

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **JEROUNDS INFANT SCHOOL**

Harlow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115023

Headteacher: Mary Evans

Reporting inspector: Pauline Silcock  
21261

Dates of inspection: 3 July – 7 July 2000

Inspection number: 190384

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Pyenest Road  
Harlow  
Essex

Postcode: CM19 4PH

Telephone number: 01279 423485

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Jean Clark

Date of previous inspection: 4 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Information Technology	What should the school do to improve further?
		Art	The schools' results and pupils' achievements.
		Music	How well are pupils taught?
		Under-Fives	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Equal Opportunities	
Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for it's pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Anne Osborne	Team inspector	Science	How well is the school led and managed?
		Design and Technology	
		Religious Education	
		Special Educational Needs	
Ali Haouas	Team inspector	English	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
		Geography	
		History	
		Physical Education	
		English as an Additional Language.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Jerounds Infant School is situated to the south-west of Harlow. It is a popular school, drawing pupils from across Harlow town. It caters for children between 4 and 7 years of age, admitting four-year-olds in either September or January (depending on when they are five). At the time of the inspection, almost all children in the Reception year were already five. The school is about the same size as other schools of its kind. There are 182 pupils on roll, with slightly fewer girls than boys, and a rather uneven distribution of genders between some classes. On entry to the Reception year, pupils' baseline assessment shows them as achieving below what can be expected for four-year-olds in the areas of language and literacy and mathematical development. However, pupils' attainment in social and personal development is better than expected, being assessed as well above average for their age. Approximately 13 per cent are eligible for free school meals (around an average figure). Only 1.6 per cent of pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds, with approximately 1 per cent learning English as an additional language. These figures are low compared to national averages. Languages spoken by pupils other than English are Cantonese and Urdu. The percentage of pupils on the Code of Practice register for special need (13) is also low, as is that for pupils with Statements of special educational need (1 per cent).

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

Jerounds is a very successful school. Pupils enjoy their schooling, feeling part of a happy community. Adults and children get along well together and learning is frequently seen as fun. Parents appreciate their being valued as equal partners in their children's education; they are welcomed into school. Teaching quality is a strength, contributing markedly to the good standards pupils achieve in many areas of the curriculum, most notably in English and mathematics. Leadership and management of the school are very good: the excellent leadership skills of the headteacher are special strengths. The headteacher is very well supported by her deputy head, senior managers and staff, and by governors who work hard in pursuit of the school's aims. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Pupils have good literacy and numeracy skills and apply these skills effectively to subjects across the curriculum. They frequently reach good standards in many curriculum areas.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school and generally good behaviour contributes markedly to their good progress in lessons and to the quality of classroom and school life.
- Teachers' good knowledge and understanding of pupils and their very good management skills have positive effects on standards achieved, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational need is very good.
- The school has very good systems in place for the care and welfare of its pupils, including those for monitoring and supporting academic progress and pupils' personal and social development.
- Partnership with parents is very good. Parents participate fully in the life of the school in ways that contribute significantly to the breadth of pupils' learning.
- The school is well supported by its governing body. Governing body members have very high levels of commitment to continuing school improvement and to ensuring its success.

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

- Aspects of teachers' management of curricular organisation.
- Accommodation in relation to releasing the library for its proper use and in providing better general facilities for staff members.

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

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

The school has made noticeable strides forward since its last inspection in November, 1996. It has successfully addressed the two areas of weaknesses identified. Pupils' achievement and progress in subjects across the curriculum, but particularly in science, design and technology and history, have received attention. Longer term targets within the school development plan – meant to support budgetary decisions -- have been identified. The need to meet curricular objectives has led to significant improvements in teaching quality. As part of their professional development, teachers have acquired very good skills in pupil-management and in organising appropriate opportunities for the development of pupils' independent learning skills. Pupils are encouraged to take initiatives regarding tasks in classrooms and around the school. In addition, teachers have benefited from a thorough appraisal of curricular matters in preparing for and implementing national

strategies

for literacy and numeracy. Consequently, standards have risen across the curriculum. School development planning is now directly linked to main priorities, with expenditure considered in terms of its likely impact on pupils' learning. Currently, the school is preparing for "Investor in People" status. The school is well placed to implement new management procedures relating to this during the next academic year.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	C	B	B	B
Writing	B	B	B	B
Mathematics	D	C	C	C

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
Well below average	E

The table shows that, in 1999, seven-year-olds attained standards above those of pupils in all and similar schools in reading and writing. In mathematics, pupils attained average standards when these same comparisons are made. Inspection evidence supports this good picture in reading and writing. It also suggests that pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved, with most achieving at least in line with national expectations and a significant number attaining in the higher range of a nationally expected Level 2 or above. Results for this year (2000) reveal a steadily rising trend in all tests. They also suggest the school is on target to meet its aim of ensuring that most pupils gain Level 2 or above, and is set to reach its longer-term aim of improving standards at the higher Level 3. Figures for national comparisons are not, yet, available. Such improvements appear to signal real and significant trends over time. Pupils frequently achieve good standards in their work across the curriculum. They have good speaking and listening skills. From the youngest onwards, they listen attentively to teachers, enjoy responding to questions and explaining their own ideas about topics under discussion. They develop good computing skills and apply these confidently to different subjects. Pupils in the Reception year develop a very good grasp of concepts relating to religious education. By the end of the key stage, pupils are starting to discern key differences and similarities between tenets of major faiths. Their singing in assembly is very pleasing. Older pupils keep a correct rhythm, in time with the singing, when playing untuned instruments. Across the school, pupils learn to ask sensible questions about historical artefacts. They can explain differences between life a long time ago and to-day.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils move around the building responsibly. They show good levels of independence in organising and getting on with work.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work very co-operatively together both for teacher-structured tasks and when helping one another spontaneously.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Pupils are eager to come in to classrooms and settle down for the start of lessons. They mostly listen attentively to adults and concentrate well during whole class sessions. In the few instances where they do not (as in Year 2 at times), they respond well to adults' firm expectations that they will participate fully in discussions. Pupils form good relationships with one another and with adults, such 'partnerships' usually succeeding in dealing with set tasks. Attendance is satisfactory overall and has improved since the previous inspection, particularly with regard to unauthorised absence. Attendance figures are, nevertheless, affected by parents opting to take pupils on holiday during term-time: the school continues to work at this issue.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	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.*

In 86 per cent of lessons seen, teaching was of good or better quality. It was judged very good in just over a third of lessons (34 per cent) and excellent in 4 per cent. Teaching was found never less than satisfactory. Teachers are very good at teaching literacy and numeracy skills. They make sure pupils apply these skills consistently to other subjects. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan carefully for different learning needs. Pupils with special educational need, including those with Statements of special need, are well supported at all times so that they participate fully in all aspects of classroom and school life alongside their peers. Pupils in the Reception year learning English as an additional language are, similarly, supported by teachers' good skills in matching work appropriately to their needs. Learning support assistants are well deployed, playing a crucial part in properly preparing pupils with particular needs for specific learning tasks, then helping them cope with these tasks. The quality of teaching is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm for learning and in the good standards they frequently reach in the tasks set.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Provision is enriched through 'Buzz Club' activities, which are wide-ranging in scope and application.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are identified at an early stage in their schooling and consistently monitored.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has a very good capacity for assessing and providing for the very few pupils acquiring English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Special strengths are evident in provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have good opportunities to develop initiative and a sense of personal responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	To very good effect. All staff members understand the school's aims and policies, and consistently seek to deliver these.

The school works in close partnership with parents. It admirably fulfils its commitment to treating parents as crucial to the success of their children's education, including parents in all aspects of school life. During the inspection, many parents were seen ably supporting learning in classrooms. The school's curriculum is broad and well balanced, albeit within constraints set by attempting to fulfil government recommendations related to literacy and numeracy programmes. At times, however, the management of curricular organisation during afternoon sessions proves difficult for teachers, simply because of the number of activities on offer. 'Buzz Club' activities allow all pupils chances to extend their learning in the course of a school year, either for purposes of further addressing known weaknesses or for building on established strengths. National Curriculum requirements are fully met together with requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school collects comprehensive, good quality information about all aspects of pupils' academic and personal development, which effectively informs its planning for different learning needs. Annual reports to parents about their children's progress are comprehensive and detailed. However, these reports do not consistently set targets for pupils' improvement in the way such targets are usefully set, each term, for literacy and numeracy. The use of 'banked' statements in reports is sometimes at variance with the school's emphasis on valuing individual's efforts, especially in subjects such as art.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has excellent leadership qualities. The deputy head and other key members of staff give very good support to ensuring the school reaches its stated aims.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	To good effect. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of their role in shaping the school's future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good systems and procedures for ensuring all staff with responsibilities, along with governors, monitor its work regularly.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Specific grants are properly used and financial matters are very well regulated to the pursuit of clearly identified development goals.

The school has an appropriate number of qualified staff. Learning support assistants contribute importantly to the school's work, ensuring all pupils strive for high standards and attain at least in line with their prior attainment. Accommodation is clean and well maintained, though it is actually insufficient for the school's needs. Learning activities outside the classroom frequently take place in the library, which cannot then be



used for its proper purpose. In addition, accommodation for staff is limited and does not fully meet staff members' needs. Good quality learning resources meet curricular demands. The headteacher has very successfully created a positive school ethos where children are keen to learn and staff members enjoy their work. She

imbues learning with a sense of fun, which is appreciated by all, including parents. The school understands principles of 'best value' and tries to apply these to all financial matters.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are skilled at teaching literacy and numeracy. Consequently, children achieve good standards in their work and behaviour.</li> <li>• Teachers are very caring. They know children well and get the best out of them.</li> <li>• The 'Buzz Club' gives very good learning opportunities to every child.</li> <li>• The headteacher and her staff are very approachable.</li> <li>• The school gives very good quality information about all aspects of its work.</li> <li>• Parents are welcomed openly into school as key partners in their children's education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons is limited.</li> <li>• Homework provision.</li> </ul>

