

INSPECTION REPORT

HEREWARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Loughton

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114935

Headteacher: Mrs G A Blair

Reporting inspector: Mrs M S Summers
25455

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

Inspection number: 191042

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Colebrook Lane Loughton Essex
Postcode:	IG10 2LS
Telephone number:	0181 508 6465
Fax number:	0181 508 8428
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Hereward Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R A Warner
Date of previous inspection:	24 th to 27 th June 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mary Summers	Registered inspector	Art, Music.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Fran Luke	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English, Geography, Special Educational Needs, English as an additional language.	
Bob Lever	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information technology, Physical education.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	Religious education, History, Children aged under five.	
Hilary Ring	Team inspector	Science, Design and technology, Equality of opportunity.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
 "Thule"
 60 Joy Lane
 Whitstable
 Kent CT5 4LT
 01227 273449

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
 Inspection Quality Division
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	9
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hereward Primary is a large community school with a total roll of 341 pupils, 179 boys and 162 girls aged between 3 and 11 years. These include 45 children in the Nursery, 1 full-time and 44 part-time and 12 pupils in the Reception class who are under the age of five. Twelve pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and six pupils do not speak English as their first language, although they do have a firm grasp of English. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average and 13 per cent are on the school's special educational needs register. When children enter the Nursery, most are at below average standards for their age. Since the last inspection, there has been a large turnover of staff. The number of pupils has risen substantially and the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals has also risen this year. Recent socio-economic indicators show that the catchment area of the school is less favourable than the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in its work and pupils make good progress, particularly in the Nursery, in the Reception/Year 1 class and in the Year 6 class because of high quality teaching in these areas. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Key Stage 2 which represents good achievement in relation to their previous attainment. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and contributes significantly to the very high quality of relationships between pupils and their positive attitudes to learning. The school is effectively led and managed and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Nursery provision is very effective, with high quality teaching and a well-organised curriculum.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and relationships and their good standards of behaviour contribute significantly to the progress they make at the school.
- The headteacher provides enthusiastic and effective leadership and the school shows a strong commitment towards improvement.
- Standards in art are above average at both key stages and standards in science and games are above average at Key Stage 2.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum which is enhanced by a good range of extracurricular activities and visits to local places of interest.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology at Key Stage 2 are below average.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs at Key Stages 1 and 2 is not organised effectively.
- Some key staff are not carrying out their management roles effectively.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are not rigorous enough to identify and address weaknesses.

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 good improvement since the last inspection. The improvement in standards has been above the national trend and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. The school is on line to meet its targets in English and mathematics this year. Subject policies and schemes of work are now in place which enable the curriculum to be taught successfully. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is now good. There are now a good range and quantity of learning resources.

STANDARDS

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

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

In 1999, standards in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 were well above average and standards in English were above the average of schools in similar circumstances although they were below average when compared with schools nationally. The rate of improvement in standards has been above the national trend. Standards this year are in line with national expectations in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and are above national expectations in science. The variation since 1999 is explained by the different capabilities of the two cohorts. The school is on course to meet this year's targets in English and mathematics which represent an appropriate degree of challenge for these pupils. Standards in information and control technology are below average and work in religious education meets requirements. Standards in art are above average at both Key Stages.

At Key Stage 1, standards are average in reading and mathematics but are below average in writing. By the time they are five, children attain average standards for their ages in most aspects of their learning, although their spoken language and writing skills are below average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. They are polite and industrious; they show commendable enthusiasm and are keen and interested in all aspects of their learning.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good, both in the classroom and around the school. The school's code of behaviour is clearly understood and is adhered to well.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils show very high levels of respect for one another and accept responsibility enthusiastically. They work together well in lessons and play together happily in the playground.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	very good	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of the lessons observed. It was very good or excellent in 21 per cent but unsatisfactory or poor in five per cent. The quality of teaching is very good for children under five years of age. Teaching in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory, although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The teaching of art is good but the teaching of information technology is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2.

The main strengths of teaching include the good management of pupils, the brisk pace of lessons, clear explanations and good question and answer sessions. The main weakness relates to how teachers plan to meet the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. Often, all pupils do the same work and this does not challenge pupils effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Well organised for children aged under five. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and there are good links between subjects. Extracurricular activities, particularly sports, enable pupils to extend their expertise.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good for children under five years of age but unsatisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Identification systems are not clear enough, targets for pupils to attain often lack precision and some pupils with behavioural and emotional needs are not supported adequately.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides well for these aspects through focused assemblies, with opportunities for reflection, clear rules and expectations, a good range of opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility and participate in groups and teams, and lessons which extend pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The staff know the pupils well and take great care of them within a supportive environment. There are good systems for pupils to set and review their own targets for improvement and good assessment systems in English and mathematics. Assessments in other subjects are not being carried out in a consistent way throughout the school.

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

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides enthusiastic and purposeful leadership. The Nursery co-ordinator is very good and subject co-ordinators provide clear and effective leadership. Neither the deputy headteacher nor the special educational needs co-ordinator are fulfilling their management roles effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and actively involved in the school. They monitor the school's work successfully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses the results of annual tests to identify weaknesses. However, teaching is not monitored rigorously enough to identify and address weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school plans appropriately for its development and uses its funds effectively but because priorities are set at the beginning of the academic year, they do not inform budget planning closely enough. The principles of best value are applied effectively.

The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources satisfactorily support teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • They feel comfortable to approach the school with any questions or problems. • The school has high expectations of the children. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their children to be responsible. • Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The school could work more closely with parents. • The range of activities available outside lesson time. • Class sizes are too large. • Mixed-age classes mean that children repeat work.

The inspection confirms most of the positive views of parents although finds that provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The information that parents receive about their children's progress is satisfactory and the school provides a sound range of opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education. Extracurricular activities are good and contribute well to pupils' personal and social development. A few classrooms are not organised well enough to accommodate the number of pupils in them. The curriculum is now organised appropriately so that work is not repeated although this has happened in the past.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Analysis of the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, standards were well above average in mathematics and science, but were below average in English. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English.
2. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in the tests was close to the national average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 and above was well above average in science, above average in mathematics but was well below average in English. The assessments made in science matched the test results, as did those in English at Level 5 and above, but teachers' expectations in English at Level 4 and above, and in mathematics generally, were lower than the test results which showed insufficiently high expectations.
3. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those of the previous three years, they show that standards are improving above the national trend. These data also show that there is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment.
4. The school sets formal targets for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics. These targets were exceeded in 1999 and those for 2000 represent an appropriate degree of challenge for this particular cohort of pupils. The pupils are on course to meet the targets this year.
5. The findings of this inspection are that the current Year 6 pupils attain above average standards in science and art and average standards in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, design and technology, geography, history, music, and physical education. Standards are below average in information technology. Work in religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The standards in English are similar to those attained by pupils in the 1999 tests. However, they are lower in mathematics and science, mainly because of the differences in the capability of the pupils in the different cohorts. Compared with the previous inspection, standards have improved in art and have remained the same in other subjects, although there were no clear judgements made in information technology and design and technology because of lack of evidence.
6. In English, by the age of 11, pupils listen carefully and communicate their ideas thoughtfully within class discussions but do not have enough opportunities to take part in formal debates and discussions or speak to different audiences. Most pupils are competent readers and can express their preferences in terms of types of books and authors. Their writing skills, however are below average, as they do not develop their ideas in sufficient depth or detail, or use a range of language confidently in their work. Literacy skills are generally average, although expectations in writing are too low. In mathematics, pupils have developed suitable strategies for problem solving, use all four operations in whole numbers and decimals, measure angles accurately and collect information and represent it in graphs. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in numeracy as they become confident in their multiplication tables and in addition and subtraction methods which they practise daily within the numeracy hour. By the age of 11, in science, pupils

recognise the need for fair tests, can classify living things, know the differences between solids, liquids and gases and understand how friction affects movement. In information technology, they can combine text and graphics in their work but show little understanding of data handling, controlling, monitoring or modelling. They do not have sufficient skills in these aspects to be able to use information technology well enough in other subjects. In religious education, they have a satisfactory knowledge of the beliefs, symbols and traditions of the world's great faiths.

7. Pupils have well-developed skills in art and can paint, draw, print and model well. They have a good understanding of the work of a wide range of artists. They design and make successful motorised models in design and technology, showing satisfactory skills in using a variety of materials and tools. In geography, they use maps and atlases well and can use scale to measure distances between places. In history, they have a broad understanding of some of the main periods in British history as well as how ancient civilisations contributed to life today. Pupils can sing tunefully and understand how music can tell a story, in, for example, 'Romeo and Juliet' by Tchaikovsky. They have good games skills and can perform gymnastics sequences in pairs and small groups, evaluating and improving their own performances. Standards in swimming are average.

8. When the averages of the school's 1999 end of Key Stage 1 data are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Compared with similar schools, the data show well above average standards in reading, average standards in writing and above average standards in mathematics.

9. Analysis of the 1999 test results shows that the percentages of pupils attaining Level 2 were broadly average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining higher levels was average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. The assessments made by teachers were similar to the test results. Teachers' assessments showed that standards in science were above the national average.

10. When the 1999 Key Stage 1 data are compared with the data from the previous three years, they show that writing standards have been improving steadily in line with the national trend. However, the trend varies in reading and mathematics, with standards rising in 1997, falling in 1998 and rising again in 1999. Taking the three years together, although in reading and writing boys' and girls' performances are broadly similar, boys perform better in mathematics than girls.

11. The findings of this inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in art are above average. Standards in other subjects, including numeracy, are average, except in English, where they are below average. Compared with the school's previous inspection, standards have remained the same, except in English, where they have fallen. Judgements were not made in information technology and design and technology at the last inspection because of lack of evidence.

12. In English, by the age of seven, although pupils listen appropriately, their speech is often inaudible and unclear and many are unable to speak at length. Most read at an appropriate level for their age and have a secure knowledge of different strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. Writing skills, including handwriting, are weak; many pupils have a limited range of expression and vocabulary and they have limited knowledge of how to use punctuation accurately. In mathematics, pupils are beginning to understand place value, can round numbers below 100 to the nearest ten and can measure length

successfully, using a range of different units. In science, pupils learn how to carry out investigations and can predict what will happen when certain materials are heated. Pupils show competent use of word processing and use a range of software to create pictures and explore and control situations. They have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and Hinduism from their work in religious education.

13. Pupils mix and use paint successfully in art and use it to create landscapes in a variety of shades. They use colour sensitively to create mood. They understand how to make a plan for their models in design and technology and can consider the end results and say how they could be improved. In geography, pupils plot co-ordinates on a simple map and, in history, begin to use secondary sources of information in their work on 'families'. Pupils repeat simple rhythm patterns in music and use percussion instruments effectively to make loud and soft sounds. They practise a range of balances and sequences in physical education and respond appropriately in dance to a 'Jack Frost' theme.

14. Children under five years of age generally enter the school with below average standards of attainment and particularly weak skills in their spoken language and range of vocabulary. They make very good progress and most are on course to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children aged five in all areas of learning except in their speaking and writing skills. In the school's last inspection report, attainment for children under the age of five was judged to be satisfactory, and many achieved highly for their age and ability. The present inspection shows that, by the age of five, in language and literacy, the children are able to use pictures to tell a story and some are able to read a few words. However, their knowledge and use of a suitable range of vocabulary and an inability to express themselves hinders the progress they are able to make in their writing. In mathematics, children are able to count to ten and a few higher attainers are able to record numbers up to 20. Children are starting to gain an understanding of the properties of simple shapes. They recognise aspects of different parts of the day, such as break and lunch times. The children use their imagination in role-play, pretending to be one of 'the three bears making porridge' or 'serving in the shop'. They enjoy painting and are making very good progress, due to the very good, informative teaching, which enables them improve their technique. The children are developing satisfactory control of small tools and equipment. The provision of a covered area and a designated area for outside play for the Nursery children enables them to make very good progress in their physical and personal and social development. Although the progress of children in the Reception class is good in these aspects of their development, it is not as good as in the Nursery because of the lack of suitable outside learning resources.

15. Children under five achieve highly when their previous levels of attainment are considered. Even in literacy, where standards are not as high as would be expected by age five, their achievement represent significant gains for many children. Many pupils with special educational needs in the Nursery achieve highly because of the extremely careful provision made for them by teachers and support assistants. Children under five receive a very good start to their formal education.

16. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory at both key stages. Achievement is good in art at Key Stage 1 and in games and art at Key Stage 2 because of good teaching and well-organised activities in these subjects. It is good in science at Key Stage 2 because of the dynamic and well-planned teaching of the caretaker science co-ordinator in the Year 6 class. Pupils achieve weaker standards in information technology because of limitations in the school's provision, but the school plans are to improve this in the near future. Although standards in writing are generally below average at both key stages, this reflects the low levels in language and literacy at which pupils enter the school. The school has planned

appropriately to address this, although strategies have not begun to affect the overall standards attained in the national tests. There are indications, however, that standards are improving slowly.

17. Many pupils with special educational needs do not attain high enough standards for their capabilities. Poor identification systems mean that many pupils who have special educational needs are not identified and, therefore, receive inappropriate work for their needs. A few pupils on the higher stages of the special educational needs register make good progress when they receive well organised and delivered support from visiting specialist teachers and through the Additional Literacy Support programme. However, many do not make enough progress because the targets on their individual educational plans are too broad and progress towards them is difficult to assess. In mathematics, teachers provide appropriate work to meet pupils' individual needs, but this is not the case in many subjects and these pupils make limited progress, particularly in writing. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory gains in mathematics, but again, in other subjects, activities are sometimes too general and do not challenge these pupils successfully. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are not at the early stages of English acquisition and require no special provision. They achieve at the same level as that of their peers. There was no evidence of any significant variations in the attainment of boys or girls, ethnic minority groups or pupils from different backgrounds during the inspection

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Throughout the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are keen, enthusiastic and eager to come to school. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and usually settle quickly to the tasks given. The pupils concentrate well, sometimes very well, during class work and work diligently both independently and with others. They are very interested in the life of the school and enjoy the extracurricular activities, school productions, fund raising and other activities organised by the school. The talented pupils take full use of the opportunities to represent the school in competitive sports. Pupils of all ages behave well and are mindful of the school and class rules. They know right from wrong and are polite and courteous to teachers, their peers and to visitors. In the classroom, they move about in an orderly manner and work hard. They move sensibly about the school and on the playground. Lunch is eaten in an orderly and social atmosphere. The pupils' attitudes generate a good working atmosphere throughout the school.

19. Pupils have very constructive relationships with their peers and with adults. They know that bullying is unacceptable and will be firmly dealt with and there are few instances of it. No bullying was seen during the inspection. There were no exclusions during the last academic year. There is very good racial equality amongst the pupils, who show respect for other faiths, traditions and cultures and for the opposite sex. Pupils handle resources with care and respect the school premises. There is no litter or graffiti.

20. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they do and its impact on others. In religious education lessons, pupils learn that others may have a different view or belief from their own and that this should be valued. Where they have the opportunity to take responsibility, pupils do so well. All pupils have class responsibilities and the Year 6 boys and girls act as responsible monitors looking after younger pupils during wet playtimes. The findings of this inspection regarding the pupils' attitudes, values and personal development show a significant improvement since the last inspection.

21. Children under the age of five behave well and are on course to attain satisfactory standards in their personal and social development. They settle into school life very well, are learning to take turns, feel safe and secure and are growing in confidence. The

children are encouraged to be independent in all activities. They are developing an awareness of others and realise that, although some may behave differently, they have similar feelings to themselves and may be easily hurt by others' thoughtlessness.

22. Attendance during last term was broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence was also broadly average. Most pupils attend punctually and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning in the school are satisfactory. There is some variation, however, as teaching and learning are very good in the Nursery, in the Reception/Year 1 class and in the Year 6 class. In the remainder of the school, teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory with some good features at both key stages. During the inspection, 76 lessons, or parts of lessons, were seen. The quality of teaching was excellent in two, very good in 14, good in 23 and satisfactory in 33 lessons. However, two lessons were observed in which the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory and two in which it was poor. The overall figures represent a significant improvement since the last inspection, when more than one lesson in five was unsatisfactory and teaching was identified as a key issue for development. In the last inspection, lesson planning did not focus sufficiently on what pupils were expected to learn, work was not well matched to pupils' needs, lessons were poorly paced and the management of pupils' behaviour was weak. The quality of teaching in the Nursery was identified as satisfactory but with 'some important shortcomings'. The appointment of well-qualified and experienced new teachers to many key posts in the school has meant that many of these weaknesses are no longer in evidence. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the new schemes of work have helped teachers to focus on exactly what they want pupils to learn, although the work planned in many subjects is still not matched well enough to the needs of all pupils.

24. The strongest features of the teaching are the sensitive management of pupils which results in good behaviour, the brisk pace at which lessons are conducted, which ensures that pupils remain interested and motivated to learn, the careful explanations of tasks, which mean that pupils know exactly what to do and the skilled question and answer sessions which encourage pupils to think more carefully and extend their learning. In those lessons with shortcomings, the most important weakness in the teaching is giving pupils of all levels of attainment the same work to do, which means that pupils with special educational needs struggle to complete it when they are not provided with enough support, and that higher attaining pupils complete it very quickly. In both cases, insufficient progress is made. In addition, opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken language are not planned well enough into lessons, particularly at Key Stage 1, which results in insufficient development by the pupils. Less important weaknesses include poor organisation in a few classes which reduces the space which pupils have to undertake practical work and the lack of helpful comments to pupils when teachers mark their books.

25. The very good quality of the teaching for children under the age of five promotes very good learning in all areas of the children's development. These findings represent a very good improvement from the previous inspection report, when the quality of teaching for children under the age of five was judged to be satisfactory but with some important shortcomings'. In personal and social education, the teachers help children to express their feelings, for example, by speaking to a glove puppet 'bear' about 'what makes you scared?' The children learn to share their thoughts and listen to others. Relationships are very good and adults praise and encourage every child. The teachers' expectations are very high and they set challenging, but achievable, activities for all children. In language and literacy, the

teachers use a range of effective strategies to extend children's vocabulary and support their growing confidence well. The teachers' very good understanding of how children learn mathematics allows the children to explore concepts through practical, first-hand experiences and to enjoy the subject. The children learn to use the computer well and extend their understanding of information technology, as well as extending their language and mathematical skills. The role-play areas are very popular and give the children very good opportunities for imaginative play. Children in the Nursery and the Reception classes have their own designated outside areas, where they can develop their personal and social skills and their physical co-ordination.

26. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning in English are satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Reading is taught well and pupils make good progress in developing these skills at Key Stage 1. However, in some lessons at both key stages, the same activities are provided for all pupils, consequently, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work and those with special educational needs often find it too difficult. The teaching of literacy skills in other subjects is generally satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to write about their investigations in science and to develop their information retrieval and research skills in their work in history and geography. However, expectations of the depth and detail of older pupils' work are sometimes too limited. The quality of teaching of numeracy and the quality of learning are satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers are well aware of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and usually plan their lessons to meet the needs of different groups of pupils appropriately. Computers are not used well enough to extend mathematical concepts, although some use is made of mathematical games. Teachers ensure that pupils' numeracy and mathematical skills are developed in other subjects, for example, in design and technology and science.

27. At both key stages, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory in science, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. Teaching and learning are good in art at both key stages. Teaching and learning in information technology are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Variations in quality are related mainly to curricular provision and teachers' knowledge and confidence in the subject. Art has a high profile in the school and teachers plan the development of skills and knowledge well into work in other subjects. The provision for information technology at present, however, is not organised well enough for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge progressively as they move through Key Stage 2. Teachers are not planning its use well enough within other subjects and much of the teaching and learning occur within a very short space of time during the Year 6 pupils residential visit in the summer term.

28. A Year 6 lesson in art embodied the successful features of teaching which were found at both key stages. The teacher had excellent subject knowledge and her enthusiasm and vigour stimulated the pupils to consider how a painting by Lowry conveyed both information and the pathos of that period in history. Her skilled questioning drew their attention to the colours used by the artist and the form in which the figures were presented. They began to realise how their responses were stimulated by the artist's skill. The very brisk pace of the lesson and the interest level meant that intervention to maintain pupils' concentration and behaviour was infrequent. A further very good example was noted in a Reception/Year 1 lesson in mathematics, where the teacher gave very careful explanations of activities so that the pupils knew exactly what to do. The careful support provided by the teacher and her careful questioning of individual pupils meant that all pupils learned effectively about place value.

29. A Key Stage 2 science lesson exemplified the most important shortcomings in teaching. Planning for the lesson lacked detail and the work set did not take account of pupils' previous understanding and knowledge of the subject. Pupils did nothing to extend or consolidate their literacy skills as the recording of the activity consisted of a series of statements copied from the board. This lack of challenge and high expectation meant that the pupils were not interested and made little progress during the lesson.

30. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and the quality of their learning are generally unsatisfactory. These pupils have good relationships with their teachers and with teaching assistants which help to develop their confidence well. There is good quality teaching from visiting specialist teachers and from the teaching assistants who deliver the Additional Literacy Support programme. However, in most subjects, teachers are not taking the needs of these pupils sufficiently into account when planning activities. This means that often they are too difficult for them and pupils struggle to complete them. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the targets on individual education plans and do not plan work to meet these targets. When pupils are withdrawn for small group work, or receive additional support in class from the special educational needs co-ordinator, teaching and learning are often unsatisfactory. Teaching is not planned or focused well enough on the needs of individual pupils and the relationships between the teacher and pupils are often strained.

31. The quality of teaching and learning for gifted and higher attaining pupils is satisfactory in mathematics, where the work is matched appropriately to their needs but is sometimes unsatisfactory in literacy lessons and in other subjects where they receive the same work as the rest of the class and are not sufficiently challenged.

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

32. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided throughout the school and the subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum where these apply. Religious education is taught satisfactorily according to the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school is successful in offering a good range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils that interest and motivate them.

33. Issues raised in the previous inspection report regarding the development of schemes of work for all subjects and improving the balance of activity in subjects have been dealt with systematically and full schemes of work for all subjects have been completed except for Key Stage 2 work in religious education and physical education and some details in the science scheme. Information technology now meets National Curriculum requirements but it is not planned well enough within subjects to increase skills and knowledge and the coverage of many skills is too late in Key Stage 2 for pupils to be able to build systematically on what they have learned. Design and technology, which was a particular weakness, is now apparent in all year groups. Improvements have been made within the mathematics curriculum to give opportunities for problem solving and investigations.

34. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum for children under the age of five are very good. The school has a clear policy and well-structured curriculum, which shows very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children, and the provision enables all children to make good progress.

35. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. There is no general overview of provision for these pupils and clear identification systems are not in place. Pupils are often supported effectively through the Additional Literacy Support

programme, and the Local Education Authority's support teacher and a specific teacher for pupils with dyslexia ensures that some individual pupils receive well structured and focused work. However, the overall organisation of support and teaching for these pupils is weak and does not promote their satisfactory progress. Some individual education plans do not identify clear enough targets, in small steps, so that pupils can gain confidence from their success. Often, pupils' emotional and behavioural needs are not taken into account sufficiently and because these are not being addressed, the pupils are unable to make progress in their learning. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support within class lessons, under the direction of class teachers, but their work is not co-ordinated well enough or monitored systematically to ensure that they maintain a consistent approach. There are effective links with local secondary schools, however, which help pupils to transfer successfully.

36. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and appropriate time is allocated for literacy lessons. The school acknowledges that there are some weaknesses in the development of writing skills and is addressing this issue. Emphasis has also been placed on the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Medium term planning is generally good and clearly shows what skills and knowledge the pupils will learn from the suitable activities that are planned for them. Plans are monitored to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum. In most subjects, the curriculum generally builds on existing knowledge, understanding and skills but where schemes of work have been recently implemented, for example, in science, there is some overlap in the areas studied. Apart from the work for literacy and numeracy, day to day planning is not carried out according to a whole school format and does not always clearly indicate what pupils are expected to learn or suitable work for pupils of different capabilities.

37. Although parents believe that there are insufficient and irregular extracurricular activities, the findings of the inspection are that a good range of extracurricular activities enriches pupils' learning outside the school day. In particular, sporting opportunities are very good and the school values the contribution of voluntary helpers, and parents in supporting their children. Pupils participate in football, cricket, netball, tennis and cross-country running both at lunch times and after school. They sing in the choir, prepare for musical festivals and productions and make items in the craft club. Key Stage 1 pupils are involved in some of the previous activities mentioned but can also belong to a 'Pick and Mix' club. Educational visits and school visitors are important and regular features of the curriculum and the school makes a good effort to provide a rich variety of experiences for pupils.

