

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH CRESCENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wickford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115242

Headteacher: Mr D Brinded

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Missin
19227

Dates of inspection: 20th to 24th March 2000

Inspection number: 189019

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	North Crescent Wickford Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body North Crescent Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Payne
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Paul Missin	Registered inspector	Information technology, design and technology.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Equality of opportunity.
Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	English, religious education, art, special educational needs, English as an additional language.	
Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, geography, music, children aged under five.	
Alan Britton	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

North Crescent School is a primary school for boys and girls aged from four to eleven years of age. Currently, there are 270 full-time pupils on roll, 135 boys and 135 girls. Fourteen boys and eight girls attend the school part-time. The size of the school is broadly average for its type. Eight pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds (2.8 per cent), and ten use English as an additional language (3.5 per cent). These are higher than in most schools. Forty-two pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals (14.8 per cent). This is below average. Fifty-four are on the school's special educational needs register (19 per cent) and three pupils have statements of special educational need (one per cent). These are broadly average. The school was originally built in 1975 on an open-plan design and was grant maintained from 1992 to 1999. Since September 1999, it has been a foundation school. When pupils enter the school, most have standards that are below those expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school with significant strengths and also with some important areas for development. It is a happy, relaxed school, where pupils are looked after well and feel secure. The good teaching evident during the inspection and the revised curriculum and assessment procedures are not yet reflected in sufficiently high national test results. The leadership of the school does not have a clear enough view of its effectiveness. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching at both key stages and for children aged under five is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and the relationships developed in the school are good.
- The quality, deployment and effectiveness of the learning support assistants are very good.
- Assessment procedures at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are good.
- The financial management of the school is very good.
- The range, quality and quantity of resources to support teaching are good. Resources for information technology are used well.

What could be improved

- The overall attainment of pupils in the end of key stage national tests is too low.
- The attainment of pupils in English at the end of Key Stage 2 is below national averages.
- School development planning is insufficiently detailed.
- The headteacher and governors do not have a clear enough view of the effectiveness of the school.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning in the school is not rigorous enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in June 1996. The response made to most of the key issues identified has been good. More curricular time has been given to the teaching of science, and standards attained in the subject have been raised. A more systematic assessment procedure has been developed and the roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators have been made clearer. Good use is now made of specialist teaching and accommodation in the school. Good improvement has been made in ensuring that attendance registers are effectively maintained, and a full health and safety policy has been implemented. However, a continuing weakness is that the school does not ensure that the good teaching and improved curricular practices are reflected in improved national test results. Shortcomings in the school development planning process limit the school's capacity to monitor and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. The school has a satisfactory capacity to ensure that these improvements are sustained.

STANDARDS

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

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

The data for 1999 indicate that, when compared with all schools and with similar schools, attainment in English was average; in mathematics, it was below average and in science, it was well below average. The trend over the last four years shows that attainment in English and mathematics has improved, except for a dip in 1999, and in science, attainment peaked in 1997 and has declined since that time. The judgements of this inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are on line to achieve average standards in mathematics and science, but below average standards in English. In English, standards are lower in the present Year 6 because of the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This judgement is in line with the school's own assessment of the cohort. The improved results in mathematics have been achieved by the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The significant improvement in the results in science is because of the newly implemented scheme of work, improved assessment procedures and the setting of individual targets for pupils. The school has set ambitious overall targets for attainment in the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics. The findings of the inspection confirm that they are on line to achieve them in mathematics, but in English, they are unlikely to be achieved because of the high proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 with specific language difficulties.

At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain average standards in information technology, religious education, history, geography, art, music and physical education. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils also attain average standards in these subjects and they reach the standards expected in English, mathematics and science. There was insufficient evidence at both key stages for a judgement to be made about design and technology.

When they enter the school, most children have standards that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning and, by the time they reach statutory school age, they attain the standards expected for their age. Many of them have poor language skills when they enter the school, and by the time they are five, most attain standards in language and literacy that are below those expected for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support and make good progress towards their own learning targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They listen attentively to their teachers, share equipment sensibly and work co-operatively when required.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave appropriately in class and around the school. They are polite to adults and respect their environment. Occasionally, some pupils call out inappropriately in class. Pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is sometimes boisterous.

Personal development and relationships	The relationships in the school are good. All staff are good role models for the pupils. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school. The pupils' council provides good opportunity for their personal development.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The rate of attendance is slightly below the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average. This is largely caused by a small number of pupils with a poor attendance record.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and of children aged under five is good. Teaching in English is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In mathematics, it is good at both key stages. The quality of teaching in numeracy across the school is good, and that in literacy is satisfactory.

During the inspection, 63 lessons or part lessons were observed. Of these lessons, eight per cent were very good, 54 per cent were good, 35 per cent were satisfactory and three per cent were unsatisfactory. Strengths in teaching are the thorough and detailed lesson planning, the good use of interesting and challenging resources, and the teachers' good subject knowledge. These positive features are having a good impact on the improved standards that pupils achieve. Homework is well used, particularly at Key Stage 2. Teachers of children aged under five develop good relationships with children in their class and use learning support assistants well. This enables children to settle to school routines quickly and impacts positively on their learning. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, they are in lessons which lack pace, in which teachers do not manage pupils effectively or there is some overuse of worksheets. These features limit the effectiveness of pupils' learning in some lessons.

The quality of learning is good at both key stages and for children aged under five. Careful planning ensures that pupils are learning the right things and the good class relationships maintain pupils' interest and motivation.

Across the school, the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are good. Their learning targets are appropriate and clearly set out and the level and quality of support given enable them to make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory and broad range of curricular opportunities, which are available to all pupils. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are being implemented well. Since the last inspection, further curriculum time has been allocated to science, and a new scheme of work has been introduced. There is a good range of extracurricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are set relevant, clear, challenging targets in their individual learning plans, and they are given good support by teachers and learning support assistants in achieving them.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils using English as an additional language is good. They are given good support and are enabled to participate in the curriculum at an appropriate level.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactorily met mainly through collective worship and religious education. Pupils are introduced well to elements of their own culture, but their appreciation of our own multicultural society is less effective. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils have good opportunities for discussing different moral issues, and their social development is promoted well through the pupils' council, residential visits and supporting various charities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. Assessment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, is detailed and thorough, however, the assessment of children aged under five is unsatisfactory. Welfare provision is good. Child protection procedures are thorough and there are clear systems for supporting pupils who are ill or distressed. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance have improved since the last inspection.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory and assists the progress which pupils make.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives sound leadership to the school and supports staff and pupils well. Teaching and non-teaching staff are given opportunities to attend long and short-term in-service training, and the procedures for inducting teachers new to the profession are thorough and well organised. The senior management team gives sound support to the work of the school. The management of special educational needs and the work of children aged under five is effective. The financial management of the school is very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to the management of the school. Through its full meetings, and the work of the well-established committees, governors have a good knowledge of the working of the school, and individual governors are involved well. For example, they are chairs of the committees and have responsibility for the oversight of literacy, numeracy and information technology. However, governors' strategic management of the school is limited by insufficient opportunities to devise and monitor the school development plan systematically.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Some useful analysis has been done of assessment data, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and good individual targets are now being set for pupils' attainment. However, overall, the school has an insufficiently clear view of its effectiveness. The procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the classes are not rigorous enough. The school development plan contains insufficient reference to costings, timescales and evaluation and success criteria, and is not at the heart of the working of the school.

The strategic use of resources	The bursar maintains a very good view of the finances of the school and how specific grants are being used. Good use is now made of specialist teachers and accommodation. The quality and effectiveness of the learning support assistants are very good. The resource of the early years unit is not being maximised. Good use is made of the local environment as a resource. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.
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The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and support staff work well together The headteacher is open to parents' suggestions and comments. Pupils' behaviour is good, but sometimes noisy. The school is a happy, relaxed community which promotes strong values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information provided about pupils' progress. The school's work with parents. The range of activities outside lessons. The range of homework.

The findings of the inspection confirm all the positive comments about the school made by parents. However, the findings do not support parents' other views. The school provides appropriate information to parents about their children's progress. This is done through the home/school diaries, consultation times, informal visits to school and written yearly reports. The school works well with parents. Regular newsletters are informative, the statutory information is provided by governors, the 'drop-in' for new families is good, the new parents' council is appreciated and an active parent teacher association supports the school well. The school provides a good range of extracurricular activities, which are entirely for pupils at Key Stage 2. Homework supports the curriculum well, particularly at Key Stage 2.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Analysis of the results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicates that, compared with all schools and similar schools, standards were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Overall attainment was below average when compared with all schools and well below that in similar schools.

2. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English was above the national average, and in mathematics and science, it was below the national average. The proportion of higher attaining pupils, those reaching Level 5 was close to the national average in mathematics, below average in English and well below average in science. The assessments made by teachers in English were below the levels achieved by pupils in the tests. The assessment of the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in mathematics was above that achieved in the tests, and in science, there was a significant difference between the teachers' assessment of the percentage of pupils likely to achieve Level 5 and the achievement of pupils in the tests.

3. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by pupils in recent years, they show an improving trend in English and mathematics, except for a dip in both subjects in 1999. In science, data show a significant rise between 1996 and 1997, but with a steady drop in attainment since that time. The combined data for the years 1996 – 1999 show that, in English, the attainment of boys and girls was close to the national average; in mathematics, it was below and in science, the attainment of boys was well below average and that of girls was below average.

4. The school has set formal targets for 85 per cent of its pupils to reach the expected levels in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests in English in 2000, and 75 per cent of pupils to meet or exceed this level in mathematics. These targets represent a significant degree of challenge for the school in both subjects. The judgements of this inspection confirm that the school is on course to achieve its target in mathematics, but the school's own assessment data suggest that the target is unlikely to be reached in English. This is confirmed by the findings of this inspection. This is the result of a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 group than was anticipated.

5. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards in English that are below those expected nationally, and in mathematics and science, they are in line with national averages. Standards found in the inspection in mathematics were higher than those in the national tests in 1999 and in science, they were significantly higher. This is explained by the overall effect of the good teaching in the school and, in mathematics, the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The significant improvements in science have been the result of more confident teaching following the introduction of a new scheme of work, improved assessment and monitoring procedures and careful targeting of pupils. The average levels achieved in English in the previous year's national tests are unlikely to be repeated because of the higher proportion of pupils with specific language difficulties in the present cohort.

6. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards in information technology that are in line with national expectations. In history, geography, art, music and physical education, pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Standards in religious

education are in line with those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made on overall attainment in design and technology. Compared with the findings of the previous OFSTED inspection, standards are lower in English and physical education, have been raised in science, and are similar in all other subjects.

7. In English, by the age of 11, pupils offer sensible ideas in class discussion, but often require further support to develop them fully. Most listen attentively in different situations, but a minority of pupils find this difficult and call out inappropriately. Most pupils read suitable books with expression and understanding, and higher attaining pupils use more advanced skills such as inference and deduction in their work. Pupils write for a range of purposes and use appropriate vocabulary but the quantity of their writing is often limited. They have insufficient opportunities to undertake extended writing. In mathematics, pupils know their tables up to ten and can convert simple fractions to percentages. They understand different measures and can calculate the area and perimeter of squares and rectangles. Some are becoming more confident with their mental strategies. In science, pupils describe the functions of some major human and plant organs, and they appreciate the importance of food chains. They are developing a good understanding of the earth's position in the solar system and undertake interesting investigations.

8. By the age of 11, in information technology, pupils confidently access CD-ROMs and the Internet for information, and change the size and style of text and print their work. Pupils develop a sound understanding of the beliefs, symbols and traditions of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. They have a satisfactory knowledge of stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. In history, pupils have a sound knowledge of the period they are studying, for example, the Ancient Greeks, and in geography, they know how to locate places and features on maps with reference to keys. In art, they mix and blend a range of colours in their painting work to produce different shades and tones, and they make models with moveable joints in design and technology. In music, pupils sing tunefully, sometimes in two parts, with a good sense of pitch, melody and rhythm. In physical education, they show good control as they pass and receive a ball in practice and in more competitive games.

9. Analysis of the results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 indicates that, compared with all schools, standards in reading and mathematics were below average and standards in writing were average. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading and mathematics were well below average and below average in writing.

10. Analysis of the school's National Curriculum Key Stage 1 test results for 1999 shows that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in reading was well below the national average, and in writing and mathematics, it was below. The proportion of higher attaining pupils, those reaching Level 3, was below the national average in reading and mathematics, but close to it in writing. The assessments made by teachers were very similar to the school's test results, except in mathematics at Level 2 and above, where the assessment of teachers was close to the national average and the test scores were below.

11. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 1 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by pupils in recent years, they show an overall improving trend. Except for dip in 1997 in reading and writing, standards have continued to rise, whilst still not reaching national averages. The combined data for the years 1996 – 1999 show that in reading, writing and mathematics, the attainment of both boys and girls was well below the national average.

12. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English, mathematics and science are average. Standards in all other subjects are also average. In

design and technology, there was insufficient evidence for an overall judgement to be made. These findings represent an overall improvement when compared with the school's 1999 results and confirm the recent improving trend in attainment. Improvements have been achieved as a result of the impact of the good teaching across the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been achieved through the effective implementation of the respective national strategies. Improvements have been achieved in science by more confident teaching of the new scheme of work and more rigorous assessment and monitoring procedures. Compared with the school's last inspection, standards in information technology and physical education have fallen, but have been maintained in all other subjects.

13. In English, by the age of seven, pupils talk confidently about themselves and the books they are reading. Most read a range of interesting books. They read accurately and have a good knowledge of letter sounds. Most enjoy reading and take their books home regularly. Pupils write simple sentences and put them together to create stories or poems, with appropriate attention to punctuation and spelling. Most use joined handwriting, but the shape and size of letters are not always consistent. In mathematics, most count confidently to 100 and add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally. They understand halves and quarters and work out the change required in simple shopping situations. Most know the basic units of measure, length and capacity and recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes. In science, pupils sort living things into groups and identify the similar characteristics of all mammals. They understand the importance of diet and exercise in keeping healthy. They carry out interesting investigations, such as what happens when an ice cube is put into water.

14. By the age of seven, in information technology, pupils become aware of the importance of following the proper opening up and closing down procedures when working on the computer. They write and print simple sentences about 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Pupils understand some stories from the Bible, for example, the story of Noah and details of the Nativity and crucifixion of Jesus. They are aware of the main Christian festivals of harvest, Christmas and Easter, and those of some of the other world religions, such as Divali. In history, they know about the lives of some famous people, such as Elizabeth I and in geography, they know about seasonal weather patterns and keep their own weather diary. In art, pupils appreciate the work of other artists, such as Van Gogh, and paint their own pictures in the same style. In music, they sing songs from memory and play percussion instruments in time to a simple rhythm. They listen to a range of music and can recognise the contribution of different instruments. In design and technology, pupils use a good range of construction kits in their making. In physical education, they move imaginatively and expressively to stories and music and demonstrate balance on floor mats and on gymnastics apparatus.

15. When they enter the school, most children aged under five have standards that are below those expected for their age. From this starting point, most children make good progress and, by the time they are five, they are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in their personal and social development, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. However, in language and literacy, few children are on course to meet expected standards. Children settle smoothly into the routines of school and quickly become independent, for example, as they change for physical education activities. They develop happy, constructive relationships with their peers and adults in the school. In language and literature, they enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and most recognise the shape and sound of letters in the alphabet. Children have a sound understanding of mathematical language, for example, as they consider the size and position of breakfast bowls. They recognise, count and order numbers to ten. Their knowledge of the world is developed as they visit a local farm and talk about the weather. Children show good physical control as they gallop, hop, run and waddle around the hall copying the movements of different farm animals. They mix paint confidently and maintain appropriate control of their pastels as they make observational drawings of flowers.

16. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well for their previous attainment. This is because they receive good additional support and their needs are adequately planned for when they do not have this assistance. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and achieve good standards relative to their previous attainment. They receive good support and are well integrated into the work of their class.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They are keen to attend and expect to work hard. They listen attentively to their teachers, share equipment sensibly, concentrate well and work independently when required. For example, some younger pupils at Key Stage 1 maintained their concentration and motivation well while working alone at the computer without intervention from adults. Pupils take pride in their achievements and are keen to apply what they know to new work. They are eager to join in discussion and offer ideas. The level of participation in extra-curricular activities is good. Parents are happy with the attitudes and values promoted by the school.

18. Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are polite to adults and respect their environment. They work co-operatively when required; for example, younger pupils worked well with their partners as they passed and controlled a ball in physical education. A particularly noticeable feature across the school is the way that boys and girls work well together. However, a small but significant minority of pupils, mainly boys, have difficulty in settling to their work and slow down the progress of lessons by inappropriate calling out. Pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is also sometimes boisterous and lunchtimes are not always pleasant, social occasions. However, there have been no exclusions in the previous year. Bullying is rare and pupils and parents are confident that any instances would be treated fairly.

19. Pupils willingly take responsibility in the school. Even the youngest undertake a variety of tasks. They have class and school jobs such as assembly and door monitors. Each class has two representatives on the pupil council, and the opportunity of representing others' thoughts and feelings is taken seriously. The paired reading scheme offers pupils a good opportunity for social development. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are good and friendly.

20. Attendance is slightly below the national average and the unauthorised absence rate is above the national average. This is due to a small number of pupils with a poor attendance record. Most pupils are keen to come to school and punctuality is good.

21. Children under five settle quickly into the school routines. The children are friendly and their behaviour is very good. They have a positive approach to their learning activities, grow in confidence and quickly become independent. When working together, they co-operate well together and support one another in their learning. In general, pupils with English as an additional language are enthusiastic and highly motivated learners. They behave well in and out of the classroom.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages and for children aged under five is good. During the inspection, 63 lessons or part lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was very good in five, good in 34, satisfactory in 22 and unsatisfactory in two. This represents an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when it was judged that there was an equal amount of satisfactory and good teaching. Currently, in over six out of ten lessons, the teaching is at least good.

23. In the lessons where teaching is good, lessons are well planned and are based on clear learning objectives. Teachers show good subject knowledge and a variety of appropriate resources are used well. A strength of the teaching across the school is the way that teachers interact with pupils to create a pleasant working atmosphere. An art lesson to younger pupils at Key Stage 2 illustrated several features of good teaching. Pupils were excited by pictures of different weaving techniques by a range of different artists, adult helpers were well briefed and prepared, and the pupils were encouraged well to construct their own weaving patterns using a variety of materials. Across the school, the good teaching has a direct and positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning, and is an important reason why standards have risen recently. In the few lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' subject knowledge is insecure, pupils lose concentration and call out inappropriately, and lessons lack pace. Other factors which limit effective learning across the school, are the over and inappropriate use of worksheets in several subjects, and the noise which sometimes comes from adjacent classes.

24. The quality of teaching and learning of children aged under five is good. All staff have established very supportive relationships with the children and know them well as individuals. They listen with interest to what the children have to say and, through careful questioning, develop their language skills. Good use is made of the learning assistants to provide support to small groups and their time is used effectively. However, teachers do not sufficiently assess and record aspects of the children's development to ensure a clear and systematic development of their learning.

25. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good, and in science, it is satisfactory. In English, teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and the literacy hour is being managed well. Teachers plan well, are enthusiastic and manage pupils effectively. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed through a good variety of approaches and their enjoyment of reading is positively encouraged by the lively interest that their teachers show in stories and books. A shortcoming in the overall effectiveness of English teaching is the lack of effective summaries in some literacy lessons, and insufficient opportunity provided for pupils to undertake extended writing. The teaching of numeracy skills is good. Teachers have a confident knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and basic number skills are being taught well. In science, teachers show good knowledge of the subject, introduce topics enthusiastically and provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to investigate.

26. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is good in music and physical education, and satisfactory in information technology, religious education, history, geography and art. There was insufficient evidence for an overall judgement to be made about design and technology. The good teaching in physical education is characterised by lessons that are well structured, and have clear warm-up and cool down elements, and where pupils are clearly shown how to improve their technique. In music, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and show a real enjoyment of the subject. In information technology, teaching in the Studio is well planned and effective and key concepts are appropriately introduced and emphasised. In religious education, lessons are carefully planned, sometimes as part of a wider topic. In history, teachers use resources well. For example, a collection of teddies for Key Stage 1 pupils encouraged their appreciation of chronology. In geography, teachers build well on pupils' previous knowledge. In art, teachers introduce pupils well to the work of other artists, and they discuss and try out a range of different techniques.

27. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good in mathematics and science and satisfactory in English. In mathematics, the National Numeracy Strategy is being taught well. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons, and use a good range of challenging resources. In the most effective lessons, for example, in a lesson to younger pupils who were interpreting bar-graphs,

the learning objectives for the lesson were clearly displayed on the board and they were considered at the beginning and the end of the lesson. In science, teachers use a good range of teaching strategies including discussion, demonstration, imparting facts and undertaking practical work. Specific vocabulary is developed well. The quality of teaching and the structure of the curriculum are having a positive effect on raising standards in this subject.

28. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good in physical education and satisfactory in information technology, religious education, history, geography, art and music. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made about design and technology. In physical education, lessons have a clear structure, teachers are interested and often well involved in their lessons, and pupils' demonstration is used to good effect. In information technology, the specialist teacher shows good subject knowledge and teaches new concepts and skills effectively. This specialist teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, planned work in the class bases does not always extend and develop pupils' existing understanding sufficiently. In religious education, lessons are planned clearly, but sometimes pupils' learning is adversely affected by noise from adjacent areas, especially when the teacher is developing a quiet, reflective atmosphere. In history, pupils' learning is developed well as they are encouraged to become 'history detectives', and in geography, teachers build well on pupils' previous understanding. In art, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and colourful, good quality work is attractively displayed around the school.

29. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs is good. They receive good specialist support and their work is set at an appropriate level when support is not available. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well taught, make good progress and show highly developed skills, for example, when speaking to a visitor to the school and being able to participate fully in a conversation.

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

30. The school provides a satisfactory and broad range of learning opportunities to meet the interests and abilities of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. A key issue in the previous OFSTED inspection was to improve the management of the curriculum by balancing the time allocated for each subject and allocating more time for science and design and technology. There were clear policies for most subjects, but a lack of supporting schemes of work, particularly in science, mathematics and design and technology. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection in some of these aspects. More time has been allocated to science since the last inspection and work is now better planned in science and mathematics. The curriculum for mathematics is organised to the format of the National Numeracy Strategy, and a new scheme of work, based on one produced commercially, has been introduced for science. However, a whole-school scheme of work for design technology is still lacking. The curriculum is balanced and relevant and appropriate statutory requirements are fully in place. These requirements include the provision for personal, social and health education and attention to drug misuse. The provision for religious education meets the recommendations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and the school is meeting requirements for a daily act of collective worship through daily whole-school or key stage assemblies.

31. The planned curricular time for all subjects is approximately in line with national recommendations with literacy and numeracy taking the largest part of the subject allocation. The planned weekly teaching time for both key stages is also within the national average figures. A shortcoming in whole-school curricular planning is the lack of a clear, cohesive overview of what is being taught at both key stages.

32. Across the school, the literacy hour is being introduced effectively and basic literacy skills are being taught soundly. Teachers have a good knowledge of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and lessons are carefully planned. Literacy skills are used effectively across the school, for example, older pupils at Key Stage 2 research and write about 'Earth in space' and search databases for information on the lives of explorers. Shortcomings in the literacy provision are that the effectiveness of the summing up at the end of a lesson is sometimes limited by lack of time and a hurried approach and, sometimes, younger pupils undertake too many non-literacy activities during their literacy time.

33. The school introduced the National Numeracy Strategy successfully a year early and the focus on this format and good teaching are having a positive impact on standards in mathematics. Overall, during the inspection, pupils in all age groups, showed above average standards in numeracy. There is evidence of cross-curricular application of numeracy in subjects such as design and technology, science and geography in both key stages. There is an appropriate cross-curricular topic approach at Key Stage 1, and this is organised on a two-year rolling programme to meet the needs of the classes with more than one age group.

34. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum for children aged under five are satisfactory. Planning is carefully matched to the recommended areas of learning for these children. However, in the Reception class, insufficient attention is given to the planning for play. In the early years class, planning is thorough and detailed for each area of learning. An appropriate emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences and more formal work, linked to literacy and numeracy, is carefully planned for and is introduced appropriately to children in the Reception class. Although provision for outdoor play is generally satisfactory, it is timetabled and the children do not have free daily access to the outdoor play area.

35. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils, who have English as an additional language. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and receive good support from well-qualified learning assistants. Good, clear, challenging, yet achievable targets are set for pupils, who have special educational needs, in their individual education plans. This helps them to feel successful and provides them with the incentive to persevere. Pupils, who have English as an additional language, are enabled to participate in the curriculum at an appropriate level and their language skills are not a barrier to learning.