Members of the inspection team agree with parents' positive views. They also judge that activities which enrich the curriculum (for example, through the 'Buzz Club') and homework arrangements are appropriate. Good examples of pupils being enthused to work at home following work in classrooms were observed during the inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children enter the Reception year, in the term in which they are five, their attainments vary. However, on the basis of baseline assessments, very few are found to reach average or above average levels for their age in the areas of language and literacy and mathematical development. Tests show that most attain well below what is expected of four-year-olds, in these areas. By contrast, most children reveal good social and personal skills (in line with expectations), with a significant number exceeding expectation in the way they apply these skills. Pupils make good progress in Reception classes. They appear set to achieve what is largely expected of five year olds in those areas of learning where, initially, they had most weakness. Thus they are very well prepared for transfer to Key Stage 1. Pupils with particular learning needs are identified early, and this early identification allows good support to be allotted to them, so that they can participate fully in classroom life. Pupils with special educational need make good progress and attain at least in line with their prior attainment. The very few children with English as an additional language in the Reception year also make good progress. Their needs are well met through carefully targeted support, aimed at including them in lessons alongside their peers.
2. In the 1999 statutory assessment tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, seven-year-olds achieved above average standards in reading and writing when comparisons are made with the results of pupils in all and similar schools. In mathematics, they attained in line with average standards when the same comparisons are made. Teachers assessed pupils' speaking and listening skills as being above national averages both at the nationally expected Level 2 and at the higher Level 3. In science, they assessed pupils' overall attainment as below the national average at Level 2 and broadly in line with this average at the higher Level 3. Over the four-year period, from 1996 to 1999, attainments in reading and writing are seen to have risen steadily from average levels to above average levels. In mathematics, pupils' attainment rose sharply between 1996 and 1997 to reach the national average. Since then, it has kept in line with this average. Over time, girls have attained better than girls nationally in all tests and better than boys, in this school. Whereas such a result is in line with national trends in reading and writing, it runs counter to national trends in mathematics.
3. Inspection evidence shows pupils reach good standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and in mathematics, by the time they are seven. Most attain at least in line with national expectations and a significant number does better than this, attaining in the higher range of Level 2. A smaller percentage of higher attaining pupils achieve at the higher Level 3. In science, pupils are judged to attain at least in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage, with some higher attaining pupils achieving beyond this. No differences were seen in the achievement of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational need make good progress and attain at least in line with their prior attainment. There were no pupils with English as an additional language in the cohort of Year 2 pupils. Early indications for this year's statutory tests (2000) in reading, writing and mathematics show pupils have made gains in terms of the percentage achieving in the upper range of Level 2 compared to last year. Results overall, therefore, are better. This improvement is particularly marked in reading and mathematics. Teacher-assessed science tests show an overall improvement at Level 2 from last year, although results at the higher Level 3 are not as good. Figures for the purpose of national comparisons are not, yet, available. Results show that the school has achieved its target of ensuring a majority of pupils attains within Level 2 in statutory tests, with the quality of its test results improved overall. The school is now aiming towards its longer-term target of raising attainment at the higher Level 3. Test results also suggest that boys have done rather better than girls than was previously the case. However, this year, there are significantly more boys than girls in the cohort, so direct comparisons with previous results are difficult to make.
4. In religious education, pupils of seven years of age attain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Younger pupils in the key stage achieve good standards. For example, Reception class pupils, who were studying the life of Jesus, learned what it means to be a good friend and applied their understanding to the story of Bartimaeus in the Bible. By the end of the key stage, pupils in Year 2 are developing a secure understanding of different faith-communities and the need to respect different beliefs and practices.
5. Pupils reach good standards in their skills, knowledge and understanding of literacy and numeracy. Across the school, they can express their ideas for a range of purposes. For example, in a Year 2

discussion, prior to an extended writing session, pupils enjoyed exploring how to use a 'tongue twister' as the basis for a story. They showed an imaginative capability for predicting possible events arising from a central character's actions in digging a hole of unknown depth. Through discussion, pupils show insight into the way stories are constructed and what they need to consider to make their own interesting for others to read. They apply their writing skills fruitfully to other subjects, too. For example, also in Year 2, pupils described places they have visited for geography work, usefully comparing similarities and differences between a town and a village. In mathematics, pupils enjoyed opportunities to play games as a means of reinforcing their knowledge of number and extending their facility in handling these. In a Reception class, for example, pupils worked out that a glove puppet manipulated by a classroom learning assistant must hold the number nine, because they realised this has not, yet, been used by the class teacher in the number game being played.

6. Pupils generally record their work neatly, especially when they know it is important to do so, or when teachers make their high expectations explicit. Across the school, pupils learn to form letters and numbers correctly. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can produce a clear, joined, script. They demonstrate good spelling skills, with even the youngest pupils prepared to 'have a go' at 'sounding out' letters they hear when an adult says a word clearly. Some Reception year pupils have very good spelling skills (seen, for example, when a small group worked out how to spell 'scratch' correctly without adult help). Teachers set realistic targets for pupils each term in numeracy and literacy, ensuring pupils recognise which skills they need to improve through practice. Where necessary, pupils are helped by additional support in achieving personal learning goals. Information about these goals is shared with parents so that support can be given at home, where possible.
7. Pupils acquire good computer skills (seen when two pupils in Year 1 collaborated to make a map, arranging elements within the screen at will, changing their minds about where to place shops and what route a road should follow). Older pupils can access the Internet to retrieve 'tongue twisters' for literacy work. Pupils consistently use an appropriate subject vocabulary when explaining what they are doing on computers. So, they talk about 'menus' and 'icons', and know how to access the required program (such as when some Year 1 pupils entered data they had collected on a pictograph accessed for the purpose).
8. Pupils achieve standards better than might be expected in many subjects by the end of the key stage. For example, they show a secure knowledge of past times in history when talking about artefacts made a century ago, and the difference between life then and now. They know, for example, that it must have been harder to look after a house when there was no electricity. Younger pupils, also, frequently achieve better than might be expected for their age. So, in a Reception class, pupils show a very good scientific ability when comparing soft and hard fruits and describing these accurately. They know that fruits grow from seeds. Across the school, pupils sing tunefully in time to the piano. They can 'come in' on a correct beat after the introduction to a song. A substantial number of Year 2 pupils are learning the recorder and gaining good skills in fingering notes correctly and producing a clear sound. Pupils read simple tunes accurately from a music stave, and readily incorporate new notes (such as F#) into their playing.

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

9. In the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes towards school and their behaviour in lessons and around the school were judged good overall. However, weaknesses were identified in areas of personal development where it was stated that pupils had too few opportunities to take initiative and develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning. There has been marked improvement, here, and pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are now judged very good, signalling improvements all round.
10. Most pupils show very positive attitudes to their school both in and outside the classroom. They are keen to come to school and - except for a small minority, on occasion, in Year 2 - concentrate well in lessons. Because teachers know their pupils and have effective management strategies, those few pupils who find concentration difficult receive effective care and supervision. They respond well to this. In most lessons, pupils listen attentively and eagerly contribute ideas and opinions to class discussions. They are self disciplined and well disposed to helping each other. These qualities show themselves especially in group tasks - for example, during literacy lessons and when members of groups working on information and communication technology tasks readily help those who are less confident. Pupils persevere with tasks and take pride in their work. They enthusiastically participate in a range of activities provided, including activities connected with the various study visits the school organises.

11. The quality of behaviour and discipline is also very good. This marks a distinctive strength of the school. Pupils are clear about the code of behaviour they have to follow and the rewards and sanctions used. They are aware of these things because every year they take part in establishing class and school rules. They are courteous, spontaneously entering into conversation with visitors to talk about their work. At play and during lunch times, pupils play well together, showing care and concern for their peers. They show respect for school property, resenting graffiti perpetrated by teenagers on walls outside the school.
12. Pupils throughout the school take registers to the school office. They assume a range of responsibilities, including taking and bringing trolleys to store and retrieve lunch boxes, managing overhead projector in assemblies so that other pupils can follow songs. These responsibilities are carried out willingly, and reveal pupils' growing ability to take initiatives.
13. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their actions, following disputes, and the headteacher and staff use these occasions well to support pupils' personal development. The importance of pupils showing concern for others' feelings is carefully fostered by the school and rewarded in special assemblies. Relationships between individual pupils and between pupils and adults are very warm, and based on a strong mutual respect. These harmonious relationships, free from any signs of oppressive behaviour, are frequently exemplified in adults' dealings with each other. To illustrate: one day, in the playground, a shy pupil from a non-indigenous cultural and linguistic background was kindly taken by the hand by another child, even though the pupil in question was in an early phase of acquiring English, and the two couldn't really communicate.
14. The school's attendance figures are satisfactory overall. They are in line with the national average and show improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the area of unauthorised absence. Many parents continue to take children on holiday during term time and this remains a concern for the school. Very few children arrive late for sessions. There were no exclusions in the school year prior to the inspection.

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

15. Teaching is a strength of the school. It is judged to be of good or better quality in 86 per cent of lessons seen. In just over a third of lessons visited (34 per cent), teaching is judged to be very good. It is assessed as excellent in 4 per cent of lessons. Across the school, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. This result marks a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was found to be mainly satisfactory, with shortcomings identified in a substantial number of lessons.
16. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the age-range taught. Planning for the needs of the youngest pupils in the Reception year takes very good account of a transition from work geared to the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers mostly have secure subject knowledge of all National Curriculum subjects and of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Although strengths are evident in many subjects, they are specially notable in the five core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. Basic skills for literacy and numeracy are very well taught and this fact markedly affects standards, which are frequently higher than might be expected in both English and mathematics. Teachers also give pupils good opportunities to apply their skills in other curricular areas. So, for example, Year 1 pupils effectively deploy mathematical skills when collecting data to make pictographs on the computer, and pupils across the school apply literacy skills appropriately to scientific tasks. Information technology skills well support learning across the curriculum (as when, for example, Year 1 pupils construct maps in connection with geography work).
17. Teachers deploy learning support assistants skilfully to aid the development of pupils' basic skills. For example, Reception year pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are helped to understand mathematical concepts related to times of the day by rehearsing new vocabulary with a support assistant prior to the lesson. Routinely, support assistants sit with pupils identified as needing additional support in whole class literacy and numeracy sessions to ensure they concentrate on the work in hand. As a result, these pupils respond to teachers' questions alongside their peers. Likewise, assistants are skilled in supporting the pupils they work with for follow-up tasks. At such times, they enable pupils to work as independently as possible while focussing on their tasks. Teachers and learning support assistants collaborate well, in partnership, sharing lesson-planning to make sure learning goals are known to all concerned, comparing notes about pupils' progress afterwards. At times, support assistants join with teachers in presenting a lesson. A good example of this was seen in a Reception class mathematics lesson, when the assistant used a glove puppet to

emphasise teaching points related to numbers from zero to nine. Later, the assistant worked productively with groups playing a number game, which had been introduced by the class teacher to reinforce pupils' understanding of number bonds below ten.

