

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWLANDS SPRING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115241

Headteacher: Mr. R. S. Leeke

Reporting inspector: Mrs. L. Moore 21243

Dates of inspection: 31st January – 4th February 2000

Inspection number: 189275

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dickens Place, Copperfield Road, Chelmsford. Essex
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Townshend
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team Members		Subject Responsibilities	Aspect Responsibilities
Mrs. L. Moore	Registered Inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Information Technology	How well is the school led and managed?
		Music	What should the school do to improve further?
Mr. A. Mundy	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs. B. Buteux	Team Inspector	Under Fives	How well are pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	
		English	
Mr. P. Garner	Team Inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Physical Education	
Mr. P. Playfair	Team Inspector	Geography	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Special Educational Needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mrs. K. Rollisson	Team Inspector	Art	
		Design and Technology	
		History	
		Religious Education	
		Equal Opportunities	

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an Infant and Junior Foundation School, catering for 375 full-time pupils, aged between 5 and 12 years. This is bigger than the average primary school. It has an attached Early Years unit which caters for 35 part-time four year-old children, prior to their admission into the Reception class. Almost all the pupils are from white, English backgrounds with a very small minority having English as an additional language (slightly higher than similar schools). Eight per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Eleven per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (below the national average), one of whom has a statement of special need. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly above average, with most pupils coming from professional families. The school serves a wide area which includes mixed housing and is at present over-subscribed. The school was last inspected in September 1996.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Newlands Spring Primary is a good school with a number of strong features. Pupils' attainment in almost all subjects is above the national average and almost all teaching is at least satisfactory, with one lesson in seven having teaching which is very good or excellent. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the use of the computer suite are strengths of the school. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment in the majority of subjects is above national averages.
- Almost all teaching is at least satisfactory, with one lesson in seven having teaching which is very good or excellent.
- The provision of, and quality of support provided by, the non-teaching staff enhances the quality of educational provision.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The use of the computer suite enhances the information technology curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and art.
- The whole-school overview of test performance and target-setting is of high quality.
- Extra-curricular activities for pupils in Key Stage 2 are good.
- Links with parents are good.
- Pupils' moral and social development are good.
- The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good.
- The school's aims and values are reflected well in its work.

What could be improved

- Although the quality of short-term planning has improved since the previous inspection, it does not yet provide sufficient detail to ensure enough support for all teachers and differentiation, particularly in the foundation subjects.
- Day to day assessment of pupils' attainment by class teachers is of inconsistent quality, with the pockets of good practice not being shared across the school.
- The present quality of marking of pupils' work does not provide sufficient feedback to pupils about where they have done well and how they can improve.
- Some higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- The use of the high-quality non-teaching staff is inconsistent, with some staff not being used in the most effective way during lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected between 23rd and 27th September 1996. The key issues arising from that inspection have been addressed by the school and the following improvements have been made:

Key Issue 1:

The school has worked hard to develop pupils' work and the work matches more closely the expectations set out in the attainment targets. In particular, improvements in the provision to meet Attainment Target 1 in mathematics and science have been made through the teaching and the range of activities offered. However, there are still insufficient opportunities for open-ended investigations and problem-solving activities and the teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

Key Issue 2:

Short term planning is now being monitored. However, the quality of teachers' planning remains inconsistent and it does not always provide sufficient detail to support inexperienced or weaker teachers, particularly in the foundation subjects.

Key Issue 3:

Improvements have been made in monitoring teaching and learning, and the staff are beginning to build upon the best practice existing within the school.

Key Issue 4:

The methods of school development planning have improved and they now incorporate the views of staff and governors. The school's priorities are appropriately reviewed and satisfactory success criteria are provided.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. In 1999, for example, pupils' performance was well above average compared with all schools in English, mathematics and science. In the same year, pupils' performance in mathematics was well above average and it was above average in English and science, when compared with similar schools.

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

Children enter the school attaining levels which are slightly above average. Throughout the Early Years and Reception classes, attainment remains above average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage One is above average in all subjects except geography, where it is about average. At the end of Key Stage Two, attainment is above average in all subjects except music, where it is about average. Standards observed in extra-curricular activities are usually above average, with some pupils producing high levels of achievement.

Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory, with good progress often being made by these pupils when they participate in extra-curricular activities.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The positive attitudes to work noted in the previous inspection report have been maintained. Attitudes in extra-curricular activities are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classes and in the open areas of the school is generally excellent, and has improved since the previous inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Relationships are also very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good, has improved since the previous inspection and is significantly above the national average for primary schools.

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.

Out of the 69 lessons observed, 96 per cent have teaching which is satisfactory or better and four per cent are unsatisfactory. Of the lessons which are satisfactory or better, 49 per cent are good and 13 per cent are very good. One lesson was excellent. The quality of teaching in Year 6 is particularly good.

Throughout the school, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of each subject and their pupils' capabilities. The teaching of basic skills, including Literacy and Numeracy, is also good. Teaching methods are effective, with various approaches being used, according to the needs of the pupils, and teachers manage their pupils very well. The use of time and resources is generally good, as is the use of homework. The use of support staff is satisfactory overall, and ranges from some very effective use in supporting small groups within the classroom to unsatisfactory use, when time is wasted by support staff who sit and watch the teacher, without participating themselves. Teachers' planning and expectations are satisfactory overall. Although long-term planning provides good support for teachers, some short-term planning, particularly in the foundation subjects, does not provide sufficient detail to support all teachers. Teachers' expectations of pupils with average attainment or special educational needs are good, but there are times when pupils with higher capabilities are insufficiently challenged.

The quality of pupils' learning overall is good across the school. They make good progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding and the extent of their intellectual, physical and creative effort is good. Pupils maintain good levels of concentration and have developed a clear understanding of, and mature approach towards their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities across the curriculum are good. An appropriate statutory curriculum is in place for all subjects, including religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils having English as an additional language is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Moral and social development are excellent, with spiritual and cultural development being satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored effectively and good educational and personal support and guidance are provided for the pupils.

The school works well in partnership with parents and most parents are very supportive of the school. The quality of information provided by the school is good, although the standard of annual reports is inconsistent across the different classes. Parents are involved in the work of the school and their contribution to their children's learning at school and at home is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher works well with his deputy to provide very effective leadership, which ensures clear educational direction for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is effective in fulfilling its statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is good, with effective action being taken as a consequence.
The strategic use of resources	There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The overall provision of accommodation and learning resources is good. Financial resources are managed satisfactorily, with an appropriate use being made of specific grants. The use of accommodation and learning resources is good and the deployment of teaching staff is effective. Support staff are not used as effectively as possible in some classrooms.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children enjoy coming to school.• Standards are high and their children make good progress.• Behaviour is very good.• The quality of teaching is generally high.• The school expects children to work hard.• The swimming pool has been an added improvement to the children's curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient information is provided about what is being taught.• Some concern was expressed about the state of the pupils' toilet facilities.• A small amount of dissatisfaction was raised with the quality of education provided within the Early Years Unit.• A small amount of concern was highlighted that some brighter pupils are not being fully extended.

The inspection findings support the positive views of parents. In response to the negative comments, the inspection team found that:

- * the quality of information provided for parents is good;
- * the pupils' toilet facilities are satisfactory;
- * the Early Years Unit provides good quality education overall;
- * some of the pupils with higher capabilities are not being fully challenged.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests are well above the national average in reading and mathematics. They are above the national average in writing. Results over the last three years have been consistently above the national average. This is an improvement in comparison with the findings of the last inspection. In comparison with similar school's results in reading in 1999 are well above average. Results in mathematics are above average and in writing they are broadly in line with the average for similar schools.
- 2 In the 1999 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Results over the last three years have been consistently well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools results in mathematics in 1999 are well above average and above average for English and science.
- 3 The number of pupils in 1999 reaching higher levels of attainment than expected nationally in reading and mathematics at the age of 7 is well above the national average. In writing the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels of attainment is above the national average. Overall at the end of Key Stage 1 girls and boys have performed equally well. Between 1996 and 1999 the performance of both girls and boys in reading and writing was well above the national average. In mathematics, over the same period of time, the performance of boys was well above the national average compared to the performance of girls was above average.
- 4 At the age of 11 the proportion of pupils in 1999 reaching the higher levels of attainment is well above the national average for English, mathematics and science. Overall at the end of Key Stage 2 girls and boys have performed equally well. Between 1996 and 1999 the performance of both boys and girls in mathematics and science was well above the national average. In English, the performance of girls was well above the national average whilst the boys maintained an above average performance.
- 5 On the basis of the National Curriculum test and assessment data over the last four years both boys and girls in Key Stage 1 are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, in Key Stage 2, boys have made very good progress in mathematics and good progress in English and science. Girls make very good progress in English, mathematics and science.

