

INSPECTION REPORT

LAUGHTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Laughton, Nr Lewes

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114404

Headteacher: Mr P Andrews

Reporting inspector: Mr M Davidson
2396

Dates of inspection: 28th February to 2nd March 2000

Inspection number: 189917

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Lane Laughton Lewes East Sussex
Postcode:	BN8 6AH
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Cole
Date of previous inspection:	7th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M Davidson	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities. Science, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education, religion education	How high are the standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs J O'Keefe	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Linstead	Team inspector	Special educational needs. English, history, music	
Mrs R Scahill	Team inspector	Under fives, mathematics, art, geography,	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school, which is for pupils aged 4 to 11, is just under half the average size of primary schools nationally, and has 106 pupils on roll. No pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Eleven pupils have been placed on the school's special educational needs register, four of whom have statements of special educational needs. When pupils join the school in the reception class, their overall attainment is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is caring and generally effective. By the time they leave the school in Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English and science, with improving attainment in mathematics. Attainment in most of the other subjects is in line with national expectations. Teaching is at least satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. The leadership provided by the governing body, in close collaboration with the headteacher, ensures that the school continues to develop. Management of the school day to day is sound. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good standards are reached in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Pupils are well behaved, are keen to learn and are considerate to each other.
- The governing body and headteacher work closely together in leading the school, which is largely successful in meeting its aims.
- Co-ordinators are committed to keeping their areas improving.
- The school takes good care of pupils with special educational needs who make good progress.
- Children under five are helped to make a good start at the school.
- Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for older pupils.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute in lessons and very good use is made of other resources from the community.

What could be improved

- Expectations of the progress all pupils can make, and standards in English at Key Stage 1.
- Keeping a careful check on pupils' learning in all subjects throughout the school to help teachers to focus on aspects where standards could be higher.
- Better use of teaching time, particularly with respect to less time spent on silent reading.
- Additional teaching for the largest class to address the challenges presented by class size.
- An outdoor play area specifically for children under five.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, improvement is satisfactory with respect to the Key Issues. The part played by co-ordinators has developed, but they are hampered by lack of time to keep a thorough enough check on standards and on teaching and learning throughout the school. Curriculum documentation used for planning teaching and learning generally is being matched to that recommended nationally and is improving as a result. Behaviour is good around the school and for most of the time in classrooms, and is never less than satisfactory. The school endeavours to ensure that parents know what is taking place at the school. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented and almost entirely meet requirements. Improvements in other aspects of the school, particularly the subjects taught, are also satisfactory. However, some weaknesses persist since the previous inspection: not enough has been done to make better provision for pupils' spiritual development, both in the daily acts of collective worship and in lessons; the accommodation for children under five is unchanged; and risk assessments have not been carried out, though governors do make visits to check on health and safety.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	B	A	C	well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average
Mathematics	D	D	B	D	
Science	D	B	B	C	

In 1999, the results in the three core subjects were above or well above the national averages for all schools. Compared with similar schools, that is schools with pupils from backgrounds similar to those of pupils at the school, the results in English and science were average, but were below average in mathematics. Taking the last four years together, which includes the results at the time of the previous inspection, standards in English and science have been above average compared to all schools, English more so than science. Mathematics has been close to average, though just below. The school exceeded its English target in the tests and the teacher assessment was the same as the target. In mathematics, the teacher assessment was the same as the target, though the test result fell below, almost certainly accounted for by the absence of one pupil from the test. The agreed targets for 2000 are lower by 2 per cent for English and higher by 7 per cent in mathematics compared with 1999.

Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily when taking account of their different starting points. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could at Key Stage 1, especially in

English where standards are not high enough. Throughout the school, the most able pupils could sometimes achieve more highly if they had more challenging work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respect the feelings of others and readily take on responsibilities. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Good: above average, with few unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	At least satisfactory, often good, and sometimes very good.	At least satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good.

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

The quality of the teaching observed, judged by its impact on pupils' learning, was at least satisfactory, and often better than this. It was good or better in almost six out of every ten of the sample of lessons observed, and was very good in two out of every ten. More good and very good teaching was seen at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Teaching of English is satisfactory overall, though better than this at Key Stage 2. Teaching of mathematics is generally good, and it is better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Main strengths in teaching are teachers' knowledge of the subjects, their teaching of the basic literacy and numeracy skills, management of pupils' learning and their use of resources. Weaker aspects relate to planning which does not lead to provision of learning activities which stretch all the pupils in a class, particularly the most able, and some irregularity in setting challenging homework. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs are met very well, learning support assistants working closely with teachers to achieve this.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a generally satisfactory curriculum, though the school day could be organised better to make fuller use of the opportunities for teaching and learning, and thus raise standards.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and support assistants work effectively with pupils who have statements of special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good for moral, social and cultural, but unsatisfactory for spiritual. The school does not provide an act of collective worship each day and opportunities are missed in the curriculum to develop pupils spiritually.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school which ensures the general well being of pupils and staff. Pupils are confident that the school will respond quickly to any reported bullying.

The school has good links with parents. Regular newsletters, parent helpers, events, consultations, the openness of the school to parents when they come to meet their children, homework diaries, parent helpers in lessons and annual reports on their children all contribute to the generally positive picture. However, the annual reports could be more helpful in providing clearer information on attainment and targets for improvement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The governing body and headteacher together provide sound leadership for the school. The headteacher ensures that the school runs smoothly day to day. The deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators work hard to keep their areas developing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Statutory requirements are met in almost all respects and the use of the delegated budget is carefully planned.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Some of the test results are examined to learn lessons for improvement. All those with management responsibilities do not do enough to keep a check on teaching and learning, and to plan for improvements based on information gathered firsthand.
The strategic use of resources	The use of the budget is matched to the school aims and priorities and care is taken to obtain the best value from spending decisions. The school's teaching expertise is not used as fully as it could be. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The school has sufficient teaching and support staff and they are suitably qualified and experienced. There are enough learning resources, now that the number of computers has been increased. The sports hall is a major improvement, as is the library and offices. But the school is otherwise short of space, particularly for the largest class, and there is still no outdoor play area specifically for children under five.

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 like school and make good progress. • Behaviour at the school is good. • The teaching is good. • They find it easy to approach the school about a problem or with questions. • The school expects their children to work hard. • Many also say that the school has high expectations, it is well led, it helps their children to be mature and responsible and that it works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some want their children to receive more homework. • Some find that the information on how their child is progressing is not clear enough. • The range of activities outside lessons for younger pupils. • Some have concerns about the individual attention pupils in the largest class receive. • The removal of all bullying.

