils suggests that the school will achieve better results in 2001 in English, mathematics and science.
3. The National Curriculum tests and assessments in 1999 for seven-year-olds show attainment in reading and mathematics to be below average and attainment in writing to be well below average. The results do not compare favourably with similar schools as attainment in reading and mathematics is well below average and in writing it is very low. Teacher assessments in science and speaking and listening show attainment to be at an average level. Results over time show attainment in reading and writing to be well below average and in mathematics below average. Attainment of boys and girls over the same period of time is not significantly different. Although again caution needs to be taken when comparing the school's results with the national picture, standards are improving. Inspection findings reveal that the present Year 2 pupils are achieving at an average level in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics. Standards in writing and science are below average.
4. The overall picture that emerges is that while standards need to improve further in English and science, there is clear evidence of an improving pattern of attainment. The school has introduced effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Basic skills are taught successfully in these areas. Teaching is never less

than satisfactory and much of it is good. This helps to ensure that pupils are acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding at a steady rate. Teachers' knowledge and understanding in science is not as secure as in English and mathematics and this prevents progress in the subject being stronger. When tasks set are demanding, pupils respond well and rise to the challenge. However, work is not consistently challenging in all lessons. Good examples were seen of opportunities being provided for pupils to use some of their literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum such as history. This is good practice because it reinforces, and in the best teaching, extends pupils' skills. The literacy and numeracy targets that the school has set itself for this year are quite low but reflect the attainment of the present Year 6 pupils. The targets set for 2001 are at a higher level and are sufficiently challenging.

5. Standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of both key stages. Pupils listen attentively in most lessons and are always ready and willing to make contributions in class and group discussions. Although reading standards are at an average level at the end of Key Stage 1, the present Year 6 pupils read with little expression and do not have a wide knowledge of authors. Although the higher attainers comprehend text well, few pupils are able to understand beyond the literal level. At the end of both key stages, standards in writing are below average. Spelling standards are below average. The school has recognised this as an area for improvement and has already started to introduce a range of strategies to improve this area of pupils' work. Pupils are provided with opportunities to write for a variety of audiences and purposes but by the time they leave school not all are able to produce well written, grammatically correct extended pieces of writing. Standards in mathematics at the end of both key stages are at an average level. Pupils have secure number skills. The introduction of regular mental mathematics practice sessions and tests has improved pupils' speed of work. Attainment in all aspects of mathematics is satisfactory and pupils' achievements are enhanced when they are encouraged to examine and explore different strategies to solve problems. In science standards at the end of both key stages are below average. Due to the emphasis given to literacy and numeracy, science has suffered in terms of its prominence in the curriculum. A lack of recent staff in-service training in the subject means that teachers' knowledge is not always as secure as it could be. Whilst learning in lessons observed was always at least satisfactory, over time the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills to enable pupils to become young scientists has been less secure.
6. In its improvement plan, the school has rightly identified the need to introduce more rigorous procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Another issue for further development is the consistent and focused use of available test and assessment data to set appropriately challenging targets and to guide future curriculum priorities and planning. These are accurate and important areas for development as they will play a significant part in helping to raise standards and to help disseminate the good practice that is clearly evident in teaching and learning.
7. In information technology and music, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are at the nationally expected level. By the time pupils leave school they exceed the level expected. Pupils are given many opportunities to use computers to support their learning in areas such as art and mathematics as well as personal research. Many pupils locate, save and retrieve information, interrogate databases and send and receive e-mail. The good quality resources, the quality of teaching and the commitment of all staff to developing pupils' skills all play an important role in explaining why standards are as they are. In music, the good quality teaching

provided by a specialist and the staff, the use of peripatetic teachers and the importance the school attaches to this area of the curriculum enable many pupils to read and play music to a good standard by the age of 11. In geography, the work covered is in a very narrow field and as a consequence pupils do not have adequate knowledge and skills across all aspects of the subject. This means that attainment overall is unsatisfactory. Geography is not given a high priority in terms of the whole curriculum and is not covered in sufficient depth to enable pupils to learn effectively. In art, pupils at the end of both key stages are good at carrying out observational drawings and produce original pieces of work using a range of materials. Standards overall are at a nationally expected level. In design and technology, history and physical education standards are at the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

8. The percentage of pupils on the register of special educational need is above the national average. These pupils receive good levels of support from the learning support assistants, who make a valuable and important contribution to the progress that pupils make. Pupils also benefit from the very good teaching of the special needs co-ordinator. These factors enable identified pupils to attain standards which are in line with their prior achievements. The progress they make is at least satisfactory and in individual or small group work provided by the support assistants or the specialist teacher progress is often good. Individual education plans contain clearly defined targets but these plans are not used consistently by all teachers to help guide and inform their curriculum planning. Throughout the school and across the curriculum all pupils make satisfactory progress overall but there are some areas for improvement. There is a tendency in mathematics to over-consolidate pupils' knowledge of number rather than presenting them with a range of more demanding tasks that would challenge them. In some lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work it is evident that there is not a high enough level of challenge for the more able. However, on other occasions tasks set are demanding and match the needs of the individual. Where this is the case, pupils respond with a sense of enthusiasm and excitement and there is an immediate improvement in the quality of learning. The introduction of personal targets, particularly to the pupils in Years 5 and 6, has motivated pupils and increased their involvement and responsibility in their own learning. Taking into account all the above factors, pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory. Although there are areas for improvement, the school ensures that skills, knowledge and understanding are acquired as pupils move through school and there is clearly added value.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils under five have positive attitudes to school. They are keen to do well and to do their best. Their behaviour is good and they abide by school routines. They show appropriate respect for adults and are willing to share with one another. Their personal development is enhanced effectively through opportunities to handle and use equipment.
10. Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils enjoy school. They have good attitudes towards their work, which was also the finding of the previous inspection. Pupils are keen to answer questions and to participate in lessons. They show interest in the tasks set, are motivated well and mostly show enthusiasm for their learning, including those with special educational needs. This has a positive effect on their progress.
11. Pupils show good attitudes towards the general life of the school. They do their best

to make visitors feel welcome. The extra-curricular activities are supported well and pupils show pride in what they do. An example of this is the enthusiastic approach by Year 6 pupils to preparing and cooking their own lunch, including clearing the dishes afterwards.

12. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently good and this has a positive impact on their progress. They listen carefully to teachers and follow instructions without fuss. They begin the morning and afternoon sessions in an orderly manner, responding promptly to the bell. They behave well at playtime and lunchtime and move around the school sensibly, showing proper respect for buildings and equipment. An example of this is the sensible use of the outdoor climbing apparatus. Pupils are friendly and eager to chat about themselves and their interests. They are polite and relate well to adults. There have been no exclusions during the past year. The good standards of behaviour identified in the previous report have been maintained. Parents feel that the behaviour of the pupils is generally good and that problems are dealt with well.
13. Relationships are good. Pupils are considerate towards one another and show respect for teachers and other adults. They are able to work together productively in groups, sharing ideas and resources sensibly. Older pupils look after the younger ones and are mindful of their feelings. No bullying was seen during the inspection and pupils are able to work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour.
14. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They are involved in the daily routines of the school, such as preparing for assemblies. They show initiative, such as using the Internet to research designs for products they are making. There is a school council which gives pupils the opportunity to engage in leadership roles and to take responsibility for others. Pupils speak positively about this.
15. Since the last inspection report good attendance has been maintained. The rates of unauthorised absence are below the national average. There are particularly good procedures for marking of registers every morning and afternoon and for monitoring absences. These good procedures encourage good attendance and make a positive contribution to the pupils' progress. Discussions with parents show that their children enjoy coming to school.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The standard of teaching is satisfactory. During the week of the inspection, 6 per cent of lessons were very good, 47 per cent good and the remaining lessons satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The overall impact of the quality of teaching is that it makes an important contribution to the effectiveness of pupils' learning but there are areas where it can be improved further in order to keep pupils fully engaged and challenged.
17. The school has successfully introduced effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy based on national guidelines. Overall, the quality of teaching in literacy is satisfactory with some good lessons at Key Stage 2 and for the youngest children in school. All teachers show a secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching. At Key Stage 1, teachers know how to teach phonics effectively and are evaluating ways of promoting different spelling strategies. In nearly all lessons, there is a good balance struck between word, sentence and text level work. For children under five the teacher focuses on

developing children's language and literacy skills to inspire their reading and writing. Sufficient emphasis is given to building on children's own language to develop their knowledge of letters, sounds and words. At Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 the objectives of the lesson are often explained to the pupils. This involves the pupils effectively in their own learning. In the best lessons, for the older pupils in school, there is a good range of activities, and questions are asked with skill which moves learning forward. Tasks are presented well and work builds on previous learning. Weaknesses in teaching occur when there is not enough challenge or demand in terms of the work set or expectations are not high enough with regard to the amount of work pupils are expected to complete.