- 6 The inspection found that overall attainment at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is beyond that expected for pupils aged 7 and 11 and that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are achieving good standards of work. At Key Stage 1, with the exception of geography where levels of attainment match what would be expected at the age of 7, attainment is above that expected at this stage of the pupils' education. At Key Stage 2 levels of attainment are generally beyond those expected for pupils aged 11. In mathematics they are slightly above expectations and in music attainment is in line with expectations. Extra curricular activities in music and physical education raise the attainment of those pupils who participate. Since the last inspection and with the exception of art, geography, physical education and music at Key Stage 2 where standards of attainment have been maintained, there has been a good improvement in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, design technology and history across both key stages. Music has improved at Key Stage 1. The introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies is having a positive impact on standards, with improvements being made within the application of knowledge in these subjects. Greater attention given to using and applying mathematics and to experimental and investigative science has also contributed to the improvement noted in these subjects.
- 7 Overall, achievement in both key stages is good. With the exception of mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5, geography at Key Stage 1 and music at Key Stage 2 where progress is satisfactory, pupils make good progress in all other subjects. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good throughout the school. Gifted and talented pupils make sound progress.
- 8 Through very good and detailed monitoring, analysis and evaluation the school set suitably challenging targets for English and mathematics in 1999. In English at the end of Key Stage 2 all targets were exceeded. The overall target of 82 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 or above was exceeded by 8.16 per cent. The target for reading of 89 per cent was exceeded by 1.16 per cent and the target of 76 per cent for writing was exceeded by 7.6 per cent. In mathematics the target of 72.12 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 or above was exceeded by 19.68 per cent. The Key Stage 2 targets set in English and mathematics for 2000 and 2001 have an appropriate challenge and take a sensible view of the fluctuations that the school has noted from its detailed assessment of the respective cohorts. The school in setting targets for 2000 at Key Stage 1 has taken a similar view. However, the targets submitted to the Local Education Authority are modest in comparison to the results achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 The positive attitudes to work noted in the previous inspection report have been maintained. Pupils come very enthusiastically to school. They conform very well to the structures of school life and respond warmly to the affection and respect they receive each day from adults. Attitudes in extra-curricular activities are very good. During the inspection, more than twenty pupils participated in early morning netball and recorder sessions.
- 10 Pupils enjoy lessons, listen attentively to their teachers and work industriously. They are keen to answer questions and to join discussions, although opportunities for participation are limited in some classes. Similarly, when given opportunities, pupils will offer good ideas and think carefully about problem solving. There are no differences in attitude between pupils of different levels of attainment. In discussion with visitors they are all justifiably proud of their achievements.

- 11 Behaviour in classes and in the open areas of the school is generally excellent, and has improved since the previous inspection, when it was good. Behaviour at lunchtime in the dining hall and playground is consistently excellent. Restricted dining facilities require pupils to be patient when waiting their turn for school meals, and to eat packed lunches quietly in their classrooms. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the school's careful organisation. When called to the dining hall, they are always prepared and orderly.
- 12 A code of behaviour is displayed in each classroom. All pupils know the structure of the school's discipline and sanctions policy, and conform to it. School records show that no pupil has ever been excluded. Parents and pupils confirm bullying or aggression between pupils to be very rare, and to be dealt with effectively when it does occur. Pupils take very good care of the school buildings, equipment and personal property.
- 13 Pupils' personal development is very good, and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, pupils listen to each other's views, and confidently answer questions and make decisions. When given opportunities, all pupils work independently without requiring close supervision by teachers. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils set up their own tests to establish the best conditions for sustaining yeast growth. Pupils in all year groups select and use resources with great care. In a Year 2 design and technology lesson, pupils making glove puppets were meticulously cutting small pieces of wool and fabric without waste from bulk supplies.
- 14 Each member of the school community has equal status and receives sensitive and effective support at work and play. Pupils are always willing to accept responsibility for everyday duties in classrooms and throughout the school. Additionally, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are particularly good at watching for loneliness or unhappiness in younger pupils at lunchtime and morning break. They are always pleased to help, for example by including younger pupils in their games.
- 15 Pupils contribute to a school magazine, published termly. They do not have editorial responsibility, although some are clearly capable of assuming it. Similarly, the school council is a very effective forum for class representatives from Years 2 to 6 but older pupils do not have opportunities to chair discussions or take some of the meeting's minutes. Council members are encouraged to bring ideas to meetings for evaluation and possible action. Recent initiatives have included playground marking, the rebuilding of the cycle shed and the purchase of a clock for the information technology suite. The school does not have a set procedure for electing members to the school council. In some classes, opportunities are missed to teach and practise democratic systems.
- 16 Attendance is very good and is significantly above the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is very good. The number of unauthorised absences is insignificant.
- 17 Class registers are completed neatly, and conform with legal requirements. Registration periods are very efficient, and lessons during the day begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 Compared with the last inspection the quality of teaching has risen from sound overall to good overall. For the most part this is reflected in the performance of the pupils at the end of key stages.

- 19 The quality of teaching across the school is good overall. Almost all teaching is satisfactory or better, with about half being good. One lesson in eight has very good teaching but one lesson in twenty-five is unsatisfactory. One lesson was excellent. The quality of teaching in Year 6 is particularly good.
- 20 The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are taught well providing the pupils with good opportunities for learning to ensure high standards of performance in the national curriculum tests.
- 21 When teaching is good or better, teachers set a good pace and offer a range of different learning activities so that pupils of all abilities can progress well. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and in some cases very good allowing pupils to extend their deeper understanding of the topics taught. Teachers manage their pupils well and throughout the school there is a sense of order in the community. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and provide positive role models for courteous behaviour. Most teachers use a variety of methods to ensure pupils' best performance. Across all subject areas the good teaching is often reflected in the very good presentation of pupils' written work. Teachers celebrate the efforts of all their pupils by displays of work in the classrooms and elsewhere in the school.
- 22 A weakness in a significant number of otherwise good lessons is the lack of challenging tasks to meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils in the class. In a few lessons the tasks set require little effort. Pupils become bored and lack the motivation to complete the tasks set with a sense of purpose. The most successful teaching matches the tasks set to the pupils' previous learning so that there is continuity of purpose and pupils understand that they are making good progress.
- 23 The national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy provide the framework for long term and medium term planning. The quality of teachers' day to day planning is not so secure. Teachers do not always indicate how they will provide for pupils of different capabilities and this limits the quality of the learning experience.
- 24 The system of placing the pupils into attainment groups for English and mathematics works well when differentiated activities are set because it provides opportunities for all children to progress at the best possible pace. However, if the whole class is set to work on the same activity this is not so successful because the higher attainers often finish early and the lower attainers do not manage to complete the tasks set. Useful booster groups have been established in Year 6 to raise the standards of performance of the lower attainers in the national curriculum tests.
- 25 Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good opportunities for improving their performance particularly in reading and in writing. Teachers know the details of each pupil's special need and they are careful to meet these needs.
- 26 Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of the lower attainers. However teaching assistants are not always deployed to the best possible advantage. In about half the lessons, assistants often sit at the back of the class during the first fifteen minutes of the lesson, without any interaction with the pupils. This is a waste of their time and expertise. In other lessons, assistants are deployed very effectively, supporting individuals or small groups.

- 27 Teachers mark pupils' books regularly but their comments do not always indicate what the pupil needs to do to improve. Day to day record keeping of the pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school. Some teachers keep very detailed written records, whereas others rely on the good central assessment schemes established by the school. Homework is set regularly and most parents were satisfied with the amount of homework provided.

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

- 28 In keeping with the previous inspection report, overall the school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It meets the statutory requirements in all subjects, including religious education, and ensures adequate coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Indications are that the school is preparing well to meet forthcoming changes in the requirements. The school takes full account of the national strategies for both literacy and numeracy and it places great emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills with planned activities in these two areas accounting for nearly all the teaching time available each morning. Occasional timetabling conflicts mean that some children miss lessons in either literacy or numeracy in order to make use of the school's swimming pool and computer suite. All the subjects are planned for with curriculum maps available for each year group complemented by policies and schemes of work. These feature in the school development plan and are reviewed regularly with success criteria, tasks, timescales, resources and responsibilities clearly indicated. There are some areas requiring further work, including geography, design technology and ICT but these areas are highlighted in the school development plan as priorities for the next year. Sex education and health related education are covered satisfactorily and there are sufficient opportunities for spiritual development in lessons across the curriculum and through daily assemblies. However, in religious education lessons insufficient provision is made for the development of spiritual awareness and the ability of pupils to engage in sensitive reflection.
- 29 The curriculum for the under fives is improving with the school generally complying with the designated areas of learning. These activities help the children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The attitudes towards behaviour, the work with children requiring special educational needs and the balance between listening, playing, recording and physical development all prepare the pupils for transition to the National Curriculum.
- 30 Curricular planning at both key stages is good in terms of curriculum mapping, medium and long term planning but more attention should be given to the short term plans which sometimes require fine tuning, so that it can support all teachers and meet the needs of different abilities. All subjects have schemes of work and policies with increasing use being made of published programmes e.g. in science, physical education and mathematics. The school has used the National Literacy Strategy well since its inception and has integrated the National Numeracy Strategy over the last year. Both strategies have helped the school continue to improve its already high standards of attainment.