18. In the few instances where teachers are seen to lack subject confidence, as in some music lessons, they are nonetheless well served by their more general planning and organisational skills. For example, in a Year 2 class a teacher's careful structuring of a music lesson overcame some uncertainty in the subject. So pupils were able to perform compositions, written previously, with a view to improving these, and to enjoy what they did. In addition, the notable musical expertise of the headteacher (who is also the subject co-ordinator) gives good support to other staff in the planning and delivery of lessons. She achieves this in a number of ways, not least via daily assemblies. Pupils' involvement in and enjoyment of music is promoted each day as an integral part of collective worship.
19. A strength of teachers' planning is the way they share learning targets with pupils at the outset of lessons, ensuring everyone understands these. Additionally, teachers frequently check whether targets have been met and discuss such matters with pupils where it is judged beneficial to do so. For example, in a mathematics lesson on capacity in a Year 1 class, a pupil disagreed with his peers about whether both learning targets for the lesson had been achieved. He rightly pointed out that it had proved hard to compare the amount of rice held in each of two large containers and suggested the class had not really understood the answer given. After probing, his teacher accepted this judgement as valid. "Target partially met" replaced the statement "fully met" on the board for this learning goal. Assessment information gathered during lessons is well used. For example, in a parallel Year 1 class, a teacher decided to revisit work on 'capacity', tackling it from a changed perspective, because she detected common misunderstandings amongst pupils who were talking at the end of their lesson about what they had found out. Teachers have very good questioning skills. They consistently pursue pupils' answers to questions both to check on understanding and to encourage the recall of previous learning. For example, in a Year 2 religious education lesson, a teacher's skilled questioning helped pupils link their experiences of special family celebrations (such as a blessing in a church) to the celebration of Independence Day in America, which they had learned about in assembly.
20. In some instances, teachers' management of afternoon sessions is hampered by the sheer number of activities organised for pupils, and the demands some of these activities make. While teaching may focus well on a particular group of pupils, such focussing precludes teachers from overseeing other work and monitoring pupils' progress more generally. Consequently, there are occasions when pupils do not develop skills as they otherwise might, and, at times, they seem to be left without a clear idea of what to do. For example, Year 2 pupils working independently on a design and technology task really needed support in developing their use of tools for cutting materials properly. In a Reception class, a group of pupils could not get on promptly with a new game linked to mathematics. The pupils waited for some time before the teacher could turn her attention to getting them started, so enabling them to proceed independently.
21. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the individual education plans for pupils on the Code of Practice register of special need, including those with Statements of special need. Lessons are carefully planned to take account of these plans, with activities matched well to pupils' varying needs. Teachers liaise closely with learning support assistants to target pupils' learning programmes during sessions taught outside the classroom and (more often) when support is given within the class. Such pupils are consistently well supported within a caring learning environment. Consequently, they make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
22. Across the school, teachers and support assistants show very good pupil management skills. They use humour effectively. Adults have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. At times, their expectations are very high. For example, in a Year 2 singing lesson, a teacher promptly stopped playing the piano when pupils failed to come in on time after the introduction to a song. She gave firm reminders about the importance of hitting the first note accurately and expressed surprise that such a fundamental thing should have, apparently, been forgotten. Pupils subsequently showed how well they could follow this instruction, attending admirably throughout the remainder of the lesson. Adults make effective judgements about what can reasonably be expected of those pupils who sometimes experience difficulties in participating in lessons. For example, in a whole-class, Year 1 information technology lesson, a classroom learning assistant withdrew a pupil she was supporting when the pupil became distressed for no obvious reason. After a brief interval, the pupil was able to return and take part in listening to the teacher and responding to questions.

23. Teachers make very good use of a range of learning resources for subjects across the curriculum, to stimulate pupils' interest and, through practical experiences, to bring things alive. For example, pupils in a Reception class history lesson washed clothes by hand as might have been done a hundred years ago, comparing what they did with how washing machines are used in homes to-day. Although pupils are not necessarily required to do the homework tasks they are given, these are well matched to classroom learning. At times, too, pupils are inspired to continue at home with work they have been doing in school. For example, a pupil in a Year 2 class was keen to share, with others, drawings and paintings she had done at home, and another pupil talked about her computer researches into the life of David Livingstone, which came about as a result of a lesson she had enjoyed.

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

24. Quality and range of learning opportunities are very good. Full account is taken of all National Curriculum requirements and of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. As pupils in Reception classes approach five years of age, a transition from curricular planning geared to Desirable Outcomes for Children's learning and that for National Curriculum purposes is managed smoothly. At the time of the inspection, only five pupils below statutory school age were in school. Consequently, for the purposes of this report, pupils in the Reception year are included within Key Stage 1. Weaknesses identified in the last report in relation to investigative skills in mathematics and science and to design and technology more generally have been successfully addressed.
25. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully in place and have helped the school raise standards both in statutory tests at the end of the key stage and in standards of work achieved across subjects. For example, in Year 2, pupils' writing skills are applied to good effect when they set out their scientific experiments and record their predictions and findings. They apply a sound knowledge and understanding of spelling rules in so doing.
26. Although there are no extra-curricular activities outside of the school day, curricular provision for all pupils is considerably enhanced through activities organised for the 'Buzz Club'. These activities are intended to give pupils well focused, extra support for their learning, either to address identified weaknesses or to extend skills where strengths have been noted. So, learning support assistants may be deployed to help pupils extend their computing skills or they may work with pupils to reinforce knowledge and understanding of letter sounds to improve reading. Over time, all pupils are included in 'Buzz Club' sessions, which are made fun and accessible, whatever task is undertaken. Such tasks are consistently well designed to improving pupils' classroom performance. They encompass all areas of the curriculum. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents spoke appreciatively of the extra opportunities their children now had to develop talents in drawing and painting, for example.
27. 'Buzz Club' activities are integral to the school's approach to equality of opportunity, since they are a practical means of enhancing every pupil's learning experiences, over time. Moreover, specific time is given to pupils identified as having particular needs, such as those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and those on the Code of Practice register of special educational need. Curricular provision for these pupils is of very good quality. It is carefully matched to identified needs. Where pupils have individual education plans for special educational need, these are used as a valuable reference for improving pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the relevant subject areas. Through a judicious mix of individual and small group teaching, provision ensures such pupils have full access to all curricular activities alongside their peers.
28. Within the constraints of meeting government requirements, the school achieves a good balance of curricular activities. Its emphasis on the arts shows in its approach to music, in that a good provision is supplemented by whole school activities in assemblies and in singing lessons, in addition to those undertaken by teachers in classrooms. This emphasis allows all elements of the music curriculum to benefit from specialist expertise within the staff, affecting the standards pupils achieve. Subject co-ordinators frequently have very good levels of subject expertise and provide effective support to colleagues through their monitoring activities, and through practical advice. For example, the co-ordinator for information technology has worked alongside colleagues in classrooms, noting pupils' learning opportunities and demonstrating how to teach specific skills.
29. In its organisation of the curriculum, the school strives to achieve a depth of study for pupils in those subjects that are not taught continuously, (that is, history, geography, art and design and technology). Subjects are planned in blocks of time within a two-year cycle to make sure all elements are properly covered. The school is well on the way to revising its curricular planning in light of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, to prepare for the latest government recommendations to be put in place by September for Curriculum 2000. It is also working at establishing the revised

curriculum for children under five, so that requirements for the Foundation Stage are met in Reception classes. Good cross curricular links further pupils' opportunities to extend learning and apply skills purposefully. So, pupils in Year 2 history sessions study black and white illustrations of aspects of Victorian life, treating the illustrations as subjects for drawing, adapting their own pencil drawings to an illustrator's style.

30. At times, however, curricular organisation presents management difficulties for teachers, with the result that teaching is either distracted from its main purpose or teachers become insufficiently aware of some pupils' needs. For example, the range of activities planned for pupils during afternoon sessions is quite wide. Some pupils participate in adult-led group work, others work co-operatively at adult structured tasks and yet others 'choose' from a variety of related activities which supposedly need little direct adult intervention. Such organisation can mean that teachers' skills are stretched to ensure varying learning needs are met appropriately (see paragraph 20).
31. The school makes very good provision for personal, social and health education. There is an appropriate sex education programme, well planned as part of the science curriculum. The school has discussed whether to broaden this programme to include reference to drug misuse but, following their consultation with local services, governors have decided that such reference is not appropriate, at this point in time. A strong theme in science of 'healthy eating' gains impetus through links made to other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 apply their observational skills fostered in art to produce carefully observed drawings of fruit and vegetables studied for scientific purposes. Good attention is paid to personal and social education in time allotted from outside National Curriculum time demands. In structured sessions, pupils are able to express personal ideas and feelings as part of a theme under discussion. They are also encouraged to listen to peers and so learn to perceive other points of view.
32. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school is a caring community, which succeeds in helping pupils appreciate cultural diversity, act responsibly and value each other's contributions to classroom and school life.
33. Quality of provision for spiritual development is good, being promoted via the school's welcoming and caring ethos, which is evident in assemblies, and via a strong sense of community amongst staff, parents and pupils. Themes set in assemblies provide valuable starting points for classroom work in religious education and personal and social development. For example, during the inspection, a theme of 'celebration' in different countries was introduced by a teacher with personal experience of the way Americans celebrate Independence Day. Through this theme, pupils gained insights into different values and beliefs relating to independence, and reflected on their own perceptions of what it means to act independently. Assemblies are also venues for celebrating personal interests and achievements both within school and within the wider community. For example, pupils listened appreciatively to a teacher and pupil from a neighbouring secondary school play various instruments. Those in Year 2 recognised the skills of the performers and expressed admiration for the way the secondary school pupil is mastering saxophone technique. Music strongly informs the special way the school celebrates how quality of life is enhanced through others' talents.
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The school's ethos and expectations create for them points of reference for their moral values. These values are echoed in the school's behavioural code, to which pupils have contributed, which spells out their rights and responsibilities. Personal and social education sessions sensitively invite pupils to reflect on and discuss feelings and personal dilemmas.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Opportunities for pupils to work, play and pursue social activities harmoniously are actively promoted in ways well understood by all. The fruits of these opportunities are often discovered in pupils' readiness to work collaboratively. For instance, in literacy lessons pupils frequently help each other with spellings when working on key words. Imaginative provision for informal play in the playground allows pupils to engage in a range of activities revolving around the sharing of equipment, to the benefit of their social relationships. So, pupils share a climbing frame, or enjoy role-play in the amphitheatre. In personal and social education activities, teachers place good stress on the need for pupils to listen and take turns, so showing respect for each other's views and opinions. Pupils appropriately take initiatives and responsibilities for daily tasks, as when they tidy up at the end of lessons and take registers to the school office. Social development is further catered for by the school's good use of educational study visits to such places as museums, and by visitors invited into school in connection with classroom work.

36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Whenever practicable, teachers plan work relating to differing cultural traditions as well as to further pupils' knowledge and understanding of a majority culture. For example, although in the Reception year, pupils learn a wide repertoire of Nursery rhymes and familiar songs, in a Year 1 class they are introduced to a range of stories from Canada, which provoke thinking about different ways of looking at the world. Pupils across the school benefit from outings within the locality, visiting places of worship such as churches, or are taken on conducted tours of historical landmarks in the town and surrounding area. Over the period of a week in the summer term, the school plans its curriculum around one of three themes in a three-year cycle: a multicultural theme, an environmental theme, a citizenship theme. This year, a 'multicultural' week is planned so pupils can explore different facets of other cultures in depth, additional to their more routine work. Thus pupils listen to stories from another country and place this country on the globe in relation to Great Britain, as well as studying other aspects of life there (for example, art and music).