36. Provision for extracurricular activities is good. This has continued to be a strength of the school which was identified at the last inspection. The provision to learn German and French is no longer available but there are after school clubs for wildlife watch and the performing arts. Soccer and netball clubs are provided, with access for both boys and girls, matches are played against other local schools. The popular rhythmic gymnastics club is due to re-start after Easter. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 attend a lunchtime computer club and pupils take on the task of producing, editing and publishing a school magazine. Year 3 pupils participate in a short residential stay at a local centre and the older pupils take part in competitive sports against neighbouring primary schools. A good proportion of pupils, staff and parents participate in and organise these activities.

37. Overall, the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils. This judgement is in line with the previous OFSTED inspection when the school was found to be successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

38. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. This is mainly addressed through collective worship and religious education. During the whole school assembly led by a visiting Salvation Army captain, the hymn, 'Seek Ye First' sung by pupils with a descant

contributed well to the spirituality of the proceedings. Records of collective worship themes for both key stages give indication of spiritual themes such as 'Remembrance Day', 'The Christmas Story', 'The Person Inside' and 'Sharing Memories'. Some assemblies have multicultural themes such as the one at Key Stage 1 celebrating Chinese New Year. Spiritual provision is sometimes fostered within the curriculum, for example, with the topic by Years 5/6, 'Its My Life' giving opportunity for self-reflection and the 'Magic Box' giving pupils the opportunity to consider which things in the world they would place in a 'magic box'. Teachers in all classes receive and value pupils' ideas across the whole curriculum especially in subjects such as English, history and art.

39. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Class rules have been formulated by teachers and pupils and most pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. A good example of this was in collective worship when the question, 'Would you accept sweets from a stranger?' was met with a resounding, 'No'. A system of rewards and sanctions underpins the rules for behaviour. Pupils of all age groups understand that there is a need to respect the rights and property of others and this is evident in class lessons when listening to the answers of their classmates. Moral issues such as smoking cigarettes are discussed well and the local community police officer makes regular visits to the school to discuss topics such as vandalism and drug abuse. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their classrooms, other areas of the school and their resources. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti in the school.

40. Good social provision is a strong feature of the school and positive relationships are evident between pupils and between staff and pupils. Members of staff, visitors and support staff act as very good role models for pupils' social development. Pupils are given good opportunities in all curriculum subjects to work together in pairs or larger groups and to take responsibility for some of their own learning. Further emphasis on social development is included in pupils' personal and social education through topics such as 'My Friends' and 'Feeling Lonely'. A lively pupils' council, with representatives from each year group, meets once a month and fosters an early appreciation of citizenship in discussing current social and behavioural problems in the school. Year 3 pupils' social development is enhanced by a residential visit to Wat Tyler Park in Pitsea. Pupils are involved in fund raising for national causes at various times of the year.

41. Overall, the provision for cultural development is satisfactory but the multicultural provision is relatively weaker. This judgement is below that of the previous inspection when cultural development was considered to be well promoted. Western culture is promoted effectively through history, geography and art topics. Painting in the style of great artists like Van Gogh, Monet and Kandinsky features in the curriculum but there is little evidence of the work of Eastern or West Indian artists. Pupils are given the opportunity to study other religions in their work in religious education including Sikhism and Hinduism. Some opportunity is given for pupils to be made aware of the culture of other traditions, for example, as they study Chinese New Year. The school library contains books with themes or stories from other cultures including stories from the West Indies and black children living in Britain. All classes have at least one outside visit every year which contributes to pupils' cultural development. These include residential visits for Year 3 and Years 5 and 6 connected to the cultural aspects of their history and geography studies.

42. The school does not yet have a complete programme of personal, health and social education. Many elements are in place: health, drugs and sex education are covered through science lessons and there is good input from local police and fire service. Pupils' personal development and social skills are promoted well by the residential visits for Years 3 as well as Years 5 and 6. Relationships and bullying are appropriately discussed in 'circle' time.

43. Links with the community and with partner institutions are good. There are good numbers of students on work and teaching experience. Good links have been formed with local businesses, which provide materials for projects. There are also strong links with local sporting clubs, some of which have given coaching to pupils. Local clergy of various denominations play an effective part in the life of the school. The school has formed very constructive relationships with other local schools, including secondary schools. Among other advantages, a good partnership has been set up which has given the school access to information technology skills training and equipment. Numeracy training was undertaken in partnership with another local primary school. Transition to secondary schools is handled well and the respective headteachers work well together to seek improvement. There are satisfactory links with local playgroups.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are good overall. The school has good, effective, systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics, science and information technology. This involves continuous teacher assessment, the use of standardised tests and the information from teachers' assessment of the attainment and progress that individual pupils make in numeracy and literacy. Careful analysis of internal and national end of key stage tests in English, mathematics and science has led the school to identify weaker areas and those which require further emphasis. Although individual teachers make assessments of pupils' attainment in other subjects, there are no consistent, whole-school assessment procedures which ensure the systematic recording of pupils' attainment and progress. Collections of pupils' work which have been assessed according to National Curriculum criteria are being developed in nearly all subjects. The monitoring of national assessment results is used appropriately to identify the achievements of different gender groups. Teachers evaluate their weekly plans, and individual lesson plans, and identify pupils who need extension or accelerated tasks. Subject co-ordinators work together with class teachers to produce consistent records especially in English and mathematics. The key issue in the previous OFSTED inspection concerning 'the use of assessment to more systematically plan, monitor and evaluate pupils' further progress' has been fully resolved.

45. Procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs are good. Statutory requirements for those pupils with statements of special educational need are fully met. These pupils receive good specialist support, which enables them to make good progress. The school supports pupils, who have English as an additional language, well.

46. Assessment and record keeping procedures for children aged under five are unsatisfactory. On-going observations of the children at work and play, within each area of learning, have not been established. Consequently, teachers do not have an overview of the curriculum or recognise the purpose and potential for each activity. Children are assessed according to the Local Education Authority's programme of assessment on entry to the school. The information provided is used appropriately to inform planning, such as deciding which literacy and numeracy groups children will work in. It also indicates the children's achievement compared to the average within the Local Education Authority.

47. Pupils' personal development is appropriately monitored and comments are included in the end of year reports to parents. Teachers make useful notes, sometimes assisted by the learning support assistant, concerning pupils' behaviour, attitudes and response in class lessons. Allied to this assessment is the involvement of pupils in setting their own targets for

improvement each half term. These targets are shared with parents and give pupils the opportunity to identify the areas of subjects that they have found difficult and those in which they have made good progress. This has had a significant impact on the recently improved standards, especially in science. The formal targets set for mathematics and science in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2000 are on course to be achieved but the target for English, especially the writing aspect, is unrealistic.

48. The school has effective procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. This was also the finding of the previous inspection. Child protection procedures are thorough and the school has adopted the Local Education Authority guidelines. Good steps are taken to ensure that all staff are aware of the appropriate courses of action. Links with outside agencies are effective. Health and safety practices and security are good. Risk assessments are carried out regularly. This constitutes an improvement on the last inspection, when it was noted that the necessary safety procedures were not clearly identified. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions are good, although relevant information, useful for supply staff, is not attached to attendance registers. Arrangements for pupils who become ill during the school day are good, although the school does not have a medical room. A high number of staff have first aid qualifications and all staff have undertaken basic medical training.

49. The level of supervision at lunchtime is satisfactory, although there is often a great deal of noise and some unsatisfactory behaviour among pupils. The role of lunchtime supervisors is underdeveloped. They have received no training in promoting positive play and opportunities are missed for effective social development. Play equipment is available, but only if pupils ask for it. No quiet area exists for pupils to sit and talk. The headteacher is normally on duty at lunchtime, but, because of the demands of the inspection, this did not happen during the inspection and arrangements for pupils to go into school at the end of play were rather disorganised. There are good arrangements for the collection of pupils at the end of the school day. Children under five have a designated area for play.

50. Within the classroom, there are good positive procedures for promoting good behaviour. These include behaviour charts for pupils with particular difficulties and the school has appropriately involved the Local Education Authority's behavioural support unit. Pupils have been successfully involved in the formulation of rules and sanctions. The system of house points also effectively promotes good behaviour and hard work. Bullying procedures are effective. The pupils' council and the paired reading scheme offer a good opportunity for social development and responsibility.

51. Procedures to promote regular attendance have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good. Registers are now completed correctly and monitored regularly. Registrations are conducted calmly and efficiently and ensure an orderly start to sessions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school's relationship with parents is satisfactory. At the previous inspection, it was good. The information provided for parents is sound. The prospectus complies with requirements and is informative, although its tone is rather formal. There are regular information letters, and advanced notice of elements of the curriculum are helpfully provided in notices to pupils at Key Stage 1 and in the home/school diaries for pupils in Key Stage 2. This also forms a useful vehicle for dialogue with parents. There are consultation meetings each term for parents and there have been information sessions on the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. Annual reports to parents are good and helpful and most contain targets. Home/school agreements have been sent to all parents, and most parents have returned them.

53. About a fifth of the parents who responded to the pre inspection questionnaire indicated that they did not feel well informed about their children's progress and a third did not feel that

the school provided their children with the right amount of homework. A smaller number were dissatisfied with the number of extracurricular activities. A number did not feel that the school worked well with parents, although parents of children with special educational needs felt well supported. However, parents were satisfied that their children made good progress and felt comfortable about approaching the school with complaints or problems. The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views of the school. They also support some of the parents' concerns. Information on pupils' progress is available in a form, and at times, which are appropriate. Homework is given to pupils in a suitable quantity and progressively through the school. Parents do not always take advantage of the opportunities for communication offered to them through the home/school diaries. The range and number of extracurricular activities are good, although there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils at Key Stage 1.

54. The school has developed some useful initiatives involving parents. The parents' council is a new venture, which is giving parents good opportunities to bring concerns quickly to the attention of the headteacher. Regular newsletters are sent to other parents by the parents' council, as are the headteacher's responses to issues raised. The drop-in sessions for parents new to the school are a very welcome way of helping them to become more involved with the school. A good number of parents help on a regular basis in the school with such tasks as the library, art and reading. The Parent/Teacher Association is active. It runs a wide range of social and fund-raising events. These are well supported and the association has raised significant sums to buy equipment to support pupils' learning. In particular, this fundraising has had a major impact on the good resourcing of information technology in the school.

55. Induction procedures for children aged under five are generally satisfactory. In the term before the children start school, parents are invited to meet with the teachers, headteacher, governors and a member of the Parent Teacher Association. An early years booklet is provided for the parents which gives them advice on relevant pre-school activities to follow and appropriate information about the school's provision for children aged under five. A visit is arranged for the children to meet with their teacher before starting school. Termly open evenings enable parents and teachers to discuss children's progress. Parents' help in the classroom is much valued by the teachers.

56. There are good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language. Parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are invited to attend review meetings and are kept well informed of any involvement with outside agencies.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher gives sound leadership to the school. The school has clear aims and these are fulfilled well through the life and work of the school. The aims, which refer to the support and welfare of the pupils, are addressed more effectively than those relating to high attainment. The previous inspection noted that the headteacher, senior teachers and governors gave clear leadership to the school and that the school's aims were also clearly reflected in practice. The current headteacher's support of pupils and staff is good. He has a good knowledge of individual pupils and their families, and supports and encourages staff well in their work. The school has provided good support for senior teachers and learning support assistants to attend long-term in-service training which has had a positive impact on their expertise and professionalism. The school has established good relations with the parents and the local community. The results of the parents' questionnaire and their pre-inspection meeting indicated that most parents support the headteacher in his work.

58. The headteacher has introduced satisfactory systems to ensure that staff are well informed about and involved in school activities. Full staff meetings are held weekly and key stage and year group teachers meet regularly for planning. The senior management team meets formally less frequently, and its effectiveness is limited by a lack of clear terms of reference to define its roles and responsibilities. The headteacher has encouraged individual co-ordinators well; for example, the information technology co-ordinator, is an unqualified teacher, but is enthusiastic and efficient and now has a significant impact on the subject across the school. The co-ordination of English, mathematics and science is also effective. The responsibility of co-ordinators is enhanced as they manage their own subject budgets.

59. The headteacher supports the staff well. The professional awareness of subject co-ordinators is raised as they carry out subject audits and take responsibility for the management of their subject budgets. Staff attend a good range of in-service training and the school has positively encouraged this by the decision to fund them from the school budget. The effects of this are an improvement in teachers' professionalism and morale and improvement in the training and effectiveness of the learning support assistants. The headteacher meets each member of staff informally every year to discuss professional development, but the provision for the statutory appraisal of teachers is currently not being met. Procedures for the support of teachers new to the profession are good. The school has adopted the Local Education Authority's recommended scheme, and teachers are supported well. They are given details of school policies, expectations and job descriptions at an early stage. They are allocated to a mentor and have regular meetings to discuss emerging issues.