Inspectors agree with most of the views expressed by parents. Inspectors agree with parents that behaviour at school is good and that pupils have positive attitudes to school. Inspectors found the quality of teaching to be good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good: one aspect of this is that teachers expect pupils to work hard. Inspectors also agree that the school could set homework more frequently to keep learning progressing between lessons. They agree with parents that annual reports on their children's achievements could give a fuller picture and include targets for improvement. The good variety of extra-curricular activities is confined to Key Stage 2 pupils, but this is not unusual. While some parents have strongly held views about bullying at the school, inspectors found no evidence of this during the inspection. Pupils are confident that, should a case arise, it will be dealt with quickly. The school could do more to address parental concerns about the large size of one class in a cramped room by making better use of its teaching expertise. Inspectors agree with the other views expressed by parents on what pleases them most, particularly on how the school works with parents to help their children to be mature and responsible.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The number of pupils in each age group is small: 17 pupils were in Year 2 in 1999, and 12 in Year 6. Attainment in the 1999 statutory Key Stage 1 tests in reading was below the average for all schools and well below for similar schools. For writing, attainment was in line with the average for all schools but well below for similar schools. In contrast, attainment in mathematics was above the national average for all schools and in line with the average for similar schools. Taking the results for 1996-99 together, that is the four years including the previous inspection, attainment in both reading and writing exceeded the national average for all schools by a small amount. Over these years, girls outperformed boys in reading and writing by a significant margin. Attainment in science, as shown by teacher assessment, was below the national average for all schools in 1999. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 shows a relatively stronger performance. Attainment in English in 1999 was well above the average for all schools and in line with the average for similar schools. Mathematics attainment was above the average for all schools but fell below the average for similar schools. Attainment in science was above the average for all schools and in line with similar schools. Taking the three subjects together, attainment was above the national average for all schools and in line with that for similar schools. During 1996-99, English attainment was above the national average by the equivalent of more than a term's worth of average progress, and science was not far behind this. Boys and girls did equally well in English, whereas boys clearly outperformed girls in science. Average attainment in mathematics was close to, though just below, the national average for 1996-99, with boys and girls performing similarly.

2 Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that children under five, starting from generally above average attainment on entry, reach above average standards by the time they are five, and have achieved satisfactorily. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is average in reading and writing, but there is some underachievement. Attainment in mathematics, especially numeracy, and science is average. In the other subjects, where sufficient evidence is available to make judgements, attainment is average. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above average in English (reading and writing), mathematics (especially numeracy) and science. It is average in art, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, and above average in physical education. Based upon limited evidence, attainment in religious education is below average. In all these subjects the great majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily.

3 During the inspection, no significant differences were found overall in the attainment and achievement of boys and girls. The great majority are progressing at least satisfactorily, with the pace of learning picking up at Key Stage 2 to result in above average attainment in the three core subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially those who have the help of learning support assistants as well as teachers, and achieve well. But there is some underachievement in two respects: in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 where too few pupils are reaching above average standards; and generally throughout the school, more able pupils could sometimes have progressed further had they been given more challenging work to do. **(Key Issue)**

4 The school's targets for English and mathematics for the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 are based upon the standards the school considers the Year 6 pupils are capable of reaching. As such, they should be achieved: inspection evidence indicates that the school is on course to meet its targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5 Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They take part fully in school life, with the good range of extra-curricular clubs for Key Stage 2 pupils well supported. Behaviour is generally good in and around the school, with no exclusions during the past year. Behaviour has improved compared with the position reported at the previous inspection. In classrooms, pupils are mostly attentive, keen to answer questions and listen appropriately to teachers and to each other. Occasionally, pupils can be noisy and take a little time to settle to tasks. Play at lunchtime and breaktimes is lively though not aggressive. No evidence of bullying was noted during the inspection, and pupils are very confident that should it occur staff would deal with it effectively.

6 The school has a happy atmosphere. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Everyone is treated with kindness and respect. The support and consideration shown by pupils to their classmates with special educational needs is most commendable and a credit to the school. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes and are fully involved in the activities of the school. They form good relationships with their teachers and especially with the learning support assistants and specialist teachers working closely with them.

7 From their start at the school, pupils are encouraged to show initiative and to act responsibly. The personal development of children under five is impressive, with children able to make choices and encouraged to increase their independence skills. Higher up the school, pupils relish the opportunity to take responsibility, such as organising charity fund raising and running their own stalls at the school's summer fair.

8 Attendance at the school is good, with the level above the national average and few unauthorised absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

9 The quality of teaching observed was similar to that reported at the previous inspection, though this time no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Judging by its impact on the rate at which pupils learn, the effort they make and the interest they show, teaching at the school is good overall. It was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen, good or better in 55 per cent of them, and very good in 18 per cent. Teaching of children under five is good. A higher proportion of good or very good teaching was seen at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1, the main differences being expectations on what pupils could achieve and the management of their learning and behaviour. As a result, pupils are generally learning better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1 and make better progress there, but the overall quality of learning is never less than satisfactory at Key Stage 1.

10 Teaching of children under five and teaching of subjects, where sufficient evidence for judgements was available during the inspection, is at least satisfactory and often good.

Teaching of children under five is good. Teaching of English, especially literacy, is satisfactory overall, though it is good at Key Stage 2. Mathematics teaching, especially of numeracy, is good overall, though again better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Teaching is good in science at both key stages, as it is in physical education. Insufficient teaching was observed in other subjects for judgements to be made on the overall quality of teaching.

11 The main strengths of teaching: are teachers' command of their subjects, including the teaching of literacy and numeracy; their mainly high expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve: choice of stimulating learning activities so that they gain pupils' interest who then concentrate, work hard and make progress; the successful management of pupils' behaviour and learning so that pupils learn step by step; the use of time, with teaching and learning taking place at a challenging pace; very good integration of learning support assistants into lessons so that they also have a full impact on promoting learning; and good assessment of the progress pupils are making through questioning and marking of their work. These successful features were shown, for example, in a literacy lesson where both teaching and learning were very good. The lesson was very well planned, with a stimulating range of resources ready. Teaching was clear and questioning challenging so that all pupils were made to think and respond. They were excited by what they were learning and worked hard throughout the lesson. Careful assessments were made of pupils' progress and the lesson was skilfully drawn together by useful revision. The work was matched to the levels pupils had reached in their groups, and this was effective to enable all of them to progress and to achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs, boys and girls and pupils in the two age ranges all learnt well.

12 Even though the picture is generally positive, there are some weaker aspects of teaching which have an effect on pupils' learning, so that all pupils do not always learn as quickly as they could. This applies particularly to more able pupils, especially the oldest in a class, who do not always have work to do which requires them to work hard enough or they sometimes have to repeat work which they have already mastered. **(Key Issue)** This is more often the case at Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2 where the rate of learning is generally good. Another weaker feature of some teaching is time lost through some ineffective strategies for gaining pupils' full concentration, often due to some overlong teaching session when pupils are sat in cramped conditions on the carpet. This also results in loss of time for learning. While the frequency and usefulness of homework are generally satisfactory, sometimes tasks do not challenge more able pupils enough and more could be expected especially of older pupils in the amount of homework that they could do well. If these weaknesses were remedied, more teaching would be good, as would be pupils' learning and progress.

13 Pupils with special educational needs fully take part in the usual lessons arranged for the whole class. Teachers take good care to fully involve these pupils in the work of the class, especially in the discussions that take place. Occasionally some receive additional or specialist help individually or in small groups outside the classroom. For example, one pupil receives regular assistance from a visiting teacher for the hearing impaired. Teachers draw up pupils' individual education plans and liaise closely with learning support assistants. This enables them to plan lessons and provide work suitably adapted to the appropriate levels of understanding. Special educational needs assistants provide very good support and closely check on the progress pupils are making. As a result of this well integrated provision, pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

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

14 The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum for children under five is sound, incorporates all the nationally recommended areas of learning and caters well for all their needs, except for their physical development, because there is no provision for a separate outdoor play area. **(Key Issue)** In all other aspects, it is good and leads smoothly into the early stages of the National Curriculum. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy on raising standards is good, and much of the provision for literacy, using the National Literacy Strategy, is effective. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, but the time allocated to some subjects has been reduced in response to the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and this contributes to the lack of curriculum balance. However, the resulting timetable leaves small amounts of time on most days that are not used effectively. In some classes a great deal of time is spent on silent reading, amounting to two hours a week in one class. This time could be used for teaching and reading in subjects which at present are not as well represented in the curriculum as they might be, particularly religious education, and to provide more opportunities for extended writing. Moreover, the timing of assembly and afternoon breaks unnecessarily fragment the afternoon session, especially for the oldest pupils. **(Key Issue)** The school intends to review schemes of work and planning for such subjects as art and geography when national requirements for the curriculum from September 2000 onwards are published. Some of these they intend to review in conjunction with other local primary schools. There is a planned programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes sex education, and pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs.