- 31 All the pupils benefit from the curriculum provided by the school irrespective of gender and cultural origin. Provision for personal and social development is not achieved in a structured way but it permeates through many of the school's curricular and extra-curricular activities making a positive impact on the pupils and contributing to their high standards of behaviour, concern for other people, honesty, trustworthiness and collaborative learning skills. There are timetabled lessons for religious education and daily assemblies, together with regular hymn practices which confer appropriate levels of spiritual development. Examples of good moral and cultural education are found in most lessons particularly, drama, physical education, music, assemblies and the range of extra-curricular activities. The school makes sensitive use of opportunities, both happy and sad, such as the recent death of the school crossing patrol man, to promote further spiritual development and to provide time for reflection. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities at Key Stage 2 and is improving provision for younger children. Activities include after-school club, netball, rounders, cricket, soccer, drama, creative arts, ICT, and gymnastics. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the curricular and extra-curricular programmes with support from a good number of teacher assistants and adult volunteers. Support staff are sometimes under – utilised whilst the teacher is working with the whole class.
- 32 Homework is set on a regular basis and is monitored by the class teacher with support from parents encouraged. Guidelines are available to assist parents in supporting their children's progress, enhance their reading and increase their range of learning opportunities.
- 33 The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory, and maintains the standards noted in the previous inspection report. The school makes good use of community resources. Pupils visit a local museum and the parish church. Occasionally they visit the on-site public library. They make day trips to towns in Essex, and to the national museums and galleries in London. An annual residential visit is arranged for Year 6 pupils. During the inspection, a youth worker spoke to pupils during assembly, but few other visitors from the community are invited regularly into school. No contacts are established with schools abroad, and other international, multicultural and multi-ethnic links are similarly underdeveloped.
- 34 The school does not have contacts with local businesses, although a good relationship is maintained with a neighbouring supermarket. Pupils collect for local and national charities throughout the year, and distribute harvest parcels to senior citizens at a nearby care home. At Christmas the school choir sings carols in the town, and the dance group and choir participate in numerous town and county events each year. The school buildings, including the swimming pool, are used occasionally by the community. This provides another source of income for the school.
- 35 Very good links are maintained with a playgroup sharing the Newlands Spring site. The school's Early Years teacher is a member of the playgroup committee, and children benefit from the close relationship as they move from playgroup to the Early Years class. The school has good links with local primary schools. The head teachers and senior staff meet regularly, and pupils are frequently involved in competitive and friendly sporting events.

- 36 Very good links are maintained with a local secondary school. Secondary teachers are invited to observe and participate in English and mathematics lessons. The special needs co-ordinators meet regularly. Pupils in Year 5 have opportunities to use high school facilities in their food and design and technology projects. High school students in Years 12 and 13 help each evening with organisation of the Newlands Spring after-school club. Each year, a student teacher from Anglia University has an opportunity to benefit from mentoring at Newlands Spring, and become fully involved in school life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 37 The school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. However, the school does not fulfil the legal requirements to implement a written policy on the restraint of pupils, and to maintain a formal record book for incidents of restraint.
- 38 Teachers and other adults know the pupils very well and are committed to their health, safety and welfare. Pupils receive very good individual care and support from class teachers and from the head teacher, who is very accessible and reassuring. The school's large number of learning assistants develop close relationships with pupils, and give effective academic and social support at all times. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated.
- 39 Playground supervision is very well organised to ensure pupils' safety at break and lunchtimes. Very good procedures ensure that lunchtime supervisors quickly notify class teachers of any concerns about individuals or groups of pupils. At the ends of break and lunch sessions, when the whistle is blown, pupils entering the main school building are not required to line up. They quickly stop activities and walk calmly to their classrooms. The system makes excellent use of the school's layout and is indicative of the mature attitudes of all pupils.
- 40 Good safety practices are evident in science, physical education and design technology lessons. Several members of staff are qualified first-aiders. All staff are caring and sympathetic to injured and distressed pupils. Short-term medication is stored safely in a cabinet and is administered by the office staff.
- 41 The school's programme for personal, social and health education [PSHE] is satisfactory, and is supplemented by cycling proficiency lessons for Year 6 pupils and road safety advice for the youngest children and their parents. Pupils are frequently reminded of potential hazards from strangers and the environment. These reminders are not oppressive or exaggerated, and instil in pupils a sensible understanding of the world around them. However, the PSHE programme is inadequately structured. The headteacher, acting as co-ordinator, does not monitor the quality of provision and does not have full knowledge of the quality, variety and relevance of resources available to teachers.
- 42 Procedures are established to ensure pupils' safety on the school site, and when away from the school on educational visits. A governor with building trade experience regularly inspects the site and buildings for deficiencies and hazards. The headteacher regularly informs governors of his periodic assessments of risks to health and safety in the school, according to local authority guidelines.

- 43 The school's arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher is responsible for child protection. He has received some training and ensures that all staff, including learning assistants and midday assistants, understand child protection issues, and the school's implementation procedures. However, formal training in child protection has not been provided for learning assistants, and the brief and effective guidelines in the school policy for child protection are not distributed to staff. The school's procedures for child protection are implemented unobtrusively. A good working relationship is maintained with the social services department of the local authority. An after-school club is open each evening until 6 p.m.. Some pupils use the time for completing homework, and the club successfully achieves its social objectives.
- 44 Parents and children are warmly welcomed into the school's Early Years unit and into the Reception class. Parent-and-child worksheets provide opportunities to work together at home before admission to school. Effective procedures quickly integrate most of the children joining other year groups in the school. Very effective procedures in Years 5 and 6 prepare pupils for transfer to secondary education. The headteacher gives additional academic support to pupils preparing for the 11-plus selection test.
- 45 Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and assessing their progress and achievement are very good. Further development of assessment procedures since the last inspection, together with valid and reliable target setting and detailed monitoring and analysis of results have played a significant part in the continued improvement of academic standards. Baseline assessment at the end of the reception year is used effectively to set targets in English, mathematics and science for the end of Key Stage 1. A sensible annual programme of assessment and target setting in the core subjects provides a good breadth of information throughout the school and contributes to the detailed individual records held for each pupil. Of particular note is the very effective use made of the non-statutory national curriculum tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 which identifies fluctuations in the attainment of pupils in certain aspects of their work. For example, through the use and analysis of this interim national curriculum testing the school was able to take early action to address weaknesses in pupils' unaided writing.
- 46 The assessment procedures for the foundation subjects require further development. At present there is too much inconsistency between subjects and between class teachers. Evidence was seen during the inspection of very good practice but this has not been used as an exemplar for all staff. Greater attention needs to be given to ensuring that planned assessments give sufficient emphasis to the knowledge, skills and understanding required of the pupils. The school recognises the need for carefully considered judgements on National Curriculum levels of attainment. The school lacks exemplar material for assessment purposes to support the new schemes of work currently being introduced for some subjects. Better use is made of assessment information to guide curricular planning in English, mathematics and science than in other subjects.
- 47 Most work is marked, but teachers often give very little feedback to pupils about where they have done well and how they can improve. The quality of annual reports to parents is inconsistent across the school. The best examples emphasise and report in detail on the knowledge, skills and understanding acquired by pupils. Reports of lesser quality tend to focus on the attitude and responses of the pupil rather than on what they have learned. This confirms the concern expressed by some parents prior to the inspection.

- 48 The assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are of the highest quality. Individual education plans reveal detailed knowledge and very good assessment of individual need and monitoring of the progress being made toward targets. The detailed information compiled for each pupil on the register of special educational needs ensures that access to additional staffing is provided and used effectively. There are occasions when teaching assistants are not used profitably, particularly when they spend lengthy periods of time listening to the teacher's introduction to the lesson. There is a strong partnership with parents who, with the appropriate outside agencies, are fully involved in the review of provision. Statutory requirements are fully met for one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Indeed the support, guidance and partnership that has been instituted by the school is a model of good practice.
- 49 The school has a suitable policy for the education of very able pupils. Pupils who are more able are usually identified by teachers, but there is inconsistency in the provision of suitably challenging work and activities. The school is aware of the need to provide for those pupils who are gifted and talented. Following the last inspection extension work was provided for more able pupils through support offered by the special educational needs co-ordinator. This initiative has not been sustained owing to the need for the co-ordinator to cover the extended absence of individual teachers.
- 50 Pupils' achievements are regularly acknowledged by both class teachers and the school during assemblies. It is a matter of regret for the school that their efforts to develop a modified record of achievement document following the last inspection were not welcomed as enthusiastically as had been anticipated by the receiving secondary schools.
- 51 Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very effective, and have improved since the previous inspection. The procedures are largely informal, based on teachers' observations, knowledge and understanding of individuals. A very good range of extra-curricular clubs is provided to develop talents in sports and the arts.
- 52 Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory, and achieve attendance figures significantly above the national average for primary schools. However, the school does not have a written policy for attendance, does not closely monitor attendance figures, and has erratic procedures for contacting parents when a child is absent without explanation.
- 53 All the staff implement a fully structured policy for the management of behaviour. The code of conduct at the heart of the policy is displayed in each class, and is well known to pupils. An effective merit system of stickers and certificates recognises the contributions of pupils in all areas of school life. Awards are presented at weekly assemblies, when parents are invited to applaud their children's achievements. The merits system, and the school's high expectations, promotes excellent behaviour in classes, in the open areas of the school, and the playground. But the atmosphere in school is not oppressive. Pupils confidently speak up for themselves, and for others. There are occasional examples of misbehaviour, but these are relatively insignificant. Currently, staff, pupils and parents have no concerns about bullying or any other aspect of pupil welfare. The school functions very well as a happy and orderly community.

