

INSPECTION REPORT

St Thomas of Canterbury CE (Aided) Infant School
Brentwood

LEA area: Essex

Unique Reference Number: 115184

Headteacher: Mrs B Stringer

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Skinner RgI

Dates of inspection: 15th to 18th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707321

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sawyers Hall Lane Brentwood Essex CM15 9BX
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, St Thomas of Canterbury Infant School.
Name of Chair of Governors:	Reverend Canon Bob White
Date of previous inspection:	20 th to 23 rd May 1996

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Brian Jones, Lay Inspector		Equal opportunities Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupil welfare
Lesley Jackson	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	Partnership with parents and the community Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
John Linstead	English Information technology Geography History	Children under five Curriculum and assessment Special educational needs

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve above average standards in writing, science, art, design and technology, music and dance. Standards in reading and mathematics are well above average.
- The quality of teaching is good, overall, and there is evidence of very good and excellent teaching. This has a positive impact on the rate of progress made by the pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic and are committed to achieving high standards.
- The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and this contributes greatly to its very good ethos.
- The support and guidance provided for pupils are very good; this includes very good assessment and monitoring of their progress and personal development.
- The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, her deputy and the governors is very good and provides clear direction for the development of the school.
- Standards of behaviour in the school are good as a result of effective strategies to promote discipline and good relationships between all staff and pupils.
- Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The teaching of information technology does not fully meet statutory requirements. Although pupils attain average, and sometimes good, standards in word-processing, they do not meet national expectations in all other aspects of the subject. The school does not have enough up-to-date computers to ensure that all pupils make good progress in their learning.
- II. Although schemes of work have been produced for most subjects, many are still being refined and updated and do not yet provide a coherent framework within which teachers can plan their lessons.
- III. The demountable classroom does not conform to modern standards of health, hygiene and safety and it sometimes detracts from the quality of learning for some pupils.
- IV. Pupils' end-of-year reports do not meet statutory requirements as they do not contain details of the progress made by pupils in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The governors' Annual Report to parents does not contain sufficient information to meet statutory requirements.

The weaknesses are outweighed by the strengths, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made a good improvement overall since its last inspection took place in May 1996. Standards have improved in mathematics, science, art and music. The school has improved its provision for the pupils' cultural development, which was unsatisfactory and is now good. Classroom methods and organisation have been improved as a result of rigorous monitoring and clear guidelines for teaching and learning. Teachers no longer organise a cycle of different activities within each lesson but have a clear focus on one subject. This has also led to a much more efficient use of time during the school day. The governors have also extended the length of time used for teaching each week to bring the school in line with government recommendations. Teachers have continued to develop policies and schemes of work for each subject in order to promote continuity in pupils' learning. Progress has been delayed in some subjects by the high turnover of staff during the past three years, and schemes of work

are not complete. The headteacher and governors have devised rigorous procedures for monitoring the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Subject co-ordinators have been given a clearly defined role in this process, although most are new to their responsibilities. There has been a greater emphasis on providing suitably challenging activities for more able pupils, and their progress is closely monitored. There has been no improvement in the key issue relating to the statutory requirements for pupils' end-of-year reports and the governors' Annual Report to parents. There are very great strengths in the leadership and management of the school, and in its ethos and pastoral care. Most of the teaching staff have less than five years' experience and curricular developments have been interrupted by frequent changes of staff. Taking all of these factors into account, the school's capacity to continue to improve is satisfactory.

Standards in subjects

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

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

When compared with schools nationally, the pupils' results are well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Comparisons with schools that have a similar percentage of free school meals show that the pupils' results are average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. The school fell into the below average band for writing by less than one per cent. The findings of the inspection are that attainment in reading and mathematics is well above average, whilst that in writing and science is above average. There has been a significant improvement in standards in mathematics over the past year. In information technology, pupils attain average standards in word-processing, but do not meet national expectations in other aspects of the subject. Pupils achieve above average standards for their ages in art, music, design and technology and dance, and average standards in history. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards in geography.

The attainment of children aged under five is broadly average when they enter the school. They make good progress in the Early Years and Reception classes and attain above average standards by the time they are five years old in all areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and attain standards that are in line with their capabilities.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	n/a	Good
Information technology	n/a	Unsatisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Good

Forty lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these lessons, three were excellent, six were very good, 18 were good and nine were satisfactory. Four lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good.

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

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good overall. The consistent implementation of the school's behaviour policy has a positive impact on standards of behaviour throughout the school.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and there are hardly any unauthorised absences. Punctuality is also good.
Ethos*	Very good. There is a very good commitment to achieving high standards. The very caring Christian ethos underpins every aspect of the life of the school. The quality of relationships is good.
Leadership and management	Very good. The governors, headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff with management responsibilities all have a positive impact on the leadership and management of the school. They have a clear sense of direction and a shared commitment to the continuing improvement of the standard of education provided for the pupils. All are involved productively in planning for school development and evaluating progress. Long-term strategic financial planning is good. The statutory requirements relating to pupils' end-of-year reports and the governors' Annual Report to parents are not met.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and places a great emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The requirements of the National Curriculum for information technology are not fully met. Schemes of work are not yet fully operational for all subjects. Teachers in each year group plan the curriculum together to ensure consistency. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils who are taught in a mixed age group class. Assessment procedures are very good. Individual targets are set for pupils and their progress is tracked closely. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to inform curricular planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are assessed at an early stage and are given appropriate work to address their targets for improvement. They receive good support in the classroom.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and for their cultural development, it is good. This makes a significant contribution to the good standards of behaviour and personal development and to the school's very good ethos.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall. There has been a high turnover of staff in the past three years, which has affected the pace of curricular development. Although there is a high proportion of newly qualified teachers and those with few years' experience, there is a good range of expertise and a high degree of enthusiasm and commitment. The demountable classroom does not conform to modern standards of health and hygiene and it sometimes detracts from the quality of education provided. The school has adequate resources overall, but there are not enough up-to-date computers to meet the needs of the curriculum.
Value for money	Good.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- V. The school achieves good standards of behaviour.
- VI. Teachers are approachable and parents feel welcome in the school.
- VII. The school enables pupils to achieve good standards in their work.
- VIII. The school promotes positive values and attitudes.
- IX. Their children like coming to school.
- X. The school keeps them well informed about their children's progress.

What some parents are not happy about

- XI. A few parents are not satisfied with the
- XII. Some parents would like more

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of parents in almost every case. However, although parents praise the quality of their children's end-of-year reports, these do not meet statutory requirements because they do not include information about the pupils' progress in all subjects. The findings of the inspection are that the school makes good use of homework to reinforce pupils' learning in school. Although the school does not provide parents with details of what is being taught each term, there have been well attended and highly praised curriculum evenings to inform parents about the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors, headteacher and staff should address the following matters in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes still further.

i. Improve the pupils' attainment in information technology by:*

- ensuring that all strands of the National Curriculum are covered adequately in the school's scheme of work and that this shows clear lines of progression in learning throughout the school;
- continuing to improve the provision of appropriate hardware and software in order to meet the needs of the curriculum;
- continuing to improve teachers' expertise in all aspects of the subject;
- further developing the use of information technology as a tool for learning across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 7, 9, 11, 18, 20, 25, 27, 55, 57, 89-91, 93, 94)

i. Continue to improve the schemes of work for each subject by:*

- streamlining and rationalising existing planning into a coherent whole school plan for each subject, which shows clearly the progression in teaching skills, knowledge and understanding from year to year.

(Paragraphs 27, 46, 52, 75, 88, 94, 99, 104, 115, 119)

iii. Continue to pursue the governors' long-term plan for the replacement of the demountable classroom, in order to improve the quality of education for the pupils who are taught in it.*

(Paragraphs 40, 49, 54, 57)

- i. **Ensure that the end of year written reports for pupils and the governors' Annual Report to parents fully comply with statutory requirements.**

(Paragraphs 43, 47)

***These issues are identified as priorities in the school development plan.**

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

- i. Provide more opportunities for children aged under five to initiate and take responsibility for activities within the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 19, 26, 62)

i. **INTRODUCTION**

i. **Characteristics of the school**

1. St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School is situated in Brentwood North Ward. It is the only Church Aided Infant School in the Chelmsford Diocese and enjoys very close links with St Thomas' Church. The school is located on a very pleasant site, which it shares with the junior school. The two schools also share a dining room and kitchen. The pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The school roll has increased from 197 in 1996 to its present level of 225, of whom 173 attend full-time and 52 part-time. There are three more girls than boys on roll. Thirteen pupils (seven per cent) are identified as having special educational needs, which is well below average. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational need. Seven pupils (four per cent) come from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is above the national average. Less than one per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Some five per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Children aged under five are admitted into school at the beginning of the year in which their fifth birthday falls. Those whose birthdays fall in the autumn term start school full-time in September in the Reception class. Those who have birthdays in the spring and summer terms are taught in the Early Years unit. They attend part-time for a term, and become full-time in January. All new entrants and their parents have the opportunity to visit the school and meet their teachers in the term before they start. Most pupils have attended a pre-school group before entry to the school. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average.

2. Since the school's last OFSTED inspection in 1996, there has been a high turnover of staff. Five of the seven teachers have been appointed during the past three years. One of the existing teachers was promoted to the post of deputy headteacher. A new Early Years classroom was built in 1997, allowing the school to admit all children aged under five in September.

3. The school aims to provide a sound Christian education, which will help pupils develop spiritually, and foster consideration, respect and understanding for the needs of others. It also aims to create a caring, welcoming atmosphere and to provide a well-balanced curriculum, which will develop lively, enquiring minds and encourage independent learning. The school recognises in its mission statement that a good partnership between school and home is essential for pupils' learning and welcomes parental involvement. The school development plan outlines priorities over a three-year period and gives greater detail for each term. Its priorities include the continuing development and implementation of schemes of work, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, improving the school's provision for information technology and developing the school grounds. The main long-term priority is the replacement of the demountable classroom with a new building extension.

4. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	98/99	37	38	75

4. National Curriculum		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Test/Task Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	32	29	33
	Girls	33	34	37
	Total	65	63	70
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87 (93)	84 (89)	93 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

4. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	32	33	35
	Girls	36	36	38
	Total	68	69	73
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	91 (90)	92 (90)	97 (84)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

1 Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
through absence for the latest complete reporting year: 1997/98	Authorised	School	4.0
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0.0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

1

Exclusions

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

1

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	23
	Satisfactory or better	90
	Less than satisfactory	10

1 PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

1 EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

1 Attainment and progress

5. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 shows that, in reading, the proportion of pupils who attained national expectations (Level 2) or higher was in line with the national average. However, the percentage of pupils who reached Level 3 was well above the national average. In writing, the proportion of pupils who attained Level 2 or higher was in line with the national average, whilst at Level 3, it was above average. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or higher was above average, whilst at Level 3, it was well above average. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that the pupils' results are well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of similar schools, they show that the pupils' results are average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics.

6. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for 1999 are compared with those of the previous two years, they show an improvement in reading and a slight decline in writing. The pupils' results in mathematics show a marked improvement over three years. Overall, the performance of girls was generally better than that of boys. The findings of the inspection indicate no current significant variations in attainment between boys and girls. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 assessments by teachers for 1999 shows that the proportion of pupils who achieved Level 2 or higher in science was well above the national average, whilst at Level 3, it was above average.

7. The findings of the inspection show that, by the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils who are on course to achieve national expectations is well above average in reading, above average in writing and science, and well above average in mathematics. A significant proportion of pupils are on course to attain above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In information technology, attainment in communicating information meets national expectations. Teachers' planning and discussions with pupils indicate that standards do not meet expectations in other aspects of the subject. There is a shortage of appropriate hardware, and the curriculum does not fully meet statutory requirements. Standards are above average for the pupils' ages in art, design and technology and music. They are average for the pupils' ages in history. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement in geography. In physical education, pupils attain above average standards in dance, which was the only aspect being taught at the time of the inspection. Pupils attain above average standards in literacy and numeracy. These findings are in line with those of the last inspection in reading and writing. In mathematics, they are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. In most other subjects, standards are judged to be broadly comparable with those of the previous inspection. However, in science, art and music, attainment was average and is now above average. In the previous inspection, no judgement was made in design and technology: standards are now judged to be above average for the pupils' ages.

8. By the age of seven, standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations. Pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and to each other, and respond to questions with appropriate answers and comments. In their conversations with each other, pupils sometimes speak immaturely. In reading, standards are well above average. Pupils read fluently, accurately and with expression. They draw upon a good range of skills when faced with an unfamiliar text and are able to discuss what they have read with interest and understanding. Standards of attainment in writing are above average by the end of the key stage. Pupils write for a variety of purposes, and are able to communicate their ideas in a clear, well-structured manner. They achieve good standards in spelling and punctuation, and develop a neat cursive style of writing by the end of the key stage. In mathematics, by the age of seven, pupils count accurately in tens from any number up to and beyond 100. They recognise sequences of odd and even numbers, and solve problems, such as finding different combinations of numbers to add to 20. They select appropriate units to measure time and estimate and measure in metres. In science, by the end of the key stage, pupils make simple predictions about the outcome of an investigation and record

their observations through drawings, tables, charts and writing. They provide explanations for their observations and say what they have found out from their work. Pupils explain how diet and exercise affect health and know that plants need light and water in order to grow. They describe ways in which some materials are changed by heating or dissolving and know that a bulb will not light if there is a break in an electrical circuit.

9. In information technology, pupils use computers well to communicate ideas in the form of text and pictures. There was no evidence of data handling, controlling or modelling during the inspection. In art, pupils experiment with water-colours, pastels and crayons to recreate autumn leaves in appropriate shades. In design and technology, they make a healthy breakfast cereal and design suitable packaging for it. In music, pupils play the recorder competently and sing with good awareness of pitch and rhythm. Pupils find out about the lives of famous people in history, such as Mother Theresa and Louis Braille, and in geography, they compare life in their own country with that in Africa. In physical education, pupils communicate through dance what they have learned about life in an African village.

10. The attainment of children aged under five is average for their ages when they enter school. They make good, and often very good, progress in all areas of learning, and attain above average standards across the curriculum by the time they are five years old. Many children in the Reception class are already working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. In the lessons observed during the inspection, children made very good or excellent progress in 40 per cent, good progress in 50 per cent and satisfactory progress in ten per cent. By the age of five, children recognise familiar words in their reading books and know and use the sounds represented by letters of the alphabet. They recognise and use numbers to ten and, in some cases, to 20 and beyond. Children use computers with confidence and skill, and handle tools with dexterity. They explore and respond well to sound, colour and texture and enjoy exploring the local environment. In dance, children respond imaginatively to music and move with good control and co-ordination. They establish effective relationships with each other and with adults and are eager to explore new learning.

11. The pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 1. During the inspection, pupils were observed to make good progress or better in 60 per cent of lessons. Progress was satisfactory in 27 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 13 per cent. Progress was very good or excellent in ten per cent of the lessons observed. Overall, pupils make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, music and dance, and satisfactory progress in history. In information technology, they make satisfactory progress in communicating information, but indications are that progress in other aspects of the subject is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient hardware to meet the needs of the curriculum and the scheme of work does not cover all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about progress in geography. Although higher attaining pupils generally make good progress, they are currently making satisfactory progress in writing. The school has identified this as an area for further development. The school has set realistic but challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics. It exceeded these in 1999 and is making good progress towards achieving the targets set for 2000.

12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall and reach levels of attainment in line with their capabilities. Work is carefully planned to meet their needs and they receive good support in the classroom. All pupils on the school's register of special educational needs have an individual education plan, which identifies their learning difficulty and the programme which has been devised to help them progress. This enables teachers and support staff to concentrate on specific targets and to provide work at the appropriate level.

12. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

13. Overall, pupils have good attitudes to their learning, and many have very good attitudes. Most parents say that their children come home enthused about learning, even though a few parents of Year 2 pupils say that some find it hard to keep up with the increasing amount of work. The previous report stated that attitudes were excellent and that pupils took pride in the quality of their work. Pupils continue to show pride in their work and are eager to talk about what they have learnt. They take a keen interest in their lessons, and listen and maintain concentration well. Their response was good or better in three quarters of the lessons seen, very good in 23 per cent, and unsatisfactory in only five per cent of the lessons. A few pupils sometimes lack motivation. One class was reluctant to tidy up at the end of a lesson. Children aged under five show very positive attitudes. Their response is good or better in 90 per cent of their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs show very positive attitudes to their work and concentrate well when given stimulating and appropriate tasks. A few pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are shown patience and understanding by other pupils.

14. Pupils behave well in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtime. Every parent who completed the questionnaire agrees that the school achieves good standards of behaviour. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents stated that their children feel safe and secure. Pupils' play at break times is very positive; for example, they often sing and dance nursery rhymes and number games together. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors. There was no aggressive behaviour during the inspection, and bullying is very rare. A few pupils are sometimes disruptive in lessons. The school has not needed to exclude any pupil in the past year.

15. Relationships at the school are good. Pupils co-operate well with one another, and make good friendships. They take turns when answering questions, and in sharing resources and equipment. There were only a few instances where this did not happen spontaneously. Pupils' respect for the Eucharist leads them to value one another as having equal worth. They applaud each other enthusiastically in lessons when a pupil does well. Teaching and support staff act as good role models in showing pupils how to work together. There is a high degree of racial harmony between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

16. Pupils' personal development is good. This begins in the Early Years unit, where children aged under five take responsibility for keeping their classrooms tidy. Older pupils take turns as 'helping hands' in each class, taking their register to the office and helping with materials and resources. One pupil in each class acts as a monitor to ensure that the class lines up neatly and quietly. Pupils are generous and enthusiastic in their support of local and national charities.

Attendance

17. The good attendance of 95.9 per cent is more than two percentage points above the national average. It is an increase on the rate recorded in the previous report. Unauthorised absences are very rare indeed. Punctuality is good; the fact that the very large majority of pupils arrive on time enables lessons to start promptly in the morning. This continues throughout the day.

17. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

17. Teaching

18. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This judgement is broadly in line with the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection. As at the time of the last inspection, there have been several changes of staff during the past two years, which has made it difficult to sustain the pace of curricular development throughout the school. Three of the teachers are newly qualified and in their first term of teaching. No full-time class teacher has more than four years' experience. Forty lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these, three were excellent, six were very good, 18 were good and nine were satisfactory. There were four unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, science, art, music and dance. It is satisfactory in history and good in those aspects of information technology that were being taught at the time of the inspection. However, in other aspects of information technology, teaching is unsatisfactory, as pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn and make progress. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in design and technology and geography. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved in mathematics, art, music and design and technology. In history, teaching was judged to be very good in the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy is good. Both are taught daily and the time is used effectively.

18. The quality of teaching for children aged under five is good, overall, and there is a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching. Ten lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these, two were excellent, two were very good, five were good and one was satisfactory. Teaching is good in all areas of learning. In language and literacy, teachers encourage children to become confident readers and writers and place a high value on developing speaking, listening and literacy skills. Children's mathematical development is also a priority in the curriculum and teachers provide a broad range of first-hand mathematical experiences in all aspects of the subject. There is an appropriately marked emphasis on developing children's numeracy skills and understanding. Teachers provide a range of opportunities for children to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world, which provides a good foundation for future learning in science, technology, history and geography. For example, children go on a 'listening walk' around the school and are taught to use computers and tape recorders independently. Teachers also place appropriate emphasis on developing the children's physical and manipulative skills in both indoor and outdoor environments. They show them how to use tools, equipment and materials carefully and safely, and exploit the children's natural eagerness to participate in all forms of physical activity. In the area of creative development, teachers provide many opportunities for children to engage in drawing, painting, music making, imaginative play and dance. They also make a significant contribution to the children's personal and social development by teaching them how to work, play and co-operate with others in groups and by building their confidence and self-esteem. However, there are limited opportunities for children to initiate and take responsibility for their activities, which are all tightly structured. Overall, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of very young children and of the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age. They have very high expectations of all children, and their day-to-day planning and assessment of the children's progress are very good, detailed and thorough. Teachers and classroom assistants work closely together to support and reinforce children's learning.

19. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good. Of the 30 lessons observed during the inspection, one was excellent, four were very good, 13 were good and eight were satisfactory. There were four unsatisfactory lessons. The main reasons for the unsatisfactory teaching were weaknesses in the management and control of the pupils and a mismatch between the objectives of the lessons and the activities that were prepared for the pupils. On two occasions, the pupils were confused about the task because they had been given too much conflicting information and did not understand what was expected of them. The teacher was too involved with other activities in the classroom to be aware that misunderstandings had arisen. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers give a very high priority to developing pupils' reading skills and consider daily reading aloud to an adult to be an essential ingredient in this process. The teaching of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammatical structures is effective and makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' writing skills. In numeracy, teachers provide a variety of activities to develop pupils' mental strategies

and to extend their understanding of all aspects of mathematics.

20. The strengths of teaching at this key stage are the very thorough planning, which clearly identifies objectives and activities for each lesson, and the high quality of the day-to-day assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers make very good provision for pupils of differing levels of ability within each class, both in terms of planning, assessment and appropriately challenging activities. In the class that contains pupils from Years 1 and 2, work is planned appropriately for the pupils in each year group to ensure that the Year 2 pupils have equality of access and opportunity with their peers in other classes. The school's marking policy is applied consistently well, and teachers provide helpful verbal and written comments to enable pupils to improve their work. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum, which they communicate to the pupils with clarity and enthusiasm. Most teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and of their ability to achieve high standards in their work. In the majority of lessons, teachers make good use of a wide range of resources to support pupils in their learning. They work closely with assistants to plan activities and record pupils' progress. Lessons generally move at a brisk pace, which enables pupils to achieve a good work rate. In a very good mathematics lesson, the teacher reinforced and extended the pupils' understanding of multiplication through a variety of activities, which challenged their thinking and encouraged the development of quick mental strategies. She provided a stimulating range of resources and was very successful in helping pupils to enjoy manipulating numbers in different situations. In an excellent physical education lesson, the teacher's inspirational and enthusiastic approach, very high expectations and the challenging nature of the tasks enabled pupils to make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in dance.