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

37. The school's aim to value each child as an individual is demonstrated very well in the pastoral and welfare roles the school undertakes. Well-organized systems combine with high quality relationships between all staff and pupils to make this aspect a strength of the school. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents endorsed the school's success as a caring community.
38. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good (including ones used with pupils who have special educational need and Statements of special need for specific learning or physical difficulties). Individual educational plans are well known to all concerned. They are regularly reviewed, parents and carers (together with outside agencies) being involved as appropriate. Pupils learning English as an additional language are similarly closely monitored so that planning for their particular circumstances can alter, as required, in line with a growing proficiency in their new language.
39. Teachers keep extensive records on all pupils' progress in the five core subjects (English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education) to show the key concepts pupils have both been taught and are assessed as having understood, or not. Assessment information is used well to inform planning at all levels. Such information about pupils' literacy and numeracy progress is also useful in helping teachers to set pupils' individual learning targets each term. These targets are plainly stated with small, achievable, steps outlined for future action. In addition to academic progress, teachers keep good quality information about pupils' personal and social development, noting particular strengths and weaknesses. At times, pupils may be set a target relating to aspects of their behaviour or aimed at building up their self-esteem. In total, teachers gather a very full picture of individuals, which serves well to support learning across all aspects of pupils' development. The school is well on the way to extending its assessment information to include non-core subjects, in line with recommendations in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines.
40. The school gives good attention to matters of health and safety, and medical procedures are effective. The school keeps detailed up-to-date records of those children with allergies or asthma, and incidents requiring first aid are recorded accurately. Staff members are aware of child protection systems and, where concerns arise, action is quickly and thoughtfully taken.
41. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented a 'First Day Call' system whereby families are rung on the first morning of a child's absence if a reason has not been given. This system has helped reduce the number of unauthorised absences. Registers are completed clearly and accurately and are monitored regularly. The Educational Welfare Officer is involved where appropriate.
42. High standards of behaviour in and around the school are underpinned by very good promotion and monitoring procedures. Pupils devise and sign up to classroom rules and well understand more general school and playground rules. Behaviour is rewarded consistently in various ways. Instances of kindness, for example, are recorded on a 'Notes' board in the Hall; good work is rewarded with a sticker and shown at assemblies. Those consistently achieving good behaviour and work are given certificates at a special assembly each half term. Pupils understand the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. A few pupils who regularly behave badly are handled sensitively by teachers during lessons. They are 'on contract'. In many cases, this way of dealing with poor behaviour has worked, and pupils' behaviour patterns have changed.
43. The school takes issues such as bullying or fighting seriously, and, though rare, related incidents are investigated carefully. Parents are involved when necessary and pupils are expected to write 'Sorry notes' at home.



44. Pupils are supervised well throughout the day. In the playground, they play energetically and with purpose using an excellent range of equipment provided. The school, together with a 'Friends' Association, has done much to improve outside areas and as a result staff comment on the connected improvement in pupils' behaviour at lunchtime. Pupils develop social skills as they eat their lunch. In good weather, older children enjoy eating packed lunches outside at picnic tables, under a gazebo.

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

45. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school in their views. At the pre-inspection meeting, they praised the headteacher for being very approachable and for the good information about progress they receive. They confirmed how children gain in confidence and self-esteem. They feel that staff are skilled in working with and getting the best out of children, saying how very caring and very concerned teachers are about the children as individuals. Parents reported that their children are very well behaved and make good progress as a result of the way literacy and numeracy skills are taught. Parents especially like the 'Buzz Club' and see it as a valuable curriculum strategy, in that all children can receive closely targeted attention for specific strengths and weakness in subjects. They described the school as a very caring community where parents are welcomed as key partners in their children's education. They expressed no concerns about the school.
46. The results of the questionnaire showed that 82 per cent of the parents who responded strongly agreed that the school expects pupils to work hard and that the school is well led and managed. Seventy-seven per cent strongly agreed teaching is good, and that they can approach staff comfortably. Twenty per cent of respondents disagreed with the statement that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons and 11 per cent had concerns about homework.
47. Members of the inspection team agree with the positive views expressed in the meeting and in the questionnaires. They also judge that a provision of activities to enrich the curriculum, and homework arrangements, are appropriate. For example, and as some parents noted, the 'Buzz Club' provides an ongoing means of enriching curricular provision for all pupils. However, inspection evidence does not support the more negative concerns expressed by some parents.
48. Information provided for parents by the school is very good. There is a well-organized induction for new parents and time is taken to allay any concerns they have about their children starting school. They are given a good insight into the way their children will be taught and informed of school routines. The school operates an 'Open Door' policy which parents appreciate and there are good informal contacts between the headteacher, staff and parents. Each class teacher produces a summary of the curriculum children will work at each half term. Parents value this as a means of enabling them to support their child's learning at home – for example, by visits to a library.
49. Parents know their child's learning targets and these (alongside individual progress) are reviewed at parents' evenings each term, with any new targets set discussed. Annual reports are detailed and meet requirements. However, teachers refer inconsistently to targets in these reports and, where targets are stated, their meaning is not always clear. This fact conflicts with the clear target-setting teachers manage during the course of the year, for example for literacy and numeracy purposes. In addition, the use of banked information for writing reports means that pupil individuality (which the school otherwise stresses) is, at times, lost. This loss of individuality is particularly noticeable in report writing for non-core subjects – for example, art.
50. Attendance is very good at parents' evenings. Often the school uses such meetings to hold workshops about wider issues in education such as literacy or numeracy. A significant number of parents help regularly in class. The school ensures that they are well briefed so adding to the good support pupils receive. As a result of their involvement, parents are better placed to assist their children at home. Most parents hear their children read regularly which positively benefits their progress. Homework is voluntary, and parents at the meeting felt this to be an appropriate approach and that it is matched well to children's abilities. The 'Buzz Diary' works well as a tool for communication between school and home; it records both reading and homework and other concerns from parents or teachers. The school has a very active Friends Association, which gives a high level of support to the school, particularly in the development of outside areas. A most recent success was the completion of a small amphitheatre, used for curriculum activity as well as by children at playtime.

51. Relationships between the school and parents remain a real strength. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and on their own child's education is very good. Parents are justifiably proud of the contribution they make to the life of the school.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

52. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall, with particular strengths noted in the excellent leadership skills of the headteacher. She has been very successful in creating a positive school ethos where children are keen to learn and staff enjoy their work. The personal, social and academic achievements of all pupils are valued and celebrated and very strong leadership and clear educational direction result in steadily rising standards. The way all staff members feel valued and work together effectively as a team to evaluate and improve practice is a strength of the school.
53. The school's stated aims inform its daily work. Individuals are valued for their uniqueness, and teachers successfully develop pupils' confidence and independence within a caring, learning environment. Parental confidence in the school's leadership and management showed in their questionnaire responses.
54. The school is supported by a conscientious governing body, which, through efficient working practices, fulfils its statutory duties. A number of governors effectively support school improvement through their specialist expertise. Governors are kept well informed of progress in curriculum matters through the headteacher's reports, through their own monitoring visits and through their analysis of pupil performance data. They see the importance of celebrating pupils' academic, social and personal achievement. Governors work well with the headteacher, trusting in her professionalism. They respect her organisational skills, consultative management style and her sense of fun. Performance targets are set annually as a result of the governing body's appraisal of the headteacher's work, and the school's Performance Management policy is being discussed and drafted ready for Autumn 2000. The governing body has responded effectively to key issues identified by the previous inspection and very good progress has been made. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas still in need of development. They are optimistic about its future and anxious to maintain its strong child-centred ethos.
55. The school's leadership is committed to improving standards of teaching and learning and all co-ordinators have time to support and develop the teaching of their subject across the school by sharing effective practice. Finances are dedicated to further develop this monitoring strategy. In addition, teachers' planning is monitored regularly, the headteacher teaches across the school, governors visit and report on teaching and standards in their nominated area and there has been external monitoring by the local education authority. Analysis of end of Key Stage 1 tests has pinpointed weaknesses in pupils' performance, and teaching programmes have been amended accordingly. Systems for monitoring, evaluation and review have developed well since the previous inspection.
56. Individual pupil attainment is assessed in Year 1 with targets predicted for pupil achievement at the end of the key stage. The school's action to meet its target of a majority of pupils reaching Level 2 in the core subjects has been successful and there is now an appropriate focus on supporting pupils to reach Level 3.
57. Across the school, there is a shared commitment to improvement and a determination to succeed. Both staff and governors are suitably involved in development planning and the current plan incorporates a three-year rolling programme of subject reviews and a one-year detailed action plan, with appropriate priorities divided between maintenance and development. Success criteria for measuring the impact of initiatives are stated together with some costings, although the plan does not include a running total of expenditure and overall costing. The plan is reviewed termly, so that progress can be evaluated and the plan amended as necessary.
58. A regular cycle of teacher appraisal is in place, comprising termly professional reviews and curricular discussions for teaching staff. Resulting targets are reviewed bi-annually. Members of the non-teaching staff have annual review meetings with a member of the senior management team. Results of all reviews suitably inform the school development plan. The school is working for an 'Investor in People' award, with final assessment due in October 2000.

59. The school has an appropriate number of qualified staff who are well managed and effectively supported. The governing body's decision to finance the employment of additional learning support assistants has markedly improved support for all pupils' learning. Support for pupils with special educational needs ensures they make good progress. The school's commitment to fund school-based training for all staff has proved beneficial for learning support assistants who have a good grasp of their role and so operate it effectively, especially in relation to pupils with special educational need. There is a useful induction handbook for new staff, and in-service training well supports the school and individual staff development priorities, and has had a noticeable impact on teaching and learning. All staff members in the school are conscientiously committed to the children in their care. As reflective practitioners, they are determined to do their best for all pupils.
60. Accommodation is clean and well maintained, safe and secure. There is a rolling programme for redecoration, and the replacement of windows in Year 2 classrooms has improved these learning environments. The governing body plans to extend this improvement programme across the school. Classrooms are spacious, attractive and well cared for. Indoor and outdoor specialist areas are well used. There is a well-organised library of fiction and non-fiction books although access is limited as it is also used effectively as the "Buzz Club" base. The school is short of non-class teaching areas. Plans to re-model parts of its building will address this and also result in much needed additional space for staff facilities. All pupils can enter the school building via ramps from the playground and the governing body is committed to financing additional access should the need arise. Parents have contributed generously to developing outside play areas, providing a good range of equipment to promote pupils' physical and social skills through structured play activities.
61. Learning resources are good overall and used effectively to support teaching and learning in all curricular areas. As schemes of work are reviewed in the light of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance, additional resource needs are being identified.
62. The school has effective working practices for planning, managing and monitoring its finances. The last local authority audit was completed in 1995 and recommendations were acted upon. A budget is directly linked to priorities identified in the school development plan, with items of expenditure costed in terms of their likely impact on pupils' learning. The governing body's finance committee meets termly to monitor the budget and make necessary adjustments. At present, there is a substantial contingency fund earmarked for building improvements, intended to improve the learning environment for both pupils and staff. The governing body recognises the importance of using this fund to enhance conditions for those pupils currently in school. They are aware of the principles of best value.
63. The school's day-to-day administration is effective. There are good office routines. The administrative staff ably supports the headteacher, staff and pupils and helps ensure the school runs smoothly and efficiently. Appropriate procedures mean the headteacher can keep finances in good order and monitor spending regularly. The school office has information and communication technology equipment and systems suited to its needs, and its staff attends regular training sessions. The school makes good use of specific funding. For example, plans are well in hand for extra administration funding to be used to buy laptops for teachers as a way of aiding their curricular planning. A training programme in the use of these is to be undertaken from next September and teachers have assessed their training needs realistically, in preparation. The Parents' Association raises considerable funds to support learning opportunities for all pupils.
64. Taking into account the effectiveness of the school in terms of the progress pupils make and the standards that they achieve, the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of leadership and management, the school provides very good value for money.