- 54 Overall, the school is very effective in raising achievement through its educational and personal support and guidance procedures. Pupils want to do well. Teaching and support staff work hard to raise pupils' achievements. They use assessment and target setting effectively and through well-planned individual and small group activities are successful in combating weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. The school uses consistent and detailed monitoring and analysis of results to address fluctuations in academic performance. The very positive and supportive atmosphere that is evident throughout the work and life of the school creates a stimulating ethos within which pupils can flourish and develop academically and socially.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 55 The school's partnership with parents is very good overall, and has maintained the high standard noted in the previous inspection report. It is beneficial to pupils' attainment, progress and personal development.
- 56 At a pre-inspection meeting for all parents, opinions of the school were overwhelmingly positive. These opinions were endorsed by responses to questionnaires and by discussions with a number of parents during the inspection. The school is rightly valued and respected by parents.
- 57 Parents have good involvement with the work of the school. They are welcome at all times, and have very good relationships with the head teacher, class teachers and other members of staff. Parent helpers are greatly valued, and their skills and interests are very well utilised. An active parent-teacher association (Friends of Newlands Spring) organises popular social and fund raising events and contributes generously to the school's budget each year. Recent activities have provided funding for a garden development, information technology equipment and a Millennium mug for each pupil.
- 58 The quality of information for parents is good. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been discussed at evening meetings. Newsletters are very informative, well designed and well written. The school prospectus includes much useful advice for parents, additional to the information legally required. However, the most recent governors' annual report to parents does not conform with legal requirements.
- 59 The quality of teachers' written reports to parents is inconsistent. Reports always identify what pupils can do, but detail is sometimes sketchy and sometimes excessive. Many reports do not indicate clearly how attainment can be further improved. Reports are issued towards the end of the summer term, and parents have only limited opportunities for discussion with class teachers before the summer holiday, with individual appointments being made on request, rather than the provision of a specific evening. Three exhibition/consultation evenings each year are very well attended, and parents are certain of a sympathetic response from teachers at any other time if difficulties arise.
- 60 Parents are very well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter the Early Years class or join other year groups. Parents of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very well informed about secondary transfer and the county selection process. Secondary schools confirm the self-assurance of Newlands Spring pupils, and the high levels of support and co-operation provided by their parents.

- 61 Parents have very good involvement with their children's learning. A policy for homework ensures very good provision for each year group, and written guidelines help parents working at home with their children. They are encouraged to note reading progress in the reading record book. The school does not have a policy to ensure that all parents are informed in advance about the topics their children will be studying. When such information to parents is limited, parents are not always fully able to contribute to their children's learning. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed of progress, and they understand the school's procedures for support. They are appreciative of the school's sensitivity to individual feelings.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 62 Overall, leadership and management are good across the school. The headteacher works well with his deputy to provide very effective leadership, which ensures clear educational direction for the school. Most day-to-day decisions are made by them, with major decisions being made in consultation with other colleagues, as appropriate. This provides a good balance of leadership, delegation and support for the staff and governors. The senior management team, which is comprised of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key stage co-ordinators and special needs co-ordinator, is involved appropriately in leading the school and provides a useful means of communication between key stages, whole staff and the headteacher. Staff are allocated responsibilities according to their strengths and needs, which ensures a good balance between the consolidation of their expertise and the development of areas which are new or less strong. Curriculum co-ordinators have some time to provide leadership within their subject area and work hard to gather appropriate information about standards, in order to develop a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject. However, the amount of time to undertake this work is not evenly allocated to those with similar responsibilities.
- 63 The monitoring of teaching and learning is good overall and is undertaken by all those with a management role, including co-ordinators, headteacher and deputy headteacher. Appropriate feedback is given, which has a beneficial influence upon the quality of teaching and learning. Teacher appraisal has been in place until very recently and is due to re-commence in the next academic year. The monitoring of standards is very effectively undertaken by the deputy headteacher, who is building up a detailed picture of pupils' performance throughout the school. This has resulted in some review of the curriculum and teaching methods, in order to provide a more balanced and appropriate curriculum for the pupils.
- 64 The governing body has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which is informed by reports from the headteacher and senior staff, combined with those from some governors who have taken an active part in aspects of the school. For example, the Governor responsible for Numeracy has been closely involved in the introduction of the Numeracy strategy, monitoring and supporting within the school and taking a lead when the strategy was introduced to parents. Although the governing body has a good understanding of the school's general strengths and weaknesses, a longer-term strategic overview has not yet been developed, supported by financial predictions and possibilities which would provide for different scenarios. This is particularly important at the present time, when the school is moving away from Grant Maintained status and the headteacher is due to leave at the end of this term. The Governing Body fulfils all statutory responsibilities, with the exception of some omissions within its annual report to parents.

- 65 The budget is drawn up annually by the Financial Responsible Officer, in conjunction with the headteacher. Although its progress is discussed at each meeting of the full governing body, there is no finance committee to support the responsible officer in his monitoring of this very important area, particularly during the transition from Grant Maintained to Foundation status. The school's budget, which was set in deficit last April, is due to remain in deficit by about the same amount by the end of the current financial year, with the estimated outgoings almost matching the income. The Responsible Officer and Chair of Governors are aware of the longer-term effect on future budgets if a similar pattern of spending is continued and the governors have discussed possible actions to alleviate the deficit situation next year.
- 66 The targeting of finances, including funds raised by parents, towards some specific areas such as the computer suite, in the past few years has had a beneficial effect upon standards. The governing body has applied the principles of best value in an appropriate way. The Early Years Unit now provides a good start for children about to be admitted into the Reception classes and the swimming pool provides a convenient access to this part of the physical education curriculum for all pupils. The latter two also provide a useful source of income for the school. The school's finances were last audited in May 1999, when no recommendations for improvement were noted.
- 67 The school's method of development planning was found to be unsatisfactory in the previous inspection. This has improved and is now satisfactory. All staff are involved in the review of the previous year and in drawing up priorities to be included for the next year. The plan is discussed and amended appropriately by the governing body. The school plan incorporates development plans for each subject area, drawn up by the curriculum co-ordinators. This forms a comprehensive document which provides outline information about areas of strength and weakness across the school. However, the school development plan, like the budget plan, only covers one year at a time, which does not help the school to plan ahead for longer periods.
- 68 The provision of staff, including support staff, is good, with class sizes being lower than average. The quality of support for teachers from both non-teaching staff and volunteers enhances the educational provision. The provision of teaching and learning resources is good overall. Some resources have been in the school for quite a while and, although the pupils have taken good care of them, they are beginning to become worn and in need of replacement. There are insufficient resources to support adequately the teaching of different cultures. Most resources are stored appropriately, although the use of the music room for additional storage of resources and furniture detracts from its best use. There is a general lack of appropriate storage space within the main school building.
- 69 The accommodation is good overall, with the additional provision of the Early Years Unit, after-school club, swimming pool and computer suite all adding significantly to this provision. The open-plan layout maximises the available space, and classrooms are generally of adequate size. The computer suite and food technology room are very good facilities, and the library is satisfactory.
- 70 The assembly hall cannot comfortably accommodate the whole school for collective worship, and is much too small when used as a dining hall. Throughout the building, storage space is inadequate, and resources obstruct many teaching areas. Most classroom furniture is in good condition and is suitable for all children in the primary age range. The quality of the temporary classrooms is variable, with some being in need of minor repairs and redecoration.

- 71 Externally, the building is in sound decorative condition. The split-level playground is of good size, and is supplemented by a large sports field and sheltered areas where pupils can sit quietly. The school site and buildings are free of graffiti and litter, and are commendably clean and well maintained. The site generally presents no risk to health and safety.
- 72 There are some good quality displays around the school which are attractive and interesting to the pupils. However, a few are shoddy and of poor quality. This inconsistency is particularly apparent in the temporary classrooms, where some teachers have worked hard to provide a welcoming and attractive environment and others have not shown the same commitment to high quality.
- 73 Taking account of the characteristics of the school, including the background of its pupils, the school's expenditure per pupil and its overall effectiveness, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 74 In order to continue to develop this already good school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- * improve the quality of short-term planning to provide sufficient detail which will support all teachers and ensure differentiation of work for all levels of ability, particularly in the foundation subjects; (paragraphs 8, 38, 45, 116)
 - * ensure that higher-attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged; (paragraphs 8, 63, 112)
 - * improve the quality of marking of pupils' work in order to provide sufficient feedback to pupils about where they have done well and how they can improve; (paragraphs 47, 61)
 - * improve the quality of day to day assessment of pupils' attainment by class teachers by sharing the pockets of good practice across the school; (paragraph 61)
 - * make better use of the high-quality non-teaching staff during lessons. (paragraphs 8, 43)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- * address the omissions within the governing body's annual report to parents; (paragraph 64)
- * make better use of computers based in class bays and shared areas.
- * consider increasing the size of the school hall to provide adequate space for the numbers of pupils; (paragraph 70)
- * review the use of storage space; (paragraphs 70)
- * revise the timetables for the use of the swimming pool and computer suite to ensure that other lessons are not interrupted. (paragraph 28)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	13	49	32	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	375
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	37

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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	30	21	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	29	29
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	49	50	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96	98	96
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	29	28
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	49	49	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96	85	86
	National	82	86	87

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	29	32	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	27
	Girls	29	30	30
	Total	55	56	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90	92	93
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	27	28	30
	Total	53	54	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85	89	90
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	365
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	170

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	741,659
Total expenditure	733,022
Expenditure per pupil	1,919
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,622
Balance carried forward to next year	61,259

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

200

Number of questionnaires returned

154

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	45	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	51	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	47	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	55	12	1	4
The teaching is good.	48	47	1	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	54	7	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	39	8	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	38	47	10	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	62	31	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	40	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	38	4	2	12

Other issues raised by parents

- * There was some concern about the state of the pupils' toilet facilities.
- * A small amount of dissatisfaction with the quality of education provided within the Early Years Unit.
- * A small amount of concern that some brighter pupils are not being fully extended.