38. The school has a commitment to, and a good policy for, equality in education. In practice, however, there is insufficient planning on a day-to-day basis for the needs of all pupils especially for some of the higher attainers and for those who have special educational needs. The school has considered how pupils in the mixed-age classes will be taught the curriculum and there is a clear rolling programme. However, there are no specific arrangements for tracking the topics that individual pupils will cover and some repetition has occurred in the past.

39. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and is a strength of the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education was identified as a key area for improvement. Opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual and cultural development are good. There is a very positive school ethos and the commitment to moral and social development has a very positive influence on pupils' personal development in these areas. School assemblies are lively and well presented and, through these and

religious education lessons, pupils learn to consider others' feelings and to value different cultures and beliefs. Acts of collective worship meet requirements and often emphasise the strong sense of purpose in all the school's work. Pupils are very positive when acknowledging the achievements of others. For example, children in the Reception class and those in Years 1 and 2 shared their recent work in music, science, religious education and design and technology with the rest of the pupils in the school who listened very attentively and appreciatively.

40. The promotion of spiritual development is now good. Improvement has occurred through careful planning since the previous inspection to take advantage of opportunities provided through religious education and other subjects. The vicar from the local church has welcomed pupils on visits and has been a regular visitor in school until moving away recently. Themes in assemblies have led pupils to learn about prayer and issues from the Bible. Opportunities are given for reflection in acts of collective worship and in some lessons. For example, pupils think about things they have done for others and how they will make the day special and show sensitivity when hearing poems about the senses. Pupils have good opportunities to show their appreciation of the beauty of the world around them when they paint landscapes, draw flowers from direct observation and learn about the workings of the human body. They listen to music and appraise pictures painted by famous artists and people in different societies around the world. They learn to express their emotions through writing or reading poetry. There are several sensitive examples on display where pupils have recorded their impressions and reflected on the impact of influential people and events in the last millennium. In their 'Wood of Millennium wishes', several have expressed their hopes for the future and speak about better provision for people who do not have homes, more happiness and kindness in the world, saving endangered species, peace in areas such as Kosovo and enough food for everyone.

41. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct is promoted effectively through the school's well implemented and maintained policies. These are supported by display boards that indicate a valuable range of strategies for promoting personal, social and moral development. These include good work charts, points gained by teams and how to play together at lunch times. Pupils are secure in knowing what the boundaries are and the positive use of rewards promotes the school's supportive ethos very effectively. Even the youngest children understand the class rules, some of which they have devised themselves, and show that they accept them. A constructive system of rewards and sanctions underpins the rules for behaviour. The school tries hard to acknowledge the efforts and improvements of individuals and these are recognised in whole-school assemblies. Good efforts made by individuals go towards the achievements of each school team and pupils discover who has won the cup each week. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong at levels appropriate for their age and know that there is a need to respect the rights and property of others. The many sporting activities help pupils to realise the importance of keeping the rules of games and fair play. Moral issues are taught well and the oldest pupils show a keen awareness of human responsibility when they discuss issues such as conservation and pollution.

42. There is very good provision for pupils' social development and parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Very good relationships within the school help to form positive attitudes towards social behaviour and self-discipline. One of the displays gives thoughtful guidance on how to play games in the playground, such as hopscotch, and what to do if someone is alone. Everyone is valued and pupils are given good opportunities to work together in pairs and groups and to take responsibility for tasks appropriate to their age and development. Even the children in the Nursery clean the

tables and tidy up the house area. Older pupils help younger ones during the lunch hour and also develop their social and collaborative skills during a residential visit to the Kingswood Centre. On display are certificates which have been awarded to pupils on an educational visit to Mountfitchet Castle, where they were complimented on their exemplary behaviour, good manners, respect for the environment and willingness to be involved. Social development is very well promoted by pupils' participation in a very good range of sporting activities and by opportunities to perform in front of others in productions such as 'Snow White in the Big Apple' and 'The Smallest Angel'. Pupils are encouraged to form links with the community and support local projects. They write letters to pupils in a school in Wanstead, raise money for charities such as Great Ormond Street hospital, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into all activities offered by the school.

43. The cultural provision for pupils is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has occurred because of effective planning to provide suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures through their work in religious education and other subjects. For example, it is promoted well through literacy sessions, art, music and history. Pupils not only learn about Western European civilisation but also experience American folk art and Aboriginal myths and legends. Educational visits are an important and regular feature of the curriculum and have included outings to local churches, the National Gallery, HMS Belfast and the River Thames. During Book Week, pupils dressed as their favourite characters. Shakespeare workshops were held for pupils in Years 5 and 6. In geography, pupils learn about weather, climate, the people, and features of the landscape and buildings in different countries such as France, Spain, India and Australia. They make a comparative study between Maldon and Cairo. A display of paintings by the pupils shows places around the world such as The Golden Palace in Moscow, buildings in Tibet and Japan and landscapes in Mexico, and Ethiopia. The ancient cultures of Greece and Egypt are studied in history. Pupils hear about the life of the Tudors and look at artefacts that reflect different times and places. In addition to their work on Christianity, the religious education programme of study teaches pupils about Hinduism and Judaism.

44. Provision for pupils' personal education is satisfactory although there is no policy or specific scheme of work. 'Circle' times are planned but are not in evidence in all classes. A good emphasis is given to teaching about health issues, the misuse of drugs, an awareness of medicines and sex education and these elements are treated sensitively. The work is taught within various relevant themes and within the science curriculum. They are well resourced and are taught appropriately according to the ages of the pupils. Outside speakers make useful contributions to these areas of learning.

45. There are good links with the local community and these contribute positively to pupils' experiences and their subsequent learning. Pupils learn to consider the needs of others when they visit elderly people and welcome them into the school. The Rotary Club provides financial support and the school seeks sponsorship from local firms so that pupils can participate in specific initiatives such as the Essex Schools' Prom which is held at the Royal Albert Hall. The proximity of Epping Forest allows the pupils to take part in nature trails and learn about the preservation of wildlife as a result of the educational programmes there. Pupils benefit from receiving tennis coaching at the David Lloyd Centre and were successful in winning a local tournament. The school is very involved with the Forest Primary Schools' Sports Association and there have been productive links with Essex County Cricket Club and Tottenham's scheme, 'Football in the community'.

46. There are very constructive relationships with partner institutions. Liaison with local secondary schools is effective. Co-operation with other primary schools in the local consortium is strong and the staff benefit considerably from joint in-service sessions. In sporting activities, pupils enter into matches with schools from both the state and private sector and show a high degree of success. Pupils from the local secondary school make regular visits and help in classrooms. Further education college students and those from teacher training institutions are welcomed into the school for the practical elements of their courses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The previous inspection found that the support and guidance provided for the children were good and made a positive contribution to the educational standards achieved. This is also the judgement of this inspection. All members of staff are very caring and know and support the pupils well. The environment is safe and pupils feel secure and happy to learn. External agencies, including the social services department and the education welfare service support the school well with many issues.

48. The arrangements for the management of health and safety are appropriate. The headteacher and a governor have recently attended a training course and have carried out a full health and safety review. Regular checks are made of the school's grounds, buildings and equipment. Fire drills are held and recorded appropriately. All teaching assistants have been trained in the administration of first aid, but the systems to monitor sick or hurt pupils at lunch times are unsatisfactory, and pupils are left on their own for long periods of time. The school follows the Local Education Authority's guidelines for child protection. Many staff have had recent training, and more are due to receive training next term.

49. Attendance at the school is in line with the national average. The school has satisfactory arrangements for promoting good attendance. Registers are marked at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. The education welfare officer is involved where concerns are identified and provides effective support.

50. The procedures for the promotion of discipline and good behaviour are good. Class rules are agreed at the beginning of each academic year and are displayed on the class room walls. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. No bullying was seen during the inspection but pupils are happy that procedures are in place to deal with it quickly should it occur. The monitoring of behaviour is satisfactory.

51. Assessment procedures are very good in the Nursery and good in the Reception class. On entry to the Reception class, the teacher assesses the children according to the Local Education Authority's baseline scheme. This indicates individual strengths and weaknesses, which are broadly based on the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes for young children.

52. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. There are satisfactory policies for assessment and marking. At the start of the autumn term, the co-ordinator for assessment audited the school's assessment procedures. The school has decided to make numeracy and literacy priorities for assessment, with special emphasis on writing, as noted in the school development plan. New assessment procedures were initiated for Year 6 pupils in English during the autumn term and were introduced throughout the school in January for English and mathematics. These procedures are good for English and mathematics, although not yet fully in place. Careful analysis of the end of key stage tests in English has led the school to identify areas

of weakness, which require emphasis. The school has identified writing as a weakness throughout the school and is addressing this through extra lessons for creative writing. It is too early yet for this initiative to have shown a substantial rise in pupils' attainment in writing. The school has introduced good target setting for individual pupils throughout the school for their academic and personal development. Standardised tests are carried out to test pupils' capabilities in reading, spelling and mathematics. Pupils in Year 4 take the optional standardised tests for English and mathematics. The school has decided to introduce the optional standardised tests for English and mathematics for pupils in Years 3 and 5 in order to make more accurate assessments of their attainment. Assessment procedures are in place within most areas of the curriculum but lack consistency in their application by teachers. The procedures for assessment reflect an improvement since the last inspection, when this was identified as a key issue for development.

53. Teachers provide very good support for all pupils. The targets for the pupils' personal development ensure that teachers are aware of pupils' emotional well-being and their social development. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. The pupils' reviews of their targets show that they feel secure and are able to express confidently their thoughts to the teachers. The formal targets set for pupils' attainments in English and mathematics in the Key Stage 2 national tests are realistic, as they reflect the analysis of previous years' predictions, class teachers' predictions and the present cohort's attainment.

54. The school's procedures for identifying pupils with special education needs are not clear enough to ensure that all such pupils are identified and their needs met. There are a number of pupils whose needs relate to aspects of writing, speaking and listening and personal development who are not included on the register and, therefore, do not receive specifically planned support. There is also some variation in the clarity and quality of the targets on pupils' individual education plans and this makes it difficult to assess some pupils' progress accurately and plan suitable work for them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The previous inspection found that partnership with parents was satisfactory, and this is still the case, although some elements of it are good.

56. Parents have very positive views of the school. Parental responses to the questionnaire they were given and the comments made at the pre-inspection parents' meeting show that parents are very supportive of the school. Most parents feel that the school is welcoming and that they would be happy to come into school to talk about problems or raise any questions. However, a few parents feel that there are not enough after school activities for the children, that the levels of homework are inappropriate, that the school does not provide them with enough information about their children's progress and that the school does not work closely enough with them. These views, however, are not supported by the inspection. A few parents are concerned that class sizes are too large and that pupils in mixed-age classes repeat work. The inspection finds that some classrooms in Key Stage 2 are not organised well enough to cater for the numbers of pupils and that the school is now planning its curriculum to ensure that pupils do not repeat topics, although there has been some duplication in the past.

57. The information provided for parents by the school is good overall. The headteacher sends out regular monthly newsletters, which give parents information about what is happening in school. Letters are also sent home from class teachers telling parents what children will be doing during the coming term and how parents can help children at home.

The governors' Annual Report to parents omits a few statutory pieces of information, for example, about the provision made for disabled pupils. Written annual reports for parents are satisfactory. They give information about pupils' knowledge and skills and, in some cases, identify areas for development. There are planned opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress formally and there are opportunities for informal discussion with class teachers at the end of the school day.

58. The school gives parents in Years 2 and 6 information about the National Curriculum tests and has held an informative meeting about the National Literacy Strategy. A similar meeting to discuss the National Numeracy Strategy is planned.

59. The impact of parental involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. There are opportunities for parents to help out in class, but few take up these opportunities, although more help out on school trips. The school receives good support from the Parent Teacher Association, which has raised significant funds to support, for example, the provision of new physical education equipment. Parental support for children's learning at home is satisfactory. A number of them support their children by listening to them read, and helping with homework.