15 All pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. The school is successful in its proactive approach to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are treated in the same way as all other pupils. The school provides the opportunity for pupils to benefit from specialised musical instrument lessons from visiting teachers. Teachers make appropriate arrangements to ensure that these pupils are able to resume their 'normal' lessons at no disadvantage.

16 Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to play a full part in lessons and in the life of the school generally. Teachers ensure opportunities are taken for these pupils to contribute to discussions, report on and show work they have done and join in with all the learning opportunities the school provides. For example, one pupil with a statement of special educational needs is able to benefit from weekly violin lessons. Pupils are able to add to the reviews of their own individual education plans and each pupil discusses his or her progress before fresh plans are drawn. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by dedicated learning support staff who work with them in the classroom most of the time. This ensures that they receive the same opportunities as the other pupils and addresses the weakness that was reported at the last inspection.

17 A good programme of extra curricular activities enriches the curriculum. This includes many sports, drama and music. Older pupils are preparing for a visit to the Isle of Wight, which is planned to enrich different areas of the curriculum such as information and communication technology (ICT), geography and physical education.

18 The school has very good links with the community. It is involved with all the village millennium celebrations and works closely with the parish council. There are very good links with other local primary schools with which they are developing good curriculum links. For example, they have held joint literacy and numeracy meetings for parents in neighbouring schools. There is a very constructive relationship with the pre-school group and good links with the local secondary school. Children from the pre-school group make weekly visits to the school in the summer term before they start school in September, and Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school.

19 The school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development, but provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. This was similar to the previous report as pupils still have insufficient opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness. The school does not provide an act of collective worship each day and opportunities are missed in the curriculum to develop pupils spiritually. Assemblies make a strong contribution to pupils' moral and social development, but those observed stopped short of acknowledging a deity or providing time for reflection and prayer. **(Subsidiary Issue)** Through stories, pupils are taught a strong sense of right and wrong and children under five develop a concern for others. During special assemblies good work and behaviour are praised. Pupils are encouraged to speak and perform, which develops their self-esteem and confidence.

20 The school expects pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. This is instilled in them from when they start school. Children under five are encouraged to make decisions and to put away the things they have been using. The oldest pupils take responsibility for looking after the younger ones at lunchtime. Pupils throughout the school work well in groups and circle time encourages them to listen carefully to others. They take part in fund raising activities and run their own stall at the school fete.

21 The school's provision for cultural development is good. The school is aware of the need to raise understanding of other cultures. Amongst other visitors to the school, during their book week they invited an African story teller to the school. She not only told stories, but also introduced the pupils to African music. Pupils take part in local singing and recorder festivals. The school organises a good range of educational visits, which enriches all aspects of the curriculum and pupils' personal development. These visits include local walks extending to nearby castles and country parks. These experiences are built on in following lessons and become an integral part of the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

22 The school has a caring approach to its pupils and this ensures their general well being. Satisfactory procedures are in place for dealing with child protection concerns, sickness and first aid. A policy for health and safety is in use, and governors make regular health and safety checks. However, the requirement to undertake risk assessments has still not been met, although reported at the previous inspection. **(Subsidiary issue)** It was noted during the inspection that the surface of the ramp to the temporary classroom presents a slip hazard to pupils, staff and visitors. Health and drugs awareness education is appropriately dealt with in the PSHE programme.

23 Homework diaries are well used in some classes, with very useful dialogues between teachers and parents providing good educational and personal support for pupils.

24 The school has high expectations of pupils' attendance and, with the very good support from parents in this area, has maintained its above average attendance figures.

25 Behaviour is well promoted at the school, with the class point system enabling one class to get the silver cup for the week: this is particularly valued by pupils. Teachers and support staff have a consistent approach to dealing with any incidents of bullying. Pupils know what to do if an incident occurs and are confident of a swift and effective response by staff.

26 The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall, though further developments are needed so that pupils' attainments and achievements as they progress through the school are tracked systematically. The school is aware of this and knows the way forward. It is well advanced in putting in place thorough procedures for recording pupils' progress and using the resulting information to find out where improvements need to be brought about. In some subjects, such as science, assessment is progressing well, particularly with respect to the detailed analysis of Key Stage 2 assessments to uncover weaker areas of the science curriculum and with plans to remedy them during teaching.

27 The school's assessment arrangements ensure that pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school career and that appropriate measures are taken to make suitable provision to meet these needs. The school's special needs co-ordinator meets regularly with class teachers and special needs assistants to determine the progress of these pupils. Appropriate use is made of outside support services such as the LEA's special educational needs and educational psychology departments.

28 Teachers know the pupils and their families well. In this way they are able to follow the personal development of each pupil carefully and provide any necessary support when required. The pupils themselves speak highly of the staff's efforts in this area and feel able to talk to them should they have a problem or worry.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

29 Parents predominantly are happy with the school and the education their children receive. They feel their children are well looked after and make good progress. A minority of parents expressed concerns to the inspection team about the size of one class, the information they receive about how their children are doing, the amount of homework, lack of extra-curricular activities for younger pupils and some bullying in the form of teasing.

30 The school has good links with its parents. Parents support the school well by helping in classrooms and on outings. Members of the local community also come into the school to support pupils' learning. The very successful Laughton School Association arranges frequent fundraising and social events, such as the summer fete and auction of promises. These are well attended by parents and the local community and provide significant funds for extra resources for the school.

31 Parents receive satisfactory information in the form of regular newsletters, letters and consultation meetings. The former effectively address the issue raised in the previous inspection about keeping parents informed about developments at the school. The prospectus is attractively presented and contains all the required information, as does the governors'

annual report, other than reporting on the action taken with respect to the previous inspection. Both these documents have improved in response to a further key issue from the previous inspection.

32 Parents find staff approachable if they need to discuss a problem or to ask for information. However, the annual written reports to parents do not give enough information on what their children have achieved in terms of whether it is high enough and how it compares with the national expectation. The reports also lack targets for pupils to work towards to help them to improve, though teachers do discuss targets directly with pupils. **(Subsidiary issue)**

33 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to play a full part in the arrangements the school makes to meet these needs. Parents are given a broad overview of individual education plans and are fully involved in the regular reviews of the targets. They are encouraged to provide support in classes which has enabled pupils with special educational needs to benefit from further individual or small group assistance.