18. In numeracy, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good examples seen for the oldest pupils in school. The school has placed a much greater emphasis on improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills. Lessons invariably start with well planned activities that promote quick mental recall skills. This often lively introduction, fully engages pupils and they respond with a sense of excitement and enjoyment. Again, a good feature is that what pupils are to learn in a lesson is made clear to them. In the better teaching, the teacher demonstrates the key targets and invites the pupils to examine and explore different strategies to solve a problem. Such practice was evident in Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher made good use of appropriate mathematical vocabulary and then asked pupils to answer questions using a similar level of vocabulary. The teacher's expectations were quite clear and the pupils responded appropriately and with a sense of achievement. In less effective lessons, opportunities are not used for pupils to examine strategies for themselves to help solve problems. Instead, the teacher provides the answer. There is evidence that at times at both key stages there is an over-mastering of certain skills. Pages of work marked correctly indicate that tasks set may be too easy. The concept has clearly been mastered and there is a need to challenge, not consolidate.
19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and when pupils are withdrawn for specialist teaching by the special needs co-ordinator the teaching is often of a very good standard. In these groups, the tasks set are challenging and a careful choice of activities and resources stimulates learning and sensitively reflects the needs of the pupils. In these instances, pupils are well motivated, keen to please and show a great enthusiasm to complete their tasks and move on. The high quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the good progress pupils make. Individual education plans are of a good standard because they contain clear, achievable targets. The weakness is that teachers do not consistently use the plans to help inform their curriculum planning and so, although progress is satisfactory, it is not as good as it could be within whole class teaching. The school employs learning support assistants who provide additional literacy support to identified pupils. This support is of a good standard. The assistants liaise well with class teachers and the special needs co-ordinator, ensuring that tasks set match the needs of individuals. The support provided is the correct blend of help and challenge. The school has rightly identified the need to examine how it can most effectively meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils. Examples were observed at both key stages, of tasks not always being sufficiently demanding to stretch the pupils. Scrutiny of work shows that work is not always markedly different for the average and above average pupils. Where opportunities are provided for pupils to advance their learning in an atmosphere of imaginative speculation or curiosity, for example in a Key Stage 1 lesson on Florence Nightingale or a Key Stage 2 lesson on the Second World War, pupils' learning advances at a rapid rate. When pupils are provided with investigations, problem solving activities or independent research

tasks, the impact is impressive because of the direction pupils take. Such responses were observed when, for example, a pupil spontaneously searched out the answer to a challenging problem on the Internet.

20. The quality of teaching overall for children under five is satisfactory with some good practice. Planning is based around the key areas of learning and the children are provided with a good range of activities that enable them to learn through practical experiences. The teacher uses every opportunity to develop children's speaking and listening skills through incisive questioning that sensitively includes their own experiences. On occasions, discussions or activities are over-long and this results in children losing interest and learning is not as effective as it could be. However, overall children are managed well and are well prepared to start work on the National Curriculum when the time is right.
21. At both key stages, teachers have a secure subject knowledge of most subjects. They have a good level of subject knowledge and interest in history. This is reflected in their enthusiasm for the subject which is transmitted to the pupils who listen attentively and respond well. Such examples were seen in Classes 2, 3 and 4. The school has a music specialist on the staff and her talents are used well across the school. The good quality of teaching ensures that pupils make rapid progress across all elements of the subject, as well as thoroughly enjoying themselves. Teachers are confident in the use of computers and directly teach the required skills to pupils. The constant use of computers to support work in other areas of the curriculum enhances pupils' progress in this area of the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge is less secure in science. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' learning through incisive questioning such as 'what would happen if.?' or 'how or why did that happen?' The lack of knowledge is sometimes shown in the lack of a correct technical vocabulary when explaining ideas or hypotheses to pupils.
22. Lesson planning does not follow a consistent format but objectives are usually clearly stated. Activities that are provided are more often than not well matched to the objectives. Many lessons, as well as literacy and numeracy sessions, follow a set pattern of whole class discussion, group activities and a plenary session. In the majority of lessons at both key stages, teachers use recap at the start of the lesson to ascertain what pupils already know or have remembered. In the most successful lessons, the questioning then becomes more probing and fully involve all pupils. In history lessons for Classes 2, 3 and 4 the teachers adapted their level of questioning skilfully to match the needs of the individual pupils. This means that all pupils are kept on their toes.
23. On most occasions pupils are managed well and all teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. Relationships with teachers and between pupils are of a good standard. When working in groups, teachers provide good levels of support and teachers stress the importance of self-discipline in acquiring proper work habits. On the odd occasion where pupils lose interest or do not behave as well as is expected, it is usually because the teacher does not exercise authority clearly enough from the outset and consequently does not get the pupils' full attention.
24. At both key stages, there is efficient management of resources and support staff. These factors promote good behaviour and effective learning. Resources are often prepared before the start of the lesson. In a science lesson at Years 3 and 4, the careful preparation of resources at lunchtime meant that pupils could start immediately with their investigative work after the initial explanation by the teacher. No time was lost and pupils' initial enthusiasm was maintained. In some lessons



observed at both key stages, examples were seen of a lack of pace. In these instances, there does not appear to be a real sense of urgency. Time limits are not always set within lessons and the quantity of recorded work does not always reflect the quality of discussion. In other instances, where the pace is brisk, pupils respond well and rise to the challenge.

25. Within lessons teachers listen and respond to pupils well. Examples were seen in Key Stage 2 of teachers using praise and gentle criticism in equal amounts to encourage pupils but also to handle misconceptions. This steers pupils towards a clearer understanding. Target setting is being used effectively for the older pupils in school. Targets are set between the teacher and pupils on a half termly basis in the areas of literacy and numeracy. This is good practice. Although teachers mark pupils work on a regular basis, the opportunity is not used effectively to outline to pupils what they need to do to improve their work or to improve their level of presentation. Homework is set on a regular basis and increases as pupils move through school. Parents express a high degree of satisfaction with the amount of work their children are expected to complete at home. The work is usually tailored to meet the individual needs of pupils and particularly for the older pupils promotes the importance of individual study and research. The school has identified the need to strengthen the role that parents can play in supporting the homework policy by, for example, generating a greater dialogue through the reading diaries that accompany pupils reading books.
26. Overall, the quality of teaching makes an important contribution and has a beneficial impact on the progress that pupils make. The standard of teaching has been maintained since the time of the last inspection. In most lessons, the quality of teaching ensures that pupils are keen and interested from the start of the lesson. Pupils are ready to make an effort in their work when the teaching makes demands and challenges and provides the encouragement which enables them to do so. In all lessons seen, there was a contribution made to the pupils' consolidation of knowledge, skills and understanding. When the teacher expects them to, pupils work at a good pace. In the best examples of teaching observed, pupils are clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Where tasks are challenging it builds upon previous learning and pupils have their own ideas about how it could be developed further.

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

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school for its pupils are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements, including those for children aged five years and under. It pays due regard to the national strategies for both literacy and numeracy. The quality of specialist provision throughout the school for pupils with special educational needs is good. When pupils are withdrawn from their mainstream class lessons for additional help, the work they are given to do is well matched to the targets found in their individual education plans. Great care is taken to ensure these pupils maintain access to the full curriculum and are not excluded from vital parts of class lessons. In these lessons the curriculum is organised well to meet the needs of these pupils. However, teachers do not always make best use of the targets in pupils' education plans. Throughout the school the curricular opportunities in information technology are of a high quality and pupils in Key Stage 2 also benefit from a good quality curriculum provided by specialist music teachers.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum on the whole but not enough emphasis is consistently given to the teaching of science and geography to enable pupils to systematically acquire the full range of knowledge and skills.

28. The provision for extra-curricular activities within the school is good. Throughout the year pupils are offered a wide range of varying activities, including netball, athletics, music, computer, chess and French clubs. These are all well attended and visits to the chess and computer clubs during the time of the inspection showed the pupils participating in a high level of challenging activities with obvious enjoyment. Members of staff are tireless and unstinting in giving their time to assist with these activities.
29. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of health issues and are aware of how their life style affects their well being. The school has developed policies for sex education and drugs awareness, both of which are taught during personal and social education lessons. In addition, pupils also benefit from regular opportunities during circle time to discuss a wide range of issues which prepare them well for taking personal responsibility for their actions and for developing an understanding of how these may affect others.
30. There are satisfactory links with the local community. The school maintains good links with the local parish church where special annual services are celebrated, such as a Leavers' Service at which Year 6 pupils are presented with Bibles. Links are in place with local businesses who are generous in their support of events such as Summer Fetes, and Christmas Fairs and offer their support in numerous ways. Local residents who have known the school and the area for many years are highly valued for the expertise, experiences and support they can offer and make a positive contribution to pupils' progress and knowledge. The church also devotes a full page of the monthly newsletter to the work, activities and achievements of the school.
31. There are good links with the Twiglets pre-school playgroup which meets in the school, thereby providing the opportunity for children to become familiar with the school and its routines. There are good links in place with secondary schools which are helpful in their consistent support by sharing resources and arranging visits by members of staff to assist in the smooth management and transfer of pupils. Links with the wider community have included exhibitions at Colchester Art Gallery and BBC Radio Essex. The school has charitable links with Children in Need, Help the Aged, Poppy Appeal and other causes for which it been successful in raising funds for their support and needs. The school welcomes and supports work experience students and tries to ensure that the time and tasks undertaken during their time with the school make a positive contribution to their future careers.
32. The school meets statutory curricular requirements, including provision for religious education. Daily acts of collective worship are incorporated into whole school and class assemblies. They are planned adequately and encourage pupils to think about their own values and beliefs and those of others. Whilst they are mainly of a Christian character, occasional opportunities are provided for pupils to explore the customs and traditions of other world faiths. Pupils respond well during times of prayer and reflection. They have a good understanding of the significance of prayer and demonstrate reverence and respect. No pupils are withdrawn from collective worship, and the parents are advised in the school's prospectus of their right to withdraw their child should they so desire.