21. The weaknesses in teaching that were identified in the previous inspection report have been successfully addressed. At that time, pupils were organised to work on a cycle of activities in some lessons, which were judged to be ineffective because too many activities were going on at the same time, some of which lacked challenge. Too much time was spent on registration and on explaining the cycle of activities to pupils, which detracted from the time spent on each area of the curriculum. A thorough review of classroom methods and organisation and a rigorous programme of monitoring the quality of teaching throughout the school have resulted in an improvement in the balance of the curriculum and the more effective use of time in lessons. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, with its increased emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to make mental calculations, has contributed to the improvement in the quality of teaching and the raising of standards in mathematics.

22. Teachers make effective use of homework to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. All but a very small percentage of the parents who responded to the questionnaire are satisfied with the school's arrangements for homework. Pupils take home reading books each evening, and older pupils also receive spellings and are asked to find out information about different topics from time to time. At the meeting with the registered inspector, some parents of pupils in Year 2 felt that their children should receive more spelling homework and that this was not consistent between classes in the year group. Nearly all parents feel that teachers are approachable and willing to discuss any problems they might have. Some were disappointed that the more rigorous security system makes it harder for them to come into school.

23. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils have clear targets for improvement and teachers plan work to match pupils' individual needs. Teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them and are able to complete set tasks. Individual education plans are reviewed and updated regularly, and teachers make careful assessments of pupils' progress, which they use to plan their future work.

24. **The curriculum and assessment**

24. In keeping with the previous inspection report, overall the school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It meets statutory requirements except in information technology, where the planned curriculum does not cover all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and pupils have too few opportunities to learn and consolidate skills. The school emphasises the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills, and planned activities in these areas account for over half of the available teaching time. All National Curriculum subjects are planned for, as well as sex, health and drugs education, which are covered mainly through science. In response to a key issue in the previous inspection report, the school has revised the length of the teaching week and now provides total teaching time in excess of recommendations. The school ensures that as well as the academic, pupils' personal development and physical development are addressed. There is a very good ethos for learning in the school and pupils are encouraged to do their best. Planned opportunities for spiritual development are very good. The school enjoys good relations with the adjoining junior school, and teachers from both schools meet regularly to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their transfer at the end of the key stage.

25. The curriculum for children aged under five is good. It is planned well to cover the six areas of learning and makes appropriate provision for purposeful play, talk and practical activities. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to initiate or choose their own activities. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the transition to the National Curriculum.

26. Curricular planning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. It provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. It makes effective provision for the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in all subjects except information technology, where there is insufficient emphasis on data handling, controlling and modelling. The previous inspection report recommended that policies and schemes of work should be developed in all subjects, so that continuity and progression in teaching and learning might be assured. Most subjects have a scheme of work and a policy that outlines the school's aims and methods. However, some of the schemes of work are still undergoing refinement, and progress in completing them has been delayed, in some cases, because of high levels of turnover of staff during the past three years. Although the school has made progress towards completing schemes of work, these are not sufficiently well established or cohesive to provide a basis for termly planning that would save teachers time and effort. The most notable exception is in mathematics. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted by the school and is being implemented well. This shows clearly what is to be taught, the progression of activities and expectations of pupils. The school has used the National Numeracy Strategy successfully over the past year to raise the standards of attainment measured by national tests at the end of the key stage. The school has modified the National Literacy Strategy and is not implementing it fully. However, key elements of the strategy are incorporated into the school's own scheme of work, which is being implemented effectively and is having a positive impact on standards of attainment. The school has identified the need to raise standards in writing still further, particularly for the higher attaining pupils, and teachers are constantly pursuing ways to improve curricular provision.

27. The school does not set homework on a formal basis. However pupils are encouraged to read at home and all take books and reading records home each evening. Parents have been given useful advice on how they can help their children progress and are encouraged to write comments in their children's reading records. Pupils often continue at home work that was begun at school, such as printing off information from the Internet or bringing artefacts and books to school. One pupil in Year 2 made a lengthy and detailed booklet extending her studies at school about Africa. The school does not offer after school or lunchtime clubs. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visiting places of interest, such as the local post office, fire station, library and church. The school choir has sung at the local Civic Centre and the school grounds are used appropriately to support learning in science and geography. Pupils also benefit from visits to the school made by the Quantum Science Theatre, Douglas Coombes Music and the Bishop of the Bahamas. Other speakers include the local librarian, a police officer, the school nurse and Father Bob, who is both vicar and Chair of Governors.

28. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school makes appropriate use of assessments, notably in reading, in order to identify at an early stage those pupils who have special educational needs. Individual education plans are prepared for all pupils whom the

school places on its register of special educational needs. These indicate the work and provision needed to address each pupil's particular needs. These plans are reviewed informally when anything of significance occurs, and formally at least once a term by the teacher and co-ordinator for special educational needs. Teachers and the co-ordinator monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs closely and keep detailed notes to inform review meetings and the planning of future work. Day-to-day assessments are used well to provide subsequent work, especially that being undertaken by learning support assistants, for example, in the teaching of letter sounds and other reading skills. Learning support assistants play a valuable part in carrying out these assessments, as they record after each lesson the progress and difficulties encountered by pupils.

29. The school has very good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for making use of these to plan future work. Children under five are assessed soon after entering school in September. A further assessment at the end of their first year in the school clearly shows how each has progressed, and Year 1 teachers use these results to adjust their curricular planning. At Key Stage 1, there is a comprehensive timetable of assessments in English, mathematics and science in both years. These include half-termly profiles on each pupil, which are written by class teachers and closely monitored by the headteacher. All aspects of reading, writing, speaking and listening are regularly assessed, and individual pupils are tracked in order to monitor their progress. Work is regularly sampled and scrutinised by the whole staff to ensure standards are consistent across the school, as well as being matched against those in other schools. Results of achievements in national tests are analysed and used to set targets. Teachers make useful weekly evaluations of the achievements of their pupils and use these to plan work for future lessons. The school has a very good marking policy, which it uses to help pupils understand what they might do in order to improve. Teachers have a good knowledge of, and make good use of, the individual targets that they set for all pupils. They remind pupils in lessons of these targets and refer to them when marking work. The headteacher regularly checks the work that pupils do in their books, as well as assessing pupils' attainment in reading through tests and hearing pupils read.

30.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

30. The school has maintained the high quality of its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development since its previous OFSTED inspection. This provision achieves the school's clearly defined aims "to give children a sound Christian education" and "to deepen the children's relationship with God". The quality of the provision for pupils' cultural development has improved. Pupils enjoy a variety of experiences in art, music and dance. They learn to appreciate the diversity of cultures through geography, music, art and textiles. The cultural diversity within the school community is valued and celebrated.

31. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The Church of England is the foundation of the school and its ethos and traditions have a strong influence on all features of its work. The daily assemblies teach children how to pray and reflect upon aspects of their life. There is a prayerful atmosphere during assemblies. The vicar of St Thomas' Church, Father Bob, provides excellent support, both as the Chair of Governors and as a spiritual mentor for staff and pupils. The headteacher, staff and many parents take communion at the half-termly Eucharist held in the school hall.

The pupils are involved in the service and receive blessed bread at the end of it. They are taught about the traditions and beliefs of the Church. For example, a candle is lit at prayer times to represent the light of Jesus spreading throughout the world. In the Early Years unit, pupils take part in a similar candle lit prayer time, followed by a shared snack time, which introduces them to the concept of the Eucharist before they begin to participate in whole-school collective worship. The staff attend an annual Quiet Day. This is a day of reflection upon a spiritual aspect of life, such as bereavement.

32. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The pupils are taught right from wrong. Every class negotiates a list of rules. Christian values and beliefs set high standards for pupils to achieve. Staff refer to these values as they manage pupils' behaviour. The emphasis is upon personal responsibility, so pupils are reminded, for example, that it should not matter whom they partner because "we are all friends here". When they report misbehaviour by others, pupils are asked, "What have you done to help?" The instruction during assemblies is thoughtfully planned to help pupils

consider the rights and wrongs of situations they might meet.

33.The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good. The very good relationships in the school promote a happy environment that enhances learning and teaching. Pupils are encouraged to be polite and considerate to each other. There are good opportunities for pupils throughout the school to take on extra responsibilities, like taking registers to the school office and being the daily class monitor. The behaviour policy is consistently implemented by most staff. It clearly sets out the responsibilities of the headteacher, staff and parents. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' self-esteem, and their contributions are valued. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop social awareness. At Harvest time, the pupils raised money for the Brentwood 'Stepping Stones' project to fund clean water in an Indian village.

34.The school's provision for the pupils' cultural development is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The previous report found the study of diverse cultures underdeveloped in the school. Last year, two Muslim families made a pilgrimage to Mecca and shared their experience with the school. During a project about worship, pupils compared the traditions of worship found in the school community. Local visits are made to the library and churches. The curriculum includes a range of opportunities to enjoy music and art from various traditions. The joy of sharing literature from their own and other traditions is not so well developed. Visitors talk to the pupils about music, books and the Church. A local charity brings some overseas visitors into the school and the whole school is aware of the current Year 2 geography topic about an African village.

35. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

35.The school provides very well for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents said the school has a very strong, caring ethos and that it takes good care of pupils if they are upset. They spoke highly of the care given by the administrative assistant. The previous inspection reported that the school provided a high degree of care and that it carefully monitored pupils' academic and personal progress, behaviour and attendance. It had effective child protection procedures, and applied its health and safety policy consistently. However, provision for the needs of the higher attaining pupils was a key issue in the previous report.

36.The school bases its very good provision for monitoring progress and personal development on the very good assessment procedures developed since the previous inspection. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well, and take care for their personal development. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. It encourages parents to participate in drawing up and reviewing their children's individual education plans. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved provision for its higher attaining pupils. It has designated a teacher with special responsibility for these pupils. They now have individual education plans that recognise their special abilities and talents. With this encouragement, they are producing high quality work. For example, a Year 2 pupil last summer term wrote some very fine poems.

37.The school has a short, clear and very good policy for behaviour and discipline. It makes provision within the policy to deter aggression and bullying. It has very high expectations to encourage good behaviour. The policy begins with respect for the individual and the belief that "Every child is unique in the sight of God". All adults play a part in implementing the policy. The eight midday assistants manage all areas of the classrooms, dining hall and playground at lunchtime. They support good behaviour in playgrounds, and encourage the children in positive play.