In response to these comments, the inspection team found that:

- * The pupils' toilet facilities are satisfactory.
- * The Early Years Unit provides good quality education overall.
- * Some of the pupils with higher capabilities are not being fully challenged.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

- 75 The early years class is accommodated in a purpose built unit close to the main school. Facilities are very good comprising a large classroom, cloakroom and an outside play area. Good equipment and resources for constructive play are used effectively to develop learning in the six areas indicated by the Desirable Learning Outcomes document. The youngest children are admitted the term after their fourth birthday and come to the unit for two and a half hours each morning.
- 76 There are two reception classrooms in the main school where children attend for the whole day. One reception class shares two part-time teachers in the spring term, the other class has a full time teacher. Most children in the older group have reached five years and are making the transition from the early learning goals towards the objectives within the National Curriculum. The early provision of training in the basic skills ensures that children make good progress into the transition to Year 1.
- 77 The teaching is good in the early years unit and children are given a range of opportunities through creative play for learning the basic skills to develop physically, emotionally and intellectually. At the beginning of the day the children come together to talk about their experiences and to share their news with the other children. This social exchange ensures that children listen with interest to each other, ask questions and respond politely. Group activities are adult led but children make their own choices, selecting freely from the range of opportunities offered. For example: one child was observed decorating a box, handling scissors and glue correctly for use on different shapes, sizes and textures of materials. He then moved to painting, enjoyed moulding and shaping play dough using a pastry cutter correctly to mark out the shapes of different sizes and then joined other children outside cycling round a simulated road track keeping meticulously to the white lines. The activities provided ensure that children develop the social skills of sharing and turn taking, control skills and making skills.
- 78 There was no bad behaviour seen. All children are confident in their relationships because the teacher speaks calmly and reasonably explaining the activities carefully. Children share the equipment appropriately and take turns using it. One group was delighted with the discovery that coconut flakes in a bottle of water can be shaken to resemble a snowstorm.
- 79 Children enjoy reading stories with their teacher, many recognising whole words and able to identify the sounds that letters make. Children play independently as in the case of one child who concentrated for twenty minutes completely alone, constructing five different kinds of vehicle from Lego kits.
- 80 Early numeracy skills are developing and children measure sand in different kinds of containers. Whole class activities provide opportunities for learning number skills as five stars covered by a moving cloud revealed a pattern of number equations ($4+1=5$, $3+2=5$). Numeracy skills are developed further in reception classes by comparing boxes of different sizes. Children identify shapes and can describe these using the correct terms, such as cylinder, cuboid and rhomboid.

- 81 Children develop motor skills, hand and eye co-ordination and a sense of space as they take risks by jumping, leaping and balancing in the physical education lessons. They enjoy skipping, singing and dancing games and saying rhymes together.
- 82 Teaching is good overall in the reception classes and is often very good. Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings. For example: 'What makes me happy?' and to respond to the feelings of others. A sense of delight and wonder was enlivened by a touch of humour as children explored 'feely' boxes containing a range of materials of different textures, sizes and consistencies.
- 83 Baseline assessment for entry to compulsory education is very thorough. Tests are based on the Essex EYSP1 scheme which measures basic skills in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Parents supply information about the child's interests and relationships outside school. Baseline assessment reveals that children's performance is above the expected national average on entry to compulsory education.
- 84 The Qualifications, Curriculum Authority (formerly SCAA) documents provide the framework for planning in both the early years and reception classes. This ensures that a broadly balanced curriculum of opportunities for learning is provided for children of all abilities. Day to day planning and assessment are satisfactory.
- 85 Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection and all the recommendations of the previous inspectors have been put in place.

ENGLISH

- 86 Standards of attainment at both key stages are above national expectations. Attainment on entry is above national expectations and pupils make good progress through Reception classes and Year 1 to reach standards well above average in reading and above average in writing by the end of Key Stage One. Since the last inspection standards have improved from slightly above average to well above average for reading and writing in the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds.
- 87 Attainment of eleven year olds in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for English was well above average in comparison with all schools. Attainment is believed to be above average for similar schools after a re-marking of the tests which had been graded incorrectly. Most pupils make good progress in English across Key Stage 2 but a minority do not meet national expectations
- 88 Some five year old children in the reception class read fluently and with expression but others are not so confident. Most pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read well using a range of skills to decipher the text. For example some sound out the words, others discover the meaning by looking at the pictures in the text. Pupils discuss their books explaining plot and character. For example one enthusiastic reader in Year 2 was able to re-tell the story of Charlie's adventures in the great glass elevator.

- 89 Good progress in writing is made by all groups of pupils. The older children in the reception class write words and simple sentences with reasonable accuracy. Most shape letters correctly and know the sounds associated with these. In Year 1 pupils are beginning to write about their ideas, views and opinions using whole sentences. For example in a Year 1 class a group of pupils with special educational needs wrote their own stories based on their Big Book 'Oops'.
- 90 Across all subject areas pupils are able to speak about their interests and explain their ideas confidently. Pupils make extended answers and reveal their understanding clearly because they are prompted and given praise to do so. Pupils listen well to adults and to other children, responding with interest and understanding.
- 91 Standards in reading at Key Stage 2 are good. Most pupils read fluently, some with expression, recording their appreciation of the stories in their reading record books. The high level of support from parents in the home reading scheme is a strength. However, many pupils do not read a sufficiently wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts. Across the key stage there is little evidence of pupils using books outside the classroom for reference tasks or scanning for information. Research skills are well deployed in the excellent computer suite but computers in the classroom are not used fully as an effective tool for learning.
- 92 The standards in writing for eleven year olds are satisfactory and sometimes good. The texts used in the literacy hour provide good learning opportunities which are exploited through written comprehension exercises. For example Year 6 pupils delved for clues into Conan Doyle's story of "The Red Headed League" to deduce possible outcomes to the story. Pupils are developing their skills in original composition through the creative writing sessions introduced recently into each year group. For example a nice sparkle of humour enlivened a Year 5 writer's story of 'Martin the Mischievous Mouse'.
- 93 Extra classes in Year 6 support reading and writing. This ensures that equal opportunities to succeed are offered to all attainment groups. The school development plan includes procedures for raising standards in writing across all subject areas. Overall children with English as an additional language are well supported and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make especially good progress because of the quality of support they are given by teachers and teaching assistants.
- 94 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages because they are keen and eager to learn. Pupils tackle activities well. They co-operate with others to discover the outcomes of tasks set and to share their findings. Pupils' enthusiasm is curbed only when the tasks set are not sufficiently challenging or too much time is allowed to complete them. For example: in a few lessons seen pupils were offered work sheets that required only repetitive responses or gap fill exercises that had little or no relevance or appeal for young learners.
- 95 Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils who respond positively to the good environment for learning created by their teachers. Clear moral values are developed during the study of the Big Book stories set for the literacy hour. For example the questioning of values that arose in a Year 6 discussion of 'The Paperbag Prince' provoked a good level of mature discussion.