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

65. The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:
- Teachers organise that number of activities during school afternoons which they can effectively manage;  
(paragraphs: 20, 30)
  - The school implements its plans for improving accommodation.  
(paragraphs: 60, 62, 72)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in an action plan. This is indicated in paragraph: 49

- Improve the quality of annual reports to parents so that they achieve:
  - greater consistency in their reporting of set targets;
  - more attention to pupil individuality in the way they are written.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

56

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	34	48	14			

*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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		182
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		24

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		25

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### **Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.3
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	34	34	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	29	29
	Girls	33	34	34
	Total	58	63	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (96 )	93 (90)	93 (85)
	National	82 (80 )	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	25
	Girls	34	33	33
	Total	62	61	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (95)	90 (85)	85 (95)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	119
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

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

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	30.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	April 98 – March 99
	£
Total income	346312
Total expenditure	356801
Expenditure per pupil	1803
Balance brought forward from previous year	44906
Balance carried forward to next year	34417

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	182
Number of questionnaires returned	69

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	41	1		
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36			
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	32			3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	43	10		
The teaching is good.	78	22			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	36	6		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	1		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17			
The school works closely with parents.	62	33	4		
The school is well led and managed.	83	17			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	28			1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	32	16	3	17



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

### **ENGLISH**

66. Results in the 1999 statutory tests for seven-year-olds at the end of the key stage show that standards attained in reading were above the national average both at the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3. In writing, pupils also attained above this average at Level 2 and close to the average at the higher Level 3. When compared to the results of pupils in similar schools, pupils attained above the average overall. Over the last four years, there has been a consistently improving trend in standards achieved in reading and writing. National results show that standards achieved by girls exceed those of boys in both these aspects of English. Teachers assessed pupils as above average in speaking and listening skills at both Level 2 and the higher Level 3, compared to national figures in 1999. Inspection evidence supports the positive picture of recent years and shows pupils achieve good standards by the end of the key stage in reading, writing, speaking and listening. No difference was observed between the performance of boys and girls. These findings represent an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged mainly satisfactory. This year's results (2000) indicate pupils have at least maintained levels attained last year in reading and writing, with some improvement at the higher Level 3 in writing. Figures for the purpose of national comparisons are not, yet, available.
67. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above national expectations. Most pupils listen and speak confidently in a wide range of contexts, taking an active part in discussions. Pupils report on their work to their peers with assurance, as when they explain what they have learned at the end of literacy sessions. Opportunities for listening and speaking occur across most areas of the curriculum, including during assemblies, where pupils are invited to present their work, and in personal and social education sessions where pupils express feelings and share experiences with their peers. Role-play is well used in Reception and Year 1 classes, with settings and topics regularly changing to give pupils a range of opportunities for purposeful play.
68. Attainment in reading by the end of the key stage is above the national average for most pupils. They frequently read a range of texts with fluency and accuracy and even the younger pupils manage remarkably good expression. They tackle words using their knowledge of letter sounds well, and read for meaning by referring to clues in the pictures and text. A consistent focus in teaching on key words and awareness of letter sounds, combined with the teaching of prediction skills, has a positive and direct impact on reading standards. Pupils are exposed to a range of books and good use is made of guided reading to stimulate their thinking and enable them to explore character, setting and plot in the development of a story. High attainers identify stylistic devices like the use in poems of onomatopoeia and alliteration. Opportunities are well used by pupils to read for themselves and a majority has an advanced knowledge of book conventions. They comment on author, title and illustrator (and in one case in a year 1 class on the publisher). Pupils' progress in reading, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is good. It is monitored through regular assessment to good effect.
69. Attainment in writing by the end of the key stage is above national expectations. Most pupils write in sentences, using full stops and capital letters. They use word banks successfully. They write independently using previous models to good effect. High attainers write well-organised, extended and imaginative pieces with good standards of spelling. Pupils of average and low attainment write shorter pieces and are less assured in using full stops and capital letters but still manage creditable pieces. A majority of pupils acquires and applies a reasonable knowledge of punctuation and is beginning to recognise and use different types of writing (for instance to make notes), using 'mind maps' to avoid simple copying. Examples of non-fiction writing include researched pieces on ospreys with a content page, writing about 'Christopher Columbus', a description of the African guitar and narrative pieces in religious education on the prophet Mohammed. Writing is well assessed through constructive feedback and by informing pupils where they need to improve. Standards in handwriting are satisfactory and are above average in spelling, with some pupils spelling difficult words (like 'scratch') in a Reception class.
70. Pupils' attitudes in English are at least positive and often very positive. Most are keen, well focused and engage well with activities. They respond eagerly when invited to discuss their reading and tackle tasks with perseverance. Pupils often collaborate spontaneously during group activities and contribute well when answering questions. Standards of behaviour are high, though a few individuals in a Year 2 class tend to fidget and become distracted at times. More frequently, pupils are keen and proud to demonstrate and talk about what they have been doing to peers and to visitors.

71. The quality of teaching is not less than good and was judged very good in a quarter of lessons observed. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of English and are implementing the literacy hour very successfully, in line with objectives set in the national strategy. Lessons are thoroughly and effectively planned with a clear structure and targets for learning. These are regularly explained and effectively used in brief sessions at the end of lessons to enable pupils to share what they have learned across groups. Lessons start appropriately by focussing on whole class reading or via using a device such as a 'tongue twister' to start discussions aimed at building on previous work within a new context. So, in Year 2, a teacher successfully intrigued pupils with such a device when beginning work on story writing. Pupils are suitably managed and effectively organised into groups according to levels of attainment, with good support from learning support assistants, and from volunteers who contribute substantially to pupils' learning.
72. The school uses the literacy framework effectively and strategies for continuous development and improvement have led directly to planned opportunities for extended writing. The co-ordinator has good expertise and works hard with other colleagues to secure the raised standards being achieved. Monitoring based on observations has enabled all teachers to learn from each other and share good practice. There are clear systems for assessment linked to different skills, and assessment informs planning well through the use of pupil profiles and samples of work, which have been 'levelled' according to National Curriculum criteria. Individual pupil targets, shared with parents, have been identified. Pupils were not seen, however, to refer to these during the inspection. Resources both in classrooms and available in the 'Buzz Club' are of high quality. They include a good range and selection of big books. However, book facilities are not fully exploited to develop independent reading skills, and for the borrowing of books, since the library is used as the venue for many 'Buzz Club' activities with individuals and small groups.

## **MATHEMATICS**

73. In the 1999 statutory assessment tests, seven-year olds attained close to national averages at the expected Level 2 and at the higher Level 3 when comparisons are made both with the results of pupils in all schools and with those of pupils in similar schools. Results rose dramatically from 1996 to reach the national average for 1997 and have since remained broadly in line with this average.
74. Inspection findings show that pupils reach good standards in mathematics with almost all attaining broadly in line with the nationally expected Level 2. A substantial number of pupils (around two thirds) attains in the higher range of Level 2 and a significant number reaches the higher Level 3. Pupils with special educational need make good progress and attain at least in line with their prior attainment. At times, these pupils do better than might be expected. There were no pupils with English as an additional language in the cohort of Year 2 pupils. No differences in the results of boys and girls were observed during the inspection. Early indications for the current year (2000) uphold this positive picture. These show that, although pupils attained broadly in line with last year's results (both at Level 2 and at the higher Level 3) there has been a considerable increase in the number of pupils achieving in the upper range of Level 2. To date, there are no figures available for national comparisons. The school's latest results show it has achieved its target of improving pupils' performance at nationally expected levels and is set to build on this achievement in its longer term aim of improving results at the higher Level 3. Inspection findings, together with indications for the latest statutory test results, represent an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged satisfactory overall.
75. By the end of the key stage, pupils in Year 2 confidently manipulate numbers in quick sessions of 'mental maths'. Across the attainment range, pupils calculate answers to questions mentally and explain their thinking, revealing a solid grasp of place value for numbers involving tens and units. To illustrate: a pupil who knows she has to apply the five times table to the number statement  $7 \times 5$ , on the whiteboard, quickly corrects her answer of "37" to "35". In response to a teacher's questioning, a boy correctly judges there has to be "a zero or a five in the answer" and another adds "it needs a five or a zero in the 'ones' place" when the teacher probes further. Pupils can apply this good knowledge to their facility for working out sums of money using the 10 times table. For example, they can work out how many 10 pence pieces there are in £2.60 because they know this represents 260 pence. Pupils know that  $10 \times 10 = 100$  so  $20 \times 10 = 200$ . They can infer how many tens there are in 60p and add the two totals. Higher attaining pupils and some of average attainment know that multiplying and dividing numbers involve inverse number operations. They are familiar with this latter term. Pupils have a good facility at doubling two digit numbers and a thorough grasp of halving them in terms of 'two equal parts'. They recognise 'odd' and 'even' numbers and know that even numbers can be halved easily by

dividing them by two. They have good strategies for such work. Pupils are less sure how to divide an odd number into equal parts but, in discussing this, show sound knowledge and understanding of simple fractions such as halves and quarters. Higher attaining pupils can work with three and four digit numbers confidently (for example, when putting them in order from lowest to highest, or in the reverse sequence).

76. In the Reception year, pupils count confidently from one to ten and back again. They recognise number names from zero to ten and know that zero means they need to hold up a clenched fist ("no fingers"). Pupils understand "greater than" and "less than" and can pick out the correct number from a number line when asked to say what is "before eight" or "after four" or "between three and five." Higher attaining pupils and those of average attainment find "half way between zero and four" or "between zero and 12" quickly in response to a teacher's questions. All pupils can count together in tens to 100. Pupils find "the number difference" between, for example, 5 and 8 by counting on with their fingers from the lower number until they reach the digit they want. So, they hold up three fingers and know this is the answer. Pupils recognise number patterns below five and thus add spots together quickly when two dice are thrown in a game. For example, a boy says instantly "I know how many, 10!" when the dice show five spots each, and many others have hands up, eager to answer.
77. Pupils in Year 1 successfully extend and refine these skills. They apply their knowledge and understanding of number to gathering data for producing a computer graph. They collect information from peers and adults about favourite pets and enter it on a tally chart prior to creating a pictograph on the machine. When exploring the concept of capacity, pupils realise they have to tally count how many small containers they fill with rice or sand when emptying a large container. They show a good grasp of "full" (rice or sand must be level with the brim), "half full" and "nearly full", responding to a teacher's questions and, later, when working in small groups on a practical task. It is evident that pupils grasp the problem better within the context of a whole class, when they can watch a teacher demonstrate and are provoked into thinking through the problem by good questioning skills, and by listening to one another's answers. However, the opportunity in one class to engage in additional practical work is seen to reap rewards as more pupils come to a better sense of both the nature and purpose of the task. Consequently, these pupils eventually compare two large containers and assert which one holds most rice and which the least, no longer confused by an earlier perception that the taller (but thinner) bottle equated in their thinking with 'bigger' compared to the shorter (but wider) jar.
78. Across the school, pupils with special educational need are helped attain at least in line with their prior attainment and, at times, better than this. Such attainment is owed to the good quality support they receive both from classroom learning assistants and from teachers' good skills in matching learning experiences to differing levels of need. So, pupils in a Reception class hold a number line (showing numbers zero to ten) and benefit from a learning assistant's close attention to their responses to a teacher's questions. Also in the Reception year, pupils with English as an additional language make good gains in learning and participate alongside their peers through well-targeted support. For example, a pupil in the very early stages of learning English could take part in work on telling the time because of the individual help he received prior to the start of the lesson in learning relevant vocabulary.
79. In all classes, pupils thoroughly enjoy their mathematics lessons. A number of Year 2 pupils volunteered that it is their favourite subject. Pupils like the 'games' element of 'mental maths' at the start of each session and the practical work following whole class discussion, such as the die game in a Reception class aimed at reinforcing number bonds below ten. Pupils work purposefully at recording tasks, as when, in Year 2, they complete work sheets after a class session on multiplication and division. They co-operate well in small groups. For example, Year 1 pupils share tasks to make sure each have a turn at tally counting as well as pouring rice or sand when working on capacity.
80. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory. It is judged mostly good or better in lessons seen (87 per cent). Excellent teaching was seen in a Reception class where the pace of the lesson was well matched to pupils' different levels of understanding, and teaching focused sharply on the lesson's main purpose. Pupils reinforced and extended their knowledge of important times of the day in relation to clock time. Teachers frequently discuss a lesson's purposes with pupils and, later, check whether these purposes have been met as a means of helping pupils to assess their own learning outcomes. For example, in a Year 1 class, a teacher agreed to adjust the decision that a target (relating to work on capacity) 'had been met' to stating it 'had been partially met' after one pupil pointed out they had not all understood the important difference between two large containers. Teachers across the school use subject vocabulary well (as when they emphasise the importance of terms such as 'greater than' and 'less than' when comparing numbers). They make very good use of practical work to extend pupils' understanding and check consistently to monitor how well pupils explain their