38.The school has very good procedures to promote attendance and punctuality. It takes care to convince parents that regular, punctual attendance is important. Occasionally, it receives support from the local church. The school has a strict rule that parents must notify reasons for absence within 24 hours. It follows up with a letter or phone call if parents do not notify the reason and the administrative officer monitors the situation very reliably. The educational welfare officer comes to school once a term, and provides other support if necessary.

39.The school takes good care for its pupils' welfare. A class teacher has a current first aid certificate, and the midday supervisors have supplementary training in first aid. The office also serves as the medical room, and the administrative officer will train for a certificate next term. The school closely

follows Local Authority procedures for child protection, and works closely with local agencies. The headteacher is the designated teacher. The school makes all staff aware of the requirements in regular staff meetings. The school has good health and safety procedures and a full health and safety policy. A committee of governors carries out a monitoring visit every term. The caretaker checks daily and attends to minor repairs. However, there are health and safety concerns. A grassy slope beside the Year 2 classrooms is very steep; the school plans to landscape this slope with bushes. The demountable classroom does not conform to modern standards of either health or safety. As there is no toilet in the classroom, pupils have to walk to the toilet in the main school building. Some pupils are not tall enough to ring the bell, or to speak into the entry phone. They do not find it easy to get back into their classroom. Often, a taller pupil has to miss part of a lesson in order to accompany them. Toilet facilities for this class do not meet modern standards of hygiene, or the needs of very young Year 1 pupils.

40. Partnership with parents and the community

40. There is a good partnership with parents and the community. The previous report said that parents played an important part in the life of the school. There were friendly relationships between teachers, parents and children. The school held consultation meetings at the start and end of the year but some parents wanted one in the middle of the year. Parents said that the annual reports on pupils covered English, mathematics and science well, but did not give enough information on pupils' progress. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting say that the school is very welcoming, and now provides good reports on their children. However, a substantial number feel that they do not get enough information on what the children are learning. The findings of the inspection are that this is satisfactory. Although the school does not provide parents with details of what is being taught each term, there have been well-attended and highly praised curriculum evenings to inform parents about the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

41. The school communicates well with parents. Parents feel that it is an open school, and know they can meet teachers informally any day. Following the recommendation in the previous report, the school has introduced parents' consultation meetings with class teachers in the spring term. The school holds successful meetings on the curriculum. A meeting about the literacy hour attracted 90 parents, and 50 parents came to the numeracy evening. The school issues informative newsletters fortnightly. Its well-written prospectus covers all statutory requirements except the rate of authorised absence.

42. However, a key issue from the previous inspection was the fact that the governors' Annual Report to parents and the annual reports to parents on their children did not meet statutory requirements. The 1999 annual reports on pupils give good, detailed, individual coverage of what they know and can do and have learnt in English, mathematics and science. However, there is no space on the form for any other subject, and the statutory requirement is that the reports must describe progress in all subjects. The governors' report jointly covers both the infant and junior schools. In respect of the infant school, it lacks coverage of the statutory requirements for information on the professional development of teaching staff, sporting aims, the rate of authorised absence and three items on arrangements for disabled pupils. Progress in response to the key issue concerning the annual reports on pupils and the governors' Annual Report to parents is unsatisfactory.

43. Parents are involved well in their children's learning. Twenty parents help in school regularly and several others come in when they can. They help with reading and other classroom activities. Parents enthusiastically support the learning visits out of school. The school has highlighted homework in the recent home/school agreement, and most parents support the homework well. The main focus is on ten minutes' home reading, and the pupils change their books each day. Year 2 pupils also do topic work at home. The parents' committee raises funds and organises social events. It responds quickly and effectively when the school identifies a particular need.

44. The good community links extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their knowledge of the wider world, and many subjects in the curriculum. The school has strong links with its own and other local churches. It holds a very popular Eucharist in school, attended by an average of 75 to 80 parents and parishioners. Local clergy frequently lead assemblies. They often build on pupils' enthusiasm to support other children's charities, in Britain and world-wide. The school has just raised

over £1200 for a school in Southern India where 550 children lacked clean drinking water. A business link with a nearby crisp manufacturer has introduced a volunteer who comes frequently to help in school. Pupils visit the local library, the fire station and a country park. Recent visitors to school include a science theatre, an author, a composer, a librarian and two bishops.

45. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

45. **Leadership and management**

46. The quality of the school's leadership and management is very good. In the school's last OFSTED inspection, leadership and management were judged to be good. At that time, the monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum was at an early stage of development. The role of each subject co-ordinator was not clearly defined and the school development plan did not give sufficient attention to the identification of priorities, the evaluation of their success or their impact on standards of attainment.

These shortcomings have largely been remedied, although the high turnover of staff since the previous inspection has unavoidably affected the pace of change in some areas. Overall, the improvement made by the school since its last inspection is good. Standards in mathematics have risen significantly, and there have also been improvements in standards in science, art and music. Weaknesses in teaching have been remedied as a result of rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Newly qualified teachers, of whom there are currently three, are given very good support by the headteacher and their appointed mentor. The role of curriculum co-ordinators is clearly defined in the school's policy for teaching and learning, but most of the teachers are new to the post and, in the case of the three newly qualified teachers, are not expected to carry out monitoring activities until later in the year.

The development of policies and schemes of work for all subjects has continued, but progress in some subjects has been hindered by the number of staff changes. For example, there have been four English co-ordinators since the last inspection, including the headteacher who is currently managing the subject.

The completion of schemes of work, many of which are again being modified in the light of national initiatives, is identified as a priority in the school development plan for the current year. The school now makes effective provision for higher attaining pupils, as teachers plan work to meet the needs of pupils of differing ability within each class. The effects of these measures can be seen in the increase in the proportion of pupils who achieve above average standards in the end of key stage national assessments. The school's capacity to continue to improve is satisfactory.

45. Other key issues from the previous inspection identified the need to review the length of the teaching week, which did not meet the recommended minimum time for infant schools. This has been rectified. However, the key issue relating to the governors' Annual Report to parents and the end-of-year reports on pupils' attainment and progress has not been addressed. There are still a number of omissions from the governors' Annual Report, and pupils' end-of-year reports, although popular with, and valued by, most parents, still do not include statutory information on all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Some fail to include the required information about the pupils' attendance.

46. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear educational direction for the school. She is committed to achieving the highest standards in all areas of school life, and respects and nurtures the talents of her staff. The headteacher provides particularly good support for newly qualified teachers, which helps to capitalise on their strengths and address any areas that need improvement. Her recently appointed deputy is a valuable asset to the school's management team and also has considerable leadership skills. He is involved in all aspects of the management of the school and has clearly delegated responsibilities, which include overseeing arrangements for staff training and assessment throughout the school. The co-ordinator for mathematics and early years offers equally good expertise in her areas of responsibility, both of which have flourished under her guidance. The other five teachers are either new to the profession or have been teaching for up to two years. What they lack in experience, they more than make up for in enthusiasm and commitment to their classroom and subject responsibilities, all of which makes a positive contribution to the overall management and leadership of the school. All have a clear picture of how they want to develop their subjects and what the needs of the school are, although newly qualified teachers are not expected to pursue these aims actively at present, and are being eased into the role of a co-ordinator as the year progresses. The headteacher currently

holds responsibility for English and special educational needs, and this enables her to have clear first-hand knowledge of the quality of provision in these two key areas.

47. The governing body has developed a clear strategic view of the school's development. Its long-term aims take into account the potential growth in school numbers as a result of new housing developments and the need to replace the demountable classroom. The governors have a clear focus on monitoring standards of achievement and the quality of the curriculum, which they do through committees, visits to the school, liaison with co-ordinators and representation on the 'core group', which meets regularly to monitor standards and set targets. Individual governors have responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, about which they are very well informed. The governors act successfully as critical friends to the school and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. The governing body substantially meets the statutory responsibilities that it has for equal opportunities, the teaching of the curriculum, the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those obligations that influence the welfare and progress of the pupils. However, the information technology curriculum and the pupils' end-of-year reports do not fully meet statutory requirements, and there are a number of omissions from the governors' Annual Report to parents.

48. The school development plan is a useful management tool, which clearly sets out appropriate priorities for improvement over a three-year period. Detailed programmes of action have been devised in order to implement the developments within a set timescale. However, some of these have been delayed and rescheduled as a result of a number of changes of staff over the past two years. Staff and governors work together to identify the priorities for each section of the plan and to review and evaluate the progress achieved. Some of the criteria that are used to judge the plan's success are not sufficiently evaluative in terms of its impact on standards and the quality of education provided by the school. Quantitative targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics, although set, are not included in the written plan. The school exceeded its targets in English and mathematics in 1999 and is making good progress towards achieving the targets set for 2000.

49. The school has a very good ethos, which is derived from its strong foundation on Christian beliefs and principles. Its aim to foster consideration and respect for others is reflected in all areas of school life. The school also aims to create a caring, welcoming atmosphere and to lay the foundations for developing lively, enquiring minds in all of its pupils. These aims are well met through the development of constructive relationships at all levels and through the school's emphasis on active learning. The school recognises the importance of creating a productive partnership between home and school, and staff and governors place great emphasis on welcoming parents into the school. The regular Eucharists are highly valued by staff, governors and parents as a means of developing that partnership and of building up the spiritual life of the school. The school's aims, values and policies are reflected very well in all aspects of school life and play an important part in creating and maintaining its strong Christian ethos. There is a shared commitment to achieving high standards and equality of opportunity for all pupils. All staff work together very effectively as a team, with a shared sense of purpose, to create a stimulating and attractive learning environment.

51. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

50. The match of number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. The previous inspection report stated that staff changes hindered the development and implementation of curricular policies and schemes of work. This situation has continued as five of the school's full-time teachers have changed during the past three years. This has affected the school's capability to achieve consistency and stability in the leadership and management of subjects. A number of subjects, including English and science, have had several co-ordinators since the last inspection. Currently, three newly qualified teachers have responsibility for a subject, but are not expected to undertake management responsibilities until they have established themselves in the classroom. All staff are enthusiastic and committed to the school. Weekly year group meetings enable staff to share expertise and support each other. Teachers in the Early Years unit and the Reception class are supported well by two assistants, and there are two more assistants who provide valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs.

51. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory. The headteacher and

her deputy have been appraised according to national guidelines. The four newly qualified teachers do not come into the appraisal framework this year. One member of staff is waiting to be appraised but was involved in a self-appraisal exercise last year. An appropriate programme of staff training includes governors, teachers, classroom assistants, lunchtime supervisors and administrative staff. Recently, teachers and classroom assistants have undertaken training in literacy, numeracy, outdoor play, dyspraxia and first aid. The school's policy is to follow national initiatives, the needs of the school and individual professional needs. Induction is taken very seriously with so many new staff in the school. The induction programme for newly qualified teachers follows recommended guidelines. More experienced staff act as mentors, and helpful group or individual meetings are held weekly. Newly qualified teachers are released from the classroom to take part in further training and visit other local schools. The headteacher provides very good support for all teachers through frequent classroom visits and discussions about her observations.