34 Parents are very supportive of their children's work at home. Homework diaries in some classes are well used by parents and indicate a strong commitment on their part. The home-school agreement has recently been put in place after agreement by the great majority of parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

35 The long serving headteacher continues to ensure that the school functions smoothly day by day: it is orderly, relationships are very good, it has a caring ethos and its aims are largely met. He is concerned that standards are as high as possible and that pupils are provided with a suitable curriculum and a good range of extra-curricular activities. Good staff appointments have been made and the team of teaching and support staff work well together for the benefit of the pupils. In this work he is supported by the deputy headteacher who has appropriate responsibilities delegated to her. Together they manage the work of subject co-ordinators who are likewise effective. However, not enough is done to keep a check on the quality of teaching and learning through a programme of firsthand monitoring and evaluation. Though some of this work has been done recently, both by the headteacher himself and by the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, overall this is a weaker aspect of school management. As a result, subject action plans and the school improvement plan itself are not based firmly enough on addressing weaknesses which monitoring and evaluation activities might uncover, such as any underachievement. **(Key Issue)**

36 Governors are very interested in the school, support it well and work hard to carry out their duties. Other than the lack of regular risk assessments and reporting to parents in their annual report on progress with the OFSTED inspection action plan, they carry out their responsibilities effectively. **(Subsidiary issue)** Through its committees and the full governing body meetings, governors maintain oversight of the school and work closely with the headteacher. To further improve governors' understanding of the standards pupils are reaching, a Standards Committee, consisting of the chair and vice chair of governors and the headteacher and deputy headteacher, has recently been established to analyse and evaluate the statutory assessment information. This is a potentially valuable initiative that could help governors to gain good understanding of standards. Governors visit the school regularly: the chairman frequently communicates with the headteacher and individual governors make

planned visits or help in classrooms. In this way the governors, who are relatively new to their work of school leadership, are getting to know the school better.

37 The school improvement plan contains appropriate priorities with clear steps for carrying them out. Senior governors work closely with the headteacher and staff in drafting the plan before it is presented to the full governing body for its consideration and approval so that the plan represents the intentions of governors and staff together. The headteacher reports to governors on the implementation of the plan at each meeting of the full governing body where governors can ask questions. However, the plan does not focus sharply enough on the impact the planned actions should have on raising standards and, to that extent, it is not as effective as it might be. The annual budget and the school improvement plan are prepared separately, the former for the financial and the latter for the academic year. Despite this, they are sufficiently well integrated in practice, as emerging school improvement plan priorities are very much in mind during the budget planning process. The governing body and headteacher apply the principles of best value when preparing and using the budget to get the most from the limited flexibility that it provides. The recommendations of the last external audit have been implemented, though the school had been slow to respond to the previous one and its recommendations had had to be repeated. Financial administration by the school secretary is efficient. The school office provides a welcoming first point of contact for visitors to the school.

38 The school's resources are generally effectively and efficiently used so that pupils learn at a satisfactory or better rate. One weakness, however, is inefficient use of the teacher time available. The pupil:teacher ratio of 21 pupils to a teacher at the school is below that found nationally. Despite this, one class at the school has 36 pupils. The headteacher, while he teaches from time to time to cover for absent colleagues, does not have a regular teaching commitment. To do so, would help to reduce the size of that large class, housed in cramped conditions, by contributing to teaching some of the main lessons on a regular basis. This would also help to address parental concerns about the individual attention their children can receive. The school has gone some way towards tackling this issue by appointing a part time classroom assistant, but more could be done within present resources regarding additional teaching for this class. **(Key Issue)**

39 The school is fulfilling all the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. An appropriate register is kept which identifies pupils' levels of need, the strategies which will be used to remedy them, and the personnel concerned. Individual education plans are made for pupils on this register, with appropriate targets set and the arrangements made to review them and track progress. The school's stated aims are to ensure that pupils of all abilities play a full part in the school and feel valued for the contributions they can make. The organisation of the curriculum, teaching provision and the pastoral arrangements ensure that these aims are met.

40 The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Teachers who share responsibility for classes work very well together and the pupils benefit from this. All teachers are responsible for at least one area of the curriculum. Classroom assistants and special educational needs support assistants co-operate with teachers to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are well supported and that all pupils generally receive help when needed. Together with a good number of volunteer parent helpers, the assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress.

41 All staff have updated job descriptions, but appraisal has fallen behind though is still being carried out. Arrangements for continuing professional development are good. Co-ordinators support their colleagues well and are involved in leading whole staff training. The school engages the help of LEA advisers, with much of the recent focus being on literacy, numeracy and ICT, and also science. New staff are well supported by the headteacher and colleagues, so that they quickly become involved in the life of the school and part of an effective team.

42 Resources are sufficient to enable the curriculum to be taught well. The recent acquisition of more computers means that pupils can have increased access to ICT during lessons, when using the school library and at other times. The school makes good use of loan collections of resources to supplement its own. It is working towards closer curriculum integration with the two link schools, with consequent rationalisation of the use of resources: this will inevitably lead to greater efficiency in the use of resources and the school's budget.

43 The school premises are appropriately maintained and in reasonable condition. The school has recently benefited from the addition of a spacious community sports hall, an enlarged library and improved office accommodation. However, space in classrooms is very limited and the lack of a specific outdoor area for children under five, with large play equipment, makes the accommodation unsatisfactory overall. **(Key Issue)**

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44 To raise standards further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should address the following issues.

- (1) Raise attainment, particularly in English at Key Stage 1 by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and for various purposes;
 - consistently setting tasks which challenge all pupils sufficiently;
 - ensuring that the balance between whole and individual or group work is suitable so that all pupils are kept busy learning.

(Paragraphs 3, 12, 58, 67, 70)

- (2) Keep a regular check on teaching and learning to identify what could be improved, and bring about improvement by:
 - enabling subject co-ordinators regularly to monitor and evaluate their subjects throughout the school by firsthand observation;
 - using the resulting information to plan for improvements at subject and whole school levels;
 - setting clear targets for improvements related to pupils' progress to judge how well weaknesses have been remedied.

(Paragraph 35)

- (3) Provide a more balance curriculum and make better use of the time allocated to teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that lessons are not too long, particularly for literacy and numeracy, and also for PE for the youngest pupils;
 - evaluate the usefulness of quiet reading as a strategy for raising standards across the curriculum, including in reading itself;

- review the need for the oldest pupils to have breaks in the afternoon, and also the place of assembly, so that learning can continue with less interruption.

(Paragraph 14)

- (4) Make more effective use of the teaching expertise of the headteacher to reduce the size of the largest class for some of the most important lessons.

(Paragraph 38)

- (5) Provide a suitably equipped outdoor play area for children under five.

(Paragraph 43)

Other less significant issues.

- Improve the quality of the reports for parents so that they receive clearer information on the standards their children are reaching, and also are given guidance on how their children can improve. *(Paragraph 32)*
- Make better provision for pupils' spiritual development by: having an act of collective worship each day for all pupils; improving standards in RE; and planning how other subjects can contribute to spiritual development. *(Paragraph 19)*
- Carry out regular risk assessment. *(Paragraph 22)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18	39	43	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	106
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5
Special educational needs	YR-6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11
English as an additional language	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Student mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	6	11	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	4	6
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	16	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(78)	88(94)	100(100)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	6	5
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	15	17	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88(83)	100(100)	94(83)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	3	9	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	8	5	7
	Total	11	8	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (80)	67 (65)	83 (85)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	6	6	8
	Total	9	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (85)	75(70)	92(85)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	106
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92

FTE means full-time equivalent

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
	£
Total income	211550
Total expenditure	212510
Expenditure per pupil	2191
Balance brought forward from previous year	3482
Balance carried forward to next year	2522

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	106
Number of questionnaires returned	66

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	51	3	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	48	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	52	17	0	5
The teaching is good.	41	47	5	5	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	31	9	6	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	27	2	6	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	26	6	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	49	34	6	6	5
The school is well led and managed.	55	31	9	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	35	3	5	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	34	21	2	5

Other issues raised by parents

The most frequently expressed concern at the meeting and in written responses was the impact of the class of 36 pupils on the individual attention which pupils can receive, and also the size of the classroom to accommodate this number. A smaller number of parents spoke about bullying in the form of teasing.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45 Children are admitted into the reception class in the September before they are five. They attend fulltime the term in which their fifth birthday falls. In the preceding terms they attend in the mornings only. At the time of the inspection, there were eight children under five, seven of whom attend mornings only. From the evidence of the baseline assessment, which is carried out in the first term, their attainment on entry is above average for their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, and the planning is such that they make a smooth transition from the curriculum for children under five to the National Curriculum.