thinking. For example, in Year 2 a teacher deepened pupils' understanding of place value by asking for more precise information about the position of the number 5 (in the units column). Teachers use such assessment information effectively, as when a teacher in Year 1 revisited the work on capacity following a class discussion. Here, it was revealed that pupils still centred on the sensory features of what they saw (a tall, thin, bottle opposed to a short, wide, jar) rather than the mathematical operations underlying the practical work they had done when filling containers with rice.

81. The Numeracy Strategy has been in place fully since September, following a gradual introduction to aspects of this in the preceding year. National Curriculum requirements are met. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed to maintaining the subject's high profile and building on the rising standards, apparent over recent times. She monitors all aspects of work (including classroom teaching and learning), in line with the school's policy on such matters. Resources are plentiful to meet curricular demands and are of good quality. Teachers make effective use of available computer programs, such as those relating to number and the representation of graphical information.

## SCIENCE

82. In last year's teacher assessments for seven-year-olds, pupils' attainment in science, when compared to that of pupils in all and similar schools, was judged below average overall at the nationally expected Level 2 and broadly in line with the average at the higher Level 3. Results for 2000 show most pupils (94 per cent) achieved nationally expected levels, with three per cent reaching the higher level. Although not as many pupils attained Level 3, this figure still represents an overall improvement on the 1999 results. Figures for the purpose of national comparisons are not, yet, available. From observations made during the inspection, pupils are judged to attain at least in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage. Higher attaining pupils do better than this. No difference in the attainment of boys and girls was observed and there were no pupils with English as an additional language in the Year 2 cohort. This picture is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment was judged to be satisfactory in the main.
83. The youngest pupils in the key stage are achieving particularly well. In the Reception year, pupils recognise and name a range of sounds, make comparisons between hot and cold and acquire a sound knowledge of 'life cycles'. They are able to communicate their findings through observational drawings and charts. In a very successful lesson, pupils used their senses to observe closely. They named and compared a selection of hard and soft fruits, and reinforced their understanding that fruits grow from seeds. In another effective lesson, about the concept of 'reflection, well planned, exploratory and investigative activities, using a range of materials (for example, glass, spoons, water, and knives), supported pupils' scientific skills, knowledge and understanding.
84. A scrutiny of Year 1 pupils' previous work shows that they can identify some properties of a range of materials, make predictions about the outcome of experiments, then conduct experiments and record results accurately (for example, when testing the absorbency of materials). They have learned that light comes from many sources and have predicted and tested objects for magnetism.
85. At the end of the key stage, the oldest pupils have further developed their investigative skills through experiments showing how some materials change as a result of heating, and have discovered optimum conditions needed for seeds to germinate. They identify parts of a flowering plant and record their functions. Through independent research using information and communication technology and other reference materials, they are developing a scientific vocabulary. Good links are made with art through observational drawings, and related language skills are nurtured through role-play in the 'Garden Centre'. In their study of physical processes, pupils learn that a number of everyday appliances use electricity. They can build a circuit using batteries, wires and bulbs, and recognise that electrical devices need a complete circuit to work. In a successful lesson, pupils picked out similarities and differences between humans and animals and recorded their findings accurately.
86. A whole school environmental week held last year allowed all pupils to work in depth on a specific scientific area, to raise their awareness of environmental issues. Visits to the sea and visiting specialists extended pupils' scientific skills. Pupils learned about the importance of water to people in India and Nigeria.
87. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good or very good. Lessons were well planned within the school's scheme of work, and had clear learning goals, shared with pupils. Challenging and probing teacher-questioning aided pupils' scientific enquiry skills, encouraging them to make predictions and explain their thinking. Questions skilfully extended and reinforced pupils' understanding, and resources were used well to support their scientific knowledge. Good class organisation and management and pupils' independent learning skills enabled teachers to work in depth with groups of children. An appropriate pace of lessons ensured that all pupils made progress and completed their tasks.

Enjoyable activities were planned where pupils could investigate, explore and record findings in varied ways. Ideas were well developed through class discussions, with appropriate scientific vocabulary used.

88. Pupils' response to science is good. They work with interest, confidence and perseverance, co-operating well and recording and reporting back results with assurance and accuracy. They use equipment sensibly and their ability to plan simple experiments has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make progress in all aspects of the science curriculum. Their scientific knowledge, skills and understanding are growing, and they are coming to an awareness of what it means to be a scientist. An especially good support for pupils with special educational need ensures they make good progress and achieve well.
89. The curriculum is planned carefully so that all aspects of National Curriculum science are taught and sufficient time is allocated to work on an area in depth. Joint planning with the adjacent Junior school means that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are built on successively through curricular planning. The current science scheme of work is to be revised in accordance with recent guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Pupils' work is assessed regularly against National Curriculum levels (this includes a detailed assessment of pupils' experimental and investigative skills). Progress is suitably recorded on pupils' individual profiles and reported annually to parents.
90. The co-ordinator has time allocated to fulfil her responsibilities. She has monitored and supported teaching and learning, in classrooms, through lesson observations, to good effect. Current resource provision includes use of a wild garden, and additional resources will be purchased to support a revised curriculum. Effective use is made of educational visits and visitors. For example Walpole Home Farm was visited recently.

## **ART**

91. Because of time-tabling arrangements, no art lessons were seen, and very little direct teaching of art was observed during the course of sessions. Teachers' planning shows that all elements of art are taught appropriately throughout the year. These are frequently linked fruitfully to other subjects (for example to design and technology, history and science). A scrutiny of pupils' work reveals that satisfactory standards are achieved in two-dimensional work by the end of the key stage. At times, pupils across the age-range achieve better than might be expected for their age, especially when they draw and paint, following close observations (such as when pupils in Year 1 studied fruit, vegetables and garden plants for work connected with science). This finding broadly echoes findings of the previous report.
92. Using pastels, pupils in a Year 2 class made a careful study of potted plants in connection with science work. Their work shows good attention being paid to detail, and to the overall shape, proportions and colour of plants they drew. Results are pleasing, with some pupils realising a good standard in their finished products. Elsewhere, Year 2 pupils studied black and white line-drawn pictures depicting life in Victorian times. They produced their own pencil drawings, using line and other marks (such as close dots), to effect the same 'Victorian' style, and to tell a story in the way of Victorian narrative paintings. Their pictures successfully recreated, for example, fussy Victorian interiors of drawing rooms, and (in some contrast) the bare starkness of Victorian schoolrooms. These pictures suggest pupils paid close attention to the content of the pictures they studied and worked hard at a desired effect whilst, still, trying to interpret their chosen subject with some originality. Pupils gain a good knowledge of the use of sketching, prior to painting. For example, a girl brought in work she had done at home after being inspired by an art lesson in the classroom. In a personal and social development session, she talked about her drawings and paintings with members of her class. This class discussion, helped along by a teacher's questioning, revealed that pupils realised why it is helpful to work from sketches, and how written notes can extend visual information on sketches. Examples of work in the classroom showed that pupils did, indeed, know how to use sketch notes of a landscape as a basis for a painting.
93. In a Reception class, pupils have looked carefully at themselves in order to paint portraits. For example, they matched paint colours to different colours of skin and evidently thought about where to place features in relation to each other. They painted the colour and style of their hair to achieve individual results. They use brushes and colours skilfully, as when they paint directly on to fairly small pieces of paper to depict themselves playing with toys. In Year 1, pupils created small-scale illustrations for written work to pleasing effect. They paid great attention to accuracy when drawing and colouring animals for poems they have studied, producing recognisable lions, for example. While small, these are well proportioned and suited to their purpose. In studying symmetry, pupils produced well-executed butterfly shapes, taking care to keep colours clean.
94. Throughout the school, pupils exhibit good levels of skill in handling tools and equipment such as

paintbrushes, pencils, scissors and glue. In addition to working in media such as pastels, chalk, graphite, pencil crayons and paint, they acquire techniques for making small clay pots, and discover how to choose and assemble materials for collage work. Pupils learn about the work of famous artists and, at times, study such work as a source for experimenting with techniques and the use of colour, as when they study the work of van Gogh and Monet.