33. The school is effective in cultivating the pupils' personal development through the good opportunities it provides for raising their awareness of social and moral issues. Adults who work within the school provide good role models for pupils and are consistent in their approach to reinforcing the difference between right and wrong. Discussions in circle time are particularly effective in prompting pupils to reflect upon how their actions may affect others and that they have choices about how to behave. They talk with maturity about the need to be honest and fair, to tell the truth and they know that justice is being even-handed and non-biased. The school council promotes this well. The oldest pupils regularly prepare lunch for themselves and guests, who include staff and governors. During the inspection first hand experience confirms the value of these occasions in developing pupils' social competence and their skills in initiating and sustaining interesting dialogue with a wide range of people. Through their participation in sports events and competitive games pupils learn the value of developing a team identity and the need for interdependence upon their team mates in order to be successful participants in local and regional events.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to explore the values of others both in lessons and listening to stories during assembly. Pupils are familiar with well known stories from the Bible, including the Marriage Feast at Cana and the Feeding of the Multitude. They relate these to the central theme of helping others and offer suggestions about how they can be helpful to others. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect upon why we are here and our place in the world. The school enhances pupils' cultural awareness through many areas of the curriculum. During their history lessons pupils learn how British culture has changed over the centuries. They know that in Victorian times Britain had an empire and that since World War II the role of women in society has changed dramatically. By studying the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, they know the impact that individuals have had upon society. Through their art and music lessons pupils find out about the work of famous artists and composers and develop an understanding of the intended effect created by a particular piece of music or work of art. By working with visiting artist, Annabel Bird, pupils learned how to construct their own three dimensional weavings to create effects of day and night on an imaginary planet. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to visit museums, art galleries or places of worship, other than the local church, or to participate in residential field trips. The school is a mono-cultural environment, so pupils have few experiences of meeting people from other cultures.
35. Since the time of the last inspection the school has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum, including appropriate provision for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has responded in an appropriate manner to the issues identified.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

36. There is a strong, positive ethos of care throughout the school. Staff know and understand pupils well with the result that pupils feel secure and valued as individuals.
37. There are good procedures in place to ensure that pupils are well protected at school and health and safety issues are regularly monitored. A new health and

safety co-ordinator has been appointed and there are good guidelines in place to support the delegation of this task. Staff show diligence in observing potential health and safety risks around the school and appropriate action is taken should any issue arise.

38. There is a named teacher responsible for child protection who undertakes this role in a dedicated and sensitive manner. All members of staff understand the procedures and have undergone recent training. The effective child protection policy is in accordance with local guidelines.
39. Currently there are two fully trained first aiders who keep their qualifications updated on a regular basis. Pupils with specific medical needs receive good and caring support throughout the day. Good procedures are in place to contact parents and carers in the event of accidents or pupils becoming ill whilst at school. Accident and fire procedures are fully in place and all incidents recorded in a clearly detailed manner.
40. Pupils and parents are fully aware of the procedures for reporting any form of bullying and are confident that any such incidents would be dealt with swiftly, sensitively and appropriately.
41. The school's arrangements for the assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are satisfactory. In addition to a baseline assessment of pupils starting school and National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven and 11, the school administers the optional national tests for Year 4 and 5 and twice yearly reading tests from Year 2. Teachers also carry out tables and spelling tests when appropriate as part of weekly programmes of work.
42. The school is beginning to analyse the results of assessment with increasing effectiveness. The headteacher plays an important part in this. Problems are identified correctly and targets for improvement agreed. However, these are not always as rigorous as they might be. In addition, the use of assessment to inform teachers' planning is not as effective as it could be. As a result, work is not always matched sufficiently to pupils' varying abilities, particularly the higher attainers. The school does not have examples of work at agreed levels in subjects to assist teacher assessments. Marking is up to date, but there are few instances when it is used to give pupils guidance on how to improve.
43. The school has put in place a number of strategies to monitor pupils' academic performance and personal development. Pupil profiles, which include levels of attainment at the end of each year where applicable, are passed to receiving teachers. Pupils have individual targets and are occasionally reminded about these in lessons. Each pupil has a writing progress book which contains samples of their writing with teachers' comments. There are reading record diaries to help monitor pupils' progress in reading. However, teachers rely heavily on close informal communication and, as a result, are not always sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that agreed monitoring procedures are administered effectively.
44. Many parents, in interviews and discussions and in the pre inspection questionnaire, recorded their high regard and respect for the good level of support given to their children. Pupils with special educational needs are positively assisted to meet their targets and receive a good level of support at all times. Children under five are introduced to school life with care and sensitivity and quickly settle down to work and to daily routines.

45. There are satisfactory procedures in place for monitoring pupils' academic achievements and personal development, although these are not always of a formal nature. Staff know their pupils well and are fully familiar with their backgrounds and emotional needs and show a high level of dedication in offering appropriate support.
46. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the day to day life of the school by involvement in the School Council which meets on a regular basis. This introduces pupils to the wide range of skills they may need throughout their future lives and ensures that their views are heard and respected.
47. The school's arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Registration and follow up procedures are efficient. A commendable feature is the practice of contacting the home immediately when unexplained absences arise. This provides reassurance about pupils' safety and makes a positive contribution to reducing unauthorised absence.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

48. The school's partnership with parents is good. Since the last inspection this has developed into a strong relationship and both parents and the school have worked hard to ensure that this is effective. The parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. Parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection and most of those who replied to the questionnaire, felt that the headteacher and all staff showed a consistently high level of dedication and support to the children in their care and to the good ethos of the school. The parents are happy with the quality of education the school provides. They feel confident in approaching the school if they have any concerns, knowing that they will be listened to and, if necessary, appropriate action taken. Parents' views are that it is a school that is well led and managed, a school where teaching is good and their children make good progress. A minority of parents would like more information about how their children are progressing and would like stronger links between home and school. Inspection findings indicate that in general parents are kept well informed and that the school works hard to develop and maintain strong links between home and school. Indeed, the partnership between parents and the school has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.
49. Information provided for parents is good. The school prospectus is well detailed and presented. The end of year report includes details of the progress pupils make and targets are identified for further improvement. Parents are invited to comment on the report either verbally or in writing and many welcome and take up this option in a positive manner. Parents of children with special educational needs are consulted at an early stage of any concerns and are kept informed of all progress. There is regular access between parents, external agencies and the special educational needs co-ordinator.
50. Parents are particularly pleased with the regular information about topics, activities and achievements that they receive in the weekly newsletter. This is well presented and informative, providing a useful link between the school and home. There is a Home School agreement in place which is working effectively.
51. Meetings for parents are held twice during the academic year and are felt to be useful occasions for parents to discuss their children's work and future curricular topics. Parents also appreciate that fact that they are made welcome to come into school at any time to discuss with class teachers or the headteacher any concerns

they may have.

52. There is an extremely active Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) which has raised considerable funds for the school by the organisation of various events throughout the year. The Association works tirelessly in its task and has been successful in providing funding for additional learning resources which benefit the education of all pupils.
53. Many parents help in school with a wide variety of tasks and activities and feel well supported and guided by the class teachers by the provision of helpful guidelines and strategies. Most parents are involved with the work their children undertake at home and give guidance and support with reading, mathematics and research projects.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership of the school is satisfactory and makes a positive contribution to the quality of education provided. The leadership and management has helped to create an effective learning environment where standards are improving. The headteacher in consultation with the staff and governors has accurately identified further areas for development in this aspect of school life. These include more rigorous monitoring procedures and a more focused use of assessment data to set targets and guide future curriculum planning. These are important issues to address to help improve standards further.
55. All who work at the school show a commitment to raising standards. The headteacher has been successful in building a team of staff who have a shared vision of where the school is heading. The school has a senior management team which meets on a regular basis. The team includes the Chair of Governors. This enables her to have an excellent oversight of issues that are pertinent to the school's further development. The headteacher has in recent months embarked on monitoring visits to classrooms and provides informal feedback. These visits have been supplemented by visits from the school's local education authority advisor. The weakness in this area is that the role of curriculum co-ordinators is not effective enough in helping to raise standards. Much informal discussion and debate occurs between staff but there are no procedures in place for co-ordinators to monitor, support and evaluate teaching and learning across the school, either through lesson observations or regular scrutiny of pupils' work. This reduces the opportunities to disseminate good practice and to tackle any weaknesses. The school is up to date with its cycle of appraisal of headteacher and teachers and targets are clearly linked to the professional development of individuals and how they can impact on the quality of education provided. All staff at the school, including support staff, are clear about their role in its day-to-day work and play a significant part in helping to bring to life the aims of the school, which are clearly stated in its prospectus.
56. The Governing Body of the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities in an effective manner. Governors make a valuable contribution to setting the direction of the work of the school and through full Governing Body and committee meetings, they question as a critical friend in their recognised responsibility of holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides. The governors know the school well and what is happening on a day-to-day basis. Most make regular visits. When visiting they have a specific focus for observation which is made known to all staff. The outcome of the visit is discussed with staff and the full Governing Body when appropriate. Relationships between governors and the school are very good. The relationship is strengthened by a number of governors who help in classrooms on a voluntary basis and who can see first hand how the school works. The Governing Body is kept very well informed by the headteacher and minutes of governors' meetings clearly show that there is a clear commitment to continually seeking to raise standards. The regular training that governors attend provided by the Local Education Authority, gives them a good insight into initiatives both local and national and provides them with the opportunity to set the school in a wider context.
57. Following on from the last inspection, the headteacher and Governing Body drew up an action plan to address the issues identified. Overall, the school has made an expected level of improvement. There have been improvements in standards but the school recognises there is still room for more improvement. The quality of teaching has been maintained. Policy documentation is of a much better standard in terms of both quality and quantity. The partnership with parents and carers is now much

stronger, with parents showing a high degree of satisfaction with the work of the school. The role of curriculum co-ordinators needs to be more focused on helping to raise standards. The willingness and commitment of staff to move the school forward indicates that the school is appropriately placed to continue to improve.