60. Induction procedures for children under the age of five are very good in the Nursery and good in the Reception class. The children are visited in their own homes by members of the Nursery staff. Parents are invited to bring their children to visit the Nursery once a week in the half term before they start school. Children in the Reception class are invited to visit their new class with their parents and meet their teacher for one morning before transferring from the Nursery.

61. There are effective links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are fully involved in all aspects of the provision that the school makes for their child. The co-ordinator for special educational needs makes good use of her knowledge and long association with the local area to support links with parents and the local community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The headteacher provides the school with very effective leadership. She is clearly committed to improving both standards and provision for the pupils and this commitment is evident in the positive way that the vast majority of staff work together. She is held in high regard by all members of the school community. Parents say that they feel confident to approach the school with any concerns. She provides a very good role model for teachers and pupils, who value her opinions and respond very warmly to her praise and encouragement. She has been responsible for leading the staff successfully since the last inspection to improve standards and many aspects of school provision. She has appointed well-qualified and experienced teachers to key roles in the school as these positions have become vacant, and this has improved the quality of teaching throughout the school and especially in the Nursery. The school development plan is much improved and shows the priorities for the long and short term. Success criteria are suitably described so that the effectiveness of the plan can be evaluated. Learning resources have been extended considerably and are now good. The school is now analysing the results of annual tests to identify and address weaknesses in pupils' learning. The school's published aims are apparent in its everyday life and work and overall, they are well met. However, although the headteacher receives high levels of support from parents, governors and the vast majority of staff, she has received very little support from the deputy headteacher, who has not been carrying out his management role effectively. This lack of support has placed

additional pressures and an increased workload upon the headteacher and other members of staff, who have had to work very hard to ensure the school's development. For instance, the only curricular responsibility he holds is for physical education. He provides very limited leadership to the development of the school and gives little support to younger and inexperienced colleagues. Despite encouragement, he has not been involved in financial planning or monitoring or in the professional development of his colleagues. Tasks which he has been asked to complete, for example, the scheme of work for physical education, remain unfinished.

63. The role of the special educational needs co-ordinator is underdeveloped and she is not performing an effective management role. She has no formal responsibility for learning support assistants and this means that their work is not monitored and that opportunities are missed to extend their knowledge and understanding. She has no clear responsibility or overview of the support provided by the Local Education Authority's learning support teacher or by the teacher of pupils with dyslexia whom the school employs on a part-time basis. Systems to identify pupils with special educational needs are not well-defined and this means that many teachers are uncertain about placing pupils on the special educational needs register. Consequently, the number of pupils currently on the register is low and does not reflect accurately the true nature of the school. It also means that some pupils' needs are not being identified and met and that they are not receiving appropriate learning experiences to help them make adequate progress. Currently, the co-ordinator focuses mainly on pupils on the upper stages of the register and does not have a clear enough overview of those on the early stages. She does, however, have a very good knowledge of many pupils and their families, having been associated with the school over a long period of time. She has formed good links with some other agencies, for example, feeder schools, the secondary school and the educational psychologist but links with the education welfare officer and social services departments remain underdeveloped.

64. Conversely, other members of the school staff with management responsibilities are performing a very effective role. The Nursery co-ordinator leads a very good team and provides high levels of expertise and experience which ensure high quality provision for these children. Subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and have clear views of the future development needed in their subjects. The assessment co-ordinator has managed, within a very short time, to implement some effective systems across the school.

65. The governing body is well-informed and plays an active part in the running of the school. Governors make regular visits and keep records of their findings which are reported verbally at meetings of the governing body. They have formed themselves into committees in order to allow them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities more effectively. The curriculum committee meets regularly to consider new policies and to review others on a rolling programme. Policies are discussed and amended when necessary. Certain governors have been appointed to take monitoring roles in literacy, numeracy and special educational needs and these governors demonstrate particular enthusiasm. Many governors have attended recent training, including those governors who have been newly appointed, all of whom attended a lengthy induction course which they confirm has been invaluable in introducing them to their new role. The link governor is keen to involve more experienced governors in further training to update their knowledge. The finance committee meets regularly to monitor the school's spending. The premises committee monitors the condition of the building and has set a rolling programme of redecoration in place. Governors monitor health and safety procedures and carry out an annual audit. The personnel committee meets termly to discuss appointments and any other relevant issues. Governors are meeting the vast majority of their statutory requirements, although

there is some information missing from their Annual Report to parents, for example, about how the school provides for disabled pupils.

66. The headteacher has, with the support of the vast majority of her staff plus the backing of governors and parents, been very successful in improving standards since the last inspection. This has been carried out by appointing high quality staff to key roles, once these positions became available through teachers retiring or moving on to other schools. Many weaknesses identified by this inspection, for example, standards in pupils' writing and information and control technology have already been recognised by the school and are included in the school's development plan. Annual National Curriculum test results are analysed to identify broad weaknesses, although the headteacher recognises the need to scrutinise the data still further to pinpoint more specific areas for curricular development. The fact that the school has been successful in raising standards, however, is a testament to the success of its own analyses and development of its performance to date. The headteacher and literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have undertaken some monitoring of class teaching and this has been successful, in a limited way, in ensuring that the national strategies have been implemented successfully. However, the lack of a formal system of monitoring the quality of teaching means that some weaknesses, for example, the weak planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs, have not been identified and addressed successfully. The open and enthusiastic way in which teachers welcomed the feedback from inspectors shows their commitment to improvement and their willingness to accept and act upon constructive advice.

67. The school's budget for the last financial year showed that spending exceeded the budget allocation from the Local Education Authority. However, this was balanced by funds which had been carried forward from the previous year to support necessary improvements to levels of learning resources in the school. This year's budget is within its income and there will be an acceptable level of funds carried forward this year. The school is a member of a local schools' consortium which employs a budget manager to oversee school practice and to negotiate contracts for supplies and services. She has been successful in obtaining very favourable rates which have ensured that the school is getting the best value for its money. The school's priorities for development are set at the beginning of the academic year and these inform budget planning for the financial year. However, subject budgets are calculated on a historical basis and opportunities are missed to relate the budget setting process to the needs of different subject areas.

68. There are an appropriate number of teachers with suitable qualifications and experience to match the needs of the curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator teaches small groups of pupils either in class or in withdrawal groups. Additional support for pupils with specific learning difficulties is provided by a part-time teacher from the Local Education Authority plus a part-time teacher who supports pupils with dyslexia. The school has an adequate number of teaching assistants who support a range of pupils in classes. There are a suitable number of other support staff in the school and the midday staff provide good support and make an enthusiastic contribution to school life. Members of the administrative staff work efficiently as a team to ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is smooth. Although the headteacher and deputy headteacher are set formal targets by governors, linked to pay reviews, the formal system for the appraisal of teachers has been suspended due to industrial action and there are no interim measures in place. Although teachers' professional development is linked to the needs of the school as well as national requirements, systems are not identifying the individual needs of teachers well enough. There is a good programme for newly qualified teachers which is linked to the Local Education Authority's programme, although they do not receive enough advice on how to support pupils with special educational needs effectively.

69. The school has an adequate amount of accommodation that is used appropriately but some classrooms are small for the numbers of pupils in them and are not well organised to ensure optimum working conditions for teachers and pupils. Storage facilities have been provided effectively at the bottom of each staircase, although this often has the effect of making these areas appear cluttered and untidy. Much of the furniture is old and in a poor state of repair, although this is being replaced gradually. The library is centrally situated and a new computer suite is planned in the near future. Outside accommodation is good, with a fenced-off area for Nursery children, which contains a covered area for play on wet days. The extensive playing fields are used well to support the good range of sporting activities on offer, although drainage problems often make it difficult to use during wet weather.

70. Levels of resources, which were identified as inadequate at the last inspection, are now good in many areas. There is a good range of material to support literacy and numeracy although the quantity of books in the library is inadequate for the number of pupils on roll. There is a shortage of information books which restricts the development of pupils' research skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

1. Improve standards of information technology at Key Stage 2 by:

- Ensuring sufficient time is allocated to the teaching of the subject;
- Ensuring greater use across the curriculum;
- Teaching specific skills in a progressive fashion;
- Improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- Implementing the school's development plan for information technology as soon as possible.

(Paragraphs 5, 6, 16, 25, 26, 32, 89, 103, 108, 116, 126, 128, 134, 137-141)

2. Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

- Establishing clear systems for the identification of pupils with special educational needs;
- Extending class teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of these pupils;
- Ensuring that class teachers provide suitably matched activities to meet the needs of these pupils;
- Ensuring that all targets on individual education plans are clear and measurable;
- Ensuring that individual education plans address all aspects of pupils' needs, including speaking and listening, writing, and personal and emotional needs.

(Paragraphs 17, 23, 25, 29, 34, 37, 53, 62, 67, 96, 98, 100, 108, 115, 135)

3. Ensure that key staff in the school perform effective management roles by:

- Agreeing clear job descriptions and monitoring performance;
- Ensuring that the special educational needs co-ordinator has a clear overview of all pupils on the register;
- Ensuring that senior managers are actively involved in training, monitoring and co-ordinating appropriate staff;
- Ensuring that the deputy headteacher is involved fully in planning for and monitoring school development, including budgetary issues.

(Paragraphs 34, 53, 61, 62)

4. Implement a clear system to monitor the quality of teaching to identify and address weaknesses.

(Paragraph 65, 110, 117, 122, 129, 136, 146, 152, 159)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Link budget planning more closely with planning for school development.(Paragraph 66)
- Improve resources in the library.(Paragraph 69, 101)
- Improve procedures to care for sick children at lunchtime.(Paragraph 47)
- Improve provision for speaking and listening.(Paragraph 6, 12, 23, 87, 93, 100)
- Ensure that appropriately challenging work is provided for higher attaining pupils in all subjects.(Paragraphs 23, 25, 30, 37, 88, 94, 98, 108, 115, 128, 135)
- Ensure assessment systems are carried out consistently.(Paragraph 51, 100)
- Ensure that the governors' Annual Report contains all statutorily required information.(Paragraph 56)
- Implement a system to identify the professional development needs of teaching staff.(Paragraph 67)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	18	30	44	3	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23.5	295
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	81

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	34	24	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	26	31
	Girls	23	21	23
	Total	51	47	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 [80]	81 [89]	93 [93]
	National	82 [80]	83 [81]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	31	33
	Girls	23	24	23
	Total	51	55	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 [82]	95 [95]	97 [98]
	National	82 [81]	86 [85]	87 [86]

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	21	17	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	12	15	16
	Total	29	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 [50]	84 [43]	92 [63]
	National	70 [65]	69 [59]	78 [69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	21
	Girls	11	13	16
	Total	22	27	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 [23]	71 [33]	97 [47]
	National	68 [65]	69 [65]	75 [72]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	256
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	24.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	206

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.25
--------------------------------	-------

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
----------------	---------

Total income	631,554
Total expenditure	651,422
Expenditure per pupil	2,005
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,895
Balance carried forward to next year	12,027

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	319
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	36	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	52	8	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	53	12	5	2
The teaching is good.	58	39	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	41	13	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	29	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	45	15	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	63	32	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	47	8	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	39	19	8	3

Other issues raised by parents

Class sizes are too large.

Mixed age group classes affect children's progress.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. The provision for children under five is very good in the Nursery and good in Reception. The Nursery provides children with very high quality teaching and a well-organised curriculum, which enable all children to make very good progress. The teaching in the Reception class is generally good and the curriculum for these children is appropriate for their age. The planning in this class refers to National Curriculum Programmes of Study and not the Desirable Learning Outcomes which are the nationally recommended areas of learning for children under the age of five. However, the teacher is very experienced and the actual provision is appropriate to the children's needs. The school's last inspection report on the provision for children under five identified some important areas of weakness in teaching and in the curriculum, and the school has made very good improvements to address these areas of weakness. The teachers in the Nursery have very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and of the requirements of the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

71. Children with special educational needs come into the Nursery from the age of three and mainstream children usually come in when they are almost four years old. Many of the children enter with below, or well below, average standards of attainment. There are 44 children, who attend part-time in the Nursery and one who attends full-time. At the beginning of the term they will be five, they enter the Reception class and attend full-time. At present, there are 12 children in this class. Children make very good progress and most are on course to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children aged five in their personal and social development, reading and listening, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. However, they are not on course to reached the desired levels in their speaking and writing development, due to their limited language development on entry to the school.