- 96 Overall teaching is good at both key stages. A system has been set up for the co-ordinator to monitor the lessons given by all teachers to secure consistency of good teaching. Variations in learning occur if the tasks set are undemanding or pupils spend too long on simple tasks. In the best lessons the pace is sustained and pupils are challenged to fresh efforts by a variety of differentiated tasks. An example of very good teaching was seen in a reception class where children used the correct terms to describe pyramid, cone, cylinder when they recognised these shapes.
- 97 Long term and medium term plans are securely based on the National Literacy Strategy which forms the backbone of all English teaching in the school. Programmes of study are tailored to ensure the best possible provision. Detailed day to day planning is less secure. Teachers know their own subject material well and give instructions clearly and precisely but the learning objectives are not always shared with the pupils. This limits the pupils' understanding of how well they have done, what they have learned and what they must do to improve.
- 98 Across all year groups handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught well. Selected extracts from a range of texts are read for understanding and comprehension is developed well. For example: one Year 5 class with a large number of boys in it enjoyed reading and writing about 'The Lady of Shalott'. The teacher had fired their imagination by suggesting that they assume one of the characters in the poem (abbot, knight, shepherd, damsel) and write about their adventures on the road to Camelot.
- 99 Pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work. Teachers celebrate the efforts made by displaying the work of pupils of all abilities on walls, table mounts or mobiles.
- 100 A broad range of learning opportunities is offered for pupils of all abilities. A good example of a teacher using a different stimulus for learning was seen in a Year 4 drama lesson. Pupils linked their objectives for exploring actions with a literacy lesson using the superlatives strong, stronger, strongest. Pupils were exploring their feelings and emotions physically so that they could relate to reading and writing with more understanding.
- 101 Teachers mark all written work but sometimes the lack of constructive comments limits the pupils' understanding of how to improve their work for the future. The quality of day to day assessment of pupils' progress varies greatly. For example some teachers keep detailed notes of the progress of each child in every aspect of English. Other teachers have only the briefest of notes and these are not always dated. Assessment records for each pupil's progress over a term or half term are kept. Records are not always completed regularly, nor do they always link with the school's central system of assessment.
- 102 The English co-ordinator is well supported by the headteacher and all other teachers on the staff. Accommodation and resources are used appropriately. Teaching assistants give valuable support to teachers who are providing opportunities for improved learning for the lower attainers and those with special educational needs. The ethos for the teaching of English is that cross curricular literacy skills should be developed for the improved learning and higher attainment of all pupils. Plans outlined in the school development plan 1999-2000 indicate that school is on course to achieve these targets.

MATHEMATICS

- 103 Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages is above the respective national average. The results of the most recent national tests show that pupils at the end of both key stages attain levels which are well above the national average and are also well above average compared with similar schools. These standards show an improvement across both key stages since the last inspection. The school is on course to meet the targets set for the national curriculum tests in 2000, and may exceed them.
- 104 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils clearly identify shapes which are symmetrical, pointing out the lines of symmetry. They easily sort shapes into sets with different properties, make paper shapes which are symmetrical and construct complicated structures containing multiple symmetrical properties. Previous work indicates that the majority of pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of number bonds to 100, place value, basic fractions, measuring and simple algebra.
- 105 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils halve and double numbers to 500, add fractions and make use of different strategies when dealing with proper, improper and mixed fractions. Higher attaining pupils put fractions with different denominators into the correct order of size and have a secure grasp of the different concepts of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Previous work indicates that the majority of pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of square numbers, geometry, decimals, fractions, factors, length, number patterns and percentages. Good use is made of this knowledge within the practical areas of shopping, for example some pupils calculate the cost of buying sufficient sheets of plaster board to cover a given area.
- 106 The quality of teaching in Key Stage One is good overall. In Key Stage Two, teaching is satisfactory overall, and it is good in Year 6. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and introduce appropriate terminology. In most lessons, teachers provide appropriate work, supported by a good range of resources. Classes are organised well, with the teachers often giving clear instructions and explaining the work appropriately for the pupils. In lessons where support staff work with a group of pupils, there is a high quality of support provided and the pupils respond well. However, when the teacher is working with the whole class, support staff are often not appropriately deployed, resulting in time being wasted. Teachers make good use of homework, which is usually closely linked with the class work. The quality of marking is often unsatisfactory. Although most work is marked, there are very few comments to indicate to the pupils the quality of their work and how they can improve.
- 107 The quality of learning is good in Key Stage One and satisfactory overall in Key Stage Two, although, again, it is good in Year 6. A contributory fact within Year 6 is the arrangement for pupils work in sets according to their levels of attainment. This enables the teachers to provide work which is more closely matched to the pupils' needs.
- 108 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in both key stages and have a positive effect on their learning. They enjoy their lessons and concentrate well. Most pupils work well in pairs or small groups, collaborating and sharing equipment. Relationships and behaviour are usually very good. Most work is well-presented and pupils take a pride in doing their best.

- 109 The mathematics curriculum is appropriately based upon the National Numeracy Strategy and provides a broad and balanced curriculum which also ensures continuity and progression throughout the year groups. The structure and coverage of the mathematics curriculum has improved since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and, in particular, there has been an improvement in meeting Attainment Target 1, as more investigations are now taking place. Where the school has divided pupils into sets, the work is matched well to their attainment. In classes containing pupils of all levels of attainment, teachers do not always provide the breadth of work to match the needs of all pupils. This often results in some pupils not completing their work and the higher-attaining pupils finding the work too easy, as they are not sufficiently challenged.
- 110 Resources to support teaching and learning are adequate throughout the school. However, although there is sufficient quantity, the quality of some resources is unsatisfactory, for example, old wooden metre rulers are in use in one classroom which have been worn down at the ends, resulting in pupils having problems in measuring accurately. Management of the subject is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

- 111 At the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessments in 1999, attainment was above the national average at level 2 and match the national average for level 3. When compared with similar schools attainment was found to match that expected. At Key Stage 2 attainment is well above the national average at level 4 and well above the national average for those achieving level 5. Pupils' performance was above average when compared with the performance of similar schools. Overall results are very high and the school is on course to exceed its targets for the tests in 2000. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.
- 112 All pupils make good progress as they grow older, both in lessons and over time. Teachers' planning is now more structured and makes good use of the scheme produced by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which ensures that the statutory requirements of the subject are met and that all important aspects of the subject are more than adequately covered. The medium and long term planning is a particular strength and teachers working within the same year groups plan their work effectively. The short term planning does not yet completely match the needs of the school. The school development plan features a review of the QCA programme as a key target for the improvement in the subject.
- 113 In both key stages pupils show a keen interest in the subject and demonstrate great enthusiasm for practical work. Year 5 pupils watched a demonstration concerning gases with avid curiosity and proposed thoughtful hypotheses to refine their earlier predictions. Year 2 pupils related their literacy work on 'Katie Morag' to further explore how humans develop, grow from babies into adults and, eventually, die. The Year 6 pupils were delighted to see how food can deteriorate over time and its implications for food hygiene and cooking techniques.

- 114 Excellent use is made of demonstrations but little opportunity is given to the pupils to design their own experiments to investigate these phenomena. In both key stages the standard of presentation is excellent with a wide variety of recording techniques utilised, namely, diagrams, illustrations, drawings, tables, charts, graphs and maps. Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of technical vocabulary with Year 5 pupils understanding the concept of temperature as a measure of hotness, of mass as opposed to weight and of Celsius compared with Fahrenheit.
- 115 Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils develop their observational skills and planned their work under headings such as “ I predict...” and “ I am trying to find out...”. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils are recording their work in a recognised scientific format including prediction, hypothesis, equipment, experimental design, control groups, results and conclusions. Investigative work is appropriately planned into the programme with a number of previous pieces of work seen in the school’s records of learning. No investigative work was seen during the inspection.
- 116 Pupils’ attitudes to learning are extremely good and this has a significant impact upon the progress made. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the mixed ability lessons utilising teacher support when available. Pupils’ active co-operation and excellent collaborative skills further aid the active participation of all the school’s pupils and contributes to their learning. Pupils are keen to respond, ask challenging questions and are willing to put forward their own ideas. The Year 5 practical work on temperature and insulation contradicted many pupils’ predictions but the pupils rationalised the anomalies and accepted the results, which caused them to rethink their original hypothesis. In each lesson seen the pupils gained knowledge and acquired greater understanding of the concepts involved. Assessment is left to the discretion of individual teachers with marking and grading not following a uniform pattern. No homework was set in the lessons seen.
- 117 Overall the quality of teaching is good with no unsatisfactory lessons seen and the teaching in 60 per cent of the lessons was good. This is an improvement on the last inspection and is a result of improved planning and a more structured approach to the work. Teachers are confident within the subject and demonstrate good subject knowledge. The work seen built upon previous experience and lessons are characterised by high expectations, good questioning and time for review of the work done. The pace of the lessons is satisfactory but more able pupils are sometimes not sufficiently stretched as the lessons seen were teacher directed with little opportunity for open ended enquiry. The lessons had clear learning objectives and the overall planning has ensured that the work is appropriate for the majority of the pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Teachers reinforce standards of literacy and numeracy and take every opportunity to incorporate cross curricular activities into the programme through discussion, debate and recording techniques.