52.The accommodation is satisfactory overall for the teaching of the curriculum but it has a number of significant shortcomings. An excellent Early Years unit has been built. It is attractive and spacious with room for two classes, plenty of storage facilities and good hygiene arrangements. It has a good quality, secure outdoor play area. The hall is large and well fitted with apparatus and has a very good quality floor. Classrooms in the school building are adequate for their purpose. There is no designated medical room, with a bed and satisfactory hygiene arrangements. The use of a corridor as a library is unsatisfactory for pupils who are just learning to read. However, no other suitable accommodation is available. Storage space in the school is still limited, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Everyone makes a great effort to store equipment as well as possible and there is a borrowing policy to limit the amount needing to be stored. The demountable classroom has no toilet or cloakroom facilities and is unsatisfactory accommodation for teaching and learning. It detracts from the quality of education for a Year 1 class. The building and grounds are well maintained, clean and tidy. The school has identified the need to develop the grounds as a learning resource. There is plenty of space but little of interest to stimulate learning.

53.The learning resources are satisfactory overall. The staff are skilled at using simple resources effectively. Most subjects are satisfactorily resourced. The Early Years unit has a very good range of high quality equipment. There is a good supply of books for the library and classrooms. The physical education equipment is good after the addition of resources from a national training scheme. There are insufficient up-to-date computers and software to teach effectively the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for information technology. The previous inspection found that resources were satisfactory but that some computers needed replacing. This situation has deteriorated.

55. The efficiency of the school

54.Overall, the management of the school's resources is good. The quality of financial planning is good, and the governors carefully consider a number of spending options. They also take into account the priorities of the school development plan when setting the budget, and seek to find the best value for money when purchasing goods and services. The previous inspection report stated that there were insufficient strategies to evaluate spending in terms of cost effectiveness and its impact on standards of attainment. Minutes of the governors' finance committee show that cost effectiveness is high on the governors' agenda. Governors also monitor closely the standards attained by pupils in English and mathematics and consider spending priorities in the light of these standards. Subject co-ordinators are not fully involved in assessing the financial needs of the areas for which they are responsible.

55.The procedures for monitoring the school's spending are very good. The bursar works closely with the headteacher and administrative officer to monitor spending each month, and keeps members of the finance committee fully up-to-date with the budget position by means of regular reports. The school has a larger than average forecast budget surplus for the end of the current financial year, which amounts to approximately to eight per cent of its income. This has partly been earmarked for improvements to the school buildings and the purchase of more computers, and also contains a contingency fund to protect staffing levels in case of a drop in income. Funds that are allocated for staff training are used effectively to develop teachers' expertise. Money that is provided for pupils with special educational needs is well spent and effectively supports the good provision made for these pupils.

56.The headteacher has deployed staff well to capitalise on their expertise and to provide adequate support for newly qualified teachers. Support staff are used well and make an important contribution to the progress made by the pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and children aged under five. Administrative procedures are efficient and unobtrusive, and provide good support to the headteacher and staff. Staff make good use of the school's accommodation. They take advantage of every available space, especially for storage and library facilities, although these are inadequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. They also make good use of the school's grounds to enhance pupils' learning in science and geography. The teachers organise and make good use of a wide range of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and help them in their learning.

57.Overall, the pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. Pupils make good progress in most areas of the curriculum, and in their personal and social development, and attain above average standards when they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain good standards for their capabilities. The school has a very good ethos and makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The support and guidance provided for pupils and the procedures for assessing their attainment and progress are very good. The quality of teaching is good, and the leadership and management of the school are very good. There are weaknesses in curricular provision for information technology, and schemes of work are not fully operational for all subjects. The school has good links with parents and the community and makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who are higher attaining. The school's expenditure per pupil is in line with national average figures. It provides good value for money. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

59.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

58.Children under five are taught in the Early Years unit and one Reception class. The education provided for them is good. On entry to the school, most children demonstrate levels of knowledge and skills that are average for their age. The school's assessment of children on entry to the Reception classes in 1999 shows that the majority achieved average scores in language and literacy and mathematics. The mathematics scores were higher than for language and literacy. By the time they are five, the children's attainment in all six areas of learning exceeds that expected for children of this age.

At the time of the inspection, the older children had been in the Reception class part-time for two weeks and full-time for seven weeks. The youngest children had been in the Early Years unit part-time for nine weeks. In January, they will attend school full-time. In many aspects of learning, the children already demonstrate that they are meeting the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes for five year olds and will progress beyond them into the early stages of the National Curriculum during the year. The planned curriculum makes good provision for this transition and acknowledges that many children will require this higher level of challenge. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop initiative and independence in selecting an activity or resources for themselves.

59.The quality of teaching is good, overall, and there is a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching. The teachers and classroom assistants have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and of the Desirable Learning Outcomes and how they link with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. They plan and work together effectively, provide clear explanations and ask questions appropriately to stimulate learning. They make very good use of assessment. There were no children aged under five in the school during the previous inspection. Plans were in hand to build the Early Years unit to admit all children in the year they are five. This has been accomplished. The facilities provided are of a very good quality. The two linking classrooms are very well equipped with a wide range of new resources. The secure outdoor play area is used regularly by the youngest children. The oldest children in the Reception class use the main playground with the rest of the school.

61.

development

Personal and social

60.The children make good progress in personal and social development and attain above average standards by the time they are five years old. However, their ability to show initiative and take responsibility for selecting activities is less well developed. The Christian beliefs and values of the school underpin the children's development in this area of learning. Children learn to pray and know the words of the Lord's Prayer. They are taught to consider the values and rules that guide everyday life. In the Early Years unit, they discuss ways in which they can be more helpful at home. The Reception class joins in the school assemblies. The children are confident and are able to establish effective relationships with other children and adults. Their behaviour is very good. They learn to take turns in games and other shared activities. They obey instructions and carry out duties, such as taking the register to the office. Children are less able to take the initiative, for example, when given a game to devise rules for. The quality of teaching is good. The short prayer time is thoughtfully managed and leads into a shared meal. This is to introduce the concept of the shared communion meal of the Church. The teacher skilfully leads discussions towards improving the children's own behaviour according to kind, fair and helpful values. The teaching does not take sufficient account of the children's need to initiate activities and take responsibility for them.

62. Language and literacy

61. The children make good progress in language and literacy and attain above average standards by the time they are five. However, their confidence in writing without support is limited. In both classes, the majority of children listen attentively and know when it is appropriate to comment. They all follow the meaning of group discussions and conversations and speak up confidently. All the children enjoy listening to stories, songs and music. They listen to recorded sounds and identify them. In reading, overall, the children make good progress, and some make very good progress, to reach the early stages of the National Curriculum. The children in both classes handle books correctly and expect to find a story in the text. A high proportion of the children can read a simple text fluently. They use their knowledge of letters and the relationships between sounds and symbols to work out unknown words. The children make good progress in writing. Most of them learn to form letters correctly and use words on cards to make complete sentences using capital letters and full stops. They can read and copy these sentences. The quality of teaching is good overall. The staff engage children in conversations all the time. In well-planned sessions, the children select a reading book daily to take home. The teachers discuss their choice with them and later read a story to the class. The classroom assistants hear children read. However, there are too few opportunities for the spontaneous use of reading or writing.

63. Mathematics

62. The children make good progress in mathematics and achieve above average standards by the time they are five years old. After nine weeks in school, many children can count accurately to ten and some to 20 or more. They record their work in numerals, pictures or charts and make a simple graph to represent the number of pupils with a particular eye or hair colour. Children explore three-dimensional shapes and recognise some of their properties when trying to build structures. They are familiar with number rhymes and songs and play counting games. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Teachers develop the children's knowledge of correct mathematical language and demonstrate how to record numbers in different ways. They provide a range of first-hand mathematical experiences and good quality resources to help pupils make good progress in their learning.

64. Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. The children make good progress in learning about the world around them and attain above average standards by the age of five. Their tasks have included examining and making a three-dimensional clock, designing and making a fruit salad or jelly and learning that bones make up the skeleton. During the inspection, children listened to sounds around the school, made a tape recording of sounds and wrote a sound poem. Some children investigated the effect of thickening water into a paste. Some children are very knowledgeable about computers and, during the inspection, they were heard describing the use of the Internet at home. In school, some children were observed drawing a picture of Humpty Dumpty on the computer. They could use the mouse accurately to control the choice of colour and brush or pencil and one pupil was able to print work. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide a range of opportunities for children to explore the outside environment and to observe and learn about the world around them.

65. **Physical development**

64. The children make good progress in physical development and achieve above average standards by the age of five. In gymnastics lessons in the hall, older children devise ways of moving on large parts of their bodies. They combine several movements to make a sequence. Most children demonstrate good control and co-ordination and are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. The younger children ride tricycles, push carts and prams and bounce on hoppers and rockers. They use a good range of construction kits, tools and materials to develop dexterity. During the inspection, children were observed building a bus with large bricks and creating models with small wooden bricks. They used pencils, brushes and utensils in a tray of thickened water. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and assistants observe children as they move and handle things and know how to help them to improve. The Early Years teacher, for example, stopped to demonstrate better ways of catching a ball. She took a paintbrush from a child to demonstrate how to paint more smoothly with the bristles. The Reception class teacher made time for children to appraise each other's movement.

66. **Creative development**

65. The children make good progress in creative development and reach above average standards by the time they are five years old. During the inspection, some children were observed very carefully mixing their own paint. They managed to take small portions of paint and water and to keep the table relatively tidy and clean. The teacher talked to them about the consistency of their paint, and encouraged them to consider the need for more paint or more water and the colour achieved from mixing two colours or more. Some older children made a collage picture, selecting from a stimulating range of materials. The children learn to sing together and to listen to recorded sounds and music. They take part in role-play situations. During the inspection, there was a hospital and a fruit stall in which children created imaginative play stories. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for children to represent their ideas through drawing, painting, modelling with dough and making collage pictures. They develop children's creativity through music, dance and imaginative play.

67.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

67. **English**

66. Analysis of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 for 1999 shows that, in reading, the proportion of pupils who attained Level 2 or higher was in line with the national average. The percentage who achieved Level 3 was well above the national average. In writing, the proportion of pupils who reached Level 2 or higher was also in line with the national average, but the percentage who achieved Level 3 was above average. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with those of all schools, they show that the pupils' results are well above the national average in reading, and above average in writing. When the averages of the school's test data are compared with similar schools, the pupils' results in reading are average, whilst in writing, they are just below average. Standards in reading fell in 1997 against those of previous years but rose again in 1998 and have maintained this level in 1999. In writing, the school's standards have remained constantly above the national average for all schools over the past three years. Overall, there has been a slight decline in the standards achieved in writing.