58. The school carries out an appropriate range of tests to assess pupils' levels of attainment. In addition to the National Curriculum tests at the end of both key stages the school administers national tests in Years 4 and 5 and twice yearly reading tests from Year 2. Teachers also carry out tables and spelling tests when appropriate as part of weekly programmes of work. The school is starting to analyse the results of assessment with increasing effectiveness. The headteacher plays an important role in this. However, co-ordinators are not always actively involved in this analysis and so target setting or identifying specific areas or groups of pupils is not consistently as rigorous as it could be. In line with statutory requirements the Governing Body has set literacy and numeracy targets for the years 2000 and 2001. The targets set for 2000 are quite low but reflect the ability levels of the pupils. The growing impact and effectiveness of the school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy suggest that these targets might be exceeded, particularly in mathematics. The targets set for 2001 are at a higher level but the school has recognised the need to examine these in light of school improvement.
59. The headteacher, in consultation with the staff, decides the educational needs and priorities of the school and articulates these in a school improvement plan. The plan is then fully discussed by the school improvement committee which includes staff and governors, before final ratification by the full Governing Body. The document is an accurate assessment of the areas of school life that need to be improved. This plan is supplemented by detailed action plans for improving literacy, numeracy and information technology. Together these form a coherent framework for moving the school on. Timescales and costings are built in. The weakness is that procedures to monitor progress towards targets are not always clear. In addition, success criteria do not always include the raising of standards as the driving force behind the initiative. It is implied but not clearly stated. Overall, however, the document is an accurate assessment of the position of the school and where it wants to move to.
60. The school has good systems in place to set up and monitor financial planning and expenditure. The school is part of a consortium of local schools who share the knowledge and expertise of the consortium financial manager. Together with the school, he draws up a detailed one-year budget. This is compiled after consultation with the headteacher and staff. Account is carefully taken of the educational priorities that have been identified, the pupil and staffing profiles and any accommodation issues. The result is that the school budgets systematically for all expenditure and has a clear and concise idea about the cost of school improvements. The school's spending decisions relate very well to identified priorities for improvement and as a result pupils benefit and make progress. Once priorities have been identified the school is effective in applying the principles of best value in its management and use of resources. The school increasingly uses the analysis of test data to compare its performance with similar schools. There is of course still work to be done in this area and the size of the school means that comparisons are not always reliable. Through the questionnaires that the school sends out to parents, it gauges their opinions about the quality of service provided and takes on board comments that are made. The staff and Governing Body pay careful attention to the impact of major spending decisions on the work of the school. For example, the school has committed itself to a long term and continual upgrading in the quality and quantity of computers. Discussions regularly take place



as to the benefit to the pupils of this decision and both staff and governors are keen to ensure that as much use is made of the equipment as possible and that staff receive the correct training. The result of this has been that standards in information technology are above average and look set to continue to improve. The school has employed two learning support assistants after supporting them in extensive literacy strategy training. This has been a most effective use of money because they now make a valuable and valued contribution to the work of the school and in helping to raise standards.

61. Overall, the school makes good use of its available resources. The school grounds are used well for work in history, science and mathematics. The interior accommodation is used to its fullest potential. The school makes good use of new technologies. Pupils send and receive electronic mail, use digital cameras, operate photocopiers and are as likely to carry out research on the Internet as from a library book. All staff and governors are keen to promote this element of pupils' learning. An excellent example was observed where a parent-governor had e-mailed to the pupils the beginning of an adventure story and the pupils had to complete it and e-mail it back. Another governor and family members e-mailed birthday greetings. Money that the school receives for teacher in-service training is used efficiently and is targeted so that it meets the needs of both the school and the individuals. A good example has been the training for developing teachers' information technology skills. The school has rightly identified the need for further in-service training for staff in science.
62. There is a good level of quality and logic in the links between planning and spending. Financial planning extends beyond one financial year. Projections of pupil numbers are made and outline financial planning reflects this. This is good practice as it enables the school to respond to differing financial circumstances that may arise from year to year. Another area of strength is the level of effective financial control and administration. The school has one financial assistant and two administrative assistants on a part-time basis. The system works well. School administration is unobtrusive and keeps the way clear for teachers to concentrate on their work. Financial administration is of an equally good standard. Systems for financial administration are efficient and responsive to need. Adequate information is always available to the headteacher and governors, finances are kept in good order and costs easily determined. The recommendations of the last auditor's report have been implemented. The quality of leadership, management and the efficient running of the school has been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
63. The school has a satisfactory complement of suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. All teachers are committed and hard working. Responsibilities for curriculum areas are effectively shared amongst the staff in accordance with their subject qualifications, interest and experience. The support staff are generally used to good effect. Members of staff with first aid responsibilities are suitably trained and qualified. The administrative support is efficient. Visitors to the school are welcomed in a friendly manner at all times. The site manager and staff work hard and dedicatedly to ensure that the building and the school grounds are kept safe, clean and tidy. The lunchtime supervisors make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school during the lunch break.
64. The accommodation, although severely limited during inter-active lessons such as science, is adequate at the present time for the delivery of the National Curriculum. Care and attention have been given to the stacking and storage of equipment in the hall to ensure that health and safety awareness is observed at all times. The hall is

used for a variety of purposes throughout the day including assemblies, physical education lessons and lunch breaks.

65. There are a wide variety of displays throughout the school reflecting the activities, work and achievements of the pupils. All areas of the school are easily accessible for both able bodied and disabled pupils. The school grounds are well maintained and children under five have suitable provision of a dedicated play area with appropriate equipment to further develop their physical skills. There are adequate resources in most subjects, with good provision in mathematics and information technology. A good 'Discovery Zone' has been set up in the Library which gives hands on experience to several pupils at any one time. Opportunities to extend pupils' learning by incorporating visits to museums, galleries and the local environment are under utilised at the present time.
66. The level of resourcing has improved since the last inspection with improvements being made in the provision of additional books to give support to the curriculum and encourage the enjoyment of reading for pleasure in pupils.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to improve further the quality of education the school offers to its pupils, the headteacher and staff, together with the Governing Body, should:

**(1) raise standards in English by putting in place strategies to :**

- improve the quality of spelling and presentation;
- develop pupils' ability to devise and sustain ideas and writing for a wide range of audiences and purposes;
- improve at Key Stage 2 pupils' ability to read with greater expression, develop a wide knowledge of authors and to extend their comprehension skills beyond the literal level.

**(2) raise standards in science by:**

- improving the level of teachers' knowledge and expertise;
- ensuring that prior attainment is built upon and extended.

**(3) ensure that all lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace, all teachers have high enough expectations and that work is consistently demanding and challenging in order to meet the needs of the highest attainers.**

**(4) make the most effective use of all available test and assessment data and the marking of pupils' work to:**

- identify areas of weakness and set targets for improvement;
- guide and inform future curriculum planning;
- outline to pupils what they need to do to improve.

**(5) establish a clear role for curriculum co-ordinators that includes:**

- the supporting, monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning across the school, in order to tackle any weaknesses and to disseminate the good practice that clearly exists;
- the regular scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning.

**The school should also consider including in its action plan the following:**

- Examine how more time is allocated to the teaching of geography to enable the pupils to develop a satisfactory level of geographical knowledge and skills.
- Examine how educational experiences that broaden pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultures can be provided.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	47	47	0	0	0

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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		93
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.0	School data	0.3
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	6	6	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4 (3)	4 (3)	6 (3)
	Girls	4 (8)	5 (8)	5 (8)
	Total	8 (11)	9 (11)	11 (11)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (79)	75 (79)	92 (79)
	National	82 (72)	83 (81)	86 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5 (3)	6 (3)	6 (3)
	Girls	5 (8)	5 (8)	5 (8)
	Total	10 (11)	11 (11)	11 (11)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (79)	92 (79)	92 (79)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	92 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	6	5	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2 (3)	5 (2)	5 (2)
	Girls	3 (3)	4 (6)	4 (7)
	Total	5 (6)	9 (8)	9 (9)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (43)	82 (57)	82 (64)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3 (4)	5 (3)	5 (3)
	Girls	4 (6)	4 (6)	4 (7)
	Total	7 (10)	9 (9)	9 (10)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (71)	82 (64)	82 (71)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	93
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*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 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23.25

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	201,088
Total expenditure	202,778
Expenditure per pupil	2,279
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,196
Balance carried forward to next year	21,506

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	57
	29

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	45	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	45	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	59	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	45	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	52	45	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	45	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	34	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	41	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	52	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	41	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	41	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	59	3	0	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**

67. At the time of inspection five children were under the age of five. These children are taught as part of a Reception and Year 1 class. The teacher has appropriate expectations and is especially successful in promoting children's literacy skills, their personal and social skills and their physical development. Assessment information gained from tests taken soon after children start school is used in a satisfactory manner to identify children with learning difficulties. On occasions more could be made of this data to guide and inform curriculum planning. Good procedures are in place for children and parents to visit and for children to take part in activities before officially starting school. There are two intakes of children each year in September and January. The children are well prepared to start work on the National Curriculum when the time is appropriate.
68. During the week of inspection, teaching was satisfactory and on occasions was good. Children are provided with a broad range of activities which are planned around the key areas of learning. Opportunities are provided for children to learn through structured play and to develop their understanding of new concepts through practical first hand experiences
69. A detailed analysis of children's attainment levels soon after they start school shows that over a four year period, attainment is below average. The most recent intake of children has a significant number who are well below average and a small percentage above average. During their time in the Reception class children make satisfactory progress in their learning with good progress in some literacy and physical education lessons. The low starting point of a significant percentage of pupils means that by the age of five attainment remains below average in children's personal and social development, and in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment is at the expected level in the areas of physical and creative development. For a small percentage of children, attainment is at least in line with the nationally expected level in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates.