46 The development of children's personal and social skills is given high priority and is promoted at every opportunity. As result, children make good progress and are well on course to attain the standards expected of five year olds, and many children are likely to exceed these standards. Teachers motivate children very successfully. They have a good understanding of how children learn and form good relationships with them. Children show considerable concentration, with even the youngest applying themselves well to tasks and this has a positive effect on their achievements. They are suitably independent in the way they make choices, select activities, record what they have done and put equipment away at the end of each session. They form good relationships and care about others. For example, they made a card for a child leaving the school and were particularly kind to him. They make good progress in developing their self-confidence and independence, are happy and enjoy being at school.

47 Children make good progress in their language and literacy skills. They listen attentively to stories and rhymes with interest and involvement, and carry out instructions well. They also choose to listen to taped stories as one of their planned activities. The teachers use different activities to reinforce children's knowledge of letters of the alphabet, such as singing, play 'I-spy', shouting and whispering. Children quickly learn to recognise their own names and some more able children can write them. They are given many opportunities to trace over letters, numbers and pictures. The weekly focus on a letter of the alphabet is effective.

48 Children's mathematical development is good. Their counting skills are developing well and most children can recognise and count numbers up to 20. They can identify smaller and larger number on a number line and add one more to a number. They learn correctly to name shapes, such as circle, square and triangle, and learn well from the many opportunities they are given to play using numbers. For example, in the 'Shoe Shop' they play at buying shoes which involves measuring each other's feet and using money.

49 A wide range of experiences is offered to the children to stimulate their interest and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their walk to the church, for example, enabled children to observe and discuss materials used in local buildings. Resources are used effectively and activities are planned to reinforce previous learning. For example, the sand and water tray contained bricks and wet sand for pupils to play at building. Teachers encourage the use of a wide range of equipment, including that for ICT, and show children appropriate skills to be able to use them independently.

50 Physical skills are developing well, as the children participate in physical education lessons. However, there is no outside play area specifically for these children or the opportunity for them to use large equipment or wheeled toys outdoors. **(Key Issue)** Their manipulative skills also are developing well: they have good control in using small pieces of equipment such as table-top games, jigsaws, modelling materials, pencils and brushes. They show a growing ability to manage small items, particularly scissors and have good control when using the computer mouse.

51 Children's creative development is satisfactory. They are given a wide range of opportunities to explore painting and are taught how to use different materials with which to print. They enjoy singing and joining in with the actions. Teachers have set up a good role play area which is relevant to other work.

52 The quality of teaching for the under fives is good. Teachers plan together for each area of learning and, as this is a mixed age class, the planning is closely matched to the National Curriculum. Activities are planned well and are appropriate to children's varying needs. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with the children and have established clear routines. They have good procedures for monitoring the children's progress. In their planning they identify what children are expected to learn and base their assessments on this. The classroom assistants work well with the children and understand the purpose of the activities. The homework books are used very effectively and there is a very good rapport with the parents who are kept informed about their children's learning and can pass any information back to the teachers. The classroom is very attractive and, although rather cramped, is well used, with interesting displays and readily accessible resources.

ENGLISH

53 Results of the national tests in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1 show attainment to be in line with the national average for all schools in writing, but below in reading. When compared to similar schools attainment was well below the average for reading and writing. At the higher levels, attainment was below the national average in reading and writing. The attainment of boys was below the national average in reading and writing while for girls their attainment was above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment was well above the national average for all schools and broadly in line with the average for similar schools. At the higher levels, attainment was above the national average. The attainment of both girls and boys was above their national averages. Over the past four years the performance of pupils at Key Stage 1 in reading and writing has fallen, although the trend shows a gradual improvement in writing so that it is now close to the national average. At Key Stage 2, performance over the past four years shows a consistent improvement and it now significantly exceeds the national average. The school is on course to achieve the target set for this year.

54 Standards of speaking and listening at both key stages are good. Pupils participate enthusiastically in discussions, whether offering their opinions on the character traits of 'the three pigs' or explaining their method for calculating a mathematical computation mentally. In the early years pupils act out imaginary scenes, for example in a shoe shop, using appropriate words and characterisation. In the older classes, pupils understand and use extended vocabulary to explain, comment and give their opinions. For example, in one class pupils were

able to give a clear explanation of the difference between active and passive verbs and what was meant by a pre-emptive question. Pupils listen well to the views and points made by their classmates or when following text being read during 'shared' or 'group reading' sessions.

55 Pupils at both key stages read well, have a good knowledge of phonics and tackle unfamiliar words confidently. They read with expression and understanding and are able to recognise and describe different forms of writing and explain their purpose. Thus, pupils at Key Stage 1 are able to recognise the layout of plays, poems, narrative and reference texts. Older pupils have built on this and can describe how writers set out to persuade, give instructions or make characterisations.

56 Pupils in Key Stage 1 reach satisfactory standards in writing and are able to communicate their ideas in simple sentences which are adequately punctuated and spelled. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are reaching a good standard of writing and are able to write for a variety of purposes and for the different audiences who might read their work. Although pupils in Key Stage 2 are becoming more proficient in the use of computers in their writing, little use of this facility was observed at Key Stage 1.

57 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory, with examples in both key stages in which the learning situations are good and help pupils to make good progress. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has enabled the school to provide many opportunities for pupils to gain in-depth knowledge about different genres of writing and the ways in which writers use language for their desired purposes. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were provided with a challenging text on conserving rain forests and were able to study the subtle and more overt ways in which the writer set about persuading the reader to his way of thinking. The teacher had high expectations of the pupils in the level of language used and in the degree of difficulty of the tasks given. Through skilful use of the discussion time and provision of suitably adapted work, the teacher was able to assure the learning of pupils of all abilities. Pupils were similarly challenged in Years 3 and 4 when studying plural and collective nouns. Through the use of good questioning techniques, a lively pace and challenge, pupils succeeded in learning 'the rules' for making plurals and managed to invent their own imaginative collective nouns. Younger pupils in one class, learning of initial letter sounds quickly became interested and sustained their concentration through the provision of a range of lively activities and the skilful management of their discussions. Pupils show considerable interest in their work and sustain their concentration and efforts for long periods. They discuss their work with each other when appropriate and are keen to finish and succeed. Pupils with special educational needs are treated with care by their teachers and are fully included in the work of the class. This, and the skill and efforts of learning support assistants ensures that they make good progress.