- 118 The subject is well led, although the current co-ordinator was absent during the inspection. The role has been taken over by a recently qualified teacher who has demonstrated enthusiasm and a willingness to improve the subject further. There are sound policies, curriculum mapping and a good range of resources which contribute to raising the high standards of teaching and learning. The small classroom areas are not always conducive to practical work and the central location of resources reduces the opportunities for pupils to select appropriate equipment. Detailed data analysis and the use of national testing information help the school set targets which are achievable and improve the quality of learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- 119 Attainment at the end of both key stages is above national expectations overall. Standards in Key Stage 1 have improved since the previous inspection, with those in Key Stage 2 being similar to those identified in the previous inspection.
- 120 When working in the computer suite, pupils in Year 2 log on, open files, use the appropriate icon to draw overlapping and touching rectangles and flood the shapes with blocks of colour. They save their work in their own folder for future use. Again, when in the computer suite, pupils in Year 6 demonstrate that they are very capable with most ICT skills. They use a spreadsheet with ease, understanding and suggesting appropriate formulae for generating a multiplication table. They copy the spreadsheet and insert it into a word-processing document, altering the font and style as they do so. Many pupils easily switch between different programs, using the cut and paste method to build up a composite document.
- 121 Very little use of classroom computers was observed during the inspection and this area is under- developed. However, a scrutiny of samples of pupils' previous work indicates that some teachers make satisfactory use of class computers and other forms of ICT at other times. When this occurs, attainment is about average.
- 122 The quality of teaching is good across both key stages, with some very good teaching in Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of their pupils' capabilities. They provide lessons which are interesting and relevant. For example, pupils in Year 2 link their ICT work with the artist they are studying, attempting to use the same style and form in their compositions. Pupils in Year 6 make good links between the work in English and mathematics which they have been covering in class, when they describe how they have set up their multiplication table on a spreadsheet. Teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour and pupils respond positively to these. Most teachers provide the same work for all pupils, expecting that the outcome will differ according to the pupils' levels of attainment. This provides only limited opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to work at a more challenging level. However, a few teachers provide work of different levels of difficulty, which challenges all pupils well from the start, and this is good practice.
- 123 Pupils are enthusiastic, particularly when working in the computer suite, and most learn quickly and easily. They usually put the maximum effort into the tasks set for them often attempting to self-correct and persevering if the work is challenging. Pupils work well in pairs, sharing tasks, taking turns and supporting each other. They take appropriate responsibility for aspects of their own learning and behave well.

- 124 The subject is well-led by a very knowledgeable co-ordinator, who is supported from time to time by a technician who is shared with other schools. Teaching is supported by a satisfactory scheme of work which is reviewed and updated to meet current government guidelines. Methods of assessment and recording are still being developed, but are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor the subject, in order to develop a view of standards throughout the school. Resources are generally good, with computers in the suite and in class bays being supported by a good range of software. Resources for control technology and simulation are being developed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 125 At the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards which are above those outlined in the LEA Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across the school. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection findings, when standards were average and progress satisfactory.
- 126 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils identify ways in which they can care for others less fortunate than themselves and be helpful. They recognise the relevance of bible stories to their own lives and interpret them in a personal way through story and writing, for example, The Good Samaritan. Christianity is a central theme and pupils are familiar with the main religious festivals and Christian symbols and know their purpose. They have growing awareness of other religions, such as Judaism. They know about some features of the natural world and their own part in being responsible for its conservation.
- 127 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know about the similarities and differences between religions. They are familiar with the festivals and traditions of Christianity and also other faiths, such as Hinduism. They are aware of the existence of a trinity in both faiths and the common theme of caring for others. Presentation and content in religious education exercise books is very good. Assemblies and corporate worship contribute to pupils' sense of order, change and right and wrong, but a sense of wonder and awe about their own spirituality is under developed.
- 128 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. There is good breadth and balance and effective coverage of the Agreed Syllabus. Teachers plan well and challenge pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding about a range of religious issues. Searching questioning and teachers' broad factual knowledge of the subject ensure that pupils understand an appropriate range of religious issues at Key Stage 1, and more complex concepts at Key Stage 2. However, there is insufficient provision for spiritual awareness and the ability to engage in sensitive reflection.
- 129 Pupils' have positive attitudes to the subject at both key stages. They enjoy discussion and debate and are eager to answer questions and show respect for the values and beliefs of others. Behaviour is very good and pupils are usually on task.

- 130 Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall. The school has increased its quantities of bibles and religious reference books since the last inspection and these are now of sufficient quantity and quality. Artefacts for use in work on Christianity and the study of other religions are insufficient. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is having an influence on the developments in religious education. Regular contributions from a member of the local Evangelical Fellowship enhance assemblies and provide an additional dimension to the development of religious education for all pupils.

ART and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 131 At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in art and design and technology is above average and the progress they make is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across both subjects. The good standards of work in art observed at the previous inspection have been sustained. In design and technology, pupils' attainment and the progress they make, have improved, from average and satisfactory, to above average and good.
- 132 At Key Stage 1, pupils record their ideas and feelings confidently using a wide range of media. They develop skills by working confidently and imaginatively with paint, fabrics, threads and collage materials. They recognise differences in methods and approaches and had demonstrate this knowledge within their own art, craft and design, for example, when making vehicles. Pupils already interpret the intentions of famous artists such as Mondrian and have produced colourful and accurate designs reflecting the style of the artist. Observational drawing is sound, but drawing skills are sometimes under-developed. In one lessons, pupils had made moving pictures and progressed to the construction of boxwork vehicles that could move. Higher attaining pupils had added sophisticated features to their models such as gear levers and headlights. Pupils are developing confidence in the use of tools and had used a specially designed and safe paper cutter to design and insert a nose in a picture of Pinocchio.
- 133 At Key Stage 2, pupils build on and extend the work in art, begun in the previous key stage. They had produced impressive pieces of art, using collage materials, which reflected the work of recent artists for example, Picasso and Monet. Links with history and religious education topics were evident in attractive paper models of the Parthenon, Hindu masks and clay models of Egyptian artefacts. Sketchbooks are used effectively in some classes to develop skills. Pupils' work indicates an understanding of the situations in which their designs will have to function, and an awareness of the constraints of the resources. They had made decisions about the best use of materials in the construction of pop-up books. A project on hats, at the end of the key stage had culminated in the design and making of made-to-measure hats for pupils in the reception class, using fabric, threads and paper patterns.

- 134 The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Effective planning identifies clear objectives. The introduction of the QCA scheme of work has had an impact on improvements in teaching and in pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers' enthusiasm for, and knowledge about, the subjects, influence the quality of the work produced. Overall, confidence in teaching design and technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. Well-prepared and organised work for a topic on torches involved pupils in a useful evaluation of the design purposes of a range of gadgets that light up. Continuous assessment and oral feedback to pupils to help them to improve their work is a feature of the best teaching. Appropriate use of efficient support staff and resources, contribute to the high standards achieved in the subjects. Unsatisfactory work in drawing, however, is occasionally accepted too readily by some teachers. The approach to marking is not consistent or sufficiently diagnostic and does not help pupils to improve their work.
- 135 Pupils respond well; they are usually attentive and on task. Behaviour is good and any exceptions usually relate to pupils becoming over-excited during interesting investigation tasks. Resources for both subjects in tools, equipment and materials are good. Accommodation and storage are satisfactory and the many colourful and relevant displays related to various curriculum areas celebrate and reflect the high standards achieved across the school.
- 136 At both key stages, ICT is used effectively as a tool for the development of art and design and technology. The subjects are well led and managed by enthusiastic co-ordinators who provide support for teachers and monitor progress across the school. Their influence has made a significant contribution to improvements since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 5 are involved with the feeder high school for several half day sessions working on a successful design and technology project, particularly relating to food technology and mechanical model making.

GEOGRAPHY

- 137 A sufficient sample of pupils' work and lessons was seen during this inspection to assess standards at the end of Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 an assessment of standards is only possible up to and including Year 4 as there is no work currently available to assess standards in geography at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection but they have not improved.
- 138 At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are achieving standards which match those expected for pupils aged 7. Pupils have a developing understanding of how people's lives are affected by location. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of maps and their use. They draw maps, create appropriate keys and identify the four countries of the United Kingdom. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 reveal good technical ability in map making. Pupils in Year 2 in their work on an 'Island Home' are using the book 'Katie Morag's Island Stories' to raise their awareness of localities other than their own. By using a simple geographical vocabulary they describe the characteristics of the Scottish island, its people and physical features. However, the pupils are not yet confident in their understanding of how the weather might affect peoples' lives and the landscape.

- 139 In Years 3 and 4 pupils broaden their knowledge of different localities but a significant majority of younger pupils have still not grasped the effect of weather and landscape on people's lives and work. This improves markedly in Year 4 where most pupils identify features of rural life, landscape and weather in a village in southern India and compare their observations with their personal experience of life in the United Kingdom. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 support their observations with evidence taken from illustrated source material. They discuss geographical ideas and provide possible reasons for what they see, knowing that changes to the environment may affect people's lives.
- 140 Some changes have taken place since the last inspection. There is evidence from this inspection to indicate that the most able pupils in Year 4 are being extended and challenged in their work. However, there is little evidence to show such an improvement in the work of similar pupils in Years 1 to 3. There have been significant improvements in the opportunities given to pupils to work collaboratively. In all the lessons observed sufficient time was given to pupils to engage in profitable group learning activities which, in turn, encourage their speaking and listening skills and aids their ability to persevere and concentrate on tasks. Teachers give better attention to the aims of their lesson but the geographical learning objectives in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding are not always sufficiently explicit or presented to the class at the start of the lesson.
- 141 Overall, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 is sound. Good teaching was observed in one Year 4 lesson. The remaining lessons were satisfactory. Good and adventurous teaching in a Year 4 class provides challenging activities carefully adapted to meet the individual needs of pupils. The teacher's knowledge of individual pupils and a good assessment of their progress and response to the task make a significant contribution to their academic and personal development. The weaker teaching often fails to give sufficient emphasis to the geographical elements of the lesson. For example, in a Year 2 lesson too much time was spent during the introductory phase of the lesson in describing the characters in the Katie Morag book rather than ensuring that tangible links are made with the weather, farming, transport and tourist activities of the island. A lack of attention to what the pupils need to know and understand in geographical terms limits the progress they make and restricts the quality of learning in Key Stage 1. Higher demands and well-planned activities in Key Stage 2 provide a good quality of learning for the pupils and enables pupils to make good progress especially in Year 4.