60. The management of the provision for children who are under five is satisfactory. The teacher responsible for the early years is the Reception teacher, who has an appropriate overview of provision for the children under five. The quality of relationships within the early years department is very good. The qualifications and experience of the teachers and primary helpers meet the needs of the children who are under five satisfactorily. The level of assistance provided by the school is good, with the equivalent of two full-time helpers attached to the Reception class. The accommodation for the Reception class is spacious and the school has a purpose-built early years unit for children aged four. It is separate from the main school, with a secure imaginative play area and appropriate equipment. However, as there are only seven children of this age in school this term, the building is not in use. At present, these children have been allocated an area within the Reception base. This is not ideal, as the area provided is too small and the children do not have free daily access to their own play area. Learning resources overall, are adequate to support the areas of learning for children aged under five both indoors and outdoors.

61. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs and for English as an additional language is good. The co-ordinators have a clear view of the working of each aspect and appropriate links are maintained with external agencies.

62. The current school development plan contains a broad indication of areas of development, but the costing, timescale and success and evaluation criteria associated with each one are insufficiently clear. Most of the current development priorities were timetabled to have been addressed by the end of the autumn term 1999 and there are few developments planned into the spring term 2000. Because the current school development plan fails to identify a suitable timescale for developments to be achieved, and how success criteria are to be measured, it is difficult for the headteacher, staff and governing body to monitor its progress or effectiveness. This was also a finding of the previous inspection and indicates insufficient progress in this area.

63. Overall, the procedures for monitoring teaching are insufficiently rigorous. Informal monitoring is undertaken by the headteacher as he observes individual pupils and classes. However, this process has not been sufficiently focused and systematic, nor has it involved formal monitoring of class teaching. Opportunities for co-ordinators to undertake formal monitoring are also underdeveloped. The effect of these shortcomings is that the good practices evident in some classes have not been sufficiently promoted throughout the school and some teachers' need for support with classroom and behaviour management has not been sufficiently recognised.

64. Although there are some strengths in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures, overall, there is an insufficiently clear view of its performance and effectiveness. The bursar maintains the school's finances very efficiently. She maintains a very detailed and thorough oversight of the school's financial planning and spending, and provides the headteacher and governing body with carefully costed future budget predictions and current spending patterns. This is a significant strength in the school's management. Governors and the headteacher have a clear view of the impact of the change from grant maintained status from September 1999 and its continuing implications. The school has also responded positively to recent concerns about pupils' behaviour by revising its behaviour policy and involving specialist support provided by the Local Education Authority. The headteacher has worked well to encourage the development of a strong cohesive staff team with a united sense of purpose. This has been achieved well despite a significant change of staff in the last two years. However, there are also some shortcomings in the school's capacity to evaluate its overall effectiveness. The school has not used the information from the Local Education Authority's assessment on entry to obtain a clear view of the progress pupils make as they move through the school. The lack of detail in the school development plan makes it difficult to judge and evaluate progress.

65. The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to the management of the school. Through its main meetings and through the work of the well established committees, the governing body maintains a good overview of the working of the school. Individual governors have oversight of particular subjects and aspects of the school, such as literacy, numeracy and information technology, and these responsibilities are undertaken seriously and conscientiously. Currently, governors' involvement with issues concerning special educational needs is less thorough. The governors fulfil their statutory duties relating to school policies and information to parents. Through the finance committee, and as a result of the clear information provided by the bursar, governors maintain a good overview of the school's spending. Their strategic management of the school is limited by insufficient opportunity to determine and monitor systematically the working of the school development plan. The governors' knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school has recently been improved by the formation of the parents' council. This provides good opportunities for parents to share any emerging concerns with the governing body and the headteacher.

66. Effective use is made of new technology and funds allocated to information technology hardware and for the employment of the specialist information technology teacher are used well. The school is making good use of several specific grants, for example, to support pupils with special educational needs. Overall, the school uses its strategic resources well and satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.

67. The number, qualifications and experience of the school's teaching staff meet the needs of the curriculum well. There are 14 full and part-time staff who, between them, provide the school with sound levels of expertise in most areas of the curriculum. The school also has an information technology specialist who provides very good support to teachers and pupils. Job descriptions are in place but they are not sufficiently specific. All staff are aware of others' roles and responsibilities and form a good team who are committed to the pupils' learning and

welfare. The number of learning assistants is high and all are well qualified to support pupils with special educational needs. They are an asset to the school and contribute significantly to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The administrative staff provides very good and valued assistance for the day-to-day running of the school. The work of the site manager is good, in terms of maintenance, gardening and in providing training for staff on safety procedures. The hard work of the site manager and cleaning staff is reflected in the clean, well-maintained buildings and grounds.

68. In general, the accommodation is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the class bases to celebrate the pupils' learning by imaginative displays. At times, however, the noise from one class base intrudes on the work of the class in the adjacent base. This is particularly evident when a quiet time for reflection is required, for example, in religious education. The library is well placed for all classes to use and is well organised. There is, however, no medical room. An upper mezzanine floor contains a classroom, a large information technology suite and a craft technology room. Significant improvement has been made since the previous inspection, when the upper rooms were considered to be under-used. However, this inspection supports the findings of the previous inspection in that the small school hall restricts the physical activities of the older pupils. The school has a purpose-built early years unit for children aged four but as there are only seven children of this age in school this term, the building is not in use. The school site is large and provides ample space for pupils to play. The extensive grass playing field is an asset in dry weather. The copse and pond area provide a good resource for environmental science.

69. Overall, the provision of resources to support teaching and learning is good. In most subjects, there is a good level of provision, with satisfactory provision in religious education, geography and music. The range and quality of resources are good and they are stored appropriately and used well. There is a good range of fiction and information books in the library, which are used effectively to support the curriculum. Good use is made of the information technology suite, which is effective in supporting the pupils' learning. The school playground, however, lacks suitable equipment or resources for pupils to explore or sit quietly. This lack of facilities, at times, leads to pupils misbehaving. The school makes good use of the local environment and people as a resource and of visits to places of interest further afield to add breadth to pupils' learning.

70. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The response to some of the key issues identified has been good. In the current year, the standard of attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 2 has been improved as a result of more confident teaching, better planning and assessment and a greater allocation of curricular time. Assessment procedures across the school have been improved and more effective use is now made of specialist teachers and accommodation. Attendance registers are now maintained well and a health and safety policy has been improved and fully implemented. However, since 1996, the results of the national tests at Key Stage 1 have been consistently below and well below national averages, whilst at Key Stage 2, only in 1998 were standards in all core subjects above the national average. Insufficient improvement has been made since 1996 in the results of the national tests at both key stages. Despite the high turnover of teachers recently, the good standard of teaching identified at the previous inspection has been continued.

71. WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- **The attainment of pupils in the end of key stage national tests.**
- **The attainment of pupils in English at the end of Key Stage 2.**
- **The process of school development planning and monitoring the effectiveness of the school.**
- **The monitoring of teaching and learning across the school.**

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1. Ensure that the good teaching and curricular practices in the school are reflected in improved national test results. (See Paragraphs: 1,2,3,9,10,11 and the subject paragraphs for English, mathematics and science)**
- 2. Raise the standard of attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 by:**
(See Paragraphs: 83 – 95)
 - i) ensuring that literacy lessons end with a suitable summing up activity;
 - ii) providing further opportunities for pupils to undertake extended writing.
- 3. Improve school development planning by:**
(See Paragraphs: 62 – 65)
 - i) devising a school development plan which shows how development priorities are costed, clear timescales for implementation, and detailed success and evaluation criteria;
 - ii) ensuring that the implementation of the school development plan is systematically monitored by the headteacher and the governing body;
 - iii) ensuring that national test data and the school's own assessment information are carefully analysed to measure the effectiveness of the school.
- 4. Identify and promote good practice in the school by improving procedures for monitoring teaching and learning, in order to raise the standards that pupils achieve.**
(See Paragraph 64)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Provide a clear, overall curricular plan for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
(See Paragraph 31)
- Improve planning and assessment procedures for children aged under five.
(See Paragraphs 34, 75)
- Raise the standard of attainment of children aged under five in language and literacy.
(See Paragraph 77)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	54	35	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	282
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	27	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	21	21	23
	Total	37	39	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (69)	78 (72)	86 (75)
	National	82 [80]	83 [81]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	20	20
	Girls	21	24	22
	Total	37	44	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (71)	88 (73)	84 (79)
	National	82 [81]	86 [85]	87[86]

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	11
	Girls	11	8	11
	Total	24	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (84)	63 (72)	73 (69)
	National	70 [65]	69 [59]	78 [69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	11
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	22	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (72)	77 (69)	73 (69)
	National	68 [65]	69 [65]	75 [72]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	241
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	28.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	233

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
	£
Total income	651,815
Total expenditure	634,854
Expenditure per pupil	2023
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,898
Balance carried forward to next year	36,759

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	282
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	48	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	48	8	4	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	62	0	2	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	50	26	4	6
The teaching is good.	38	52	2	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	42	22	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	44	6	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	38	2	4	4
The school works closely with parents.	24	62	10	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	38	50	8	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	64	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	40	14	2	24

Other issues raised by parents

1. School uniform needs to be more strictly enforced.
2. Parents have not been told sufficiently quickly of reading difficulties experienced by their children.
3. Children are doing well at school. The residential visit by Year 3 to an activity centre was much appreciated.
4. Able pupils are insufficiently challenged.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

73. The school admits children, part-time, to an early years class during the term in which they are four. During the year in which they are five, the children move into the Reception class, either part-time or full-time, depending on when their birthday occurs. At the time of the inspection, there were 22 children aged under five in the school, seven in the Early Years class and 15 in the Reception class. During the time of the school's previous OFSTED inspection, children aged under five were not admitted to the school.

74. When they enter the school, most children aged under five have standards that are below those expected for their age. From this starting point, most children make good progress and are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in their personal and social development, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. However, in language and literacy, few children are on course to meet the standard that would be expected of them by the age of five.

75. Overall, the teaching of children aged under five is good. Teaching in all the lessons observed was satisfactory, and in nearly seven out of ten, it was good. Teachers have established supportive and caring relationships in the class which enable children to settle quickly to routines and to feel safe in the school environment. Teachers respond openly and warmly to children's questions and comments which has an impact on the quality of children's learning. When they feel secure, and when the teaching is well matched to the needs of the children, they make good progress. Teachers' planning in the early years class is more detailed than that in the Reception class, but insufficient attention is given to planning for play activities. This limits children's personal and social development. Procedures for assessing the attainment and the progress made by children are unsatisfactory.

Personal and social development

76. By the time they are five, most children are on course to achieve the expected standards in their personal and social development. They settle quickly into the school, where the well-established routines and caring nature of the provision allow all children to feel secure and grow in confidence. Children quickly become independent and, within a few weeks, all put on their own coats for outside play and hang them up again afterwards. All adults use praise and encouragement and each child is valued. By the time the children are five, they are able to work and play as part of a group and behave well. They develop happy and constructive relationships with each other and the adults they work with and have a positive attitude to school. Children are eager to explore new learning, enjoy their work and concentrate for suitable periods to make the most of the activities provided for them. They join in whole-school assemblies and change quickly for physical education, thus enabling maximum use of the allocated hall time. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory in this area. Good use is made of 'tuck time' to develop the children's social skills by talking with them and to encourage their consideration of others by not starting to eat or drink before everybody sits down. However, although teaching of relationships and interactions is of a good quality, opportunity for imaginative play is too limited in terms of both scope and frequency. This reduces the children's abilities to make choices, play co-operatively and fully develop their independence. In whole class sessions, children are encouraged to put up their hands when they want to speak and to listen when it is not their turn to speak. Children are encouraged to be kind and helpful towards others and to begin to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Language and Literacy

77. On entry to the school, the attainment of many of the children in language and literacy is below that expected for their age. This is confirmed by the results of the Local Education Authority's programme of assessment on entry to the school. From this starting point, the children make sound progress in the development of language and early literacy skills. However, by the age of five, they do not reach the expected levels. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to talk with an adult whilst they undertake their tasks and actively seek to extend their vocabulary. Although most children understand and use an appropriate vocabulary by the age of five and readily engage in conversation, many find it hard to express their thoughts and develop their ideas in detail. They do, however, listen attentively and respond appropriately to routine instructions. Children enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and have positive attitudes to reading. By the age of five, most know how books are organised and that words and pictures carry meaning. Few however, recognise familiar words in simple text. Although most children begin to identify letters of the alphabet by shape and sound, some have difficulty in hearing and identifying the initial sound in words. For example, when learning about the letter 'w', whilst most children put forward relevant words such as 'watch' and 'whistle', one child said 'helicopter' and when asked why he had chosen helicopter, replied 'because I like helicopters'. In writing, children know that marks on paper carry meaning, for example, when acting out the role of waiters and waitresses in the café, they 'write' out the order and give a receipt. Most children write their first name and older children copy the script of adults when writing about a picture. However, there are too few opportunities provided for the children to experiment and write independently.

78. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning in language and literacy are satisfactory. Teachers understand the importance of language development and use an appropriate range of strategies to extend the children's learning. Children have opportunities to share books and listen to stories. The teaching of reading is well structured, from sharing books, to the more formal introduction to reading and regular phonic practice. All children enjoy taking home books to share with adults. Teachers have devised an appropriate range of activities for the daily literacy lesson to help increase children's interest, knowledge and understanding in both reading and writing. However, in the Reception class, the range of 'play writing' activities is too narrow and there are too few opportunities provided for the children to develop their full potential as writers.

Mathematics

79. Children make good progress in lessons and by the age of five, they are on course to reach levels appropriate for their age. A wide range of practical activities is thoughtfully prepared by teachers to enable the children to practise counting and explore the values of numbers up to ten. Children put sets of objects in order of size, for example, big, middle-sized and small teddies and bowls. They use language such as heavier and lighter when using a balance to compare the weight of different items. Children begin to understand and use the vocabulary related to time and know key times of the day, such as dinner is at twelve o'clock and 'we go home after 3 o'clock'. There is some confusion, however, about what time they go to bed. They make two colour, repeating patterns and sort socks into pairs. Their knowledge of numbers is average by the time they are five. Children recognise, count and order numbers to ten. They carry out simple calculations by adding on one more and, through practical activities, learn to add two numbers to make a given total up to nine. Higher attaining children represent their work with pictures and discuss it. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young children ensure that there is an appropriate variety of practical activities before working on a

more formal curriculum. The work is planned well and the tasks provided for the children clearly promote their numeracy skills. Teachers use methods in the National Numeracy Strategy well and provide suitable practical activities according to the needs of the youngest children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. The children's developing knowledge and understanding of the world around them are line with expectations for children of this age. In science, children are encouraged to be observant and use their senses. For example, the youngest children find out how colouring influences their view of food, by looking at and tasting green custard, yellow yoghurt and blue orange juice. They explore the school grounds and learn to recognise and identify different plants and animals. Discussion forms an important part of the work and children are encouraged to explain, describe and give their opinions. Reception children draw what they see and match young and adults of the same animals, including tadpole and frog. Good use is made of visits to places of interest, such as Marsh Farm, to provide the children with 'hands-on' experiences, such as feeding the chickens and stroking a horse. They talk about the weather and sing 'this is the way we walk into school on warm and sunny morning' as they come in from the playground. During games outdoors, they learn to play traditional playground games, such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf ?' Valuable first-hand experiences are provided by inviting visitors, such as a policewoman, into the school. Children use a variety of construction equipment to make models and consider ways of joining materials to make Easter baskets. They enjoy using the computer and learn to control the mouse to move items on screen. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good. This is evident in the range of well-planned experiences that are relevant to the children in the world around them.

Physical development

81. Most children are on course to attain the expected standards by the time they are five. Progress in physical development is good and many children use a range of equipment, including wheeled toys, with increasing control and skill. Children have sessions in the school hall, where they learn to travel round the hall confidently with an increasing awareness of space. They move in different ways to reflect the movements of different animals, such as galloping like a horse, hopping like a rabbit and waddling like a duck. Manual dexterity is well promoted and children develop increasing hand control through a range of activities such as painting, cutting, sticking, fixing jigsaws, and manipulating construction toys. The direct teaching of physical education and playground games is good and fully promotes the children's development. A good variety of activities is introduced to the children and the brisk pace of lessons ensures that the interest of all children is maintained. However, too few opportunities are provided for the children to have free access to the outdoor area on a regular, daily basis.

Creative development

82. Children make satisfactory progress in acquiring skills in this area of learning and, by the age of five, achieve appropriately for their age. Children are encouraged to paint freely and show a developing understanding of how to mix colours, such as blue and yellow to make green. They use pastels, pencils and paint to produce some good observational drawings of flowers, pasta to make pictures and modelling materials to make 'plates of food'. The café role-play area is very popular and gives good opportunities for imaginative play. For instance, during the inspection, children acted out the roles of waiters and waitresses by taking orders and serving meals. However, the area allocated to the youngest children this term is too small to support their creative development fully and in Reception, there are insufficient planned, structured and purposeful play opportunities for children to engage in freely. In music, children use percussion instruments to beat in time to a simple rhythm and sing a range of songs

tunefully from memory. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory. Teachers provide an appropriate range of experiences, but, in general, the planning for all play activities provided within the Reception class lacks a clear focus.

ENGLISH

83. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, standards were broadly in line, but that, compared with similar schools, standards were below average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above was above the national average, but was below the national average at Level 5 and above. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those of the previous three years, they show that, although standards rose from being in line with the national average in 1997 to above in 1998, they dropped to being broadly in line with the national average in 1999. The school has set formal targets for 85 per cent of its pupils to reach the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests and assessments in English in the Year 2000. This target represents a high degree of challenge, which is over ambitious, as there is a high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs in this year group. Although the school is trying to address this by providing extra staff to attempt to improve the pupils' standards of attainment, the school is aware that it is unlikely to achieve its target.

84. The findings of this inspection are that the oldest pupils in the school are on course to attain standards by the end of Key Stage 2 that are below the level of the national expectation. This is a decline in standards from the 1999 national tests and from the judgements of the previous inspection report. The high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs adversely affects standards in English.

85. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory, pupils attain below average standards in speaking and listening by the end of Key Stage 2. Many pupils readily speak in discussions and offer ideas, both in small groups and to a wider audience. However, they use a limited range of vocabulary and need support to develop their ideas. Most listen attentively both to their teachers and to other pupils, although there are a few pupils who still call out. Teachers plan well for, and encourage, group and paired discussions, both in English lessons and across the curriculum throughout the key stage. They use open-ended questioning well, which stimulates pupils' own thoughts of enquiry and promotes good listening skills. This was evident in a Year 6 group of pupils who were discussing how to write a story within a particular genre for a designated audience. The teacher's effective questioning enabled pupils to express their views logically and enhanced their learning. When teachers use plenary sessions well in the literacy hour for pupils to report back to the class about their work, this helps pupils to gain self-confidence, speak clearly, listen attentively and consolidate their learning. However, lessons sometimes over-run and plenary sessions are shortened or do not take place, which limits pupils' learning. They miss opportunities to reinforce their newly acquired knowledge, and to use new vocabulary within complex sentence structures, thus attaining higher standards.

86. Overall, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading are below average, as there is a high proportion of pupils in the Year 5/6 classes who have special educational needs. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for reading, but it is good for pupils who have special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language. Pupils share their ideas thoughtfully and read suitable books with expression and understanding. Higher attaining pupils read with accuracy, fluency and relevant expression. They read challenging material and use the higher order reading skills of prediction and deduction. The skill of inference is being taught within the literacy hour and higher attaining pupils are learning to use it. Although higher attaining pupils readily name their favourite authors, such as R.L

Stine and Lucy Daniels, many pupils are unable to do so. Most pupils accurately read an appropriate range of texts for their present attainment, have a broad understanding of the main points and can discuss some aspects of characters and plot. Although lower attaining pupils use a range of strategies, including their knowledge of phonic sounds, when attempting to read unfamiliar words, they are not always successful. Teachers promote reading skills well across the curriculum and are good models for the pupils, as observed when a teacher read a passage very expressively about Hindu customs and beliefs. The enjoyment of reading is encouraged, when pupils are able to read for pleasure during the 'quiet reading' times. Pupils are encouraged to develop their research skills across the curriculum, such as in history topics.

87. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing are below average, although the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils write for a satisfactory range of purposes and audiences, such as imaginative story writing, note taking, letters, autobiographies, character studies, diaries and poetry. They are able to sequence their writing in an organised way and choose appropriate, although limited, vocabulary. However, their output is often far too limited for them to attain high standards. Both in English lessons and other areas of the curriculum, many pupils spend far too long before starting and waste precious writing time. Most pupils understand how to plan, draft and refine their writing, but lack the expertise to extend their writing, when they redraft it. The use of worksheets in other subjects, such as science and religious education lessons, also inhibits pupils' learning of how to express their thoughts logically and write at length. Teachers encourage pupils to present their work well, and write in a neat, legible, fluent joined style. They ensure that pupils are given many opportunities to develop their writing competence across the curriculum, such as their work on the Ancient Greeks and a playlet about David and Goliath. Higher attaining pupils' writing has a refreshing sense of style and an adventurous choice of vocabulary. However, many pupils use simple sentences with a narrow range of vocabulary and have difficulty in sustaining their ideas. The class teaching of focused word and sentence work within the literacy hour is enabling pupils to develop satisfactory skills in spelling, sentence construction and punctuation within appropriate writing contexts. The lack of a sustained period of time, when pupils can write at length, limits the teaching of different styles of writing such as opinions, persuasive, factual, and biased views. Pupils require time to consider their ideas before producing a logically extended piece of writing.

88. When the averages of the school's test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards are below average in reading and broadly in line for writing. However, in comparison with similar schools, standards are well below in reading and below in writing. Analysis of the school's national end of Key Stage 1 tests and assessments by teachers for 1999 shows that standards in reading at Level 2 and above were below the national average. Teacher assessments at Level 3 and above for reading were close to the national average, but in the tests and tasks, pupils attained below the national average. In writing, standards at Level 2 or above were below the national average in both the tests and teacher assessments. Standards in writing at Level 3 or above were close to the national average in the tests but below in the teacher assessments. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for 1999 are compared with those of the past three years, they show that standards of attainment in reading and writing are rising from being well below the national average in 1997.

89. In this inspection, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment in English, in reading and writing, are broadly in line with national expectations. This is above the standards found in the last national key stage assessments in 1999. However, there is little evidence of writing at Level 3 or above. This difference is due to the fact that a different group of pupils is involved and that the National Literacy Strategy is helping to raise standards. Standards in literacy are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well from their previous attainment.

Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged, especially in writing. In the previous inspection report, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was reported as being in line with national expectations, which is similar to the findings of this inspection.

90. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. The quality of teaching and learning for speaking and listening is good. Teachers provide good opportunities for speaking and listening activities and focus well on developing these skills. By the end of the key stage, pupils describe, converse and narrate at levels appropriate for their age and most speak confidently about stories they are reading. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who have English as an additional language is good, which enables them to make good progress. Teachers encourage pupils to listen attentively. Although the plenary sessions of literacy lessons are used to encourage good speaking and listening skills, they are not always used for pupils to report back what they have learned during the lesson and teachers miss opportunities to assess how much pupils are learning.

91. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading are in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. The quality of teaching and learning of reading is good at Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are provided with good support and attain well for their previous capabilities, but there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. By the end of the key stage, pupils read a range of interesting books. Teachers impart a love of books well to pupils, and the emphasis on the enjoyment of reading in the first few years at school is successful in developing positive attitudes towards books. Most pupils read accurately; many work out new simple words by splitting them into sounds, and nearly all have a store of memorised words to call upon. Most enjoy reading and regularly take their books home to practise their skills.

92. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in writing are in line with what is expected of pupils of this age, but there is little evidence of higher attainment. The quality of teaching and learning of writing is good at Key Stage 1. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, which enables them to achieve well from their previous attainment. Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged throughout the key stage. Although pupils can write simple sentences and put them together to form a story or poem, making a satisfactory attempt at simple punctuation and spelling, they are given insufficient opportunities to write at length. The encouragement of developmental writing enables pupils to express their thoughts in writing freely and creatively. Marking and teachers' oral comments are congratulatory, but seldom contain helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work. Most pupils learn to spell simple words increasingly well, but their range of vocabulary is not wide enough to attain higher than average standards. Most pupils produce joined handwriting, but its size and shape are not always consistent.

93. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. All English lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory, with instances of very good teaching in Key Stage 2. The previous inspection reported teaching to be sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught as a class. Year 2 and Key Stage 2 pupils are taught by ability grouping for literacy lessons. During the spring term, pupils in the mixed-age Year 5/6 classes are taught as separate year groups for four lessons a week to enable the Year 6 pupils to have more intensive teaching to try to upgrade their attainment in the smaller 'booster' classes. At Key Stage 1, if aspects of English, such as a story, can be closely linked with topic work, pupils sometimes undertake art or design and technology activities during the group, or independent work part of the literacy hour. This is an inappropriate use of the literacy hour, which has been designed to enable pupils to attain higher standards in English. Although standards of

attainment are rising in Key Stage 1, few pupils are attaining higher than average standards. When teaching is good or very good, it has a strong impact on learning. This was exemplified by the very good lesson observed in Key Stage 2 in which pupils learned to read, spell and write verbs ending in 'ed'. The teacher was knowledgeable about the requirements of the English curriculum and provided a stimulating lesson. She set challenging tasks, which extended pupils' learning, and had a very good rapport with pupils, which enabled them to feel confident and created a positive learning atmosphere. The use of good, effective questioning, coupled with clear explanations, enabled pupils to acquire and consolidate new learning. Their comments and questions were responded to well. Pupils responded well to the challenges set and concentrated throughout the lesson and produced work of a high quality. Good use was made of assessment information in order to plan appropriate work for pupils to attain high standards in line with their previous attainment.

94. Pupils' attitudes to their work in English are at least satisfactory and often good throughout the school. They are polite, courteous and mostly well behaved. They settle to their work quickly and concentrate well, especially when work is challenging. Pupils are interested, attentive and collaborate well together, which is conducive to learning. They are eager to question and reply. Pupils are able to work independently on individual tasks and co-operatively when required. There is a good working atmosphere in the classes during the literacy lessons.

95. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her role, has good knowledge of the subject and manages it efficiently. She has a clear direction for the subject and monitors the teaching and standards across the school through some observation of class teaching, informal discussions with staff, and monitoring of pupils' work. She has a good overview of the subject and gives clear professional guidance to teachers. Effective targets are set for every pupil to motivate them and provide them with a sense of achievement. Assessment procedures in English are good, especially for reading. Marking is variable and ranges from congratulatory remarks of 'excellent', 'good', to comments on how pupils can improve their work. The school library is easily accessible for all pupils to use for research purposes and provides a sound resource area with a satisfactory range of interesting books. English makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

96. Analysis of the schools average points score in the 1999 Key Stage 2 tests indicates that, compared with all schools and with similar schools, standards are below average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above was below average, and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. There is no significant difference in attainment between girls and boys in the mathematics tests. Trends over the last four years indicate a steady improvement in standards reaching above the national average in 1998 but dropping slightly below the national standards in 1999.

97. The findings from this inspection indicate that, by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils attain standards that are in line with the national average. This judgement shows an improvement on last year's national tests and is in line with the findings of the last OFSTED inspection when it was recorded that standards were overall in line with national expectations. By the time they are 11, most pupils have a sound understanding and knowledge of their multiplication tables up to ten, can convert simple percentages like 25, 50 and 80 per cent to fractions and use and explain their mental strategies well. Most pupils have some difficulty in using approximation strategies in multiplication and division and negative numbers, for example, in reading a thermometer. They are beginning to develop the ability to divide numbers by tens, hundreds and thousands with an understanding of the use of the decimal

point. Their ability to use non-calculator methods for long multiplication and long division, including the multiplication and division of decimals, is limited except for the pupils in the top mathematics set. In their work on measurement, they show a sound understanding of measuring both short and long distances and have worked in liquid capacity using both metric and imperial measures. Most pupils identify equilateral triangles and their connection with lines of symmetry and they calculate the area and perimeter of squares and rectangles. Some pupils are able to calculate the area of triangles and more irregular shapes. In their knowledge and understanding of data handling, they use line graphs, for example, to convert pounds to dollars and are able to work out train journey times from a timetable. All pupils use information technology satisfactorily in their data handling work, and transfer their mathematical skills to data work in geography and science

98. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the number of pupils achieving the average Level 2 and the higher Level 2A and Level 3 was below the national average. Pupils' performance in the tests was also below average compared with similar schools. Trends over time indicate a steady but slow improvement in standards in 1996, 1997 and 1998 and a sharp rise in 1999 but still remaining below the national average. The findings of the inspection indicate that most pupils are on course to reach standards at the level of the national expectation by the end of the key stage. This judgement is in line with the findings of the last OFSTED inspection where standards were considered to be in line with national expectations and above the results of the last national tests.

99. The majority of pupils, at the end of Key Stage 1 count beyond 100. They add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and by using fingers, and also understand place value and ordering of numbers up to 100. They understand halves and quarters of shapes but have difficulty in working out quarters or halves of numbers. In their work with money, most pupils use appropriate coinage when calculating shopping problems concerned with receiving the correct change. Nearly all pupils show a good understanding of odd and even numbers either individually or as part of a sequence. Their knowledge and understanding of division principles are limited. Most pupils are beginning to develop their ability to explain their methods of working in mental numeracy work and their use and explanation of their mental strategies are developing well. Pupils use basic metric units to measure mass, length and capacity and can explain the characteristics of two-dimensional basic shapes like triangles, quadrilaterals, pentagons, hexagons and octagons with accurate and appropriate terminology. Most pupils are able to carry out simple surveys and record their findings in block graphs.

100. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in both key stages. This judgement is in line with the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was considered to be variable from sound to good but mainly good. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning in all aspects of the subject due to the high standards of teaching throughout the school. Throughout the school, teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics are good overall. This is evident in their clear introductions to lessons and skilful questioning. Most are confident in teaching the subject. For example, in a Year 3/4 whole class mental session playing multiplication bingo with two dice, the teacher encouraged pupils to work out numbers that were impossible or unlikely to appear. Teachers' confidence has been greatly helped by the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. In the lessons where teaching is good, pupils are informed of the lesson objectives and are invited in the plenary session to comment on whether or not they have achieved them. Where pupils are given the opportunity to explain their work and mental strategies, their intellectual and creative development is enhanced, for example, in a Year 1 lesson when the teacher encouraged pupils to find a quick way of working out answers from a block graph without counting blocks individually. Pupils make better progress in learning when sessions are timed, as in mental numeracy sessions. Throughout the school, teachers'

management and control of pupils are good and enable pupils to concentrate and take advantage of what has been learned. This is especially noticeable in classes with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs including behavioural difficulties where teachers and learning assistants move around the classroom ensuring that pupils understand and remain on task. Resources are carefully prepared and used, including learning support assistants and teaching students, to provide all pupils with good opportunities to practise their previously learned skills and consolidate their understanding. The use of homework is also good, especially in Key Stage 2, to consolidate work previously learned in class.

101. The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils to their mathematics work and lessons is good. Most are keen and interested in the subject, concentrate well and show a good ability to discuss and evaluate their work. They generally behave well in the classrooms, listen attentively to their teachers, and are eager to answer questions in the introductory mental arithmetic sessions. Nearly all pupils work conscientiously, either individually or collaboratively with a partner, and use equipment and materials safely and sensibly. They react well to the opportunity and challenge to participate in independent learning, for example, in any problem solving exercise concerning everyday occurrences like shopping. The presentation of work is generally neat and tidy; pupils take a pride in their work and are willing and able to explain it to adults.

102. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities. It gives equality of access to all pupils throughout the school. A comprehensive subject policy is in place and all classes have an hour of numeracy teaching every day. A scheme of work has been formulated in conjunction with the National Numeracy Strategy to bring together the variety of resources available in the school. It is well linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum, to ensure that pupils of all abilities throughout the school make good progress in their learning. The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and gives good guidance to other members of staff even though she is only in her second year of teaching. All classes have been monitored in the teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy and the appropriate training has been provided for all teachers. The member of the governing body with responsibility for mathematics gives good support to the subject co-ordinator and has also observed teaching in the subject. The mathematics co-ordinator attended training before the introduction of the strategy and this training has been passed on to all staff including classroom support assistants. A National Numeracy Strategy information evening for parents was recently organised and was very well attended by over 60 parents. Resources for the subject are good, with a range of easily accessible books and practical equipment available in all classrooms for staff and pupils. Information technology is used satisfactorily in data handling topics and extension tasks for the younger pupils to broaden their understanding of the subject.

SCIENCE

103. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for the school in 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, standards were well below average. When compared with similar schools, standards are also well below average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above was below the national average and the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was well below the level of the national average. The assessments made by teachers were very similar to the test results. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the school in 1997, they show a decline in standards. This was due in part to the 1999 Year 6 cohort having a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, in response to the low standards in 1998 and 1999, the school rightly identified science as an area for development. A new commercial scheme was introduced to support teachers in their planning, careful assessment and tracking

procedures were introduced and increased curricular time was given to the subject. As a result, the teaching of science is much improved, which is having a significant impact on pupils' progress and is ensuring that they accumulate the relevant knowledge. Consequently, the findings of the inspection are that the standards attained by the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 are at the expected level, which represents an improvement from the below average standards found in the school's previous inspection. Again there is a high level of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 5 and 6 cohort, but with the introduction of set groups for science and the well-focused teaching, work is planned to provide challenge for the full range of ability within these classes.

104. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils describe the functions of some important human and plant organs. They construct food chains and use the terms 'producer', 'consumer' and 'prey' in relation to the feeding relationships. They have a sound knowledge of electricity and draw diagrams of a circuit using conventional symbols accurately for the battery, wires, bulbs and switches. In their study of the earth and beyond, pupils gain considerable knowledge of the solar system and know that the earth orbits the sun once each year. They make predictions and understand the need for a fair test when, for example, carrying out an investigation with a marble run. In an investigation on the change in temperature of a hot cup of water over a period of an hour, they make a line graph to show their results. However, although they use the resources provided for their experimental work, in general, they lack the skills to devise their own investigations.

105. In the 1999 assessments by teachers at the end of Key Stage 1, standards were below average at both expected and higher levels of attainment. The introduction of the new scheme of work for science is now beginning to have an impact on pupils' learning and is ensuring that due attention is given to the development of scientific skills. The inspection's findings are that, the present cohort of pupils is on course to attain average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. This finding is broadly in line with school's previous inspection.

106. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sort living things into groups and identify ways in which mammals are similar, such as they all drink milk and have fur or hair. They understand the importance of diet and exercise for good health and keep a diary of their own exercise over a week. In their work on materials, pupils understand that objects made from some materials can be altered by squashing or stretching and that materials often change when heated, as when making bread. They make predictions about such things as whether an ice cube will float and observe what happens. The pupils write about the dangers of electricity and can construct an electrical circuit to make a bulb light up. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are able to carry out simple experiments with support, compare objects and living things they observe and record their findings through labelled drawings and writing.

107. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported in their learning and make satisfactory progress. A Key Stage 2 lesson on the growth of plants illustrated several of the strengths of the teaching in science. The teacher made very good use of a range of strategies, such as discussion, demonstration, imparting facts and practical work to capture and retain the pupils' interest in the lesson. The objectives of the lesson were shared with the pupils and constant reference was made to the pupils being 'real scientists' while they carried out their investigation. Emphasis was placed on the development of scientific vocabulary and pupils quickly learned to use terms, such as 'germinate' and 'evaporate', correctly in relation to their investigation. Lesson planning overall was clear and the activities provided indicated that pupils' learning was organised well. Overall, the management of pupils was good and promoted a good working atmosphere. At Key Stage 1, good use is made of scientific questions to introduce a new

concept to the pupils and make it relevant. This was used well, for example, in a Year 1 lesson introducing camouflage. Although pupils are generally supported well when carrying out an investigation, teachers do not always give them enough opportunity to make suggestions about how an experiment could be carried out. All staff are confident and present lessons in interesting ways, which results in pupils developing an enthusiasm for the subject. This is a significant improvement in the findings of the previous inspection when the teachers' subject knowledge was judged to be insecure. However, a minor weakness is that, at times, there is an over dependence on worksheets to guide pupils' recording and not enough use is made of information technology for this purpose. The pupils show positive attitudes to the subject and are keen to put forward ideas. They are interested in their work and most concentrate well when working, even when at times, pupils in the adjacent base are actively involved in another subject.