58 The arrangement of the English curriculum provides for considerable opportunities for pupils to read, in addition to those prescribed in the daily literary lessons. The previous inspection found that the school provided a variety of writing opportunities. Whilst this is the case in Key Stage 2, in Key Stage 1 the opportunities to write at length and in a variety of ways are limited. Although the standard of writing in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, the achievement of the more able pupils is not what could be expected and all pupils should be able to write for a greater range of purpose. Few instances were seen, for example, of pupils writing at length in other areas of the curriculum. The more able pupils are not always provided with work of sufficient challenge for them to make good progress and are thus often

underachieving. **(Key Issue)** The need to cater for all pupils in mixed-age, mixed-ability classes is especially great and, where lessons were less successful, discussion times went on for too long. In these lessons the pace of learning sagged and pupils found it difficult to sustain their interest.

59 Resources for English are good, with each class having a wide-ranging supply of fiction and reference books. Pupils are familiar with the use of dictionaries and thesauri and have access to these as part of their everyday studies. Pupils are able to benefit from the recently installed and extended library. Although presently stocked with books suited to Key Stage 2 pupils, plans are well under way to provide reference and non-fiction books for younger readers. Some non-fiction is stored in readiness for use when particular topics are taught.

60 To improve standards further, the school needs to ensure that better provision is made for its more able pupils in Key Stage 1 and that more opportunities are made available for writing, including in other curriculum areas. The arrangement of the English curriculum provides for considerable opportunities for pupils to read, in addition to those prescribed in the daily literary lessons. Consideration needs to be given to using some of this time for writing activities. Discussion times during lessons are sometimes too long. The progress of pupils of all abilities would be enhanced with a better balance between teacher-led oral work and other activities. **(Key Issue)**

MATHEMATICS

61 Pupils' results in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average for all schools, with an above average proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3. These results were in line with similar schools, and there was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. The work of the present Year 2 pupils is in line with the national expectation and they are achieving appropriate standards for their age.

62 At Key Stage 2, pupils' results in the 1999 national tests were below the national average for all schools, although teachers' assessment shows that this would have been higher if the whole year group had been present for the test. The number reaching the higher level 5 was close to the national average. Compared with similar schools, attainment was below average. The performance of boys has exceeded that of the girls for the past four years. At both key stages, results have fluctuated from year to year but the trend has been broadly in line with that found nationally. The majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are working at level 4 of the National Curriculum and some are confidently working at level 5. They stand in good stead to reach the targets set for this year.

63 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The youngest pupils are learning at least satisfactorily and are well motivated. This is because teachers plan lessons carefully and resources are well prepared. Very good use is made of classroom assistants who support groups who are not working with the teacher so all pupils are purposefully occupied for the whole lesson. Pupils can confidently count to twenty, which they practise in different ways at the beginning of lessons. They are encouraged to record their work in a variety of ways such as when, in a lesson where they were learning to add three numbers, they drew and counted the spots on dice. Older pupils are keen to learn and answer questions, but when explanations become too long, they lose concentration and talk among themselves or call out without

putting up their hands. This slows the pace of the lessons still further. **(Key Issue)** However, more able pupils enjoyed the challenge of the written tasks and worked well together. One pupil explained to the others how he had added 99 to a number. The use of worksheets at this key stage and irregular marking does not motivate, encourage or challenge the pupils sufficiently.

64 In Key Stage 2, teaching is good. Pupils make good progress because of the brisk start to the lessons and the high expectations of the teachers. Lessons are well organised and the needs of the different ages and abilities are taken into account in the planning, so all pupils are working at an appropriate level and achieve well. The teachers work very well with other adults in planning these activities. This is especially valuable for pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress. For example, a lesson on fractions was presented in the form of games where the younger pupils were introduced to simple fractions and the older pupils learned the decimal equivalent. The games motivated pupils well and at the end of the lesson they could explain what they had learnt. When recording work in their books, pupils' work is well organised and neatly presented. This is a result of good marking that not only praises pupils for their efforts but also suggests points for development.

65 The oldest pupils show interest in their lessons and sustain concentration, which enables them to achieve well. Lessons start by reinforcing mathematical facts and the vocabulary they have previously learnt. Good evaluation of previous lessons shows that teachers know the pupils well. They are suitably challenged with appropriate questions and all pupils are involved in discussions. Pupils are told what is expected of them and how long they have to complete their work. They co-operate well when working in groups and learn from each other. For example, when ordering a set of negative and positive numbers, pupils discussed the task sensibly and quickly came to a conclusion. Pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding is developed well in some other subjects. For example, in science, they use bar charts to record the length of shadows and the distance from a light source. Others use their knowledge of negative numbers when recording temperatures and show good understanding of graphs. This also makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning in mathematics. Day to day assessment, both in questioning pupils at the end of lessons and in marking, is inconsistent across the school. However, tests at the end of units of work are building up a good picture of pupils' learning and help in future planning. As at Key Stage 1, pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress, which is better than this when they receive the help of learning support assistants.

66 The curriculum for mathematics is good. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on standards and there is an appropriate emphasis on mental mathematics, number work and mathematical vocabulary in each lesson. The subject is well managed. Teachers' plans are monitored each term and lessons are observed to monitor teaching and the curriculum. The results of lesson observations are shared with the teachers and support is given where needed.

67 Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Most work is well matched to pupils' needs, especially for the different age groups in each class. Generally the more able pupils are suitably challenged, while the less able are well supported by either the teacher or a classroom assistant. However, in some classes, work could be more closely matched to the different abilities of individual pupils. **(Key Issue)** The last inspection found that pupils did not apply themselves to their work due to poor behaviour, but this is no longer the case. Pupils

behave well, and although they are a little noisy at times, they work hard and complete the work expected of them. The school is well placed to maintain standards in mathematics and make further improvements.

SCIENCE

68 The generally positive position reported at the previous inspection has been maintained. In 1999, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, as judged by teacher assessments, was above the national average for all schools for level 2 or above, but below average for level 3 or above. Compared with similar schools, attainment was in line with their national average for level 2 or above, but below average for level 3 or above. At Key Stage 2 in 1999, the test result was above the national average for all schools, and the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 was well above the national average. Overall, the result was in line with the average for similar schools. Taking the past four years together, the attainment of Year 6 pupils has been above the national average for all schools by an amount that represents about a term's further progress. Boys performed much better than did girls during this period. While overall performance at the school fluctuates year by year, the trend is one of improvement. Pupils presently nearing the end of the two key stages are reaching similar standards to that shown in the statutory assessments. In their work on materials, for example, Year 2 pupils used equipment sensibly and made careful observations, including counting, when examining the waterproof qualities of a number of materials. Year 6 pupils, coming to the end of the topic on states of matter, showed above average understanding of reversible and irreversible changes. Many pupils could use their knowledge of the different ways in which particles are packed in gases, liquids and solids to explain these changes.

69 While most pupils are reaching the standards they are capable of, this is not always the case. Sometimes, especially the older more able pupils in a class could have progressed further with more challenging work and with less time spend doing work which is too easy for them. **(Key Issue)** Moreover, pupils are not challenged enough to write or to write at sufficient length about their scientific investigations. Standards could be higher than they are at present, particularly at Key Stage 1, though most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making sufficient progress.