Personal and social development

72. Children are on course to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in their personal and social development, due to the very good opportunities offered to them. From the time they first enter the Nursery, they are encouraged to make independent choices from a very wide range of appropriate activities. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in the Nursery and the Reception class, which enables the children to feel safe, secure and able to learn. They settle well and work and play independently and most are willing to ask for help when they need it. Most are willing to take turns, although a few find this difficult. However, the very good teamwork by staff in the Nursery ensures that the children are given many appropriate opportunities to enable them to learn to share equipment. For example, taking turns on the large wheeled toys outside and preparing the 'snacks' for other children help them to learn how to share in a very purposeful way. The children have a caring attitude towards each other and those who have special educational needs are very well integrated. All children under the age of five respond positively to new challenges and enjoy their work. They are attentive and very interested in all that they do. Many are able to sustain interest in their activities. They are polite, very friendly and well behaved. The children quickly make effective relationships with adults and are learning to make friends with other children. Role-play in the 'shop', the 'bear cave' and 'the three bears' house' enables them to work co-operatively with each other. They are able to express their feelings and behave

in appropriate ways and are developing an understanding of what is right and wrong. The teaching of relationships and interactions is of very good quality. The very good provision for free play supports personal and social development and enhances the children's ability to work and play collaboratively.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in this area. The teachers have a very encouraging manner and value each child's contribution. They ensure that every child has the opportunity to take part in all activities, which helps to build the children's confidence. Children are encouraged to be independent and to tidy up and dress themselves.

Language and literacy

74. On entry to the school, the attainment in language and literacy of most of the children is below and, in some cases well below, the national average. The teaching and learning of language and literacy receive a high priority. Teachers concentrate on providing an environment which is rich in language to ensure that the children develop a more varied and extensive vocabulary. The children are making very good progress and most are on course to attain the nationally desired standards for children by the age of five in their listening and early reading skills. They are not on course to meet the desirable outcomes in speaking and writing and, thus, language and literacy overall. Their listening skills are reinforced very well and they enjoy listening to stories, as a class, in groups and individually, both from adults and listening to taped stories. Few respond readily to questioning about stories or reply using whole sentences. The children enjoy being in the various role-play areas, which provide them with a secure, welcoming environment. Opportunities for the children to extend their language skills through imaginative play are extensive. An adult often participates in the role-play situations to extend the children's vocabulary and their understanding of the conventions of conversations. This was seen to very good effect, when one of the nursery nurses was sitting just outside the 'bear cave' reading, 'We're going on a bear hunt', to a group of children 'looking for bears'. When they come into the Nursery at the start of each session, the children are encouraged to look for, and recognise, their own name cards and self-register by putting them into a box. They enjoy 'reading' and are encouraged to handle books with care and to understand how they are organised. They know that words and pictures carry meaning and some are beginning to acquire early reading skills. In the Nursery, children know that marks and shapes on paper carry meaning and make attempts at writing. They are encouraged to make their own storybooks and their early attempts at drawing and writing are valued. In the Reception class, a few are starting to recognise a small range of words on sight. Some are beginning to associate sounds with letters, and make a good attempt at using known letters and words to write, although often using inaccurately formed letters. Their pencil control is limited and many have difficulty forming letter shapes correctly. Information technology activities are used regularly to encourage good hand control and to extend the children's language skills. Children with special educational needs are fully integrated in all areas of learning.

75. The quality of teaching and learning of language and literacy is very good and many imaginative, short activities, which are appropriate to the limited concentration spans of this age group enable the children to make good progress. Children are being taught, and most are learning, the phonic sounds for letters, which the higher attaining children are able to recognise in other words or in their own names.

Mathematics

76. On entry to the school, the attainment of these children in their mathematical development is mainly below average. They make very good progress and most meet the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five in their mathematical development. They are provided with many practical activities to stimulate their learning. They gain experience of basic activities underlying the development of mathematical concepts, such as capacity and volume through play with sand and water. The children often have an adult with them, who asks appropriate, open-ended questions about the water or sand, which extends their understanding sufficiently to ensure that they make good progress. In the Nursery, one child showed his good understanding of 'long and short,' 'longer than' and 'shorter than', when he drew three different rectangles for 'beds' for each of the 'three bears'. Teachers have used the topic of 'The Three Bears' well to provide the children with many opportunities to gain a good understanding of numbers up to three. They can match and sort objects, according to colour or shape and enjoy singing number rhymes, which helps to reinforce their understanding of numbers. In the Reception class, the teacher enabled the children to gain a good understanding of basic shapes, when she gave them the invaluable practical experience of drawing round and cutting out the shapes for themselves. This helped them to gain a fuller understanding of the properties of circles, squares, triangles and rectangles. Children can count single numbers and some have an idea of what they represent, but many are unable to form written numbers correctly. The higher attaining children can order, count and record sets of objects to 20. Their understanding of numbers, shapes and quantities is reinforced by the use of number apparatus and games. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their previous attainment.

77. The quality of teaching and learning of mathematics is very good. Open-ended questions are used very well to encourage the children to think and answer clearly, before the adult reinforces their understanding by clear explanations. Adults assess each child very well by close observation and questioning to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is planned and taught and to enable the children to make further progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children's knowledge and understanding of their immediate world are below average on entry to the school. They make rapid progress in the Nursery and good progress in the Reception class. The difference in their rates of progress relates to the more extensive range of well organised experiences on offer in the Nursery. Most are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. Children are interested in events in the world around them and in features of living things. They know the routine of the day and understand that there are different times for daily events. Members of staff encourage the children to be observant. In the Nursery, the children enjoy mixing oats and milk to make porridge. They have made models of 'tables and chairs' for their teddy bears from wood, glue and paint. In the Reception class, the children enjoyed making toast, which extended their understanding of electricity, as well as their knowledge of the changes to bread, when it is heated. In information technology, children like using the computer and respond well to simple programs, which reinforce the development of their language.

79. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and the very good range of activities provided makes a substantial contribution to the children's good progress. The topic of 'The Three Bears' enables the children to explore a wide range of activities for future work in many areas of the curriculum. It has enabled the children to explore materials in preparation for future work in science. They play out their experiences in role-play and

extend their vocabulary. The topic has been used well to extend the children's knowledge of real bears and their habitats.

Physical development

80. In the Nursery, the children are provided with a wide range of activities to develop their physical skills. They have regular access to an outside area, where they can run, jump, climb and learn to share wheeled vehicles, such as tricycles, in order for them to develop good skills in co-ordination and control of their bodies. Although children in the Reception class have access to outside activities, they do not have any wheeled vehicles or climbing apparatus to extend their physical development. They have regular sessions in the hall, where they use the apparatus and start to acquire early gymnastic skills, and listen and respond to music. Although many of the children lack good hand control, they are given many opportunities to develop this skill through a range of activities, such as using small construction toys, cutting and sticking, picking up pieces of puzzles and using the computer mouse. Most children are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five.

81. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Nursery and good in the Reception class, due to the limitations of resources. The teachers have a thorough understanding of the needs of young children, which enables them to provide suitable experiences.

Creative development

82. Most children are on course to meet the desired outcomes for creative development by the age of five. Children in the Nursery make very good progress and those in the Reception class make good progress in acquiring and developing their creative skills. The difference in the rates of progress is related to the vast range of experiences which are on offer in the Nursery and the many different techniques to which children are introduced. The teaching of different techniques for painting in the Nursery for example, enhances the children's knowledge and skills very well. They are encouraged to experiment with paints and have an adult with them to extend their learning. The role-play areas are very popular and provide good opportunities for imaginative play, as well as helping to build good relationships. The children know many nursery rhymes, are starting to memorise the words of new songs and enjoy listening to music and playing instruments. They are learning that instruments have different pitch, such as when the children played the bells to represent a high pitched sound for 'baby bear', and the lower sound of the tambour to represent 'daddy bear's voice'. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are very good in this area. The staff have very high, yet realistic expectations for the children. The provision of a wide range of appropriate activities and experiences is extending the children's progress in their creative development.

ENGLISH

83. Analysis of the school's national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, pupils' performance was below the national average but compared with similar schools, pupils' performance was above average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in English was close to the national average but the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 and above was well below average. Assessments made by teachers were similar to national test results at Level 5 and above but the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 and above showed that teachers did not have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils.

84. When the averages of the school's test results for 1999 are compared with those of the previous three years, they show a significant improvement which is above the national trend. The combined data for the last three years show no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

85. The school has set formal targets for national tests in the Year 2000 which represent a moderate degree of challenge. The school considers that this represents a realistic level of challenge for this particular cohort of pupils, and the findings of the inspection support this judgement.

86. The current pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain nationally expected standards. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls. This judgement reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

87. By the age of 11, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils listen carefully and ask and answer questions that are relevant to discussions. They share their ideas thoughtfully and communicate clearly and confidently. A good example of their skills was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were discussing how they could improve their writing through the study of extracts from several well-known books. Guided by effective questioning from their teacher, pupils were able to make observations about the different strategies that writers were using and offer their responses to those strategies. There are planned opportunities for pupils to speak in school and key stage assemblies and these afford good experience for pupils to speak in formal situations. However, there are insufficient opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to take part in formal debates and discussions or to speak to different audiences.

88. Standards in reading are average at the end of the key stage. Most pupils are competent readers and talk about their reading with interest. They are able to talk about books they have enjoyed and their favourite authors. They are also able to refer to characters and events and make predictions about their reading. Some higher attaining pupils are able to compare books they have read, identifying features that they have particularly appreciated. Pupils generally know how to find books and information in both fiction and reference sections of the library. Research and referencing skills are generally developed satisfactorily across the curriculum but higher attaining pupils do not always develop the depth of their research sufficiently.

89. At Key Stage 2, standards in writing are below average. The school has identified the development of pupils' skills in writing as a priority but strategies employed by the school have not had time to affect standards. Although pupils write for a sound range of purposes and different audiences, they do not develop their ideas in sufficient detail, nor do they use language confidently to achieve different effects. However, with some very well focused teaching in Year 6, pupils are learning to appreciate that, through their reading, they can see writing in action and find good models for their own writing. Standards of accuracy and presentation are variable and, for some younger pupils in the key stage, standards of handwriting and presentation are weak. By Year 6, pupils are attaining more appropriate standards, mainly as a result of an extended focus on spelling and handwriting at the beginning of the year. Older pupils practise techniques of drafting and editing in order to improve their work but this is insufficiently developed in some younger pupils in the key stage. There is insufficient use of information technology to support their skills.

90. When the averages of the school's test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards were average in reading and

below average in writing. Compared with similar schools, however, pupils' performance in reading tests was well above average and in writing, it was average. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in reading was close to the national average and, in writing, was below average. The proportion attaining Level 3 and above in reading was close to the national average and in writing, it was above average. The assessments made by teachers were generally similar to the school's test results.

91. There has been a varied trend in standards in reading over the past three years, due mainly to the different capabilities of the pupils involved. For example, standards in reading were close to the national average in 1996 and 1998 and above the national averages in 1997 and 1999. In writing, improved standards match the national trend.

92. The findings of the current inspection are that pupils are on course to achieve below average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. This judgement represents a fall in standards since the previous inspection and similar standards to the national end of key stage test results for 1999. It highlights the lower capabilities of this year's cohort, particularly in speaking and listening and writing. However, although standards are below average, pupils' achievement is satisfactory when compared to their previous levels of attainment

93. Standards in speaking and listening are below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Many pupils enter the school with below, and sometimes well below, average abilities in language and a limited range of vocabulary. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are able to listen to their teachers and to others appropriately and respond relevantly to questions. They are able to talk about their interests but many do not speak audibly or clearly and few are able to speak at any length. The school provides some good opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence in speaking to larger audiences when pupils take part in assemblies but there are insufficient opportunities provided within everyday classroom activities for them to extend their confidence and vocabulary effectively.

94. By the end of the key stage, standards in reading are average. Most pupils read simple texts accurately and fluently. They have a secure knowledge of a range of simple strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. Some higher attaining pupils are reading confidently and independently but only a few pupils are able to talk about their favourite books or the books they have read outside the school's provision.

95. Standards in writing are below average. Higher attaining pupils are able to convey meaning in simple sentences and arrange them to make simple stories or descriptions. They are able to spell simple words accurately. However, the work of average and lower attaining pupils shows a more limited range of coherent expression and vocabulary. Although the school teaches a joined style of handwriting from an early stage, many pupils do not have secure control of letter formation and continue to write with an inappropriate mixture of lower case and upper case letters. Only a few pupils use capital letters and full stops with consistent accuracy.