67. The findings of this inspection are that the proportion of pupils who are on course to achieve or exceed national expectations by the end of the key stage is well above average in reading and above average in writing. This reflects the finding of the previous inspection report, which judged attainment in English overall to be higher than national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards in line with their capabilities, as do higher attaining pupils. Standards in literacy are good, overall. Literacy is developed well in other subjects of the curriculum. By the end of the key stage, standards of attainment in speaking and listening reflect national expectations. Pupils are able to explain, narrate and describe satisfactorily. They listen attentively and respond to questions with appropriate answers and comments. Higher attaining pupils convey their meanings in fluent, elaborated

sentences. For example, pupils in Year 2 describe the operation of supermarket scanning devices and those in Year 1 predict what might happen next in the story of Elmer, a multi-coloured elephant. Pupils of all abilities are able to provide suitably descriptive words for a given subject and to use them in spoken sentences. In their conversations with each other, pupils sometimes speak rather immaturely and, when reading to inspectors, took time to feel confident enough to converse or read freely.

68. By the end of the key stage, pupils generally read accurately, with expression and understanding. They discuss what they have read, and express ideas about what might happen next and the characters in the plot. They have good skills with which to break down unfamiliar words into sounds, and have a good store of memorised words. Pupils have a limited understanding of the different genres of fiction and needed prompting to identify books as humorous or exciting. Although pupils read and understand well, some displayed little of the joy of reading, and showed little emotion or reaction to events unfolding, when reading to inspectors. This is not the case when enjoying texts being read together in class, where considerable interest and excitement are generated, for example, at the exploits of 'Elmer'.

Pupils read willingly and are able to choose their books from a wide selection available to them. They take their books home each day, and individual records indicate that parents play an active part in the development of their children's reading skills.

69. Pupils' standards of attainment in writing by the end of the key stage are above national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs write simple sentences that are correctly punctuated with many common words spelt correctly. Higher attaining pupils are able to use longer descriptions and more complicated sentences to convey their meaning. Standards in spelling are good. Pupils are able to use their knowledge of letter sounds to make good attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. For example, one pupil in Year 1 was able to spell 'camouflage', making only one small mistake. Written work is well punctuated by pupils of all abilities. Higher attaining pupils are able to use question marks and commas, and one or two make good attempts at using speech marks. Work is generally well presented and pupils develop neat and legible styles of writing. All pupils are encouraged to join certain letters and, by the end of the key stage, they are able to use a good cursive style. Pupils are offered opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, for example, telling stories, describing historic events, producing posters and creating poems. Few examples of longer stories or extended writing were observed during the inspection, although planning indicates opportunities when these will be undertaken later.

70. Overall, pupils' progress in English is good. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in reading and speaking and listening, and satisfactory progress in writing. The school has taken steps to provide higher attainers with more challenging work and the progress of these pupils is closely monitored in each class. Initial assessments of speaking and listening skills on entry to the school show that they are underdeveloped. Pupils make good progress and develop confident speaking skills by the end of the key stage. They become more adept at explaining their reasoning as they progress through the school. They extend their range of vocabulary and are able to report back on work carried out. Pupils make good progress in reading. Almost half of the pupils achieved above average standards in the national tests in 1999. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In writing, pupils again make good progress although the higher attaining pupils do not make more than satisfactory progress. The reasons for this are unclear although recent changes in the planning of written work and changes of co-ordinators have clearly influenced the speed of progress.

71. Pupils have good attitudes towards their work in English and they take part in oral sessions with enthusiasm and an eagerness to contribute. They listen well to others' ideas, help each other in group activities, for example with the spelling of words, and cooperate and share resources appropriately. Pupils often become excited and enthusiastic, for example, when writing stories about imaginary creatures or sharing the exploits of a fruit-eating donkey in a shared text. They settle to work quickly and are keen to finish. When given stimulating ideas and appropriate challenges, they respond well. For example, when writing sentences putting in adjectives, pupils in Year 1 produced some very imaginative responses. They discussed these with each other, made alterations and were keen to read them at the end.

72. The quality of teaching in English is good. This is broadly in line with the findings of the last

inspection. Teachers plan activities that are well matched to the lesson objectives and extend the higher attaining pupils. These objectives are invariably shared with the class, as are the reasons why the work is being undertaken. In the best lessons, teachers constantly check that pupils understand what they are doing and the reason for it. All teachers have a good knowledge of the individual targets set for each pupil and remind them of these, drawing their attention to them when they are not attending to them, and praising them when they are. Resources are used well, and teachers produce their own if necessary. For example, in one class, a picture of 'a rainbow fish' was used, along with labels produced by the teacher, to stimulate pupils into thinking of appropriate descriptive words. In another, a teddy bear and a pomegranate were used to good effect as stimuli for writing, as was a patchwork elephant in another Year 1 class. Teachers use praise and encouragement for all pupils, especially for those with special educational needs, to good effect. They make good use of questions to draw from pupils exactly what they want to say and to make the teaching points directly from pupils' responses. Pupils made most progress in classes in which the proceedings were brisk, and where pupils were expected to rise to the challenges set, as when pupils in Year 2 were expected to find different words for common verbs and to use their dictionaries and a thesaurus to help them. Although pupils are encouraged to select their own books, some were observed to have books which were clearly beyond their capability of reading.

73. The school has not adopted the National Literacy Strategy, although teachers have incorporated some of its ideas into their plans. Parts of the school's scheme of work are being reviewed in the light of this situation. The present co-ordinator is the headteacher. The school has had four different co-ordinators since the previous inspection. The headteacher has a clear idea of how the subject will develop, and carries out rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. She examines teachers' termly and daily lesson plans and has also observed lessons throughout the school. There are comprehensive assessment procedures in place, which cover all aspects of the subject. Special notes are made and the progress constantly checked of the higher and lower attaining pupils in each class. Good use is made of day-to-day assessments, which teachers draw upon when planning future lessons. Teachers make effective use of individual targets for pupils, which are predominantly concerned with the development of reading and writing skills. The school places a major emphasis on books, and is very well supplied with them. Each class has a good range of fiction and non-fiction, as well as picture books, dictionaries and thesauruses. The school makes use of books from a great number of published schemes, which it codes by colour, allowing pupils to select from within a band. In some cases, these bands are broad and pupils may select books that are too hard for them. The school suffers from a lack of space generally, and the school library is housed in corridors, which do not attract pupils to sit and become absorbed in reading. Lack of space also means some books are crammed on shelves or stacked, which makes their retrieval difficult and their storage unattractive. The school makes good arrangements for the professional development of staff in English and the subject fully meets statutory requirements.

75. **Mathematics**

74. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests, the proportion of pupils who achieved Level 2 or higher was above the national average. The percentage achieving Level 3 was well above the national average. When the average of the school's test data is compared with that of all schools, it shows that the pupils' results are well above average. When compared with the averages for similar schools, the pupils' results are above average. There has been a significant improvement since the 1998 end of key stage tests, and a marked rise in standards over the past three years.

75. The previous inspection found that the proportion of pupils who achieved national expectations was average, but the percentage achieving above average standards was too low. The majority of pupils were numerate, used mathematical vocabulary correctly and solved problems mathematically. During this inspection, it was found that the proportion of pupils who are on course to attain, or exceed, national expectations by the end of the key stage is well above average. Few pupils fail to meet the national expectations for their age. Approximately one third of pupils reach levels that are above average for their age. Most Year 2 pupils, in the first term of the year, can, or are learning to, count accurately in tens from any number up to one hundred and back again. They use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten and understand the value of the digits in numbers up to 100. Pupils recognise sequences of odd or even numbers and try to solve problems, such as how many ways four odd numbers add up to 20. They select appropriate units to measure time, and estimate and measure

length in metres. Pupils achieve very good standards in numeracy, and their skills are developed well in other subjects, such as science and design and technology.

76. Most pupils in the school make good progress, and some make very good progress. Year 1 pupils learn a range of mental strategies to multiply by two and three. They count forwards and backwards to 20, and count on or back from the larger number in an addition or subtraction sum. In Year 2, pupils learn to check their multiplication answers by reversal or counting cubes. They use mental recall of the two, five and ten multiplication tables to solve problems and higher attaining pupils understand that multiplication is the same as repeated addition. Most pupils can add and subtract two digit numbers. When the lessons are particularly well taught, some older pupils make very good progress. They respond well to challenging, structured and focused teaching. The pupils on the special educational needs register are set simplified tasks and often work with a classroom assistant. They make good progress in learning to write down their calculations and memorising some facts about numbers.

77. The pupils' response to lessons is generally good, varying from unsatisfactory to very good. Most pupils eagerly join in whole-class mental arithmetic sessions. They speak clearly and confidently about their problem solving and work hard to complete as much as possible during the lesson. A few are left behind during whole-class sessions and need reminding to improve their behaviour. Some pupils on the special educational needs register were unable to concentrate on a number game. Seven pupils were involved, which made their waiting time too long. In the lessons where discipline is weak, the pupils fail to concentrate and make slow progress.

78. The quality of teaching is good, especially in mental computation sessions. One third of the teaching seen was very good. One sixth was unsatisfactory. The previous report mentions too many activities going on at the same time. It reports on pupils being left to work at their own pace on unclear lesson objectives. This situation has improved. Instruction is guided by clear and specific objectives taken from the National Numeracy Strategy. The very good teaching in Year 2 is challenging, brisk and focused on pupils being successful. The mathematics is very clearly explained and misunderstandings are corrected during plenary sessions. All the teaching is well informed, planned and organised. The group work is appropriately matched to the range of ability in classes. The unsatisfactory teaching in Year 1 stems from a lack of firm discipline and understanding of the subject. The task of counting back from a number did not help pupils to understand what the difference between two numbers means. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs during class lessons, helping them to follow whole-class instruction and providing a step-by-step approach to individual work. The pupils make less progress without this support, when they are set some unchallenging work.

79. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has provided clear guidance for progression in the subject. It has indicated the appropriate balance between oral and written work and the kind of mental strategies to teach the pupils. Each section of lessons clearly defines what knowledge and skills are to be learned, and a time scale to follow. The procedures used to assess pupils' progress are very good. They are only selected when they are found useful. The information gained is used to group pupils by their previous attainment, match work accurately to their learning needs, track progress, set individual targets and predict test results. All teachers consistently follow the marking and assessment policies.

80. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership for the subject. The school's numeracy strategy started to be developed two years ago and has been very effective in raising standards, as is demonstrated by the improved end of key stage test results. The co-ordinator, with the headteacher and governors, has analysed test results and samples of pupils' work to track pupils' progress and set targets. The co-ordinator is very well informed about the subject, national initiatives and the situation in the school. She keeps very good records about developments in the subject. All staff have been trained to implement the National Numeracy Strategy. After an audit of resources, staff made items needed to cover the new curriculum, to ensure that it is well resourced. The subject fully meets all statutory requirements.