70 The quality of teaching is mainly good: as a result, pupils are generally learning well. They are enthusiastic about science, work hard, concentrate fully during investigations and behave very sensibly. Lessons are carefully planned, with good integration of the various aspects of science, and also ICT, so that pupils can apply their knowledge and understanding in new situations during investigations. Activities interest pupils and they work hard in groups. Their behaviour is successfully managed as the work they are given interests them, they know what to do and can work independently. Some very effective questioning was successful in getting pupils thinking, aided by useful demonstrations to make clear teaching points, for example on the weight of air. Also in the best lessons, records were made of pupils' achievements while they were involved in investigations. But, even where teaching is good overall, not enough is always expected of pupils regarding the quality of their written work: their reports of investigations are often untidy and briefly written, and diagrams are not carefully drawn. Another weakness in teaching is the lack of consistent challenge for the most able pupils of different ages: the work they are given does not always challenge them sufficiently. This is

particularly the case at Key Stage 1, as also shown by the 1999 statutory teacher assessments, where no above average attainment was recorded. (**Key Issue**)

71 It was reported at the previous inspection that the scheme of work needed to be developed. The school has now decided to use the one nationally recommended; this is one of the priorities in the co-ordinator's action plan. The subject is well managed, though lack of time to monitor and evaluate the subject in each class means that the co-ordinator does not have as clear a knowledge of standards throughout the school as is needed to focus support and advice. However, the statutory assessments at Key Stage 2 are thoroughly evaluated to find out what can be improved. To raise standards further at both key stages, work for all pupils needs to be sufficiently challenging, and more should be expected of pupils in the quality and presentation of written work in science.

ART

72 Pupils attain the nationally expected standards at the end of both key stages. Evidence from previous completed work shows that pupils use a variety of media, including three-dimensional modelling in clay and textiles in collage work. Pupils are introduced to a range of techniques. Good use is made of sketchbooks and pupils learn how to mix colour and to experiment with tones and shades. The youngest pupils have used a variety of materials, such as polystyrene, plastic and metal to explore different effects of printing. Pupils in each class study portraits, and one class has used this to try out different methods of shading. ICT is used effectively and pupils are becoming increasingly confident in applying a variety of drawing and painting programs to produce pictures, which they subsequently print. All the work seen shows sound progress and the development of skills. Not enough work was seen in lessons to make a judgement about teaching and learning.

73 Pupils' recent work is kept as a record of what has been achieved. The subject co-ordinator ensures that there is a balance of coverage of the National Curriculum and monitors standards by collecting samples of work from around the school and by photographing displays, but has little opportunity to observe pupils working. The scheme of work is in the process of being updated in conjunction with the link schools, and they intend to adopt the nationally recommended scheme. Displays around the school show how art is used to enrich other subjects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

74 Insufficient work was seen for a judgement to be made about attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. In the class earlier in the key stage, pupils selected materials and used tools confidently. They worked well in pairs to make paper cubes. The good range of resources available, together with effective help from the learning support assistant, ensured that pupils made progress and enjoyed the activity. In the lesson observed at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils had been assigned a challenging design and making task. They had not had time during this lesson to turn their design ideas, shown in sketches of a girder bridge, into accurately drawn designs. Pupils in the class earlier in Key Stage 2 had had time over more than one lesson to progress further in their task. Their work demonstrated the full design and making process, resulting in products of a good standard. Set the challenge of making a package for confectionery, some pupils had developed their ideas by disassembling a commercially made product. Applying their mathematical knowledge, they had drawn a net involving triangles and

were at the stage of being ready to make a trial package. Other pupils had gone further and, in one case, the product was a well-proportioned cuboid package which was being neatly finished. Prior to this, pupils had planned how to make the chocolate contents for their packages but, in the absence of facilities for cooking, had not been able to progress beyond this. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their work and were able to describe clearly the process they were engaged in. The quality of the designs and products indicate good teaching that had drawn a positive response from these pupils.

75 The school is satisfactorily resourced for DT, other than cooking facilities, the position reported at the previous inspection. Teachers go as far as they can in providing pupils with experience of food, but cannot complete the process. Other parts of the National Curriculum are satisfactorily provided. Another aspect needing improvement is more focused assessment of pupils' attainment in both design and making skills so that parents can be fully informed about their children's achievements.

GEOGRAPHY

76 Insufficient lessons were observed to make a judgement about teaching and learning. Judging by the samples of work seen, pupils attain standards at both key stages in line with the national expectation, which are similar to those reported at the previous inspection. The youngest pupils make sound progress studying the local environment. They observe local buildings and learn about the different methods used in their construction. They are able to talk about their surroundings and learn to appreciate different features, such as the different ways flint is used for boundary walls and for the church. They record what they see by drawing or writing a list. Older pupils study maps and plans, and make sound progress as they move through the school, as the work becomes more demanding. They discover the differences between rural and urban environments, for example when they visit Brighton and compare it with Laughton. In the forthcoming school journey to the Isle of Wight, it is planned for pupils to undertake fieldwork and make further comparisons. A particular strength of the geography curriculum is the number of visits, which enrich and extend pupils' learning. There is good support for their cultural development through their studies of other places.

HISTORY

77 At the time of the inspection no lessons in history were planned. Evidence for this subject is based on a scrutiny of previous work, photographs and discussions with the co-ordinator, pupils and staff. However, insufficient evidence was available to make judgements about the standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have benefited from their first hand experience of seeing and handling artefacts at Michelham Priory and from speaking with the many visitors provided by the school which has included an ex-pupil of the school from sixty-five years ago. Pupils have learnt how things develop and change over a period of time, for example in the differences between bathrooms and kitchens of today compared with those of a hundred years ago. They have also learned something of how it must have been to be alive in Victorian times through their participation in the school's 'Victorian Day' and through their studies of life in Ancient Egypt.

78 At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation. In keeping with the findings of the previous inspection, pupils have a good understanding of how evidence of the past is gathered, of the passing of time and the ways in which things change.

They are beginning to examine the validity of different types of evidence; first hand accounts as opposed to accounts written some time after the event, for example. Pupils have also had the opportunities to empathise a little with the people of other times through using Egyptian hieroglyphs and Roman numerals, as well as dressing as Vikings or Tudors.

79 Pupils have benefited from the many and good opportunities provided by the visits they make and visitors to the school. These have included visits by the London Armoury, Sussex Archaeological Society and members of local carnival and cowboy and Indian societies. Pupils are thus able to handle costumes and artefacts, as well as engage in conversation with experts on different historical themes and periods of time. Pupils visiting Fishbourne Palace and Michelham Priory gain from the opportunity to see at first hand the buildings, artefacts and furniture associated with other periods in time. Teachers have also provided pupils with activities designed to stimulate their imagination and so help their understanding of how things were. Key Stage 1 pupils make Egyptian hammocks, handle and sketch artefacts found locally while pupils in Key Stage 2 make Viking weapons and put on medieval armour.

80 A strength of the school's provision is its association with local historical groups and good use it makes of the local environment. This has, for example, enabled it to benefit from the expertise of a local archaeologist and flint knapper. Good use is also made of the Local Authority's museum service for the loan of artefacts which supplements the school's own resources. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

81 On the few occasions when ICT was observed in use during the inspection, in English, science and art, it usually contributed well to learning in those subjects. Pupils were confident and demonstrated overall average attainment in the aspects observed. In a Year 5/6 science lesson, for example, when pupils were studying physical changes, use of the CD-ROM for research enabled pupils to learn about larva as molten rock. This was good integration of ICT with the lesson, and pupils quickly accessed this information, showing good knowledge of the computer functions and skill in use of the mouse. In work from earlier in the term, also in science, this class had used datalogging equipment to study temperature rise over time, with many pupils able to interpret correctly the resulting graphs. Information from work in other subjects, records and reports shows that the school is teaching a broad ICT curriculum in line with the National Curriculum and that attainment meets the national expectation. In English, for example, wordprocessed creative writing contributed to the quality of the resulting finished work. Many pupils benefit from having access to ICT at home where such work also can be done.