- 142 Geography makes an effective contribution to two of the school's general aims, namely to instil a respect for and tolerance of other races and ways of life and to help pupils understand the world in which they live. The subject policy gives appropriate emphasis to environmental values but in practice the desire to support teaching and learning through the first hand experience of fieldwork and visits is underdeveloped. The school is currently introducing a new scheme of work for geography. This should allow for further improvement in the medium and short term planning for the subject and enable greater clarity and consistency to be given to assessment that reflects the knowledge, understanding and skills required of the pupils. At present it is difficult for the co-ordinator to judge consistently the progress and achievement of pupils throughout both key stages. There is limited time available to the co-ordinator to evaluate the provision being made for the subject across the school. This is a weakness and is partly responsible for the school being unable to identify at an early stage the failure of a Year 5 class to be provided with their topic on 'water'. Resources for information and communication technology are adequate but no use by pupils was observed during the inspection.

HISTORY

- 143 Pupils' attainment in history at the end of both key stages is above average and the progress they make is good. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection findings, when standards were average and progress satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the school.
- 144 At Key Stage 1, pupils are developing a good understanding of chronology, an awareness of the passage of time and the division of the past into periods of time. They are recognising the similarities and differences characteristic of different times. For example, they have explored the purposes and features of old and new toys and the influence of television and new technology, including the difference between clockwork toys and battery powered toys. This topic had involved pupils in drawing activities and the making of puppets.
- 145 Pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate an increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and other countries including the Fire of London, the Victorians, World War 2, the Egyptians, and Ancient Greeks. The range of work is comprehensive and relates to other subjects. Pupils had written detailed newspaper accounts of the fire of London, studied reports from the Essex Records Office about the establishment of a home for destitute boys in Chelmsford, created clay models of Egyptian artefacts, studied the geography of Europe in a topic on World War 2 and obtained artefacts and reports written by relatives and other adults who had first hand experience of wartime evacuation.
- 146 The quality of teaching across the school is never less than satisfactory and is good overall. Good planning, preparation and thorough teaching usually ensure that pupils select and organise information to produce well-structured work. In the best teaching, teachers' knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the subject challenge pupils and make demands on those of higher ability so that they extend their grasp of more complex ideas. Pupils are set work that is well matched to their abilities. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. This has not been fully addressed since the last inspection. Where the pace of work is slow, pupils lose concentration and standards of work decline.

- 147 Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. They often work well together and show developing independence in researching for information. There have been improvements in the extent to which pupils evaluate their own work since the last inspection. Behaviour is good and pupils are usually attentive and on task, particularly when lessons are challenging.
- 148 ICT is used well and contributes to pupils' attainment in history with appropriate use of different types of databases. Resources are satisfactory and further additions are planned. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and supports staff by monitoring teachers' plans and providing advice and guidance.

MUSIC

- 149 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is slightly above national expectations, which indicates a slight improvement since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is in line with expectations in class lessons, which is slightly below the standards observed in the last inspection. Pupils often attain high standards in extra-curricular work such as instrumental lessons and those who take instrumental examinations usually obtain high marks.
- 150 In Key Stage 1, pupils identify different sounds and suggest instruments which could represent them. They play a variety of simple instruments in time to a regular beat, showing good control and playing louder or softer according to a conductor. Some pupils conduct the class, using appropriate hand signals. They also classify each instrument according to the material from which it is made and how it is played. In Key Stage 2, most pupils know basic musical terminology. They follow written music whilst listening to a recording, and sing along or play instruments accurately. In assemblies, pupils sing hymns with appropriate reverence, being accompanied by a tape recording, piano, guitar or recorders.
- 151 Teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in extra-curricular instrumental lessons is very good. Teachers demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject. They make good use of demonstration and ensure that the pupils hold and play instruments correctly. Occasionally, teachers' expectations of higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenging.
- 152 Most pupils enjoy music lessons and participate with enthusiasm. Older pupils try hard to respond accurately when singing from a music book and make good use of features such as repeat, loud/soft, verse/chorus, slow/fast etc. They listen attentively and concentrate well. Relationships and behaviour are very good.
- 153 The curriculum is appropriately based upon a published scheme, supplemented by teachers' own ideas. It provides a good progression of skills to be taught throughout the school. Assessment is built into the scheme and is appropriately supplemented by weekly evaluations by class teachers. The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of extra lessons in violin, piano, keyboard and recorder. The school also has a hard-working choir, who sing at events in the local area, including the schools' music festival.

- 154 Music is incorporated into some other aspects of the school's life, for example, it is often played at the beginning of the day as pupils arrive at school. Some assemblies have recorded music playing at the beginning and end, which helps to provide an atmosphere of reverence. However, this is not always the case, with some assemblies beginning and ending in silence, which does not produce the same atmosphere
- 155 The subject is well-led by a highly accomplished and enthusiastic co-ordinator. In addition to supporting colleagues in their teaching, she writes books to help the recorder players and takes numerous instrumental classes, helping her pupils to prepare for external examinations.
- 156 There are adequate resources to support teaching in the subject, although these vary in quality, and there is not a wide enough selection of instruments from different cultures. The school uses a temporary classroom as a music room. Although it is useful to have this room, it is also used to store unwanted furniture and other resources, which limits its usefulness and reduces its attractiveness.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 157 At the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 attainment is above national expectations with pupils achieving high standards of performance in a wide range of activities. The teaching methodology of the staff, high levels of staff expertise, good planning, extensive resources and a commitment to raising standards all help to achieve the levels of performance observed during the inspection.
- 158 Pupils attainment is above national expectations in the range of activities seen, namely, soccer, rugby, gymnastics, netball, striking and catching skills and dance. Teachers emphasise the value of warming up, stretching out and, to a lesser extent, warming down, which enhances the quality of pupils' participation. Great emphasis is placed on improving basic skills with pupils in Year 2, on a particularly windy day, showing ability to bounce and strike a ball using a small bat whilst outside on the playground. In Year 6 the pupils demonstrate excellent standards of passing and catching a rugby ball although taken by a teacher professing no physical education expertise.
- 159 In the soccer and netball sessions further emphasis is placed on principles of attack, defence and decision making and the pupils demonstrate high levels of skill and a good understanding of the techniques required to achieve a high degree of success. In the gymnastic sessions pupils demonstrate good control and most perform rolls, balances and stretches well, with links to enable them to produce basic sequences. The gymnastics clubs, held before school, extend the pupils skills and complex movements were seen leading to several cartwheels performed in sequence. High attaining pupils are extended and achieve high standards of performance. Pupils of lower ability are challenged and well integrated into the lessons. Pupils' collaboration and co-operation are a strong feature of the school enabling those of limited ability to make progress and achieve success. Although the pupils work well individually and in groups little opportunity is given to pupils to enable them to plan, perform and evaluate activities less directed by the teacher.

- 160 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have experienced and participated in a range of activities including games, gymnastics, dance, athletics, swimming and outdoor activities making good use of the small hall, extensive playground, small playing field and their own heated, indoor swimming pool, which has its own qualified manager. Older pupils are given the opportunity to attend residential visits to enhance their outdoor activities programme, work on team building exercises, improve their individual competencies and undertake some complex problem-solving exercises. The school has sufficient resources to support the very broad programme and these resources are complemented by a number of kits provided by the BT Top Sport programme, which has also enabled all the teachers to attend training courses as part of their staff development.
- 161 Pupils have a very positive attitude towards learning and all are enthusiastic about physical education and are very keen to participate. This judgement was admirably supported by the large number of pupils attending extra-curricular activities, some starting at 8-00 a.m., and the very few numbers of non-participants. All the pupils are very well motivated, listen attentively, concentrate well and make sustained, determined efforts throughout the lessons. They are very co-operative, support each other and enjoy positive relationships with their teachers. Parents and pupils speak highly of the physical education programme, stressing enjoyment and team games as key strengths of the programme.
- 162 Overall the quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 with no unsatisfactory lessons seen. Three quarters of the lessons are good or very good and the teaching of the youngest children is particularly impressive providing the children with demonstrations, a variety of opportunities and challenge. The good class management skills, the level of subject expertise, the effective use of resources, the pace of the lessons, the demands made upon the children and the rapport with the pupils all contribute to a positive working environment where good learning takes place. Planning is adequate overall. Assessment is left to individual staff and no formal record of assessment is reported to parents.
- 163 The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and is complemented by both extra swimming time and an extensive extra-curricular programme, particularly at Key Stage 2. Younger children are now more involved in this programme and this is an improvement since the last inspection. There is equality of access for all pupils and it was good to see girls integrated into the soccer programme, boys relishing dance and pupils with special educational needs fully integrated into the lessons. The subject is well led by a keen, enthusiastic and capable co-ordinator who is well supported by a number of other staff, fully committed to further improving standards and provide good learning opportunities for all the pupils.