#### Personal and social development

70. A significant number of children enter school with poor personal and social skills. Some children have relatively low levels of confidence and self esteem and are not always ready to share resources. Some children find it difficult to follow classroom routines. The good quality of teaching and sensitive handling of the children result in a growth of children's self esteem. As the children get older they start to show signs of co-operative working and to respond appropriately to teachers' instructions. A lot of time is directed to encouraging children to develop their personal and social skills. The provision of structured play activities gives children the opportunity to collaborate and recognise the importance of valuing the needs of others. However by the age of five attainment for a significant percentage of children remains below the expected level.

#### Language and Literacy



71. By the age of five present attainment levels are below average. Children initiate conversations but do not use an expressive or expansive vocabulary. Most children copy write with varying degrees of accuracy with the higher attainers forming their own letters and developing an early understanding of sentence structure. Children really enjoy listening to stories but not all are able to re-tell simple stories they have heard. Most children know that words and pictures convey meaning but a smaller number use their phonic knowledge to help them with unfamiliar words. The quality of teaching is good because there is a constant emphasis on developing children's literacy skills. Children are provided with opportunities to learn through structured play activities. The teacher places a lot of emphasis on the teaching of phonics.

### Mathematics

72. Children of all attainment levels make satisfactory progress, even though by the age of five attainment levels remain below the nationally expected level. This is because of the low starting point of a significant number of children. Children do not have a well developed mathematical vocabulary. They are given lots of opportunities to learn through practical mathematics games including counting games and dominoes. Most children recognise early numbers but not all are adept at writing them accurately. Children have little understanding of the concept of addition and subtraction. Most identify simple shapes. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher uses questioning well. The use of a puppet keeps most of the children's interest. However on other occasions the teacher does not gain the full attention of the children when making relevant and pertinent teaching points. As a result children miss the salient points and their progress is suppressed.

### Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below average at the age of five. Children of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Children have a satisfactory understanding of materials but find it difficult to describe their properties. When talking about electricity they can name different appliances but do not have a basic understanding of how they work. Children are not adept at recognising passages in time or in talking about long ago or the recent past as distinct periods of time. Their knowledge of the wider world is limited. Attainment in the use of computers is at a satisfactory level. Children are given many opportunities to use computers and this shows in the confident manner in which they use the keyboard and operate basic programmes.
74. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In a lesson about Florence Nightingale the teacher gave clear explanations but also used questioning effectively to keep the children interested throughout the lesson. Good use is made of computers to support children's' learning. In all lessons a purposeful working atmosphere is created. Only occasionally does the pace of the lesson drop and the children lose a sense of interest motivation and expectation.

### Physical development

75. The majority of children attain the nationally expected level in this area of learning and all children make satisfactory progress. Children develop a satisfactory sense of spatial awareness in their physical activities and move confidently with varying degrees of control and co-ordination. Children throw and catch balls with confidence and roll balls with accuracy. When painting, or making things, children handle brushes, crayons, scissors and other tools with appropriate levels of control. Some

opportunities are provided for children to develop their physical skills further through outdoor play with large toys and on the school's climbing frames area.

76. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good practice. In physical education lessons the teacher gives clear explanations and instructions. This means that children are clear about what is expected of them. She uses examples of children's work well to show to the rest of the class how they can improve. Many opportunities are provided for children to be involved in practical making activities which consolidate their physical skills.

### Creative development

77. The children's' attainment is at the expected level by the time they are five. The progress made by all children, including those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Children recognise and name a range of musical instruments. They know a range of songs and accompanying actions. Children use paint and other media when taking part in art and craft activities with opportunities provided for them to experiment with colour and different media. Children cut and stick appropriately. In role-play activities, such as in the mock-up health centre, children take on different characters but are limited by their vocabulary.
78. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is good support provided by classroom support and other adult helpers. The children receive appropriate small group guidance and direct teaching linking to developing their creative skills. Learning is enhanced when adult helpers are directly involved in the role-play activities and are enhancing children's language skills as well as their confidence and expressiveness.

## **ENGLISH**

79. The previous inspection found attainment in English at the end of both key stages to be satisfactory and often good. However, spelling was identified as a weakness throughout the school and the raising of standards in this area of the curriculum was a key issue. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is now broadly in line with the national average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is below the national average.
80. The school's results in the 1999 reading and writing national assessments for pupils aged seven were well below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in the reading tests was close to the national average, but no pupils reached the higher levels in writing. Overall results in reading for the four year period 1996 – 1999 have been variable but moving up. The results in writing have also been variable, but the trend is down. Compared to similar schools, results in reading were well below average in 1999 and results in writing were very low.
81. The school's 1999 results in the National Curriculum English tests for pupils aged 11 were well below the national average. However, the percentage reaching the higher levels in the tests was well above the national average. Overall, the results in the period 1996 - 1999 have been variable, but slightly up. Compared to similar schools, the results were average, but with a significant difference between the percentage reaching average and above average levels. The percentage of pupils reaching above average levels was much better. At both Key Stage 1 and 2, the indications are that the variability of results between years has been due to the small number of pupils assessed and the difference in ability levels of differing cohorts. Evidence

from the current Year 5 pupils indicates that standards are set to rise again.

82. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily and pupils respond well to the structures and routines of the literacy hour. Most pupils begin school with below average language skills. At both key stages, pupils' learning over time and in lessons is satisfactory, although on occasions higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and extended. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is often good and this too is in line with the previous report. The support given by the specialist teacher is good, but work in classrooms is not always linked appropriately to the targets set in pupils' individual educational plans.
83. At Key Stage 1, pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. They listen attentively and convey meaning when speaking. Pupils enjoy books and handle them with care. They persevere with texts and use letter sounds satisfactorily to tackle new words. By the age of seven, most read with growing confidence and to a satisfactory standard. However, pupils' reading record diaries contain little more than titles of books and the dates they have been read. There are few comments to help pupils know how to improve and the diaries are not used as an effective tool to guide future programmes of reading. Writing skills are generally unsatisfactory. Pupils are beginning to understand basic grammatical sentence structure, but too little work is accomplished in the time available and too often simple words are spelt inaccurately. Lined books are used for handwriting practice, but pupils' general written work is sometimes untidy.
84. At Key Stage 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. They listen attentively and contribute sensibly to discussions using appropriate vocabulary. An example of this was observed when pupils from Year 5 and 6 considered how writers might convey the passing of time. However, standards of reading and writing for pupils aged eleven are below national expectations. Pupils enjoy books, but most read aloud with hesitancy and little expression. Their reading record diaries are not used effectively to help them improve. Pupils write for a range of purposes, including stories, reports, plays and book reviews, but ideas are not often sustained and developed, although some higher attainers have the ability to do this. Basic grammatical structure of sentences is usually correct, but seldom complex. As with the younger pupils, too many simple words are spelt inaccurately. Handwriting and general presentation are sometimes unsatisfactory. At both key stages, writing skills taught within literacy lessons, including spelling, are not always reinforced sufficiently across the curriculum.
85. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good lessons at Key Stage 2. All teachers show a sound understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and have secure subject knowledge. Relationships are good and teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn, although lesson planning sometimes lacks detail. The purpose of work is often explained to pupils at the beginning of lessons and this helps them understand what has to be done. Classes are managed effectively and pupils are motivated to work hard and behave well. Resources are organised efficiently so that time is not wasted. An example of this was the successful use of story tapes in a lesson with pupils from Years 5 and 6. In the best lessons, there is a good range of activities, and questions are used with skill to move learning forward. Tasks are presented well and work builds effectively on previous learning. An example of this again was the lesson with older pupils which included discussion of a text and writing a story with a time slip.