95. Although no direct teaching was seen, pupils were observed working in a brief recall session, with a teacher in a Year 2 class, prior to starting their landscape paintings. This served well to reinforce earlier learning about the use of sketches and what to remember when setting up their work. Pupils were then able to get on independently with little adult intervention. Pupils in a Reception class enjoyed printing shapes on paper and demonstrated a fair idea of how to do this for themselves, although close adult attention potentially hindered the further development of independent learning skills.
96. Resources are sufficient and are of good quality. They are well used, although the samples of pupils' work seen in classrooms and around the school suggest a prevalent use of pencil crayons and an emphasis on small-scale work. Whilst there is no specialist subject expertise in school, the co-ordinator is committed to ensuring the school's aim of achieving a proper breadth of curricular provision through the arts is realised. To this end, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines are seen as a helpful adjunct to the school's approach to planning over a two year cycle. This is especially the case in relation to the framework provided for assessing pupils' progress and attainment by the end of the key stage. The co-ordinator is gaining a good overview of classroom practices through her monitoring of these and of pupils' work more generally. She reviews teachers' planning regularly to check pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are built on appropriately over time.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. Significant improvements have been made in design and technology since the last inspection. By the end of the key stage, pupil attainment at least falls in line with and, at times, exceeds national expectations, and pupils' good progress in the subject is apparent across the school.
98. The youngest children have used a range of materials to make musical instruments, assembling and joining the materials effectively. They have constructed 'pop-up' Christmas cards.
99. In lessons observed, a number of Year 1 pupils designed and made model tents, selecting appropriate materials and discovering the most effective methods of fixing materials to a frame. They used basic tools correctly and safely, and some added finish and detail to their models by constructing interior furnishings. Evaluations of the previous group's models were used to improve the models under construction. This work can be judged as evidence for these pupils achieving above national expectations. Also in Year 1, pupils were able to make quite complex three-dimensional structures from polydrons, recognising the purpose of hinges. They are introduced to subject-specific terms and concepts, such as 'blueprint'. Examples of previous design and technology work included Christmas tree decorations, demonstrating pupils' sewing skills; well modelled, detailed and accurate plasticene animals; and simple two-dimensional puppets, which involved some basic knowledge of mechanics in arranging their moving joints.
100. The oldest pupils have made glove and finger puppets working carefully from initial designs, using a range of materials. A number of these puppets are particularly well detailed, showing intricate pattern work and careful sewing. In their models of plant containers, Year 2 pupils reveal a grasp of the properties of clay and show their knowledge of how to create successful finished products.
101. In those lessons observed, the quality of design and technology teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Lessons were carefully planned and appropriately resourced. Pupils made most progress when techniques were demonstrated by the teacher and where activities took particular note of pupils' established skills, and pupils were encouraged to modify and improve their work. Open-ended activities challenged all pupils, including the most able. Pupils were not afraid to tackle difficult tasks, knowing that if they didn't succeed, "doing your best is what matters." At times, there was insufficient use of initial designs and not enough attention paid to pupils evaluating and improving their work.
102. Pupils have positive learning attitudes to design and technology. They work with enjoyment and considerable perseverance, even when tasks are specially difficult. Most are able to work effectively from designs, make sensible choices of materials and techniques and help one another to succeed.
103. Issues raised in the previous inspection concerning a lack of pupil progress, insufficient rigour in planning, and a lack of teaching skills, have, largely, been addressed. Pupil progress is, now,

facilitated by a 'curriculum map', and a review of the current scheme of work in the light of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority recommendations will further aid progress. The current planning of blocked time for design and technology enables aspects of the subject to be taught in depth and quality work to be achieved. The co-ordinator has had opportunities to support design and technology teaching across the school. He has raised standards by sharing effective practices. Teachers assess pupil progress against National Curriculum level descriptions twice a year, recording results on individual pupil profiles and in annual reports. Resources are currently adequate and are to be reorganised into year group collections to aid curricular consistency and the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding over the two-year planning cycle. Overall, good progress has been made in design and technology since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. Because of time-tabling arrangements, only three lessons were seen. A scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that all elements of the curriculum are covered. In work seen, standards reached by pupils at the end of the key stage are better than might be expected for this age. In other year groups, pupils achieve at least satisfactory standards. This is a more positive picture than that found in the previous report, when standards were judged to be broadly in line with expectations overall. Pupils, including those with special educational need and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress.
105. In the Reception year, pupils are familiar with the nature and purpose of different buildings sited near to where they live and on their way to school. In response to a teacher's questions, pupils reveal a quite detailed knowledge of places and events familiar to them. For example, they can name the police station, fire station and church, and compare terraced with semi-detached houses. They explain the work of local people, such as nurses and the lollypop lady who helps them cross the road for school. In Year 1, pupils recognise famous landmarks from postcards, such as Buckingham Palace and the London 'eye', when recalling previous learning in preparation for a new lesson. They can name a number of European countries and cities and know where to locate Europe on a globe. They realise that a globe shows countries around the world. A pupil unhesitatingly points out the British Isles on a wall map displayed with earlier work, and another pinpoints Britain on the globe. Elsewhere, pupils show good understanding of the elements of street plans when working on the computer to produce a map of a town.
106. In Year 2, pupils apply skills learned earlier from making maps of imaginary gardens to good effect as they map out on a grid the location of different items in the school's adventure playground. Their work demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of direction and scale. Pupils use a key correctly and locate different items skilfully, using co-ordinates. They make sensible comparisons between amenities seen in a visit to a village close to the local town and those in the town itself. Pupils show a good grasp of how to describe the main features of a village and town in this work.
107. Pupils apply themselves well to geography, showing a positive interest and curiosity about places. They participate enthusiastically in lessons, persevere with tasks and willingly ask for help or clarification. They are well motivated and keen to find out information.
108. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory and is mainly good. Planning in lessons is detailed and states clear learning goals, which are shared with pupils. Teachers carefully establish recall of previous work to help pupils build on existing skills. Time and resources are well used to maximise learning.
109. Good use is made of the time provided for the co-ordinator to monitor planning, teaching and learning. The curriculum usefully allows pupils to benefit from overseas teachers' own personal knowledge (for example of America and Canada). The co-ordinator is reviewing the geography scheme of work in order to adjust planning in line with Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance.

## **HISTORY**

110. Three lessons only were observed. Evidence from these and from a scrutiny of pupils' work, classroom displays and teachers' planning, shows that all elements of the subject are covered in line with National Curriculum requirements. It also reveals that most pupils attain above national expectations by the end of the key stage. This finding represents an improvement since the previous inspection. All pupils make good progress in acquiring relevant skills, knowledge and understanding, including those pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational

need. Pupils are well supported in their learning through the practical activities undertaken and through the opportunities provided for them to explore these activities through talk.

111. Pupils in Year 1 show they understand the passage of time when they refer to old houses one hundred years ago. They describe changes in bathing facilities, then and now, and suggest differences, like the unavailability of electricity, when working out the function and use of a range of artefacts. Evidence from scrutiny of work and from displays show that Year 2 pupils have a good comprehension of the different types of clothes worn during Queen Victoria's reign. A visit to the Braintree museum was skilfully used to inform follow-up work, resulting in a range of work being produced, with good examples of imaginative descriptions of pupils' Victorian adventures.
112. Pupils reveal their interest and curiosity when observing and handling artefacts. They are attentive during a teacher's presentations and are very forthcoming in discussions. They remain focused when working individually, and collaborate voluntarily when they can (for instance when conferring on the use of artefacts).
113. Quality of teaching seen is good overall with some very good teaching also seen. Activities and resources are well planned. Clear links are made to previous learning and good questioning develops pupils' understanding by eliciting intelligent answers. Good use is made of artefacts to bring history alive, giving pupils a 'feel' for periods studied. Teachers share learning goals explicitly and effectively with pupils. Time and resources are sensibly used to advance pupils' knowledge, with emphasis placed suitably on the use of a specific vocabulary and key concepts.
114. The co-ordinator makes good use of time provided to monitor planning, teaching and learning. The curriculum benefits from pupils' visits to the local area and to the Braintree museum. Adequate resources are supplemented by the use of artefacts. The co-ordinator has begun reviewing the history scheme of work in order to adopt Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance. All the issues raised in the last report have been addressed, with standards of work improving as a result of better continuity and the attention paid to building up pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding progressively, as reflected in the scheme of work developed since then.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

115. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment is at least in line with what can be expected at this age. Often, it rises to an above average level (for the age group). Pupils use computers confidently for a range of purposes, relating to subjects across the curriculum. During assembly, they use an overhead projector to display song sheets, and can control a compact disc player so as to play the week's music for pupils entering and leaving the school hall. Pupils use headphones and tape recorders competently, for purposes such as listening to stories. They know that technology is a source of information and a means of controlling aspects of their environment. They know how to exploit technologies for their own ends. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was judged satisfactory, and pupils' ability to use computers, for example, was stated to be limited in this still developing subject.
116. Pairs of Reception year pupils were observed using computers, confidently, to support earlier, whole class work for mathematics and literacy purposes. For example, they used programs for number work, and deployed word processing skills to write simple sentences. They knew how to 'click' on a mouse and control its actions on a screen, and could handle a keyboard appropriately. Although no direct teaching was seen in the Reception year, it is clear from a scrutiny of work and from teachers' planning that skills are taught systematically, while pupils have opportunities to practise these skills, in line with the school's general policy. Examples of work show pupils can create pictures of diverse shapes, and reproduce constructions made during practical mathematics' work (when they built towers from variously shaped building blocks). They have also made pictures for art with a painting program, knowing how to control a 'paintbrush' and place colours where they want them.
117. In a Year 1 class, pupils across all levels of attainment build successfully on earlier learning. They reveal a very secure knowledge and understanding of how to make a pictograph representation of collected information (about class members' favourite pets). In response to a teacher's questions, they could explain fully, as well as demonstrate, steps needed to open up the correct computer program for making the graph. They knew, for example, which icon to click for the data program, and that it needed a double click to open up the program. Pupils worked together profitably, in pairs, while confidently collecting data about favourite pets for graph work. They knew how to print out their work and store it for future applications. Pupils could discuss, expertly, the processes involved and get on without adult support. They could read their graphs correctly to extract information when asked for it.



Pupils consistently used a correct vocabulary in connection with information technology tasks, responding well to their teacher's emphasis. On another occasion, pupils working in pairs on a modelling program adeptly moved items around a screen to produce the map of a town as a follow up to some work on geography. They fitted pieces of road together for the street plan and then sited a variety of buildings along the streets. They could make changes to their plan with ease. Pupils were seen during parts of literacy lessons routinely applying their computer skills to work on words and to complete comprehension tasks. They used either the mouse or direction keys to find words with matching sounds, and to put capital letters and full stops in their correct place.

118. In Year 2, pupils know it is possible to access information from sources other than CD ROM disks for their work. For example, in recapping earlier learning in a whole class session, pupils showed good knowledge and understanding of how to 'log on' to the Internet. They could search for materials needed for their literacy work on 'tongue twisters'. Subsequently, they worked competently in small groups to retrieve examples of these 'tongue twisters' to share with the class. Pupils displayed good skills in their use of the mouse, and in following 'on screen' information to access the Internet. In assembly, some pupils showed pieces of work illustrating the new skills being acquired in class, during the week when they had learned how to create an illustrated page of information by joining text to pictures. By the end of the key stage, pupils have proficient word processing skills and can use these for a range of purposes (such as for writing stories or accounts of their experiences).
119. Pupils plainly enjoy working on computers. They are always absorbed and fully intent on their tasks, whether working in pairs, in small groupings or alone. They like talking about their work, and older pupils explain the operations they perform (for example, with the mouse or the keyboard) and give clear reasons for what they do. Younger pupils can demonstrate practically what they cannot so readily explain. Pupils listen attentively when teachers or other adults explain something to them and they love participating in lessons in order to demonstrate a skill. They like to 'bring in' things they do at home (as when a Year 2 boy talked about how he had retrieved a 'tongue twister' from a CD ROM, showing enthusiasm for the class work he had done).
120. The teaching seen was of good quality overall with some very good teaching also seen. Brief teaching sessions are used very effectively both to check on previous learning and to build on this to teach new skills for application in later work. Teachers make sure pupils know and understand terms used. Their good questioning elicits detailed explanations of these and demonstrations of steps to be taken in accessing programs. Through such means, teachers build successfully on previous learning, allowing pupils to exercise new skills with confidence (as when Year 2 pupils used the Internet, and put text together with pictures). Teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons well and intervene judiciously both to check understanding and to push learning forward. So, a teacher in a Year 1 class realised pupils were applying their computer skills well to a number program but had lost sight of the mathematical purpose of the work. Learning support assistants also give good quality support to pupils working on machines. They show that they understand computer tasks and therefore are able to help pupils work as independently as possible.
121. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about promoting the subject. She has a good overview of the school's provision and monitors resources (such as software programs for computers) regularly to ensure these meet curricular requirements. Currently, for example, she believes more mathematics programs are required to meet the learning needs of pupils in the age-range taught. She monitors teachers' planning and classroom practice effectively, in line with the school's organisation of such monitoring activities. She also gives good support to colleagues via demonstration lessons and by helping appropriately with the use of new programs.
122. In light of a continually evolving technology, the subject is sensibly viewed as developing through a rolling programme of renewal for keeping equipment up-to-date. There is a sufficient supply of good quality machines, with new ones imminently being made available in Reception classes, to match others already in use in other years. As much as is feasible, machines are well used to support work across the curriculum throughout the school. Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines ensure curricular planning achieves a good balance and meets National Curriculum requirements over a two-year cycle. As a consequence, skills are now taught in depth, with plenty of opportunities provided for pupils to apply their skills and gain a necessary proficiency. Inspection evidence suggests this approach is working well. An assessment system, allied to key concepts taught, is now in place, enabling teachers to plan effectively for each step in pupils' learning.