108. The subject is capably managed by a knowledgeable and competent co-ordinator, who is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject in the school. Although she has only been in post since September as an acting co-ordinator, she has already carried out an audit of the subject which, in the main, has been a review of the scheme of work. Her monitoring role is not sufficiently firmly established to improve further the quality of teaching and raise the standards achieved by the pupils in the national end of key stage tests. Very good use is being made of assessment to set individual targets for pupils and, after an extensive exercise in which each pupil in Year 6 was tested, the school has predicted that 80 per cent of the pupils are on course to achieve the expected standard this year. Learning resources for science are good and the school is fortunate in having an attractive copse and pond area for pupils to use. Visits to places of interest such as the Wat Tyler Park and the Science Museum enhance the pupils' learning. The inspection confirms that the issues identified in the last report relating to science have now been addressed.

ART

109. Standards in art are average for the age of pupils at both key stages. Pupils undertake a suitably broad range of activities, which increase their expertise as they progress through the school. The judgements of this inspection are similar to the findings of the previous inspection report, when attainment in art was judged to be 'average for pupils of their ages'. Pupils with special educational needs attain good standards according to their previous capabilities and make good progress towards their own learning targets.

110. At Key Stage 2, pupils show increasing confidence in using various media and techniques. They are satisfactorily developing their skills in observational drawing, both in pencil and pastel, and produce sketches with suitable attention to line, detail, proportion and expression. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the range and use of colour, and blend and mix colours well to produce different tones and textures. They explore pattern and colour combinations of a wide variety of media, for example, when they used paints for their well displayed, geometrically shaped colour-mixing artwork. Older pupils make clay coil pots in connection with their history topic on the Ancient Greeks

111. At Key Stage 1, pupils, develop satisfactory skills at colour mixing, using primary colours, and in their understanding of line, texture and pattern in everyday objects. They generally observe carefully and record their ideas effectively, both from their own experience and from imagination. Their drawings show awareness of line and a growing attention to detail, such as the observational pencil drawings of teddy bears, dried leaves and grasses. Pupils improve in their ability to use scissors and glue carefully. They enjoy cutting and manipulating paper in a variety of ways, such as the colourful mobiles of 'bees'.

112. Across the school, pupils gain a sound knowledge and understanding of the work of famous artists. At Key Stage 1, older pupils understand how certain artists, for example, Van Gogh, paint in a particular style. At Key Stage 2, pupils have focused well on the techniques of LS Lowry and Helen Bradley, and have successfully produced paintings of figures and a collage similar to the style of these artists. Although pupils use sketchbooks, these are not used consistently to record observations and develop ideas.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching at both key stages. In the previous inspection, teaching was judged to be sound. During the inspection, very good teaching was seen in one lesson. The teacher inspired the pupils by her enthusiasm and clear explanations. She helped them to interpret abstract designs by famous weavers, as well as explaining the technique of using warp and weft threads. She encouraged the pupils to feel successful with their weavings. The pupils applied themselves sensibly and the teacher used their responses productively to explain how the use of colour, texture and attention to detail can be used to create a work of art. They responded well to her clear explanations and their positive attitudes made them receptive to this new learning experience.

114. The co-ordinator for art is enthusiastic and manages the subject satisfactorily. A commercially produced scheme of work is used throughout the school to ensure progression of skills. The co-ordinator gives informal advice to colleagues and monitors displays, but not classroom practice. Planning is appropriate and teachers create relevant links with other subjects, for example, the links with geography for the 'weather' paintings and the collages and paintings of the 'Santa Maria', 'Pinta' and 'Nina' for history. Resources are good to support teaching and learning in the subject. Although the open-plan design limits the areas for display, teachers make good use of the space available to display pupils' artwork.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. There is insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made about the attainment of pupils of all abilities at either key stage. This is because of the very limited opportunity to see the subject taught and the limited work available for inspection. Because of the way in which the timetable is organised, it was only possible to see a single lesson being taught at Key Stage 1. Evidence from the limited work provided and on display, conversations with teachers and pupils, and analysis of teachers' planning indicates that pupils at both key stages have had appropriate opportunities for designing and making. At the previous inspection, attainment at Key Stage 1 was in line with expectations but at Key Stage 2, it was below.

116. At Key Stage 2, pupils use a variety of materials. For example, they use clay as they make their Greek pots, and cardboard and wood in their models with moveable joints. Evidence of previous work indicated that topics such as, 'Design and make a moveable toy', and 'Design and make a vehicle suitable for exploration' had been undertaken. These shared a common approach which encouraged the pupils to consider the following: What I will need? How do I make it? Did it work? What could be improved? Appropriate opportunity was provided for pupils' evaluation of the product.

117. At Key Stage 1, younger pupils have access to a good variety of construction materials. Photographs and evidence from previous planning indicated that some had undertaken a food technology project, and that others had designed and made musical instruments. In the lesson observed, pupils were using appropriate skills as they designed and made their own weather symbols and displayed them on a weather chart. They designed, for example, symbols to illustrate snow, wind, sunshine and rain, and then, using different materials, coloured, cut and stuck them onto a prepared base.

118. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made about the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school. Teaching in the single lesson observed at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory. The activity was clearly explained to the pupils and the teacher circulated well around the groups as they worked. Overall, teachers' termly planning does not consistently show the knowledge, concepts and skills to be taught. Evidence from some of the pupils' previous work indicated that topics had been taught in satisfactory depth.

119. In the single lesson observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory. They listened well to their teacher's introduction and made sensible comments during class discussion. Evidence from the sample of pupils' work indicated a satisfactory response to the teaching.

120. There is a brief guidelines statement but this gives insufficient support to teachers in their planning. There is no overall scheme of work, but the co-ordinator provides each teacher with support and advice on topics to be covered and he monitors their termly planning. Planning of the subject is often linked to a wider topic basis, particularly at Key Stage 1. However, the individual elements of each subject are not always identified sufficiently clearly. It is, therefore, difficult for the school to ensure that key concepts and skills are taught progressively across both key stages. Teachers make their own assessments of work done and this information is used to inform the yearly reports to parents. Resources for the subject are good. They include a good range of cutting, drilling and joining equipment which is of good quality, well-maintained and accessible to class teachers.

GEOGRAPHY

121. At the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs attain satisfactory standards according to their previous learning and make sound progress towards their own learning targets. This is in line with the judgement of the previous inspection. Due to the timetabling arrangements and the nature of the school's programme for teaching geography, it was only possible to see one geography lesson at Key Stage 1 during the period of the inspection. Judgements have been supplemented by an analysis of pupils' work, discussion with teachers and pupils and examination of teachers' planning.

122. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils find geographical features and places on maps. They design a key for a map and know that the key enables others to gain geographical information about it. Pupils understand the directions on maps and use co-ordinates and grid references to locate features on a map. Through their study of St. Lucia, pupils learn about the main physical and human features of the island and the devastating effect that a tropical storm can have on the landscape and the people. They write about famous explorers, such as Christopher Columbus and plot his voyages on a map of the world. At Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of the weather. They study the seasonal weather patterns, make predictions about what the weather might be the following day and keep a chart of their observations over the period of a month. They use appropriate symbols on their charts to represent the different weather conditions.

123. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Strengths in the teaching of geography and its effect on learning were evident in a Year 2 lesson on the theme of weather. The teacher skilfully linked design and technology with geography by building on the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the weather. By designing and making a 'weather plate' using the correct symbols, pupils effectively applied their knowledge to a meaningful task. Effective strategies for the

management and organisation of the lesson enabled all pupils to succeed, including those with special educational needs.

124. A sound policy and scheme of work provide an appropriate overview of the subject, but, in general, this does not provide sufficient detail to support teachers in their planning. In Key Stage 1, teachers have made some use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines to supplement their planning. Good use is made of visits to Wickford and Burnham to promote the pupils' geographical knowledge and skills. In Key Stage 2, work is planned according to the National Curriculum requirements and is taught through a two-year rolling programme that is often linked to a cross-curricular topic, such as Exploration, which brings geography and history together. There is however, a distinct geography focus that alternates half-termly with history. At present, the headteacher is in a 'caretaking' role, as the original post holder is now only teaching part-time. This limits the effectiveness of the co-ordination and does not sufficiently promote further development of the subject. Resources for the subject are sound, and good use is made of the local area. The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest, such as Wat Tyler Park and Wicken House.

HISTORY

125. Pupils at both key stages achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age. This finding is in line with the judgement of the last inspection when standards of attainment at both key stages were found to be sound. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve satisfactory standards relative to their previous attainment.

126. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils describe some of the main changes and events from the past linked to their work on Ancient Greece, Britain in the 1930s and the Second World War. They use secondary sources like books, posters and pictures to find out about the period of history. Pupils show a sound ability to identify and explain interpretations of the period from these sources and explain and discuss reasons for the difference between living conditions in the 1930s and the 19th Century. Pupils have good opportunities, in their attractive and interesting information folders and in the production of an imaginary newspaper in the time of Christopher Columbus, to link their work successfully with literacy, information technology and art.

127. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of the lives and times of some famous historical characters, such as Elizabeth I and Vincent Van Gogh. Younger pupils begin their work on 'toys from the past' by examining an assortment of wooden toys used by children at the end of the last century. Older pupils have constructed a time line from 1960 to 2000 and matched the dates with a collection of teddy bears thus enhancing their knowledge and understanding of chronology.

128. The quality of teaching and learning in history is satisfactory at both key stages. In the lessons observed, teachers confidently introduced the correct and appropriate vocabulary concerned with the relevant period. Enquiry skills were introduced well, following questions such as 'How can we be history detectives?' and 'What do police detectives look for?' Teachers used resources well to stimulate and develop pupils' learning such as costume dressing up to illustrate lifestyles of the period. In this respect, pupils made good progress in their practical enquiry learning skills, but a significant number found difficulty in recording their findings.

129. Pupils' attitudes to history are generally good: they are keen and interested in the subject and are prepared to talk about their own experiences and relate stories from the past. Pupils of

all abilities participate keenly in lessons. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to participate in any group discussion work or practical research. They answer questions sensibly and well, and show good concentration upon their tasks either individually or when required to work with a partner or small group. Their work is normally neat and well-presented and most pupils take a pride in their work. However, sometimes, the calling out of answers and lack of concentration by a small number of pupils result in limited progress.

130. The curriculum is broad and balanced for both key stages and is linked well to other curriculum subjects like art, literacy, information technology and geography. For example, pupils' study of the life of Van Gogh was linked with an appreciation of his work. The study of explorers was enhanced by the opportunity to find maps, pictures and information from CD-ROMS in information technology. Teachers are supported by a sound policy and guidelines statement, and a comprehensive two year rolling programme of topics has been produced for Year 5 and 6 pupils. The other year groups also have topic plans but a shortcoming is the lack of a whole-school curricular plan for the subject. The headteacher has temporary responsibility for the subject. Resources are generally satisfactory with a good range of books, pictures and artefacts including a collection of bears and wooden toys in Key Stage 1. Learning assistants are used well to assist pupils with special educational needs to develop their learning skills in line with their mainstream classmates. Curricular provision is enriched by visits to the Wat Tyler Centre at Pitsea and the Colne Valley Victorian Fantasia.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

131. At the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs attain satisfactory standards according to their previous learning and make sound progress towards their individual learning targets. At the previous inspection, pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 exceeded national expectations and at Key Stage 2, it was in line.

132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have appropriate experience of using a variety of information sources and communication processes. Younger pupils are confident with such functions as highlighting text, delete and insert, and they use appropriate mathematical programs to reinforce their understanding of number. They also enjoy using simple role-play simulations, as they attempt to rescue Marvo the Magician from the Wicked Witch. Older pupils use information sources on CD-ROMs to access data for their project work. For example, they find and print pictures and information about Henry VIII for their Tudor topic in history, and a diagram to illustrate and explain the working of the heart in science. Older pupils access the Internet confidently, are beginning to send and receive e-mails, and know how to interrogate Internet databases. Pupils develop a satisfactory appreciation of information sources as they collect, display and interrogate graphs showing the favourite crisp flavours of members of their class. A scrutiny of planning indicated that pupils are provided with sound opportunities to explore the monitoring and modelling functions of the computer. Pupils at this key stage have additional opportunities through the lunchtime computer club, and by the chance for older pupils to devise and publish a yearly school magazine.

133. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop sound computer skills as they learn to use the computer mouse to access screen menus and the keyboard to write and display their work. With help, younger pupils write and print sentences about 'Little Red Riding Hood' and the 'Gingerbread Man'. Older pupils alternate confidently between upper and lower case letters in their writing and undertake simple editing as they use the arrow and delete keys. They are well aware of the importance of following proper procedures in opening and closing down the computer. Older pupils' appreciation of the importance of control is developed well. They identify the features at home and at school, such as microwave ovens, TV remote control, toys,

that require commands, and devise a program for the floor roamer to move around the points of the compass.