86. Weaknesses in teaching occur occasionally when whole class sessions are too long and pupils become restless. In addition, ongoing assessment is not used sufficiently to inform what pupils are to do next and planning does not always take into account the needs of the higher attainers.
87. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for English. He has analysed tests and assessments and has a clear idea of what is needed in the subject. He helped to lead staff training on the National Literacy Strategy and has carried out some monitoring and evaluation of the work in classes. Particular emphasis has been placed with some success on improving writing and spelling. However, the school is aware that there is a need to use all the available analysis of test data and the information from the monitoring of teaching to help to raise standards further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. The results of the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 show that pupils' attainment is above the national average and in line with that found in similar schools. Standards have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection when only 24 per cent of pupils achieved the required level (Level 4). Improvement has been at a faster rate than found nationally. Taking four years 1996 to 1999 together test results show no significant difference between attainment levels of boys and girls. Inspection findings show that the present level of attainment for the oldest pupils in school is at an average level. This does not indicate a fall in standards but more accurately reflects the fluctuating ability levels of different cohorts. Observations and scrutiny of pupils' work at Year 5 suggest that higher standards will be achieved next year. No significant evidence was found to suggest differences in attainment levels of boys and girls that could not be explained by natural ability differences.
89. When the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds are analysed they show that although the percentage of pupils reaching at least the required level (Level 2) was close to the national average, the percentage exceeding this level was below the national average. This results in attainment being judged to be below the national average and well below the level achieved in similar schools. This has been the trend for the last three years with both boys' and girls' results below the national average. Inspection findings paint a more positive picture. The present Year 2 pupils are a more able group of pupils and standards overall are at a satisfactory level.
90. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy Framework has had a significant impact on attainment levels. A far greater emphasis is now placed on the development of mental arithmetic skills. The pupils really enjoy the work and are fired up in the lessons. The quick, sharp focused introductions to many lessons, where pupils are engaged in a range of different activities that test their mental recall and speed of response, keep the pupils fully engaged and motivated. It is this initiative which has given teachers a more structured, and focused programme for teaching that does not simply rely on following a commercial scheme. As a consequence both staff and pupils are more confident and enthusiastic and levels of attainment are clearly rising - even though, as recognised by the school, there is still room for improvement.
91. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to at least ten with a minority exceeding this. Most pupils can count in 2s, 5s, and 10s and recognise patterns with odd and even numbers. They understand the

place value of digits and put numbers up to 100 in order. Pupils are not as secure in applying their knowledge to solve problems or in identifying different strategies to solve a problem. However this is more linked to a lack of opportunity. When opportunities are provided, pupils respond with a sense of determination and perseverance and not without a sense of fun. A great emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' number skills and knowledge. Pupils have an awareness of standard and non-standard measures and estimate and measure with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Pupils identify two and, in some instances, three-dimensional shapes by their properties. Evidence is available of pupils handling data in graph and chart form although not all pupils interpret the data accurately.

92. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have secure number skills. They have a solid grasp of place value. Mental arithmetic tests are carried out on a regular basis and this is certainly helping to sharpen pupils' agility with numbers. Pupils add and subtract decimals to two places. Higher attainers carry out multiplication and division of larger numbers. Many pupils calculate the area and perimeter of regular shapes. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to handle and interpret data and they present their findings in formats such as graphs and pie charts. Opportunities are sometimes provided for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum at this key stage. However these opportunities are not as frequent as they could be in subjects such as science, geography and history. These are missed opportunities to consolidate and extend pupils' skills. Pupils do not have a well developed mathematical vocabulary. Pupils are increasingly being asked to examine and explore different strategies to help them solve problems but over time this element of mathematics has not been prominent as it is now. Consequently although pupils are gaining in confidence in this area they are not always able to explain succinctly how they achieved their answer.
93. The school's approach to teaching numeracy has improved since the time of the last inspection and pupils are now gaining numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding at a satisfactory rate. Progress is good for the older pupils in school within lessons when teaching encourages pupils to share their methods and strategies. When this happens, a golden opportunity is provided for pupils to learn from one another. This drawing on the class for ideas, solutions, methods and practical contributions challenges pupils' thinking and engages them fully. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. When they are provided with additional classroom support progress is sometimes good because skilful, sensitive questioning enables them to grasp new concepts with a sense of confidence and achievement. Overall the higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school. There is a tendency on occasions to over consolidate their learning. Pages of correctly marked work indicate that they have mastered a particular concept, but they are not always moved on quickly enough to more challenging and demanding work. When work is set at a more difficult level the higher attainers often rise to the challenge and attempt the task with perseverance and enthusiasm.
94. The attitudes to work displayed by pupils are generally of a good standard. Pupils are productive and work at a good pace where the level of teacher expectation is high. Pupils often show a lot of interest in their work, are able to sustain concentration and increasingly recognise the fact that they can think and learn for themselves. When teachers make clear the learning objectives of the lesson pupils respond well because they understand more clearly what it is they are learning. Most pupils take a pride in their work but a minority do not and this sometimes detracts from the content of what they have completed. Behaviour in lessons is often of a

good standard with pupils showing good levels of respect to staff and one another. Overall the positive attitudes and good behaviour displayed contribute significantly to pupils' learning and to the progress they make.

95. Overall the quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory with some good practice at the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers are developing a high level of confidence with the National Numeracy Strategy Framework and this is having a most beneficial impact on pupils' learning. Expectations are usually appropriate but occasionally work is not challenging enough or teachers do not make clear to pupils their expectations in terms of presentation. Teachers often make clear what is to be covered in a lesson and pupils feel confident to ask if they are uncertain. In the best lessons expectations are high, tasks set are clear and concise and there is a brisk pace to the lesson. In a good lesson in Year 5/6, time limits were set and the teacher drew the lesson to a conclusion by highlighting the key facts, ideas pupils had learned and what they needed to remember. This set pupils up well for the next lesson. Pupils are managed well in lessons and they respond appropriately to constructive criticism in a positive manner. Most lessons have a good structure - whole class activity - group work - plenary sessions. On the odd occasion there is too much teacher directed talk and this leaves too little time for pupils to complete their recorded work. A good initiative the school has introduced is target setting. The older pupils negotiate targets with the teacher and discuss these on a termly basis. This is proving effective because it is encouraging pupils to take far more responsibility for their own learning.
96. Teachers mark pupils' work on a regular basis but the opportunity is not always used to outline to pupils how to improve. This means that similar mistakes, such as number reversals are repeated. Where it is used effectively the pupils take on board comments and there are clear signs of improvement. The school has an integrated mathematics computer programme for pupils. This system pitches work at a correct level for the ability of the pupil. Tasks covering all elements of the curriculum are provided. All teachers use this well. They provide each pupil with a regular slot so that they can practise and extend their mathematical skill. All teachers are confident in using the system. This initiative is beneficial not only in improving standards in mathematics but in providing regular access to computers which enhances pupils' development in this area of the curriculum. Homework in the subject is set on a more consistent basis and tasks are clearly linked to the individual needs of pupils. Parents appreciate the amount of homework that is set and the school is constantly evaluating homework arrangements so that parents are used to their full potential in supporting the work of their children.
97. The subject has in the past been led by the headteacher but in recent months the role has been taken over by another member of staff. The headteacher and school advisor have observed lessons throughout the school and informal feedback has been given to teachers. The school has identified in its improvement plan the need for curriculum co-ordinators to be more actively involved in monitoring, supporting and evaluating teaching and learning across the school. This is an important improvement. This together with the regular scrutiny of pupils' work will enable co-ordinators to identify and disseminate good practice and tackle any weaknesses, to have a greater impact on raising standards. This school has developed a satisfactory numeracy improvement plan. The school has recently started to carry out a more systematic analysis of available test and assessment results. This needs to be rigorous. Although the number of pupils assessed each year is small and comparisons with national data unreliable, the setting of individual targets and the use of the data to guide curriculum planning will play instrumental roles in raising

standards still further. A moderated portfolio of pupils' assessment work is not yet in place to help teachers compare and assess pupils' work. The targets that the school has set itself for numeracy are low but it is reviewing the situation in light of the impact that the teaching of numeracy is having. This is appropriate. Targets are high for the year 2001. The good quality resources and the use that is made of computers help to bring the subject to life. Pupils recognise this and respond appropriately and the overall impact is that it improves their learning.

## SCIENCE

98. Pupils' attainment in science at the end of both key stages is presently below the national average. The attainment levels of the present Year 5 pupils indicate that standards are set to rise again. The emphasis the school has given to raising standards in literacy and numeracy has meant that science has not been targeted as an area for development. Whilst teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory during the week of inspection, over time pupils of all abilities have not acquired the necessary knowledge and skills across all areas of the curriculum at a brisk enough pace. The school clearly recognises this and has adopted the Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines to help ensure pupils progressively acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. In addition, the school has identified the need for further staff training and the more rigorous use of assessment data to guide curriculum planning. These are appropriate strategies to help improve standards.
99. The results of the National Curriculum assessments made by teachers in 1999 show that at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainments are similar to national averages and similar schools. Evidence from the inspection would indicate these standards are too optimistic. At the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results in 1999 show that pupils' attainments are close to the national average, but below average when compared to similar schools. Attainment over time, based on National Curriculum test results, indicate pupils achieve standards well below the national average. However, the trend in standards is improving. The number of pupils achieving higher than average standards is also below the national average. Boys attain slightly better standards than girls. The inspection evidence confirms these standards.
100. At Key Stage 1, pupils are not confident in planning and carrying out investigations and experiments and are not confident to offer suggestions about what might happen next. The higher attaining pupils have a secure understanding of the features of a fair test and draw conclusions from interpreting test results and evaluation scientific evidence. The majority of pupils, however, are not adept at using an appropriate scientific vocabulary to explain, for example, how a circuit works. At the time of the inspection pupils had not undertaken any work so far this year relating to life processes and living things. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties is satisfactory. They adequately describe the similarities and differences between materials used in the classroom, including plastic, wood, paper and metal. Some understand why different materials are only suitable for certain functions, such as using glass for a window, but not a roof, but they are unable to give clear explanations about their thoughts. They have some understanding of the sources of materials, including those which are natural and others which are man-made.
101. Pupils are less confident in their work about physical processes. They develop some understanding of electricity and its use in their daily lives. They can build a simple

circuit using leads, bulbs and batteries. Through handling malleable materials they learn that forces distort the shape of objects. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning are restricted due to many teachers performing experiments on behalf of pupils.