82. Science

81. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 1 assessments by teachers for 1999 shows that the proportion of pupils who achieved Level 2 or higher was well above average. The percentage attaining Level 3 was above average. These results show an improvement since 1998. The findings of the inspection are that pupils are on course to achieve above average standards by the end of the key stage. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were described as “sound overall” and “rising from less than satisfactory to good”. By the age of seven, pupils carry out investigations competently, make relevant observations and record their findings in the form of tables, diagrams and writing. They predict what might happen to water, chocolate and eggs when they are heated. Pupils provide explanations for what happens when investigating the effect of vigorous exercise on their heart rate. They know that the heart pumps blood around the body, and higher attaining pupils explain that the blood carries oxygen.

82. By the end of the key stage, pupils know that some materials conduct electricity whilst others act as insulators. They describe ways in which some materials are changed by heating or cooling, and know that some changes are irreversible. Pupils construct simple electrical circuits using batteries, wires, bulbs and buzzers, and know that they will not work if there is a break in the circuit. They identify different sources of light and sound, and know that forces can make things speed up, slow down or change direction. The previous report stated that there were few opportunities for pupils to design their own experiments. There is no evidence to show that this has been addressed.

83. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, make good progress at Key Stage 1. They increase their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills through first-hand exploration and investigation. They learn to relate this knowledge and understanding to their own lives, as when pupils consider the ways in which diet and exercise affect their health. Pupils increase their ability to use correct scientific vocabulary and to present information in a variety of ways.

84. Pupils respond well to the teaching of science. They show interest in their work and enjoy participating in practical investigations. Pupils in Year 2 used their initiative in working out how to construct a simple electrical circuit. They collaborate well with each other when working in small groups and share equipment fairly.

85. The quality of teaching is good, overall. It ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. Teachers generally have good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and they communicate this imaginatively to the pupils. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher demonstrated how an electrical circuit works by using the pupils to form a ‘human circuit’. This brought the subject to life for the pupils and provided an interesting visual stimulus to learning. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils’ ability to learn and make progress, and they plan a stimulating range of investigative activities to develop pupils’ scientific knowledge and understanding. In most lessons, pupils are managed very well, but where teaching is unsatisfactory, the teacher does not maintain a clear overview of all pupils when they are engaged in group activities. Teachers make good use of a range of resources to engage pupils’ interest. Discussions with pupils about their work are helpful and informative, as is the teachers’ marking. Where teaching is good, or very good, the task is explained clearly and skilful questioning challenges pupils’ thinking and assesses their understanding. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils are unclear about what is expected of them because the explanation of the task is too complex. The last inspection report stated that teaching was unsatisfactory when science was taught as part of a cycle of activities and the teacher was distracted from the science group by pupils working on other tasks. Science is now taught to the whole class at the same time, which, in most cases, ensures that the pupils have the teacher’s full attention.

86. The science co-ordinator left the school just over a year ago, and the headteacher has maintained an overview of the subject since that time. A newly qualified teacher, who is a subject specialist, now holds the post. She is very enthusiastic about the prospect of developing the subject further. Although she is not expected to undertake any management responsibilities until the spring term, she has already

identified the priorities for action. These include the completion of a scheme of work and the introduction of new assessment and recording procedures. Teachers' yearly, termly and weekly planning is thorough but it is not related to a coherent whole-school scheme of work. Consequently, the line of progression in each aspect of the subject throughout the school is unclear. The previous report stated that there were no formal arrangements for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the science curriculum. This is identified as a priority in the school development plan for the current year and funds have been allocated to enable the co-ordinator to be released from the classroom to carry out monitoring of the curriculum. There is insufficient use of information technology to support learning in the subject and there are few instances of the development of pupils' numeracy skills in science. Pupils' literacy skills are extended appropriately through writing reports of their investigations. The subject fully meets statutory requirements.

88. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

88. **Information technology**

87. During the period of the inspection, it was possible to observe only a few lessons when information technology skills were being taught directly. There were few occasions when information technology was seen being used by pupils. Judgements have been made on the basis of these observations, examination of work produced and discussions with teachers and pupils. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in communicating information meets national expectations, and for the higher attaining pupils, exceeds these expectations. However, indications are that attainment does not meet national expectations in all other aspects of the subject. This is broadly in line with the findings of the last inspection. Teachers' planning documents also indicate that not all the strands of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are adequately covered, and, therefore, the school's provision does not meet statutory requirements.

88. By the end of the key stage, pupils use computers competently to produce written work and demonstrate a sound understanding of how to use different fonts, print size and the word processing functions of computers, such as the spell check. They use a mouse skilfully, save and retrieve files, use programs to create pictures and find and print information from encyclopaedia software. However, opportunities to use information technology for handling data, and for modelling and investigating patterns and relationships, are limited. No examples of pupils using information technology to handle and portray data were observed during the inspection, although planning indicated some opportunities for this later in the school year.

89. Overall, the progress made by pupils of average ability and those with special educational needs in communicating information is satisfactory; higher attaining pupils make good progress. Many pupils are aware of, and can use, the higher word processing facilities afforded by computers. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of much of the technology in their lives and of how it is used. However, progress is unsatisfactory in all other strands of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study as pupils have too few opportunities to engage in appropriate activities.

90. When seen using computers, pupils did so with enthusiasm, and co-operated well, taking turns to operate the mouse or keyboard. Many pupils have computers at home and are familiar with a good number of the functions and operations. These pupils willingly share their knowledge and expertise. For example, in a Year 2 class, one pupil gave clear directions to others on how to use the spell check facility.

91. In the two lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was good. In one lesson, pupils were taught as a whole class how to change fonts and print size and the beginnings of how to access the spell check facility. The teacher made good use of pupils, who were watched and encouraged by other pupils, to carry out instructions. Pupils were then given the opportunity to experiment with these skills later in the day, and at other times during the week. However, the teaching of information technology is unsatisfactory overall, as pupils do not make sufficient progress to attain national expectations in all strands of the Programmes of Study. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are variable, and improving the expertise of staff is identified as a priority in the school development plan. Assessments are made of pupils' success in acquiring word-processing skills, and these are used to give more practice in the future. Teachers monitor pupils' use of computers, and give advice or sort out

problems as pupils encounter them. The planning of the curriculum is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that full use is made of computers to support learning in other subjects.

92. The school has insufficient equipment to meet fully the requirements of the National Curriculum. The ratio of computers to pupils is much lower than the national average. There is a variety of computers throughout the school. This means, for example, that pupils taught in the Reception class have to be re-taught in Year 1 and then again in Year 2, as different machines require different inputs. Although the school's plans for the National Grid For Learning have been accepted, work has yet to begin on the installation of cabling which will allow it access to the Internet. There has also been a delay in the expected delivery of computers funded by external sources. The governors have made alternative contingency plans to address this situation if it is not resolved in the near future. The scheme of work for information technology shows appropriately how pupils will progress in their learning for the 'communicating' strand of the subject, but does not include similar details of data handling, controlling or modelling. The co-ordinator for the subject has clear plans for the development of the subject over the next three years, including the provision of training for teachers, the purchase of further equipment and utilising the Internet connection.

94. **Art**

93. Pupils attain above average standards for their ages in art. In the previous inspection, attainment was judged to be "sound with some good features". Pupils draw and paint objects and features of the environment with increasing accuracy and attention to detail. In Year 2, pupils observe carefully the shape, colour and texture of autumn leaves. They experiment with water-colours, pencils and pastels, and mix colours thoughtfully to match to the shade of the leaves. They observe and draw African artefacts with good use of line and tone. Pupils experiment with texture, mixing sand and rice with paint to create an African landscape. Pupils in Year 1 explore wax resist techniques when creating fireworks pictures. They study Turner's paintings and use pastels to make their own pictures in imitation of his style and technique. Pupils also experiment with printing techniques using vegetables to print repeating patterns for a book cover. In both year groups, there was limited evidence of three-dimensional work.

94. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the key stage in developing visual perception. They learn to express their ideas and record their observations confidently and imaginatively. Pupils make noticeable progress in mixing and matching colours, and creating images using line and tone. Their awareness of shape and form increases and they develop their knowledge and understanding of the work of a range of different artists.

95. Pupils enjoy all art activities and approach them with enthusiasm. Most take good care over their work and show a pride in the finished product. They handle materials sensibly and share resources fairly.

96. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and their lesson plans are detailed and contain clear objectives. They provide effective demonstrations of skills and techniques, and use a good range of visual stimuli, such as African artefacts, musical instruments and the natural world. Teachers place a particular emphasis on the skill of drawing and the way this influences other aspects of the subject. They ensure that pupils are given a wide range of materials and resources with which to experiment. During the lesson, teachers maintain a good oversight of all pupils, interact with them constantly, and encourage them to find ways to improve their work. They make effective and useful links with other subjects, such as geography, music and information technology. For example, pupils use computer programs to paint pictures. In the class that contains pupils from both Years 1 and 2, the teacher provides different work for each group of pupils, which allows both older and younger pupils to work at an appropriate level of skill.

97. The previous inspection identified the need to produce a scheme of work to support the consistent development of skills throughout the school. Although teachers' yearly and termly planning is thorough, there is no whole-school framework to ensure balanced coverage of the curriculum or progression in the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator, a newly qualified teacher, has just been appointed to the post and is not expected to begin to develop the subject until the spring term. The headteacher currently monitors teachers' planning and maintains an overview of the curriculum

throughout the school. A subject action plan clearly identifies the priorities for development over the next two years. There is an adequate range of resources for the subject.

99.

Design and technology

98. There were no design and technology lessons during the inspection as they had taken place during the first half of the term. An examination of teachers' plans, photographs and displays showed that pupils' attainment is above average for their age. Year 2 pupils made a healthy breakfast cereal and designed appropriate packaging for it. They compared the pupils' choice of favourite ingredients with their parents' choice of healthy ones. Pupils listed realistic suggestions, and drew on their knowledge of food to help generate more ideas. In the last inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the pupils' attainment. However, the report stated that much of the work in design and technology had insufficient challenge and was not well matched to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. These issues have been addressed successfully. The recent labelling of displays and portfolios of work shows that work is now well matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum and that it provides a good level of challenge for pupils.

99. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the key stage. Year 1 pupils made a simple magnetic game and used re-cycled materials to make musical instruments, using various methods to join materials. They made pop-up pictures for greetings cards, after gaining ideas from published examples. Having made a bridge using construction kits, pupils tested its strength and made improvements.

100. No teaching of the subject was observed during the inspection. The previous inspection found no recent policy or scheme of work to support teaching. There is now a sound long-term curricular map that shows progression in the teaching of skills and knowledge. The quality of leadership in the subject is good. The long-term plans and policy statement provide sound guidance for teachers, especially in relation to questions to ask for assessment purposes. The curriculum includes looking at the design of buildings, textiles and tools from Ghana. The co-ordinator has monitored standards through team planning to develop progression throughout the school. She has also created a portfolio of work year by year to exemplify the standards expected. There is a satisfactory range of materials and construction kits to teach the curriculum and some simple resources are used to good effect.