134. There are examples of pupils at Key Stage 1 using the computer satisfactorily to reinforce basic number and some literacy skills. However at both key stages, shortcomings in the overall effectiveness of the subject are the missed opportunities to use information technology skills sufficiently widely to support work in other curriculum areas and to ensure that these skills are developed as an integral part of pupils' whole learning.

135. Overall, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory. The teaching undertaken by the specialist teacher in the school's computer suite, the Studio, is consistently good. She uses the good resources well, and this has a positive on the standards that pupils achieve. Pupils' work in the 'Studio' is well planned and structured. This ensures that concepts and skills are taught progressively across the school, and that pupils' learning matches their age and ability. The teacher's individual lesson plans are thorough and detailed, and include the learning intended for the lesson and a list of the key vocabulary to be introduced. This ensures that pupils become familiar with the required specialist terms. Lessons are well organised. They begin with a clear explanation of the task, appropriately supported group or individual activities and a useful summing up of what has been learnt at the end of the lesson. Assessment is used well. Key skills are targeted and regularly assessed which ensures that the teacher has a good understanding of pupils' learning. Teaching outside the Studio is less effective. Some work is not well matched to the level of ability of pupils in the class and it is not always sufficiently closely related to skills learned in their Studio time. The teachers provide some opportunity for pupils to have access to computers in their class areas, but often pupils work without enough guidance from the teacher or support assistant, and the work is insufficiently challenging. There are too few examples of effective group or class teaching outside pupils' work in the Studio.

136. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their work and they behave consistently well. They enjoy their computer work, listen well to their teacher's instructions, and are keen to try skills for themselves. They maintain their concentration well. Many pupils are becoming independent learners and can work productively for longer periods of time without direct intervention from adults. They discuss effectively with their partners, and take turns well when necessary. They stop quickly when requested to do so by their teacher and show respect for the computers as they go carefully through the proper shut-down procedures. In the lessons in their class bases, when the work is insufficiently challenging, pupils are less enthusiastic and soon lose concentration.

137. Teachers are supported by a helpful aims and objectives statement and subject guidelines. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is a part-time teacher. She has appropriate qualifications in the subject and undertakes all the specialist teaching in the Studio. The co-ordinator has produced a full scheme of work which is detailed and well matched to National Curriculum requirements. Teachers are supported well by the co-ordinator through appropriate training and by encouragement and helpful advice. A shortcoming in the subject is that work within each classroom is not being planned and developed to the same depth as that in the Studio. The effect of this is that the good skills and concepts taught through Studio work is not being sufficiently reinforced and complemented by work in the class areas. The effect of this is that pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. Opportunities for the further and full use in information technology across all subject areas are not sufficiently developed. Assessment of pupils' attainment is good. Pupils' skills in the Studio are regularly monitored and the school has produced a useful assessment test which measures attainment on entry to the school. This is providing a good baseline on which further skills can be systematically built. Hardware resources are ample although some

are out-of-date. The ratio of computers to pupils is well above the national average. The well-equipped Studio can be used for whole-class as well as group teaching. Classes also have access to computers in their own teaching bases. The co-ordinator has instigated a clear development plan, which has identified the need to improve software and hardware resources, and provides useful attainment targets for pupils when they leave the school.

MUSIC

138. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils generally attain standards, which are in line with those expected for their age. Older pupils sing songs tunefully, including those in two parts, with a good sense of pitch, melody and rhythm. Pupils in Year 6 are beginning to show an understanding of the different ways that sounds are put together by listening to different melodies, those that stand alone and those that link together. However, they do not find this easy and their musical knowledge in this element is not secure. There is some evidence that pupils are familiar with conventional notation, as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 created a group composition for a round and used it for the class to perform to. Those pupils who learn to play the recorder or woodwind instruments are familiar with musical notation. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs attain satisfactory standards according to their previous attainment and make sound progress towards their own learning targets.

139. There is a wide range of attainment at Key Stage 1, but already the youngest pupils sing songs from memory and show an increasing ability to play percussion instruments in time to a simple rhythm. Pupils in Year 2, listen carefully to music and show in their singing that they are developing an understanding of tempo. They are aware of the pulse of music and play a range of percussion instruments rhythmically. They learn the names of various percussion instruments and identify those that they find easy to play slowly and those that are easier to play fast. In general, when using the instruments, they find it easier to play a slow rhythm than a fast one. Pupils show an awareness of dynamics, when they record their compositions using symbols to represent loud and quiet sounds.

140. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Several features of good teaching were exemplified by a lesson observed at Key Stage 1. In this lesson, the teacher used a tape productively to teach musical points and made clear to the pupils what was expected of them. The good use of time, secure subject knowledge and genuine enjoyment of music fully engaged all pupils and maintained their interest. With this good lead, pupils tried hard to put into practice the advice given. For the most part, teaching is appropriately supported by the schemes of work adopted by the school. However, at Key Stage 2, there are times when the use of a worksheet is inappropriate and opportunities are lost for developing pupils' musical ideas. Hymn practices are good opportunities for pupils to experience the pleasure of singing together and the music co-ordinator provides a good lead in developing the pupils' performance. Members of staff present take note of pupils' individual performance and give an award to the 'singer of the week'. During the week of the inspection, the award was given to a Reception child, who was congratulated for her enthusiastic singing. All teachers are responsible for teaching music to their own classes and are well supported by the co-ordinator who has provided 'hands-on' training for staff to meet their own needs and those of the pupils. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and respond well to all aspects of the subject. The quality of learning is, however, sometimes slowed down when the lesson does not fully engage them and they become restless. In general, they enjoy singing and show confidence when performing to an audience.

141. The subject co-ordinator is keen and has a clear idea for the future development of music in the school. However, at present, the school is making use of three different

commercial schemes of work and although these provide a satisfactory progression of concepts and skills, they have not yet been sufficiently harmonised. The co-ordinator has had no release time to monitor the use of, or effectiveness of, these schemes. The previous inspection noted that there was insufficient documentation to support the less confident teachers. Music is not formally assessed nor progress recorded. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to join a performing arts group and learn to play the recorder. Musical tuition is available from a peripatetic woodwind/brass teacher and from a school tutor of recorders and the guitar. The school's resources are adequate and there are sufficient percussion instruments of good quality to support the teaching of music. There are however, few instruments from a diversity of cultures. Musical productions and seasonal celebrations give opportunities for all pupils to be involved in performances. The standard of music observed at the last inspection has been sustained.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. At the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age. This judgement is below the findings of the last OFSTED inspection when it was noted that the standards of attainment were above average at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs attain good standards according to their previous learning and make good progress towards their own learning targets.

143. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show sound co-ordination and control in their games and dance activities and pupils of all abilities show a good awareness of the use of space indoors and outdoors and particularly in the rather restricted space in the hall. All pupils demonstrate a sound ability to improve their performance by practice in their various travelling movements in gymnastics. They show a good ability to control a large ball in a competitive situation and can throw a ball with accuracy when shooting in a games match. At Key Stage 1, in their dance activities, pupils link their imaginative movements and expression well to appropriate music or story commentary as in their work on 'The Weather Forecast'. They show sound control in their dance movements, and in gymnastics they are able to demonstrate balance on one, two or three points both on and off the apparatus. Across the school, pupils perform safely and are beginning to recognise the effect of exercise on their bodies. Their ability to observe, analyse and report what they see in their classmates' performance is less well developed in some classes. The statutory requirement to participate in swimming is fulfilled to ensure that the maximum number of pupils can swim for 25 metres by the time they leave the school.

144. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages for pupils of all abilities. Warm-up and cool-down activities are used appropriately at the beginning and end of lessons indicating a good subject knowledge and understanding of health and safety principles by all teachers. In the lessons where teaching is good, teachers often make very good use of demonstration by individual or groups of pupils and invite others to comment on their performance. Timed activities also give pace and challenge to lessons and encourage pupils to make greater efforts and good progress in individual activities. Planning in all lessons is satisfactory. Teachers are actively involved in their lessons, and prompt and encourage pupils, for example, in a games lesson to younger pupils at Key Stage 1, the teacher led the warm-up session very effectively and enthusiastically. Pupils are encouraged to perform independent activities well when setting out apparatus such as in the Year 3/4 lesson when markers and hoops had to be placed on the playground in a rather complicated pattern. Resources are generally used appropriately and well.

145. Most pupils enjoy their work and their attitudes and behaviour to all its aspects are usually good. This leads to good progress in their learning. They listen attentively to their

teachers' instructions and directions and behave well. When moving from the classroom to the hall or playground they behave quietly and sensibly. They show a sound awareness of safety when handling or setting out equipment or apparatus. Pupils respond well to the opportunity to devise their own movements and sequences and they are willing to work co-operatively with a partner or within a larger group.

146. The subject curriculum is broad and balanced and all aspects of the subject are covered in both key stages. A subject policy is in place but there is no whole-school scheme of work. The school intends to review and revise these in the light of new national recommendations. Shared planning between teachers in the various year groups ensures that all activities are progressively developed as pupils move through the school. The subject co-ordinator, who has been recently appointed to the post, is well qualified and enthusiastic. She has had the opportunity to monitor lessons with the very youngest children. The school is fortunate in having several members of staff with physical education qualifications and interests. Resources are generally good with a generous supply of indoor and outdoor equipment. There is a small hall, a playground and a large playing field, which are all used well to enhance pupils' performance. However, the size of the hall and the use of its perimeter for storage partly limits the full participation of the older children in all gymnastic activities. The curriculum is further enhanced by after school clubs for football, netball and performing arts for Key Stage 2 pupils. The school also participates in competitive games with other local schools in both soccer and netball.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. Pupils attain standards, which match the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language attain satisfactory standards, relative to their previous attainment, when they receive appropriate support. This judgement is similar to the findings of the previous OFSTED inspection, when standards were deemed to be broadly in line with the attainment targets of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

148. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the beliefs, symbols and traditions of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism and are given satisfactory opportunities to compare these religions. Pupils know that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that Hindus worship the gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Older pupils are able to explain that Hindus believe in reincarnation and that this means 'being born again'. They have satisfactory knowledge of stories in the Old and New Testaments in the Bible and can retell the stories of David and Goliath, Samuel, and Joseph. They know about the life of Jesus and are able to relate some of the parables. Pupils are aware of the significance of the festivals of harvest, Christmas and Easter. Visits to local churches enhance their understanding of places of worship. Pupils show a sound understanding of the Christian and Hindu versions of the Creation. They thoughtfully express their ideas and feelings about the wonders of the world and the make simple comparisons between their own lives and that of believers in Hinduism. Pupils in the Year 3/4 classes have written 'thanksgiving' prayers and sensitively express their feelings about envy, vanity and special friends.

149. At Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of Christianity and Judaism, and have some knowledge of Islam and Sikhism. They know the story of Noah's ark and the main events in the life of Jesus, from the Nativity to the crucifixion. They are aware of some of the main festivals, such as Christmas and Easter and the Hindu festival of Diwali. Pupils know that Guru Nanak is special to Sikhs and can compare him simply to Saint Francis of Assisi. They are able to make a simple comparison between a Christian and a Sikh wedding.

150. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, which is similar to the judgement of the previous inspection. Teachers plan lessons carefully with clear objectives, which engage the interest of pupils well and extend their learning. Although teachers try to ensure a quiet, respectful atmosphere, which is conducive to learning, at the start of lessons, this is not always possible, due to the open plan accommodation. During the inspection, two Year 5/6 religious education lessons were disrupted by the noise from other classes, which made it difficult for pupils to listen and to learn. Analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, are making steady gains in their knowledge of different religions. However, the colouring in of worksheets does little to extend their knowledge of the different religions in the world.

151. There is a satisfactory policy for religious education. The scheme of work for Key Stage 2 pupils is based on the new locally Agreed Syllabus, while Key Stage 1 pupils follow a commercially produced scheme of work, which is in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the planning is relevant to the needs of the pupils. Literacy skills are appropriately developed through stories, listening and speaking and recording work in different forms. The co-ordinator is conscientious and provides good support for the teachers implementing the new scheme of work in Key Stage 2. She discusses planning issues with teachers, and although she has not had the opportunity to monitor classroom teaching, she plans to do this next term. Resources and books are adequate and well organised. The co-ordinator has accurately identified the need to provide more resources, such as books and posters. The subject provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to learn to respect and celebrate religious and cultural diversity.