## MUSIC

123. The attainment of seven-year-olds is at least in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. At times, standards pupils reach exceed expectation, as when they sing calypso songs by heart in a pleasing manner, or play the recorder.
124. In the Reception year, pupils know a good range of familiar songs and Nursery rhymes by heart. They can recognise a rhyme when a teacher taps it out, using two fingers on the palm of a hand. Pupils, including a pupil in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, learn by such means to recognise the names of children in the class. Copying the clapped rhythm accurately, they repeat the syllables of children's names in time to the claps. Pupils play a range of untuned percussion instruments, keeping reasonably 'in time' throughout a song. They know many ways to accompany songs with their hands, slapping, clicking, rubbing and stroking hands to achieve different qualities of sound.
125. Across the age-range, pupils sing well together in assembly and in whole school singing lessons. At such times, they demonstrably improve their performance through practise. For example, Year 2 pupils were reasonably sure about the words of one song while others were uncertain both of the words and phrasing of the lines. After a teacher had demonstrated how each line sounded and how lines fitted together, Reception and Year 1 pupils joined in with increasing enjoyment. Eventually, all performers achieved a creditable result and were well on the way to knowing several verses by heart. During year group singing lessons, Year 2 pupils sing very well together. Although words are projected on a screen, the pupils know familiar songs by heart. They are quick to pick up the words and phrasing of new songs from a teacher's good demonstrations and repetitions. Pupils sing simple, two part songs and maintain their part through two or three rounds. These older pupils know how to modulate their voices to achieve different dynamics of sound and have a good grasp of the associated subject vocabulary. At times, though, their enthusiasm gains the upper hand, to the detriment of the sounds they produce!
126. Pupils across the school enjoy using instruments. By the end of the key stage, they are adept at handling a range of percussion instruments for a variety of purposes. So, they readily accompany songs in assembly and in lessons without having to rehearse. Pupils know the conventions of composition and can read one another's pieces when performing. For example, in a Year 2 class a boy had composed his own instrumental accompaniment to 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', at home, using a visual notation inspired by class work. In the lesson, he chose a group to play his piece and organised them quickly to perform to the rest of the class. Following this, groups returned to previous work playing one another's compositions with the aim of further improving these. Although there was insufficient time to finish such work during the session seen, it was evident pupils understood the nature of tasks and would complete these in future lessons. They could explain their notation system and could match notes to sounds on different instruments. Pupils know the names of the instruments they use and how to use these instruments to gain different musical effects.
127. Pupils have good opportunities to hear music. For example, in a Reception class, music is sometimes played as pupils come in and settle down, and it is known by everyone that this signals a quiet listening time. A teacher explains what the music is and, on one occasion, was heard to question pupils briefly about how it made them feel. In assembly, the 'piece of the week' starts and ends the gathering, and pupils are asked if they are familiar with the kind of music it represents (for example, Greek music was played during the inspection). Then they are informed about its origins, and the instruments played. Instrumentalists visit school regularly. A teacher and pupil from a local secondary school came to play a violin, clarinet and saxophone, during the inspection period. Older pupils showed themselves knowledgeable about the names of these instruments and the way sound is produced on each one. For example, they could explain that different sounds are achieved on the clarinet depending on which keys are fingered, and they knew that finger-placing is important for violin playing, too. They named materials used for making instruments and knew that an orchestra is made up of different 'families' of instruments.
128. A good proportion of pupils in Year 2, boys and girls, is learning to play the recorder. These pupils are familiar with the use of staves and read notes correctly. They know the names of notes. They understand correct fingering and realise that holes have to be properly covered before a good sound is produced. They can play in time to a teacher's accompaniment on her recorder, and improve their performance through practising phrases and single notes.
129. Pupils of all ages enjoy music lessons. They listen and watch attentively when they are unsure of the words they are asked to sing and work persistently to improve. They respond to their teacher's high

expectations and want to succeed in order to please. Pupils work sympathetically together, as when they play a group member's composition in a Year 2 class.

130. Teaching is judged to be good overall. It is always at least satisfactory and is frequently good or better. This is especially the case in those lessons where a teacher has subject expertise. For example, in a music assembly, skilful questioning helped pupils recall earlier learning thereby helping them better appreciate the instrumentalists. In a recorder lesson, too, pupils tackled a quite demanding task with enthusiasm and assurance, because a teacher was able confidently to monitor pupils' progress and demonstrate techniques.
131. Through a judicious mix of whole school and class teaching, the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Resources sufficiently meet curricular needs and are well used in all classes. They are of good quality. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and expertise and is concerned to establish music as an important part of the school's provision. She provides a good model for less musically confident colleagues to follow. Throughout the year, pupils have good opportunities to perform to wider audiences. For example, they all take part in a Christmas concert and perform in regular Family Assemblies, as well as performing more informally within daily assemblies and classrooms.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132. By the end of the key stage, standards reached by most pupils, in the work seen, are in line with national expectations. This finding is broadly similar to that of the previous inspection.
133. Pupils in a Reception class use space appropriately. They throw and bounce balls when playing with a partner. Pupils observe teacher demonstrations and the performance of peers to good purpose and practise diligently to improve their own. Well aimed provision for pupils with special educational need ensures that a pupil with physical difficulties, for example, shows good balance and control when co-ordinating hand, eye, and foot movements. Year 2 pupils have good skills in throwing and catching quoits and create their own game, using three pieces of equipment. They recognise the purpose of rules in games. As they practise, they evaluate their performance against demonstrations by peers, so improving their own techniques.
134. Overall, pupils make good progress because teachers set clear learning goals and give clear guidance to pupils in executing tasks. Pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise important skills.
135. Most pupils respond well to physical education lessons. They dress appropriately and change quickly with few exceptions and, mostly, sustain concentration. They work well individually and in small groups and follow instructions. Pupils willingly help put away equipment and are aware of a need for safety.
136. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory and is judged good overall. Teachers' planning is well structured around clear learning targets. Lessons start suitably with a 'warm up'. Pupils are well-briefed about skills to be practised and are reminded pertinently about safety. Good use is made of demonstrations and interventions as markers for improving pupils' performance. Pupils with English as an additional language are well guided by learning support assistants, who monitor pupils' understanding and reinforce relevant teaching points on a one-to-one basis. Time and pace are effectively managed so pupils make good progress.
137. Since the last inspection, more consideration in teaching has been given to pupils evaluating their own performance, and to teachers demonstrating skills. Access to resources has also been improved. The co-ordinator has time allocated for monitoring aspects of teaching and learning and for advising colleagues, where appropriate in line with the school's approach to such matters.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

138. Standards in religious education are generally in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for seven-year-olds at the end of the key stage. At times, the achievement of the youngest pupils in the Reception year exceeds expectations. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
139. Religious education occurs during well-planned assemblies, which are followed up by class teachers. Assemblies are planned a term in advance and, during the course of a week, have a Christian, multi-cultural, musical and 'celebration of achievement' focus. Such planning ensures that follow-up work in classrooms is carefully matched to important teaching goals in relation to the school's aims for

religious education. The school's religious education/collective worship policy suitably emphasises the importance of a growing awareness of Christianity, a respect for different faiths and their celebrations, and for individual uniqueness. These priorities are revealed in the daily life of the school, through the respect and consideration all members of the school community show for each other.

140. The youngest pupils have begun to explore their own feelings and learn to respect the feelings of others. They know what it means to be a good friend and (for example) applied these to Jesus in a successful lesson about blindness, referring to the story of Bartimaeus.
141. Year 1 pupils can talk about the Christmas and Easter story. They have accurately retold the story of Jonah and the Whale using colourful illustrations. They have explored feelings of jealousy and fair play and the concept that 'being different is delightful' through the 'Elmer' story. Pupils have listened to stories derived from different faiths, and learned about Muslim birth customs. In an effective follow-up lesson to assembly, they extended their knowledge and understanding of important celebrations in other countries and, through listening to the story of the 'Selfish Giant', considered the effect of their own actions on others.
142. Year 2 pupils have written about their emotions, identified the relationship between actions and feelings and shown a perception of and sympathy for the feelings of others. They can recount Bible stories, such as 'Jonah' and 'Noah's Ark', and have some awareness of different faith communities. They accept that everyone is special and learn about different community celebrations and customs. Overall, pupils are attaining appropriately in line with the end of key stage descriptions, although they are not always aware of what constitutes religious education, apart from their experiences of the focused assemblies.
143. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of a variety of faiths and celebrations is to be extended during a forthcoming multi-cultural week, when pupils will visit different places of worship and hear stories originating in a range of cultures. A visit is also planned to Aklowa, an African traditional heritage village, where pupils will learn about African culture.
144. Quality of teaching ranges from sound to very good and is good overall. In all lessons, pupils are sensitively encouraged to share their thoughts and are taught to value and respect others' views. Pupils' thinking is challenged through incisive teacher questioning, and effective links are made with other subjects to support pupils' learning (for example, via their study of 'life cycles' in science). Supportive adult/pupil relationships and a safe and caring environment provide the security needed for pupils to express their feelings. In a very successful lesson in the Reception year, a teacher's excellent subject knowledge and understanding of how young children learn resulted in achievements of a high standard. Pupils were able accurately and thoughtfully to reflect on a Bible story they had heard, listening respectfully to each other's contributions.
145. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are generally good. They listen with interest and respond thoughtfully to questions, express opinions confidently and listen sympathetically to the views of others. They make good progress in each of the aspects assessed at the end of the key stage.
146. Teachers assess pupils' attainment in religious education using key stage descriptions and record progress on pupil profiles and in annual reports. The co-ordinator is especially well qualified to lead religious education and has had some opportunity to monitor standards, both through discussions with pupils and by assessing samples of their work. Her plan to involve all staff in developing a portfolio of assessed work will contribute usefully to further progression in religious education across the school.
147. The current scheme of work is to be reviewed in the light of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance and additional resources purchased if required. Good use is made of appropriate stories to explore moral issues and associated emotions.
148. The school has maintained standards and improved some aspects of religious education since the previous inspection. The subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development.