102.

Geography

101. Due to the way the curriculum is organised, it was possible to observe only one lesson in geography. Although a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning documents, and discussions with staff and pupils, allow some judgements to be made, there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about the levels of attainment that pupils reach, the amount of progress they make and the quality of teaching. From displays around the school, planning documents and photographs, it is evident that pupils have made a study of some aspects of life in Africa. Pupils in Year 2 compare the lives of children and their schools in Britain and in Africa. Artefacts and traditional dress are displayed along with masks, photographs, maps and pictures. Visiting speakers include a charity worker, who was able to tell of the conditions of people for whom the provision of clean drinking water was an important priority. The project also involves other areas of the curriculum, including physical education and the creation of African dance, as well as African music and opportunities in English to write descriptive accounts of African life. Parents are generous in sending in a range of African artefacts and the school staff dress in various traditional African garments. Pupils in Year 2 undertake a safety walk of the local area, and identify hazards and safe routes. This leads to the production of maps and oblique plans with keys. The work of the higher attaining pupils shows a good eye for detail and some understanding of scale. Pupils make a study of weather conditions and show the weather using appropriate symbols on large scale maps of the British Isles.

102. The school has established a link with another school in Brentwood with whom it shares ideas. The school has a satisfactory range of resources to support the curriculum. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of how the subject is to progress and has drawn up a three-year development programme. This includes a revision of the policy and scheme of work, resource replenishment and the provision of appropriate in-service training.

103. During the period of the inspection, few history lessons were observed due to the timetabling of the curriculum. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and other documents, and discussions with pupils and teachers. Pupils' attainment is average for their age. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils have developed a sense of the passing of time beyond their own experiences and are able to place events in the correct order. For example, they compare some of the aspects of their own lives with those of people in times past. Pupils in Year 1 observe at first hand the differences in, and development of, toys over the past thirty years. They learn about the lives of famous people, such as Louis Braille, Guy Fawkes and Mother Teresa. They know how to find out about the past from using texts, investigating photographs and talking with people about past events. They are familiar with some of the facts surrounding these lives and can recall details well.

104. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the passing of time, and they are developing an awareness of how and why things change. For example they trace the need for improving light sources from candle to oil lamp to light bulb and torch.

105. Pupils show positive attitudes to history and join in discussions well. They are keen to answer questions and are pleased to show that they have remembered the facts about past events studied. They quickly settle to the tasks given to them and concentrate well.

106. The teaching of history is satisfactory. Teachers offer pupils a variety of ways of finding out about the past including discussions, using photographs as evidence and finding out how textbooks may be used to the best effect. Pupils listen to, and then question, a visiting speaker about life in the 1950s, having first considered the sort of things they wanted to know and having drawn up a list of suitable questions. Pupils in Year 1 bring in photographs of themselves as babies, and the rest of the class are challenged to look for clues to identify them. Discussions are well managed, and there are high expectations that pupils will understand and contribute. For example, in Year 1, pupils explore how to develop a sense of chronology and in Year 2, they identify the qualities that make a person famous.

107. History resources are just adequate to support the curriculum, although parents and pupils provide artefacts where possible, for example in bringing toys and photographs to school. The scheme of work for history is a combination of the school's own ideas and the guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This provides adequately for the progression of skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Music

108. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only two music lessons. Pupils were also observed singing in assemblies and responding to music through dance. Indications are that pupils attain above average standards for their age in listening, appraising and performing. It was not possible to see evidence of composing. In the last inspection, attainment overall was "sound with some very good features". Pupils sing songs from memory with confidence and a good awareness of pitch and rhythm. They play simple accompaniments to songs and perform short musical patterns from symbols.

Pupils listen attentively to music and respond to its changes of mood through dance. Pupils in Year 2 attain very good standards for their age when playing the recorder. They perform together confidently, keeping in tune and in time with each other. Some pupils play according to the numbered notes, whilst an increasing number are able to read music accurately.

109. Pupils make good progress in listening, appraising and performing. They make very good progress in learning to play the recorder. Although pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in music, a few pupils experience great difficulty in mastering the recorder and are unable to sustain the pace of progress set by the rest of the class. There is currently no alternative provision for these pupils.

110. Pupils clearly enjoy singing and making music, and participate in all activities with great enthusiasm. They behave very well in whole year group music lessons, listening attentively and responding promptly to teachers' signals. When playing recorders, some pupils do not listen carefully to the teacher's instructions and continue playing when told to stop.

111. The quality of teaching was good in the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and encourage them to strive for good standards. Music is taught as a whole year group lesson at present, and pupils in Year 2 have an additional class lesson in which they learn to play the recorder. In the year group lesson observed, teachers worked well as a team, capitalising on their expertise and ensuring that all pupils were fully involved in the activities. There was imaginative use of symbols to represent long and short sounds, and pupils were shown how to respond to them. Teachers gradually increased the complexity of the task, which provided a high level of challenge for pupils, by using a 'rhythm square'. This provided four lines of symbols which pupils had to respond to by clapping and playing untuned percussion instruments. The teachers' own enthusiasm and enjoyment inspired the pupils to concentrate and achieve good standards. Although this lesson worked well, it is unclear how teachers would provide opportunities for pupils to make their own compositions in such a large group. In the previous inspection, the quality of teaching was variable. Teaching was less successful when music took place as part of a cycle of activities and teachers did not intervene sufficiently in these activities. This no longer happens.

112. Teachers use a taped commercial programme for teaching pupils to play the recorder. They acknowledge that this is rather uninteresting and pedestrian, and are planning to replace it in the near future. However, in the lesson observed, the teacher used it effectively, and intervened frequently to demonstrate and make new teaching points to the class or to provide further reinforcement. One drawback of the scheme is that it makes no provision for pupils who are lower attaining in music, and who have difficulty in keeping up with the rest of the class.

113. The music co-ordinator is a newly qualified teacher who has considerable expertise in the subject and is looking forward to developing it throughout the school. She is not expected to undertake any additional responsibilities for the subject until the spring term, when she plans to replace the scheme for teaching recorder playing and to begin updating and improving the school's scheme of work. The school is currently using the Local Education Authority's scheme of work, which is being tailored to meet its own needs. An appropriate action plan for the subject identifies the main priorities for development over the next two years. There is an adequate range of resources for the subject, but storage space is limited, and it is very difficult to gain access to them. The school produces concerts in which all pupils have the opportunity to participate and perform to an invited audience. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development; it is used very well in collective worship to create an atmosphere of reflection and prayer. It also makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development, as when they listen to African music as part of their topic on the country.

Physical education

114. At the time of the inspection, it was not possible to make a judgement about standards in games or gymnastics as every class was following the curriculum for dance. The previous inspection found the pupils' attainment to be above average and standards continue to be good in dance. Year 2 pupils communicate through dance what they have learnt about life in an African village. They work well in pairs, collecting and carrying water, or using the Ghanaian greeting. Through planning, rehearsal, evaluation and repetition, they work hard to improve the quality of their dance sequences. Many demonstrate exceptionally well-controlled and expressive movements. Pupils explain how exercise increases their need for oxygen and so their breathing and heartbeat get faster.

115. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in dance. Year 1 pupils consider the quality of their movement as they dance. They stretch, point and flick their limbs to be like Jack Frost. Most pupils use space well and are aware of others as they move about the hall. The progress in a small proportion of lessons is disrupted by an under current of fidgeting and chattering. In a particularly well-taught lesson, Year 2 pupils entered the hall silently and very quickly. They maintained exceptionally high standards throughout, in response to the challenging and brisk teaching, and all danced enthusiastically. Pupils generally respond well in dance lessons, and participate with enthusiasm and enjoyment in all activities.

116. The previous inspection found that the quality of teaching was mostly good. There was some very good teaching that identified clearly what was to be learned, points of safety and the need to warm-up and cool down. Some lessons were too slow and passive, so that pupils were not sufficiently energetic.

During this inspection ,the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory throughout, and good overall. One lesson was excellent. This excellent teaching features exceptionally high expectations of behaviour and quality of work. The pupils are shown how to improve and respond by working as hard as possible to do better. They are inspired by the high quality teaching to achieve very high standards. Generally the planning, organisation, pace and choice of recorded music are good. Where teaching is less effective, the teacher does not manage to establish high standards of good behaviour and accepts lower standards of performance from the pupils.

117. There is a satisfactory curriculum. Gymnastics, dance and games are planned in half-termly units. Assessment is being developed through sound evaluation of lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to experience the spirituality of dance and music. They are expected to respond to the actions of others in dance. The leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has provided a sound long-term plan of the curriculum with a brief outline of progression in each aspect of the subject. A more detailed explanation of progression in the pupils' learning is to be found in individual year group planning folders, but it is not included in the whole-school overview of the curriculum. The policy statement provides good guidance by mentioning many aspects of safety and showing where the early stages of athletics and outdoor activity fit into the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Also provided are helpful ideas for lessons and guidance about teachers' resource books. The co-ordinator has initiated some developments by joining a national scheme that provides extra resources and staff training. The large hall has an excellent, well-maintained floor and is well equipped with gymnastics equipment. The games equipment is being improved and there is a good quality outdoor play area.

119. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

120. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors who spent a total of 12 inspector days in the school. Time spent observing teaching, scrutinising the work of pupils and checking their attainment by working with them during the inspection - 36 hours 25 minutes. 7 hours 55 minutes at Pre Key Stage 1, and 28 hours 30 minutes at Key Stage 1. In addition, a further 21 hours 40 minutes were spent on the inspection activities listed below.

- 40 lessons or parts of lessons were observed as were a number of registration periods, assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes;
- discussions were held with all teaching staff and some non-teaching staff;
- many pupils were heard to read and were questioned about their mathematical knowledge and understanding;
- three samples of pupils' work across the full range of ability in each class were inspected in addition to work examined during lessons;
- all available school documentation was analysed;
- attendance records, pupils' records kept by the school and teachers' planning documents were examined;
- the budget figures were inspected;
- discussions were held with pupils, parents and governors;
 - a parents' meeting was held and the views of the 21 parents at this meeting and those of the 75 families who responded to a questionnaire were taken into account.

121. DATA AND INDICATORS

121. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y2	199	0	13	9

121. Teachers and classes

121. Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	8.15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	24.42

121. Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff:	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	90
Average class size:	24.9

121. Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	342001
Total Expenditure	330289
Expenditure per pupil	1508
Balance brought forward from previous year	(262)
Balance carried forward to next year	11712

121. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 224
 Number of questionnaires returned: 75

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	49	44	4	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	48	44	4	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	32	37	26	5	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	38	47	8	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	26	60	11	3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	47	51	2	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	33	56	7	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	41	51	5	3	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	68	31	1	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	67	33	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	53	44	2	1	0