96. Some pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards relative to their previous attainment when they are withdrawn for specialist teaching either with visiting teachers or with teaching assistants in the Additional Literacy Support programme. However many pupils make unsatisfactory progress because the targets on their individual education plans do not identify clear steps forward and because class and some teaching support activities do not match their needs closely enough.

97. At both key stages, standards in literacy are average and the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is generally satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to write about their investigations in science and to develop their information retrieval and research skills in their work in history and geography. However, expectations of the depth and detail of older pupils' work is sometimes too limited.

98. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning in English are satisfactory at both key stages. Similar standards were observed in the school's previous inspection report. During the week of the inspection, some good and very good teaching was observed in both key stages. An example of very good teaching practice was seen in the extremely effective partnership developed by the teachers of the Year 6 class. Their enthusiasm, confident subject knowledge and high expectations enable their pupils to make good progress in their final year in the school. These characteristics are a feature of other good and very good teaching in the rest of the school, for example, in the Reception/Year 1 class, where the teacher motivates the pupils well to develop their sight vocabulary and knowledge of letter sounds by enthusiastic and well focused games and activities. In these lessons, where activities are well matched to all pupils' needs and teaching assistants are used productively throughout the whole session, pupils concentrate well on their tasks and make satisfactory and often good progress. There are good relationships in most classes and, where teachers combine these with consistent expectations, pupils are involved with their work and develop their confidence well. Teachers generally have a satisfactory understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy but, in some lessons, tasks in group activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. Some lower attaining pupils in these lessons are not able to understand the work or to make good progress with tasks even when they have support.

99. Most pupils respond well in whole-class teaching and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. However, in lessons where teachers are not consistent in maintaining their expectations of pupils' behaviour, for example, allowing pupils to call out, the focus of the lesson is weakened and pupils do not always make sufficient progress.

100. The curriculum in English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and literacy is taught daily. The National Literacy Strategy framework forms the basis of the scheme of work but this does not sufficiently incorporate a planned approach to speaking and listening. Planning in year groups is usually detailed although it is not always sharply focused for pupils with special educational needs. The school makes good and effective use of the Additional Literacy Support programme which is well taught by trained teaching assistants. Assessment procedures, including strategies for assessing and developing writing skills, are good. However, these are newly in place and are not yet fully implemented. Criteria for identifying pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently clear. They do not ensure that all pupils who need it receive support, particularly in the school's identified priority area of writing. Teachers' comments in pupils' books are too often only supportive and encouraging and do not sufficiently indicate ways in which pupils' work could be improved.

101. The co-ordinator for the subject has a good awareness of the priorities for the development of the subject. She has monitored teaching, pupils' work and teachers' planning and has discussed priorities for the subject with colleagues. Resources in English are satisfactory. There have been some recent good quality purchases for teaching literacy and there are a good number and range of books in the classrooms, including appropriate dictionaries and thesauruses. However, the provision in the library is limited and there are an insufficient number and range of books for the pupils. The school is aware of this and has planned its development carefully. The school enhances its curriculum appropriately

with events such as book weeks and book fairs. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development and a good contribution to its cultural development through its study of traditional tales and myths and legends from western and other cultures.

MATHEMATICS

102. Analysis of national test results for 1999 shows the percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation was well above the national average and the percentage reaching Level 5 was above the national average. Performance was well above average when compared with similar schools. Test results were higher than teachers' assessments. When the averages of the school's test results for 1999 are compared with those of the previous two years, they show a rising trend with the 1999 results exceeding the national trend. The 1999 results show a significant improvement on the findings of the last report, when standards were only average. The findings of the inspection indicate that the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is broadly average which is appropriate for this particular cohort of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The school has set appropriate targets for this cohort of pupils which they are on course to attain in this year's National Curriculum tests.

103. By the age of 11, pupils are developing their own strategies for problem solving and demonstrate average skills in using all four operations in whole numbers and decimals. They work confidently with large numbers and perform accurate calculations mentally, using their knowledge of multiplication tables and quick addition and subtraction strategies. The pupils classify two-dimensional shapes using their properties and identifying their symmetries. They find perimeters of simple shapes and graph their relationships and measure accurately, including angles to the nearest degree. Pupils use and interpret first quadrant co-ordinates. They collect data and communicate it in various graphs. There has been little improvement in the use of computers to extend mathematical concepts, although some use is made of mathematical games. The pupils use and apply mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they measure accurately in design and technology and science, and use time lines in history. The use of investigations is much improved since the last report, where it was a weakness.

104. An analysis of the results of 1999 test information at the end of Key Stage 1 shows that the percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation is above the national average and the average for similar schools. The percentage reaching Level 3 was average. The findings of the inspection and school data indicate broadly average standards this year. This reflects the findings of the previous report.

105. By the end of the key stage, pupils recognise and use simple relationships and discuss their work using mathematical language. They are beginning to understand the place value of digits, and can arrange numbers to 100 in order. Pupils understand the language of addition and subtraction and can count on and back in tens. They read and write numbers to 100 and round numbers under 100 to the nearest ten. The pupils measure using standard and non-standard measurements of length and know the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes.

106. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory overall at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, they range from very good to satisfactory and at Key Stage 2, they range from very good to poor. Teaching is particularly good in the Year 6 class but is poor in the Year 5 class. Most teachers show commitment and work conscientiously to promote high standards. The findings of this inspection are an improvement on the

previous inspection when teaching was not specifically judged but progress was unsatisfactory in half of the lessons seen. In the best lessons, teachers clearly explain the purposes of tasks, indicate that they have high expectations of what can be achieved and make skilful use of questions to probe and extend pupils' understanding. In these lessons, pupils learn rapidly. In this subject, all teachers plan for the full range of ability within their classes, which was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. Throughout the school, the teachers' management and control of pupils are generally good, and these approaches help all pupils to concentrate and take advantage of the skilful introductions to lessons and the thorough evaluations of what has been learned. These elements are good features of most lessons. Resources are carefully prepared and provide pupils with good opportunities to practise skills and consolidate their understanding. Most teachers build on what pupils already know and understand, give a consistent emphasis to practical calculations and work hard to help individuals to develop the appropriate mathematical vocabulary and explain their strategies. This is a result of more sharply focused teaching in line with the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been successfully implemented.

107. In the very good lessons, teachers have a brisk, no nonsense style, which ensures pupils' full attention and keeps them on their toes. Clear planning ensures work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and they make very good progress. This is evident in Year 6 where the teacher's enthusiasm challenges pupils when working with decimals to three places and applying their skills in using money and converting currencies. Also in Year 6, skilled teaching and good management lead to pupils making very good progress in their understanding of probability. In a Reception/Year 1 class, the teacher's very positive relationships with the class mean that pupils are keen and willing to take risks in their learning.

108. In the poor lesson, weak structure and planning mean that teaching is confused and progression in learning is not considered. The teacher has not taken account of what the pupils already understand and a lack of suitably matched activities means that lower attainers find the work too difficult and higher attainers mark time. A general weakness in teaching throughout the school is the limited use of information technology.

109. The new co-ordinator has made a pleasing start in the role. He monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work, and has begun to monitor teaching and give feedback to colleagues but this is not followed up systematically enough to address weaknesses. The co-ordinator has successfully ensured the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. He supports colleagues with their planning to try to ensure that skills are systematically built on and work is accurately assessed against the framework. Resources for the subject are now adequate and have been improved since the last inspection. National Curriculum requirements are met.

SCIENCE

110. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 shows that, compared with all schools, and with similar schools, the standards attained in science at Level 4 and above, and at Level 5 and above, were well above average. The assessments made by teachers were very similar to the test results. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those attained over the previous three years, they show a marked improvement above the national trend. There are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls.

111. The findings of the inspection are that the standards attained by the oldest Key Stage 2 pupils are above the expected level. This represents an improvement on the school's previous OFSTED inspection when standards were judged to be satisfactory 'in the aspects of science seen'. By the age of 11, pupils recognise the need for fair tests and

realise that predictions may be different from the actual results found. Many pupils can give reasons for their findings and understand the importance of controlling variables. They classify living things and recognise the feeding relationship that exists between plants and animals in a habitat. They explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases and identify a range of contexts in which changes such as evaporation and condensation take place. Several are able to make links between the loudness of a sound and the amplitude of the vibration causing it and to show ways in which frictional forces, including air resistance, affect motion when they test the movement of a shoe on different surfaces. They are encouraged to use scientific terminology, and many do this, but some pupils with special educational needs are limited by their skills in giving oral descriptions and writing accounts of experiments. Their learning is often hindered by work which is too difficult for them or by the lack of support during activities. This means that their progress overall is often unsatisfactory.

112. In the 1999 assessments by teachers at the end of Key Stage 1, standards were above the national average at Level 2 and above, and at Level 3 and above. They were well above average when compared with similar schools.

113. The findings of the inspection are that standards are in line with national expectations with regard to the proportion of pupils who are on course to attain Level 2 and above. The difference in attainment from last year's assessments relates mainly to changes and absence of staff and the capability of this year's cohort. By the age of seven, pupils have some good experiences of investigating and testing. They often need help, however, in analysing how their observations lead them to form conclusions based on the evidence that has been gathered. They find out whether older children in the class are taller than younger ones, discover that the body is a structure which is supported by bones and realise that the rate at which ice cubes melt depends on different conditions. They explore the properties of materials and predict what will happen when butter, chocolate, a wax crayon and a paper clip, for example, are heated. Pupils understand the dangers of electricity, discover which appliances are battery and/or mains driven and learn how to make circuits and switches. This work is reinforced well when imaginative teaching enables pupils to apply their knowledge to a design and technology task and construct robots with eyes that light up. Many pupils demonstrate that they are capable of understanding the principles of practical tasks but their skills in describing their findings verbally and recording their work are not well developed.

114. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory at both key stages. Very good teaching occurs at the beginning of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 and as a result pupils make particularly rapid gains in their understanding of physical processes and in the acquisition of skills associated with investigative science. The very good quality teaching in Year 6 is the main reason why pupils attain higher standards at the end of this key stage than at the end of Key Stage 1. One lesson was judged to be poor but the rest were satisfactory or better. This is an improvement on the variability of teaching at the last OFSTED inspection when one in five lessons was unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 and there were equal amounts of good and unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 1. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen at Key Stage 1 during this inspection.

115. Strengths in teaching relate to clear understanding of the subject which is communicated well, positive relationships with pupils, lively presentations which hold their interest and innovative methods which allow pupils to learn by having good practical experiences. All the above aspects were seen when Reception and Year 1 pupils discovered how they used their senses of taste, touch, hearing, smell and sight and when

Year 6 pupils experimented with ways of producing sounds and analysed how pitch can be altered according to the size of an object. Key features of these lessons were the accomplished management of pupils, purposeful approaches, good pace, opportunities for all pupils to move round the groups and experience different aspects of the concepts and detailed planning which considered what pupils already knew. Thorough discussions of the work to enabled pupils to have a good awareness of what they were testing and very good evaluations at the end helped pupils to make evident gains in their knowledge. Older pupils also benefited from the chance to use their initiative and apply their literacy skills when writing accounts of what they were finding as they carried out various experiments. All pupils were fully engaged in the work as a result of the challenges which were presented and the good preparation and organisation of resources. They responded well to the teachers' high expectations of output, behaviour and presentation. Appropriate questioning at strategic points allowed the teachers to check on what pupils were gaining from the work and to provide further explanations.

116. Where lessons are good or satisfactory, inventive methods, such as listening to different sounds in a house, are useful starting points but the scientific element is sometimes obscured and pupils are not always clear that the work they have actually undertaken is science. Most teachers build good relationships with pupils and give them confidence. Marking often reflects this and is best where teachers of older pupils help them to see where they can improve on their work. The main weaknesses in the teaching are brief lesson planning which does not reflect the needs of all pupils or take account of the different National Curriculum levels of work. This leads to lessons which involve retracing work that is well understood by the majority, and unsuitable methods of recording. In some classes, the work of the higher and lower attainers is identical and merely represents limited copied statements from the teacher. Although the work of Years 5 and 6 should be similar in content and output according to the rolling programme, there are inconsistent expectations and a much higher quality of work is produced in the Year 6 class.