102. Within Key Stage 2 the youngest pupils study living things. They examine plants and find out how each of its parts has a particular function and how water travels from the roots to the stem, leaves and fruit. They know how seeds of plants can be dispersed by the wind, animals and birds. Pupils correctly label parts of the skeleton using everyday terminology, but they have little knowledge of scientific names for the main bones of the human body. They have learned about muscle functions and growth rates. More recently pupils have learned about magnets and can define the concepts of attraction and repulsion. At the time of the inspection these pupils had not undertaken any work in this academic year relating to materials.
103. The oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 study the Earth and beyond, including the sun and moon, how day and night occur and how the length of shadows change during the course of a day. Pupils conduct investigations and perform experiments to test forces including gravity, magnetism and objects which exert forces when stretched such as springs. More recently they have separated mixtures by dissolving, sieving and filtering them and by examining the impact of evaporation on the recovery of dissolved solids.
104. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in performing experiments and conducting investigative work but they do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the full range of scientific processes, nor are they able to describe theoretical ideas. Pupils' acquisition and use of scientific vocabulary are unsatisfactory. Worksheets are generally overused and sometimes lack adequate differentiation for the range of age and ability of pupils in each class. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to write extended accounts of their work.
105. The attitudes of the majority of pupils to their science lessons are good. They clearly enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and show them respect. They are generally motivated, most listen attentively and show pleasure in achieving success. When pupils find their work less interesting they are fidgety and too few make good efforts to answer the teacher's questions. On the occasions pupils are afforded to perform investigations and experiments themselves they demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and clearly achieve great satisfaction from the opportunity to learn through discovery. When this opportunity was given to the pupils during the inspection the quality of their learning experience was much greater than in lessons over-directed by the teacher. On these occasions they demonstrate a genuine excitement about their discoveries.
106. Overall the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory. In the best lessons, where the teaching is good, teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Explanations are effective in enabling pupils to develop an understanding of scientific ideas and concepts. Teachers' questions challenge and extend pupils' thinking through their own enthusiasm for the subject. In less effective lessons the teachers' expectations are not high enough and there is an over reliance on worksheets. Where teaching has most impact on pupils' learning opportunities are provided for pupils to perform their own experiments and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the work they are covering. All teachers mark pupils' work on a regular basis but the opportunity is not always used to outline to pupils what they need to do to improve.



107. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the post. He has an appropriate awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject but has not yet had time allocated to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school. He has already identified the need to do this and to develop a portfolio of moderated pupils' work to assist staff in accurate assessment. Although standards have improved overall since the time of the last inspection, the school recognises there is a need for further improvement. The commitment of all who work at the school to raising standards indicates that the school is now appropriately placed to improve work in this area of the curriculum.

#### **ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. Four lessons were seen during the period of the inspection, three of them at Key Stage 2. Judgements were informed by an examination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of children's work and displays around the school. The programme is broad and balanced and includes good use of technology. Overall, pupils are achieving appropriately for their age and the standard of some work is good, particularly in art. This is broadly in line with the findings of the previous report.
109. Pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in lessons and over time. At both key stages, pupils use materials and equipment sensibly and show increasing confidence in experimenting with different media. They generate ideas and plan the design and making of products effectively. Many pupils understand the importance of adapting and refining what they make in order to bring about improvements. An example of this was seen when pupils from Years 1 and 2 made models of outdoor play equipment using a range of construction equipment. Emphasis is rightly given to being aware of the purpose for which a product is made. An example of this was the design and making of container for household use. Pupils from Year 5 and 6 evaluated their work as it developed and used the Internet to research particular designs. Food technology has been introduced since the last inspection. As part of this programme, Year 6 pupils are provided with opportunities to prepare and cook their own lunch, which they do with enthusiasm and considerable success. Visitors are invited to join them and pupils talk with pride about their efforts.
110. Pupils at both key stages show good skills in drawing, painting and colouring. This often helps them illustrate work across the curriculum, for example in history and geography. As they move up through the school, they show growing confidence in the ability to represent what they have seen through pictures. They mix and apply colours with increasing skill and learn satisfactorily about shade, shape, pattern and texture. Their work includes printing, weaving, collage and the making of computerised pictures. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of observational skills. An example of this was seen in the display of work on plants by Year 3 pupils in which they concentrated successfully on line and shape. Satisfactory attention is given to the study of the work of well-known artists such as Picasso and Lowry. Pupils copy their styles effectively. Such studies help broaden their understanding of different cultures.
111. Teaching is satisfactory, although no art lessons were observed at Key Stage 1. Teachers have secure subject knowledge which is shared effectively with pupils and has a positive impact on progress. Lesson planning is often brief, but lessons themselves begin with reminders about previous work and clear explanations of what pupils are to do. This helps build pupils' confidence. Relationships are good

and the satisfactory use of questions helps to move learning forward. Resources are organised effectively and pupils are motivated to work hard. They have good attitudes towards the activities and behave well. They use equipment and materials sensibly and are prepared to share ideas and to learn from one another. Examples of this were seen in a lesson in which pupils from Year 5 and 6 were designing and making chocolate bar wrappers. Throughout the lesson, pupils sustained their concentration and worked together well.

112. There are helpful policy statements for both art and design and technology. Teachers plan together, but there is no formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching itself. Displays of work in classrooms and shared areas are satisfactory and help to enrich pupils' visual awareness.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

113. The work pupils produce in their history lessons is of a standard appropriate for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their lessons in the range and depth of their historical knowledge and understanding.
114. No geography lessons were observed during the period of the inspection. Judgements are, therefore, based upon a scrutiny of pupils' earlier work, review of documentation and discussions with staff and pupils. The evidence indicates that pupils attain satisfactory standards within a narrow range but geography is not taught enough or in sufficient detail to enable pupils to gain appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding across all elements of the subject. The scrutiny of work shows pupils are capable of making satisfactory progress.
115. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have developed an understanding of chronology through studying the lives of well known people including Samuel Pepys, Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War and other significant events such as the Great Fire of London. They use pictures and artefacts to compare houses of long ago. They know that if they had lived 100 years ago they would not have had kitchen appliances such as microwaves, toasters and electric kettles. They study the local environment and compare different types of housing or features about dwellings, such as the number of windows they each have. They can group together features which are the same or different when discussing flats, houses, bungalows, cottages and caravans.
116. As part of their topic work, pupils in Key Stage 2 study other regions of the world such as India, and look at modern British history, including World War II, and more recent events which have occurred in the post-war period. In discussion the oldest pupils could recall other aspects they had studied in their history lessons including, the Romans, Vikings and Victorians. They had particularly vivid memories of a visit they made some considerable time ago in connection with their work about the Tudors. The pupils were much less confident in sharing their geographical knowledge and understanding. They struggled to recall well known rivers, capital cities and weather features and were unable to clearly explain the differences between villages, towns and cities.
117. Over time pupils study a range of periods in history and their knowledge and understanding of the era and culture are satisfactory. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers and classmates. They are very keen to answer questions and are

confident to talk about their work. When given the opportunity they work very well co-operatively, offering and receiving help from each other willingly and enthusiastically. However, in geography pupils are provided with too few opportunities to study geography from first hand experiences or regular day or residential field trips. They have acquired insufficient basic knowledge and understanding of rivers, the environment and a range of localities, settlements or weather conditions.

118. The quality of history teaching is satisfactory. Insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgement on the teaching of geography. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. Documents indicate lessons are adequately planned using the time and limited resources to best effect. Behaviour management strategies are consistently implemented by all staff and pupils are provided with clear guidance about standards expected of them. On occasions, teachers fail to adequately challenge the more able pupils by providing adequately testing activities. Good use is made of visitors to the school who help to bring the subject to life with their own first-hand accounts of, for example, life during the Second World War. Pupils are made aware of the importance of different kinds of historical evidence and artefacts to develop a deeper understanding of the past. Examples were seen of pupils being encouraged to extend their literacy skills through writing accounts of history from different perspectives but this area is not promoted as often as it could be. Pupils are encouraged to use computers to carry out research tasks and do so with a sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment. The marking of pupils' work is not always used to outline to pupils what they need to do to improve. Where it is, pupils clearly take on board the comments and there is an improvement in the standard of work.
119. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance have been implemented and provide an outline of the required skills and knowledge to be acquired. The guidance has been more systematically and rigorously followed in history than in geography. This explains the difference in attainment between the subjects. Resources for both subjects are satisfactory. There has been no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning in order to disseminate the good practice or to tackle the weaknesses. This has already been identified as an area for development by the school.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Standards in information technology are at the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave school they exceed the national expectations. Progress of pupils of all ability levels including those with special educational needs is good. Pupils acquire new skills and knowledge at a good rate. The quality of teaching, and resources and the emphasis the school gives to developing and improving its provision helps to create an atmosphere where pupils are keen to learn. Pupils respond with confidence and enthusiasm and are not afraid to try out a range of activities. The school has based the development of skills around the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. This is appropriate as it ensures that pupils acquire a range of skills across all elements of the subject. Regular and intensive training has been undertaken by all staff members. Their secure subject knowledge is transferred to the pupils who clearly recognise that teachers will be able to help them solve a problem should one occur. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Documentation to support the teaching has improved, the quality of teaching is of a higher standard and there has been a

dramatic improvement in the level of hardware and software resources. Information technology is now clearly a strength of the school. The commitment of staff and the level of finances earmarked for up grading resources on a regular basis indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve in this area of the curriculum.