82 Good emphasis is given to teaching and using ICT in relevant contexts so that it becomes a means of learning across the curriculum. The joint co-ordinators have been encouraging colleagues to incorporate the use of ICT in teaching and learning in their subjects, and this approach is developing well. This includes the intended use of ICT in the residential experience for the oldest pupils planned for soon after the inspection when work in ICT control and data handling is to be used in the geography and physical education work to be done then. However, no teaching of ICT was observed during the inspection. On the few occasions when pupils were seen using computers, no teaching occurred, though in most instances pupils were confidently able to work independently to achieve the intended results. Just occasionally, pupils were unsure of what to do next and their lack of progress went unnoticed.

83 Although good progress is being made in the use of ICT, it is not yet as fully developed as it could be due, in part, to shortage of computers, though this has recently been remedied, so that the school now has an adequate number. This includes one kept in the library where its use can be integrated with other information sources. Opportunities are missed, however, to make the fullest use of computers. During the inspection, they were left unused for considerable periods of time, including outside lessons times, so that pupils do not have frequent enough use of computers. This means that they are not able to keep their knowledge, skills and understanding developing as quickly as they could, particularly those pupils who do not have access the ICT at home. A similar situation was reported at the time of the previous inspection, where the underuse of computers also was noted. However, the school is rightly emphasising the use of computers during lessons in other subjects to help to meet the lesson's objectives, thereby contributing to learning in the lesson, as well as developing pupils' ICT skills.

84 The position of ICT has improved since the previous inspection. The number of computers has increased, as has software. Teacher confidence has grown, and good progress is being made in integrating the teaching and learning of ICT throughout the curriculum. Assessment of pupils' progress is better done than previously. But a weakness continues: computers are not used fully enough throughout the day, including lunchtimes and after school, to give all pupils opportunities to keep progressing as quickly as they could in developing the full range of skills. The useful practice in one class in this respect could be more widely employed.

MUSIC

85 Too few music lessons were observed for a judgement to be made about the attainment of pupils in either key stage or about the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils observed receiving specialist teaching of the clarinet attained levels above and well above those expected of pupils of this age. This was due to the very good tuition they received and their response to it.

86 The quality of singing heard during assemblies was satisfactory, as it was during a lesson in which pupils in Key Stage 1 learned and rehearsed a song for the forthcoming music festival. Displays and a scrutiny of work indicate that pupils have knowledge of composing and then record music in simple notation, including the use of ICT.

87 The school provides pupils with the opportunities to receive tuition in playing the violin and clarinet as well as having a thriving choir attended by all pupils in Key Stage 2. It also provides lessons during lunchtimes for pupils of different abilities to learn the recorder. Both the choir and the recorder ensemble take part in local festivals involving other schools. The school has considerable expertise on the staff, which it uses to good effect, especially in the production of music and drama for school 'productions', festival contributions and concerts for senior citizens.

88 Since the last inspection a new co-ordinator has been appointed and the school has made increasing use of LEA guidance on music teaching. The school's scheme of work is derived from this comprehensive guidance and enables all teachers to teach the subject. This is a development from the last inspection when music was mainly taught by the co-ordinator. Further developments include the forging of links with two other local schools so that expertise and resources can be shared, as well as to give pupils the opportunities to mix and

perform together. The school's music resources are rather limited but good use is made of the LEA to borrow instruments and it is expected that links with the local schools will also provide further resources.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

89 Dance was the only aspect of PE planned to be taught during the inspection. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with the national expectation, with some girls and fewer boys showing above average skills in creating and performing dance sequences. Pupils in Year 2 quickly responded to the tempo of the music to link together, in pairs and then in fours, several movements which expressed their responses. As they practised, the movements became more confident and imaginative. Attainment in dance at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national expectation. Working in groups, pupils planned how to demonstrate their emotional responses to the music. As the lesson progressed, pupils showed increasing fluency of movement, linking steps and learning from each other to reach an overall good standard of expression by both boys and girls. The great majority of pupils work hard in PE, do not give up even when becoming tired, and enjoy working together. As a result, they make progress and achieve well in dance. Pupils with special educational needs join in fully and also progress.

90 The teaching seen varied from satisfactory to good, and was good overall, with the result that pupils' learning was mainly good: pupils developed their dance skills to respond to the music's tempo, rhythm and mood. Classes were successfully managed in the excellent sports hall, time was fully used and pupils were expected to work hard. The planned activities interested the pupils who mainly responded enthusiastically and in a self-disciplined way. Stage by stage, classes were carefully taken through demanding dance routines, showing teachers' good expectations. In the best lessons, pupils were encouraged to speak about the quality of work in the class, though even in these lessons not enough attention was given to discussing how movements could be improved. Good use was made of paired and group work, so that lessons also contributed well to pupils' social development. No assessments or recording of individual pupil's progress was seen during these lessons, though the teaching scheme used readily lends itself to keeping a regular check on progress.

91 The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities in PE, involving both competitive team games and dance. Teachers give considerable time throughout the year to these activities which contribute to pupils' progress in PE and to their enjoyment of school. Coaches from outside the school bring further expertise. The sports hall has radically improved facilities so that good quality indoor PE can be taught: this is the most significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school is well placed to exploit fully this major resource due to the enthusiasm of teachers for the subject. Good use is made of other local resources, particularly for swimming, with all Key Stage 2 pupils involved in swimming lessons during the summer term. The great majority of these pupils are reported to be competent swimmers. More needs to be done to assess pupils' progress in other aspects of PE, in addition to swimming so that parents are given clear enough information on their children's physical development. Another improvement, which would increase the rate of pupils' progress, is more opportunity for them to speak about their work and how it can be developed further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

92 Insufficient evidence was available to make a judgement about attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Judging by the limited amount of written work in pupils' folders and the one lesson observed, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is below the expectation of the local agreed syllabus. While the topics covered show that the school is teaching in accordance with the syllabus, the detail in which it is taught is not sufficient to enable pupils to reach high enough standards, due to insufficient curriculum time. Appropriate emphasis is given to Christianity, and teaching other world faiths takes place according to the syllabus expectation. In the Year 5/6 lesson observed, pupils made progress in learning about the Hindu festival of Holi. Pupils were interested in the lesson, as were the pupils in the earlier Key Stage 2 class who visited the parish church to learn about the celebration of Christian marriage. Pupils concentrated very well for a long period, listening attentively to the vicar and a number asked relevant questions. The vicar also contributed to lessons in the Key Stage 1 classes during the inspection, but these were not observed.

93 Too little teaching was observed during the inspection for a judgement to be made about the quality of teaching. The amount of time which the school is allocating to RE is low and this contributes to the unsatisfactory attainment seen. As a result, the subject is not making the expected contribution to pupils' spiritual development through teaching pupils in enough depth about the beliefs that underpin many people's behaviour and moral values. The study of world religions in addition to Christianity contributes to pupils' cultural development, and the school has in the past invited representatives of those religions to the school to speak to the pupils as part of an 'RE week'.

94 Although the agreed syllabus requirements are met, more needs to be done to enable pupils to reach high enough standards. The recent publication of the revised local agreed syllabus should cause the school to examine its own scheme of work, which is dated and sketchy, to ensure that teaching expectations fully match those of the agreed syllabus. More time needs to be given to teaching RE. Regular monitoring, evaluation and support are needed to help standards to rise quickly, supported by a programme of assessments to enable teaching to be based upon accurate understanding of the progress pupils are making.