117. The teaching of science meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The work on investigative and experimental science is well focussed and underpins the areas that are concerned with life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes. Pupils are keen and eager to be involved in practical work and show very good relationships with one another during group activities. They treat the equipment sensibly and often have the chance to use their own initiative in investigations. These very positive attitudes to the subject are the main reason why standards in science are better than those in English and mathematics. Displays around the school reflect the emphasis that is given to this element of the subject and also show how scientific facts relate to other subjects. When using clay for example, pupils apply their observational skills and knowledge of materials to record what happens to it when it dries. The school is aware that insufficient use is made of information technology in the teaching of science both for research purposes and in the recording of results. Variable use of literacy occurs but good examples are evident when older pupils produce their own group books on friction experiments and when younger pupils are encouraged to read information books about the body. Opportunities to practise numeracy skills are widespread. Pupils produce block and line graphs, handle data and take measurements, for example, when they learn to use Newton meters.

118. The subject is well managed by a conscientious and knowledgeable co-ordinator who is presently caretaking the subject while the permanent co-ordinator is on maternity leave. A clear lead has evidently been given for the subject and good informal support is provided for members of staff who declare their lack of expertise when tackling specific

areas. There have been no opportunities to monitor the actual teaching of lessons which means that weaknesses have not been identified and addressed successfully. The scheme of work, which is still being developed in detail, is not sufficiently well known to all staff in order to provide a challenge for all pupils and build on what they already understand. There is some overlap and pupils repeat tasks that they have covered in previous years, for example, noting the hazards of electricity, making a simple circuit and testing which materials a magnet will attract. Assessment procedures are not secure enough to help teachers to plan appropriately especially for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school and higher attainers in several classes, especially at the end of Key Stage 1. Resources have improved since the last inspection. They are good and are now readily accessible. Teachers try hard to provide practical opportunities for pupils even though some of the large classes do not have a great deal of space in which to manoeuvre. The school grounds are being developed to provide a wildlife area and a pond, with the help of funding from the local council. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, when they observe living creatures and plants, discuss issues such as conservation and pollution and work together on group tasks.

ART

119. At the last inspection, standards in art were satisfactory although there was a lack of teaching of specific skills and insufficient opportunities to engage in creative and imaginative work. The school has addressed these weaknesses effectively and standards in art are now above average for pupils' ages at both key stages. Considering the low levels at which pupils enter the school, this represents very good achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils receive a wide range of experiences which focus effectively on the teaching of specific skills. They are also introduced systematically to a range of artists' work and are encouraged to evaluate techniques and reflect upon their responses. There are many examples of work around the school in which pupils have been able to make a creative and imaginative response.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show good levels of confidence in using a range of media and techniques. They learn how to create perspective in their drawings and paintings of buildings and scenery and use this knowledge well to discuss the work of artists such as Lowry. They learn good drawing techniques in Year 3 when they draw figures to place on the pediment of their Ancient Greek temple. They show a good understanding of the relative proportions within the figures as they use their pencils as measuring gauges to ensure that the body is the right size in relation to the head. Painting techniques are well developed; they use water colours, poster and acrylic paints to produce well finished representations of Ancient Egyptian masks and decorations, and work in the style of Monet and Cezanne. Some paintings of famous world landmarks, for example, The Grand Canal in Venice and Indian temples show sensitive use of colour and a very careful approach. Good techniques in clay work are seen in the models of Ancient Egyptian tombs and mummies. Sketchbooks have been introduced recently and are being used effectively in some classes for pupils to try out different techniques before beginning a larger piece of work.

121. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils mix colours and use paint effectively in their work on houses and gardens. They develop these skills further when they are given a small square from a magazine, containing several shades which they then have to reproduce and extend into a large painting. They show a good awareness of colour in their chalk drawings of 'Farmer Foster's Dancing Hen' and bold use of pastels in their responses to 'The Carnival of the Animals' by Saint Saens. Three-dimensional work shows developing skills in clay, when they make leaf prints which they then paint and finish to a high standard. Pupils expressed enthusiastic responses in their follow-up work from a visit to the National Gallery.

122. Only three art lessons were observed during the inspection, but, based upon the work on display around the school and discussions with pupils and teachers, teaching and learning are generally good. The new scheme of work is being implemented successfully and ensures that teachers are well supported in their planning and that pupils are introduced to the relevant skills and knowledge in a systematic fashion as they move through the school. An excellent lesson was observed in Year 6 where the teacher's enthusiasm and vigour motivated the pupils to develop their understanding of Lowry's work very effectively. Excellent subject knowledge and skilful questioning meant that pupils began to realise the use of the painting as a historical resource, as well as note the particular style of the figures and the use of colour to suggest poverty and depression. The school is fortunate to have a teaching assistant with good expertise in art and she is deployed very effectively to support teachers and pupils throughout the school. Her contribution has a significant effect upon the progress that pupils make. One of the main strengths in art teaching generally is the very effective way in which teachers link it with other subjects, for example, history, geography and music. This enables pupils to see the relevance of art within a range of contexts. The quality of pupils' learning is often enhanced by their very positive attitudes to learning and their relationships. They are well motivated and work hard at the tasks which teachers set, always trying to give of their best.

123. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and is clear about how she wants to develop the subject in the future. Although she undertakes some monitoring of work on display and of teachers' plans, the monitoring system is not formalised well enough to ensure she has a clear overview of standards or provision. Resources are good and are well stored and easily accessible. There is a popular craft club which enables interested pupils to develop further their skills. The subject has a high profile in the school with very imaginative and colourful displays which help to provide a stimulating working environment for the pupils. Art work from a range of different cultures is displayed around the school and contributes successfully to pupils' developing awareness of cultural differences. The subject also makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development when they reflect on their responses to artists' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124. During the course of the inspection, there were limited opportunities to observe the teaching of design and technology. Evidence gained from analysis of the work on display, teachers' plans and discussions is sufficient to show that pupils attain average standards for their ages at both key stages. No specific judgement was made at the last inspection but the indications were that standards were low since insufficient direct teaching was seen and there was very little evidence of the work in this subject in the school.

125. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 understand how to generate a number of ideas to produce a final design that meets the requirements of the task. Some pupils are adept at using constructional equipment to produce working models with motors. Many pupils evaluate their work as it develops and suggest changes. Pupils work accurately and use tools safely, such as lino cutters and glue guns. They pay attention to the quality of finish and function and, in most cases, are willing to adapt their work and learn from their mistakes. They know how to take products apart in a structured way and identify the components carefully. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand that the making process begins with a plan. They use models and pictures to develop and communicate their designs. Many are beginning to reflect on their ideas and consider improvements but need help to explain their points and put them in writing. Pupils select from a range of materials, tools and techniques and learn to join various types of paper and fabric. They know the importance of making judgements about what they have achieved and how they might make their model differently another time.

126. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. No teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 but the quality of some of the finished products shows that good teaching occurs in this key stage, for example, when pupils design and make puppets in Year 1. Building on this experience, Year 2 pupils develop their skills well when joining materials and evaluating their work. They produce robots with boxes and papier-mâché and demonstrate how they have given them eyes that light up. This experience is well planned to link productively with the pupils' current work on electricity in science and helps them to understand the application of their work on circuits. In the lessons observed, good teaching occurred when clear introductions were given, techniques were carefully taught and the lessons were planned to build on previous work. In a Year 4 class, for example, the teacher's awareness of the requirements of the subject was evident when the pupils had the opportunity to consider product design. Thoughtful questioning led the pupils to look carefully at different types of torches, examine their components by disassembling and assembling them and decide who would use each type of torch. They considered the materials used, the switches, the grip and features such as a handle, which would enable such a torch to be hung from a fireman's belt, for example. High expectations characterised the lesson and the work was consolidated by producing annotated drawings. Good support was given to pupils with special educational needs who needed help with new vocabulary and the teacher provided specialised words for pupils to use in their diagrams. Similarly, in a Year 5/6 class, frequent intervention from the teacher enabled pupils to learn how to use the wood block designs they had made to print on tee shirts and to help them to improve on their work. As a result, pupils were clear about the purpose of the task and the approaches to take to achieve a good finished result. Resources were well prepared in the other lessons seen and there was a good emphasis in Year 3 on analysing the finished product to determine if the clay pots they designed fitted their intended purpose. Pupils were well motivated by the teachers' enthusiasm and approaches in the lessons but in two classes, where the design and technology work followed an art activity, the management of time was not satisfactory. Practical tasks could not be carried out by all pupils and the design and technology had to be curtailed because of timetable constraints.

127. At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum for design and technology did not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Statutory requirements have now been relaxed but recent planning follows the recommended guidelines and is beginning to provide good breadth and balance across the school. The present co-ordinator holds a temporary post in the school but has made an impact on the subject by producing a comprehensive curriculum map, reviewing current practice and providing informal support. There are examples of the work in each year group and teachers show a willingness to tackle the subject, which was not apparent at the last inspection. There is little written evidence in books, however, to indicate that the subject is featured systematically. Some cross-curricular opportunities are taken to include design and technology in subjects such as history and geography but information technology is not used sufficiently to enrich the subject. There are no assessment and recording procedures in place to indicate the skills that are being acquired as pupils move through the school. Resources have been improved and are now good. The subject contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development when they work together on projects, share equipment and learn about the technology of the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians.

GEOGRAPHY

128. Standards at the end of both key stages are average for pupils' ages. This judgement is based on the lesson observed during the inspection and also on the analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussion with teachers and pupils. The

judgement is similar to that made by the school's previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to use a range of geographical questions in their research activities. They use atlases and reference books to make observations on physical features of different countries in the world and the use of land in these countries. Pupils compare features of their own lives and area with people's lives in Cairo. They are able to follow a route using compass point directions and, using scales, work out distances between various places. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to plot features on a plan and, using simple co-ordinates, plot a route on a treasure map. They identify simple features on maps of different scales of their own area and label a map of the British Isles with names of countries and capital cities.

129. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages. In the lesson seen, the teacher used a good range of resources to interest and involve pupils and to develop their research skills. All pupils were clear about their tasks and some were able to develop their initiative by acting as leaders of a group. Pupils with special educational needs were given appropriate resources and support. Pupils developed their skills and knowledge well under the good guidance of the teacher. Analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that pupils develop their skills appropriately through specific teaching and opportunities to apply their skills. They have an increasing understanding of their own area and are given good opportunities to make comparisons with other localities through a study visit to Maldon. There is some variation in teachers' expectations of the depth and detail of higher attaining pupils' work and for standards of presentation. In some pupils' books, below average presentation is praised without indicating ways to improve. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed appropriately but the use of information technology is underdeveloped in the subject.

130. There is a detailed scheme of work in place which represents an improvement since the last inspection. There is useful additional guidance for ensuring that the geographical focus is maintained but there is insufficient guidance to ensure that teachers are clear about the appropriate development of geographical skills for each year group. This is particularly significant while the school has mixed-age classes. The co-ordinator for the subject has a clear understanding of her role. She monitors teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work but has not had opportunity to monitor teaching. There is a good range of resources but the quantity does not always enable two classes to teach the same area at the same time, as indicated in the scheme of work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development when they learn about life in other countries.

HISTORY

131. Pupils attain average standards for their ages at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve satisfactory standards, relative to their previous attainment. The judgements of this inspection are similar to those of the previous inspection report. In this inspection, classroom observations were supplemented by an analysis of pupils' work, displays, teachers' planning, and discussions with teachers and pupils.

132. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have gained a satisfactory understanding of aspects of life in Britain since the 1930's, the Tudors, the Ancient Greeks and invaders and settlers in Britain. They are given many opportunities to gain a good understanding of the use of primary and secondary sources of information. This was seen to very good effect in the Year 6 class, when they undertook research work to find facts about the life of Queen Victoria and in the Year 3 class, when they investigated the legacies left to civilisation by the Ancient Greeks. In Year 5, pupils have an appropriate understanding of chronology and show knowledge of the life of a Tudor monarch and of the roles and characters of the wives of Henry VIII. Artwork by pupils in the Year 3/4 class complements and extends their knowledge and understanding about Ancient Greek art and architecture. Throughout the

key stage, pupils' work shows a satisfactory range and depth of historical experience and a secure understanding of the context in which people lived. Pupils are aware of appropriate historical language and are given sufficient opportunities to present their ideas about history in discussions and writing. They are encouraged to work through inquiry, interpretation and observation of a wide range of artefacts and secondary sources of information. The very good teaching in the Year 6 class helps pupils to be fully aware of the criteria for judging the reliability of historical evidence and enables all pupils to make very good progress within that lesson. Visits to places of historical interest and museums, such as the visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum, are of great value, as these add substantially to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of historical events.

133. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils show a suitably developed sense of chronology for their age by using words associated with the passing of time. Their work on 'families' and 'everyday objects', both from the past and the present, enables them to gain a satisfactory understanding, as the work is well linked to their own experiences. Photographs of families from Victorian times to the present day help the pupils to start to use secondary sources of information.

134. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory at both key stages. Due to timetabling arrangements, no direct observations of the teaching of history were possible at Key Stage 1. Judgements are based, therefore, on discussions with teachers and looking at their planning, pupils' work and displays. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory, with some good, and some very good, teaching and learning within the key stage. The school has made a good improvement in the teaching of history from the previous inspection, when the judgement was that teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory.

135. At Key Stage 2, a lesson to find out facts about the life of Queen Victoria from primary and secondary sources aptly demonstrated the strengths of the very good teaching in the subject. The objectives for the lesson were shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and her dynamic approach enabled her to sustain a brisk pace and convey her enthusiasm clearly to the pupils. They very quickly became engrossed in their tasks and their learning was greatly extended, as they were actively engaged in real research. Their interest was maintained by purposeful tasks and the teacher's confident explanation of the importance of source material, such as diaries, letters, photographs and paintings, in answering questions about the past. Opportunities to discuss and develop the pupils' ideas about the work were used well to further the pupils' knowledge. Activities supported the learning objectives well and kept the pupils motivated and on task. Pupils made very good gains in their understanding of how knowledge about the past can be gained from a range of different sources of information. Pupils responded willingly and productively during this lesson, as a result of the energetic and focused teaching. However, information technology was underused to broaden the pupils' range of experience.

136. Current arrangements for the teaching of history ensure a broad and balanced curriculum in the subject. Teachers' planning does not always encompass the needs of pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. Literacy skills in history are satisfactory, although the pupils' presentational skills are often weak.

137. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has an enthusiastic approach to history. Monitoring of planning and pupils' books takes place but the lack of formal monitoring procedures means that she does not have a clear and up-to-date overview of the subject. Displays, particularly family photographs, the English and Spanish galleons and the Greek pots are stimulating focal points.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

138. There were no opportunities for observation of discrete lessons in the subject, so judgements are based on observations of pupils using computers, discussions with staff and pupils and the analysis of a limited amount of previous work. This evidence shows that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is overall below the national expectation. Attainment is broadly average in communicating and handling text but it is below average in handling data, controlling, monitoring and modelling. There has been little improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs do not attain high enough standards for their previous attainment.

139. By the age of 11, most pupils show an awareness of audience when combining text and graphics in their work. They can use a variety of fonts, colours and sizes. They use multi-media to access information, but have not had the opportunity to use the internet or e-mail. The use of data handling is not well developed and pupils have not been given the opportunity to control events in predetermined way, sense physical data, or explore patterns and relationships with the aid of computer simulations or models. There is still very limited use of information technology in other subjects. The annual residential visit gives Year 6 pupils the opportunities, currently lacking in school, to develop their skills in using multi-media, work with spreadsheets and access the internet. It also provides experience in using control and monitoring external events, such as pulse rates before and after exercise. It gives them access to scanners and digital cameras and to simulations. Although this ensures that the full programme of study is experienced by the end of Year 6, the present arrangements in the school do not allow these skills to be extended successfully.

140. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is broadly in line with the national expectation. No judgement on this was made at the last inspection. By the age of seven, pupils can generate and communicate ideas using text and pictures. There is a good example of the use of an art package, where pupils use the line and fill features to produce pictures in the style of Mondrian. Pupils show appropriate knowledge of the keyboard, use the mouse confidently and competently and use the features in a variety of programs. They use computer simulations to explore imaginary situations and give direct commands to produce a variety of outcomes when using controllable toys.

141. There were no opportunities to observe direct teaching, as discrete lessons are not planned, but other evidence shows that teachers have varying levels of skill and understanding in the subject. Some do not have sufficient knowledge of information technology and lack confidence to teach it effectively. Other evidence shows that the quality of teaching and learning is sound at Key Stage 1 but is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2, where pupils are given too few opportunities to use computers and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. This shows an improvement since the last report at Key Stage 1 but little improvement at Key Stage 2.

142. A new computer suite is to be built in the summer term and the school has clear plans to improve teachers' knowledge and to improve standards in the subject. The acting co-ordinators have carried out an audit of staff skills and have identified appropriate training needs. The school has adapted national guidelines to ensure that pupils receive a balanced programme and build systematically on the skills. This is, however, not fully in place and has not begun to improve standards across the whole school. The use of information technology in other subjects is still limited but there is some use in literacy and numeracy.

MUSIC

143. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection and additional evidence was taken from pupils' singing during assembly and discussions with pupils and teachers. On the basis of this evidence, pupils reach average standards for their ages in music by the end of both key stages. This finding is similar to that of the last inspection. However, the last inspection identified some weaknesses in coverage of the full Programme of Study for music and the school has addressed these successfully by implementing a comprehensive scheme of work.

144. Pupils at both key stages sing tunefully and enthusiastically during assembly. Music is used well during assemblies, either to set the tone for thoughtful reflection or to set the scene for a joyful celebration of their work. Pupils at Key Stage 2 appreciate the work of a range of composers and understand how music can be used to tell a story in, for example, Tchaikovsky's 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Swan Lake'. They are able to reflect on the mood of the music and say how it makes them feel. Pupils recognise the sounds made by a variety of instruments and can identify the orchestral families to which they belong. They work together successfully to compose and perform their own music, using a range of percussion instruments as well as voice sounds and rhythms. The pupils recognise rhythm patterns and make up their own to include in their accompaniment to the story 'We're all going on a bear hunt'.

145. At Key Stage 1, pupils repeat simple rhythm patterns and know a sound range of musical vocabulary. They know the names of a number of percussion instruments and use them carefully to make loud and soft sounds. The pupils know a range of songs off by heart. They listen to 'The Carnival of the Animals' by Saint Saens and respond by drawing pictures of their favourite animals.

146. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and are well supported by the new scheme of work. Resources, for example percussion instruments and pre-recorded music, are used well to support teaching and learning. Teachers manage their pupils sensitively, laying down clear expectations regarding their behaviour and this means that pupils know exactly what is expected of them and respond appropriately. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Year 6, where the teacher uses very good questioning skills to draw pupils' attention to patterns in the music to which they are listening and then motivates them successfully to create their own compositions. Pupils are keen to learn and their positive attitudes and good behaviour ensure that they benefit successfully from the wide range of experiences provided by teachers. Their very good relationships are evident when they work together to discuss their musical compositions and in the way that they reach collective decisions with a minimum of fuss.

147. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a clear idea of the future development of the subject. She provides effective support to colleagues and ensures that the scheme of work is being covered by monitoring teachers' plans. However, the lack of a structured monitoring system means that she does not have a clear view of standards and provision across the school. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and there is now a satisfactory range and number of instruments and pre-recorded music. A choir for Year 6 pupils is practising for a forthcoming recital at the Schools' Prom at the Albert Hall. The subject makes an effective contribution towards pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. The last inspection found that standards were average at both key stages, and this is still the case, although attainment in games is above average at the end of Key Stage 2.

149. At Key Stage 2, pupils practise and improve their own performance, working alone, in pairs and groups, or as team members. They evaluate their own and others' performance, and apply it to improving their own variety, quality and accuracy. They sustain energetic activity over suitable periods of time, show they understand the effect of exercise on their bodies and appreciate the need for careful warm up and cool down. In the games lesson observed, boys and girls show good skills in lacrosse and netball in Years 5 and 6. In Year 4, pupils show developing skills in tennis and Year 3 pupils make good gains in passing and ball handling skills in basketball. Standards in swimming are average.

150. At Key Stage 1, pupils plan and perform simple skills with safety and control the linking of actions. They make simple judgements and discuss what they and others have done. They use space appropriately and change direction and level successfully. In Year 2 pupils perform a range of balances and, in Year 1, dance successfully to the 'Jack Frost' theme.

151. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including that of pupils with special educational needs, are satisfactory at both key stages and are good in games at Key Stage 2. In most lessons throughout the school, teachers start physical education lessons promptly and in a well-organised manner. Warm-up activities are appropriate and interest the pupils who work at a good pace. The lessons are developed by challenging and varied activities which encourage the pupils to work hard and sustain concentration. Teachers show secure knowledge of the subject in their instructions and demonstrations and these factors, along with their use of pupils to demonstrate, help to ensure that the pupils understand what they are doing and acquire new skills successfully. This was particularly evident in the games lessons, where enthusiastic teaching motivates all pupils to make good progress in practising ball skills and developing them in a good range of games. The talented pupils make very good progress when taking part in extracurricular sport and inter-school competitions.

152. Pupils respond well in lessons, show good attitudes and they behave sensibly and safely. They all change quickly into appropriate kit, take part enthusiastically and co-operate well in pairs, groups and teams. Many show keen interest by participating in the extracurricular sports activities and outside clubs and this has a significant effect upon the progress that they make and the high level of skill that they develop.

153. The co-ordinator is very keen and enthusiastic about all aspects of the subject. He has, however, few opportunities to monitor teaching across the school. Resources are good and the school makes good use of outside coaches, for example, in cricket and tennis. The school enjoys very good outdoor and indoor facilities. The parents' association has purchased a range of new equipment, including goalposts, mats for gymnastics and netball kit. There are teams for football, netball, cross-country, lacrosse and cricket. Pupils take part in district swimming and athletics competitions. The school enjoys high levels of success against other schools and sporting activities are well supported by parents. The subject makes a good contribution to the social and moral development of the pupils as they learn to understand the benefits of teamwork. They know the rules of the games and display sporting behaviour.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain standards which meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at both key stages. This is similar to the judgements of the previous OFSTED inspection.

155. Pupils develop an appropriate understanding and knowledge of the beliefs, symbols and traditions of the world's great faiths. Older pupils are given a range of useful opportunities to compare aspects of other religions with Christianity. They have a satisfactory understanding of the New Testament and the life of Jesus. They know about the disciples and why Jesus used the parables to help people to understand about God. Pupils express their ideas and feelings sensitively about suffering, love, compassion and the wonders of the world.

156. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the main Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter. They learn about Christian places of worship during their visits to the local church. They have satisfactory insight into the practices and traditions of Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism and can discuss the importance of different religious symbols. Year 6 pupils can discuss the values and beliefs of others, make valid comparisons and apply their own interpretation to these beliefs. They show an awareness of how beliefs influence personal behaviour.

157. At Key Stage 1, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and Hinduism. They know the story of the Creation and about the life of Jesus and his disciples. They know why Christmas is a special time for Christians and know some Hindu stories, such as the story of Rama and Sita. They can make a simple comparison between a Christian and a Hindu wedding and are familiar with the festival of Diwali.

158. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. This is similar to the judgements in the previous inspection. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, which they share well with the pupils to move them forward in their learning. They impart a feeling of sensitivity and respect for all religions, to which the pupils respond well.

159. Strengths in the teaching of the subject were evident in two Key Stage 2 lessons about 'determination'. Planning was careful and addressed the pupils' needs well. The good rapport between the teachers and pupils enabled pupils to feel confident to explore and express their ideas. The role-play activities in one lesson enabled younger pupils to gain greater understanding of the theme. Pupils were very attentive and were engrossed in their learning. In both lessons, the teachers' calm, respectful approach and high expectations of behaviour and quality of work led to a very productive response from pupils, who made good gains in their knowledge and skills. Speaking and listening skills are extended appropriately in the subject, at Key Stage 2, for example, in the good discussions on 'determination' and symbols in the Sikh religion.

160. A very good scheme of work is in place for Key Stage 1 and the scheme for Key Stage 2 is almost complete. The co-ordinator provides good support for the staff. She monitors the subject through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work but these systems are not formalised to ensure that any weaknesses are quickly identified and addressed. Religious education makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development as it provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on a range of issues.