121. Early in Key Stage 1 pupils start to learn the layout of the keyboard and the function of important keys and icons. They use the mouse in a confident manner. As they get older they start to use the keyboard to write simple sentences. Pupils are familiar with different hardware and a range of software. Through the integrated mathematics learning programme and other software packages they realise how computers can be used to support their work in other areas of the curriculum. A small number of pupils have a good understanding of the uses of information technology in the wider world and know that computers have the ability to communicate ideas in a range of different texts including text, tables and pictures. Pupils are provided with opportunities to see how information technology includes items such as photocopiers, listening centres and video recorders. The school has a programmable robotic toy. This enables pupils to input a set of instructions and to check the outcome of their actions.
122. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop and build their skills and knowledge at a good pace. Pupils have good access to machines so that it becomes a natural component of their learning. By the end of the key stage pupils use desktop publishing to create and merge pictures and text. They use programmes to copy and colour fill designs by Clarice Cliff that have been downloaded from the Internet. Pupils cut and paste pieces of text and know how to maximise and minimise. Most are confident in changing font size, colour, bolding and underlining. Pupils have their own folders on the computer and save and retrieve information with ease. As pupils get older they become more adept at setting up databases and then create fields to locate required information.
123. Pupils have used digital cameras successfully and indeed the school saves samples of work on disc using this method. The pupils recognise the importance and functions of e-mailing. The school's e-mail address is made known to parents and friends of the school who regularly communicate in this manner. Examples were seen of a parent governor e-mailing a story beginning to a Year 3/4 class. The pupils then had to complete it and e-mail the parent. Other parents, friends and family send birthday greetings which the pupils successfully retrieve. Pupils recognise the potential of the Internet. A small percentage of pupils are as likely to research on the Internet, successfully, for a piece of information than they are to look it up in a book. Pupils use 'Superlogo' and the school is to purchase a control box in the near future to enable pupils to instigate and control traffic lights and a burglar alarm.
124. Throughout the school pupils use computers with a sense of enjoyment while at the same time recognising their vast potential. This is as a direct result of the emphasis that the school places on the subject. Pupils work well together. They rise to the challenge when provided with problems to solve. Those pupils who bring considerable knowledge from home are more than happy to help their classmates. This is extended in the extra - curricular computer club where pupils work together, experiment and explore with a higher degree of confidence.
125. The quality of teaching overall is good. Teaching is specifically geared to developing pupils' skills across all elements of the curriculum. When pupils are working in the computer suite or with the class there is clear expectation made to pupils of what the

pupils are doing and why. Teachers are often providing direct teaching of specific skills. Teachers' interventions are not merely for solving technical problems but are far more likely to be enhancing pupils' knowledge or setting further challenges that fully maintain pupils' attention on the task. This results in a deeper understanding of the subject. The teachers place a good emphasis on the subject being used to support other areas of the curriculum, in particular mathematics. An integrated system is in place which sets work at an appropriate level for pupils' ability. Pupils have regular access and so experience a range of tasks that change according to how successful pupils have been. This system makes a valuable contribution to their mathematical as well as computer capability. Computers are also used regularly in English, art and music. The involvement of governors gives the subject an added impetus and pupils show a genuine sense of awe and wonder when a message has been e-mailed either to the school or an individual pupil. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers and support staff help to make a most effective learning environment in which pupils flourish.

126. The headteacher is the co-ordinator and leads the subject well. He has been most instrumental in improving standards and setting a clear direction for the development of the subject. Governors show an equal commitment to improving resources on an ongoing basis. The headteacher has provided regular training sessions for all staff and these have been most effective in developing staff and expertise. The headteacher has not monitored the quality of teaching across the school but plans are in hand to do so. He nevertheless provides good levels of informal support and guidance to colleagues.

## **MUSIC**

127. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve satisfactory standards of work in their music lessons which are in line with the expectations for their age. Throughout the key stage they make satisfactory progress in all aspects of their work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 who are taught by specialist music teachers make good progress in their lessons and by the time they leave school standards are higher than those found in the majority of schools. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their classmates.
128. Only two music lessons were observed during the inspection. Therefore, judgements are also based on scrutiny of planning and discussion with staff and pupils. The youngest pupils participate well and sing tunefully during assembly. They follow familiar tunes and join in at the correct point when singing either the verse or chorus of well known songs of praise. They use a range of percussion instruments sensibly to accompany their singing.
129. Older pupils recognise formal musical notation, such as flats and sharps. They clap a range of given rhythms of increasing complexity and develop confidence and accuracy when performing together in small groups to play the recorder. They play tunes such as 'Morning Sun' and 'Beauty and the Beast' on their recorders and with a piano accompaniment. Pupils recall subject specific vocabulary such as staves and score and use them correctly when studying sheet music.
130. Pupils successfully build upon their earlier work as they move through the school. They develop and refine their skills in listening to and appraising a range of music. They develop a sensitivity for audience, venue and occasion. Photographic evidence

shows their successes in working together to produce Christmas concerts.

131. Pupils enjoy their music lessons very much. They are confident when sharing their ideas and feelings. Even the most reluctant soon become absorbed by the activity and readily participate in discussions about their own work and that of others. Pupils behave very well in their lessons and respond positively to teachers' expectations. On occasions they can become over-excited. Nevertheless, they respond quickly and positively to firm management.
132. The quality of specialist teaching at Key Stage 2 is good and a particular strength of the school. Pupils are given a clear understanding of the tasks they are to undertake and teachers draw their attention to points that arise from work in progress. Good provision is made for all pupils to take part in a range of activities, covering all of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The pace of lessons is generally good although at the end of the day some pupils are very tired and find it difficult to sustain concentration.
133. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments, through lessons with school staff and visiting teachers. This provision makes a positive contribution to the musical life of the school and to pupils' personal development. The contribution of musical productions adds an important dimension to the pupils' social, moral and spiritual development. This is further supported through a sensitive choice of music for assemblies
134. The school has responded well to the previous report's key points for action by introducing a policy and scheme of work for the subject and improving storage facilities for instruments. However, within the scheme of work insufficient emphasis has been placed upon developing and using assessment procedures to monitor pupils' attainment and progress or to guide curricular planning. No time is provided to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching in the subject.
135. Since the time of the last inspection the school has maintained good standards of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 through the use it makes of subject specialist teachers.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

136. Based on limited lesson observations during the week of inspection, pupils of all abilities acquire skills in physical education at a steady rate throughout the school. By the end of both key stages pupils attain standards expected for their age.
137. Since the time of the last inspection the school has put in place a policy statement and a scheme of work to support work in the subject. However, the school has rightly identified the need to develop the scheme of work further so that pupils' prior attainment is consistently built upon and developed. Scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that over the course of the year pupils experience six areas of activity, which are games, gymnastics, dance, athletics, swimming and outdoor activities. Some of these activities take place off the school site with appropriately qualified coaches. The small size of the school means that there is not a great deal of opportunity to compete in inter-school competitions but when such occasions do occur the school takes part with enthusiasm.

138. At Key Stage 1 pupils respond willingly to instructions understanding the need to warm up in preparation for exercise and recognise the short-term effect of exercise on the body. The youngest pupils put out mats sensibly and, in how they position themselves, show a good eye for safety. Pupils balance and show the ability to put together a sequence of actions. They show an appropriate awareness of space. When rolling or throwing small balls, the pupils do so with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They already recognise what is appropriate and inappropriate speed to complete a task successfully. Early catching skills are developing well. The oldest pupils at this key stage put together more complex sequences. They balance on different body parts and understand the need to start and finish movements with a sense of poise and elegance. Pupils move around the hall showing good awareness of space. When moving round they include changes of speed, direction and levels. Pupils are starting to develop the skill of forward and backward rolls. The higher attaining pupils carry out cartwheels with their legs straight in the air, and finish with good balance. Only limited lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. Evidence indicates that pupils can put together a rolling and balancing sequence. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good sequence of 'slide-balance-roll-balance' and finish with a high level of control and graceful movement.
139. The attitudes that pupils display towards the subject are variable but are satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 1, attitudes are good. Pupils show a real interest for the subject. They are keen to learn and show a great sense of maturity in putting out and returning equipment. Pupils are always ready to listen to constructive advice because they understand that this will help to improve their level of performance. The younger pupils get changed quickly so that little time is wasted. Once in the lesson, pupils show good levels of concentration and are eager to participate in all activities. Many show a willingness to learn from the performances of their classmates. At Key Stage 2, although attitudes are satisfactory overall, a small percentage of younger pupils show little interest and their behaviour is unsatisfactory. Many pupils are keen to develop their physical skills and realise that this will be achieved through attentive behaviour. These pupils carry out tasks with a sense of determination and achievement. However, a small number of pupils do not follow the teacher's instructions, act in a careless manner and disrupt the performance of others. These features are the exception rather than the norm but do not make for an effective learning environment for pupils who are giving of their best.
140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good practise at Key Stage 1. There is not consistent format for lesson planning although the best teaching lessons have clear objectives that are made known to pupils. This helps pupils to know exactly what is expected of them. The best teaching at Key Stage 1 is characterised by good management of pupils, clear and concise instructions and the direct teaching of specific skills such as how to execute a forward roll. These features result in a better level of performance of pupils. Teachers make good use of examples and pupils' sequences of movements to show to the rest of the class. As well as highlighting strengths to the rest of the class, it has a most beneficial impact on pupils' self-esteem. On occasions at this key stage, there is an over use of praise which is not warranted. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory. Again, there is good use of exemplars of pupils' performance to help improvement for all pupils. However, on occasions the teacher does not gain the full attention of the pupils due to ineffective management strategies. In these instances, pupils' learning is restricted and they do not make the progress of which they are clearly capable.
141. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that are seasonally based and reflect the interests and expertise of the staff. Such activities

are usually well attended. The school has good resources which are enhanced by an outdoor play and activity area which provides pupils with the opportunity to enhance their physical skills in break and at lunch times. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall but little opportunity has been provided for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Provision for the subject has remained at a similar level to that identified at the time of the last inspection.