

INSPECTION REPORT

DOWN HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rayleigh

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114936

Headteacher: Mrs. A-M Lavender

Reporting inspector: Martin Beale
19385

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th January 2000

Inspection number: 191557

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

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Brooklyn Drive
Rayleigh
Essex

Postcode: SS6 9LW

Telephone number: 01268 780018

Fax number: 01268 780018

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Terry Livings

Date of previous inspection: 13th – 17th May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Martin Beale	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	Religious education	
		Geography	
		Music	
		Special educational needs	
Anne Holland	Team inspector	Art	
		History	
		Under-fives	
Terri Boohan	Team inspector	English	
		Physical education	
Clive Parsons	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	

The inspection contractor was:

Brookbridge Education

2 Haselwood Drive
Enfield
Middlesex
EN2 7BU

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	7
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?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a larger than average sized community primary school for boys and girls from 4 to 11 years of age. It has 283 pupils on roll. The pupils' attainment on entry is above that found nationally. 32 pupils have special educational needs, a figure that is well below the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and only one pupil has English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Down Hall is an effective school. Standards have improved considerably over the last two years under the astute leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by staff and governors. Pupils achieve good standards because the teaching is good overall throughout the school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in National Curriculum tests are high, particularly in mathematics, and have improved considerably in the last two years.
- There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching throughout the school and especially in Years 5/6 which enables pupils to learn quickly and make good progress.
- The school benefits considerably from the strong leadership provided by the headteacher and the effective support of the Governing Body in managing the school, identifying and eliminating any weaknesses and planning developments.
- The school's provision for the pupils' personal development is good. The pupils are very keen to learn, behave very well and get on well with each other; this makes a considerable contribution to the standards that they achieve.
- The good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress both towards their targets and in most subjects.
- The school has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum by creatively exploiting links between subjects.
- The very good links with the local secondary school have an impact on both the standards achieved and the pupils' interests, and enable the pupils to make the transition at 11 smoothly.
- The curriculum provision and the quality of teaching for the under fives are both good, enabling these children to make a good start to their education.

What could be improved

- There is insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils in some lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in dealing with the key issues and other weaknesses from the last inspection in 1996.

The National Curriculum test results are now higher than at the time of the last inspection. Although they fell in 1997 at both key stages, there has been a significant increase in results since. Effective systems have been introduced for monitoring the work of the school, the quality of the education it provides and the standards achieved by pupils. They are the main reasons for the improvements in teaching and higher standards. The quality of the teaching has improved; there is very little that is less than satisfactory and much that is good or better. Appropriate school aims have been written as required, and they underpin all of the school's work. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is supported by schemes of work and policy documents which undergo regular review. Good assessment systems have been introduced, but the school recognises that more needs to be done if assessment information is to be used effectively in teachers' planning. The school day has been increased to the recommended length, a curriculum statement prepared and child protection and health and safety policies written.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	C	B	C
mathematics	C	C	A	B
science	E	C	B	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The results of Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) taken by 11-year-olds have improved significantly since a low point in 1997. The overall trend from 1996 is broadly in line with the upward trend nationally. Boys have tended to achieve higher results than girls in mathematics, but there has been no pattern to any gender variation in either English or science. The school's targets for 1999 were exceeded and those for the next two years are challenging and represent a significant raising of standards.

The majority of pupils are achieving good standards in the core subjects, although some higher-attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not always sufficiently challenged and do not achieve as they could. Standards of language and number skills are good overall, with a significant contribution to literacy being made by other subjects. Attainment in information technology (IT) is satisfactory. The school has been concerned that IT skills have not been developed rapidly enough and has provided a new suite of computers for pupils' use. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at Key Stage 1 and are above average at Key Stage 2. Attainment is satisfactory in all other subjects. It is above average in geography at Key Stage 1 and in history at Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen and enthusiastic; they work with interest and become very involved in the activities in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils respect the feelings of others and take responsibility well. They work well together both in lessons and at other times.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average; there is little unauthorised absence and pupils are punctual to school.

The school is very effective in the work that it undertakes to fulfil its aims of promoting positive attitudes to work, good behaviour and the pupils' personal development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Lively and enthusiastic teaching, which engages the interest of the pupils, coupled with high expectations of what they can achieve and how they should behave are features of the good teaching in the school. The quality of teaching is good overall and has a significant impact on the high standards achieved by pupils. Teaching is satisfactory or better in over 97% of lessons and good, very good or excellent in over 50%. All of the teaching of the children under five observed was good or better. There is a greater proportion of the good and very good teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6.

The successful implementation of both the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson has resulted in good teaching overall of both English and mathematics. The development of literacy is also supported well through teaching in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well both in lessons and in withdrawal groups.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of curriculum provision is good, but more coherence is needed in the planning of personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There has been a significant increase in the support for these pupils since the last inspection. Individual education plans are used effectively to inform work both in class and in withdrawal groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school promotes the pupils' personal development well. Good provision is made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Great care is taken to promote the health, safety and well-being of the pupils.

Statutory requirements are met in all subjects, although a few refinements are needed in some. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and provide good care, support and guidance. Considerable improvements have been made to the way in which the academic progress of pupils is monitored.

The school has strong and improving links with parents. Parents are actively encouraged to become partners in the education process, with the Parents' Council being a notable innovation.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led by the headteacher, who provides the school with a clear educational direction and a strong commitment to raising standards. She is effectively supported in this by other senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and fully involved in the school. They are becoming increasingly effective in fulfilling their duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, senior managers and governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and take vigorous action to eliminate any weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and funding is allocated effectively to meet the school's priorities and targets for improvement.

The school benefits considerably from the strong leadership of the headteacher. Subject co-ordinators vary in the effectiveness with which they fulfil their role. Some are able to provide very good support for their colleagues while others are less experienced and are undergoing training. There have been considerable improvements in the role of the governors since the last inspection when they were judged to be failing to fulfil many of their statutory responsibilities. The operation of the committee structure is now much more effective. Staffing levels, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory, with considerable improvements having recently been made by the introduction of a computer suite. Although the school seeks value for money from the spending decisions it makes, it has yet to implement fully the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress that their children make. • The school's expectations of hard work and good behaviour. • The way the school helps their children to grow up well. • The school is well led and managed. • The approachability of staff. • Their children like coming to school. • They are well informed about their children's progress. • The close way in which the school tries to work with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents are unhappy with the amount of homework that the school sets. • They would like to see more extra-curricular activities. • Some parents feel that higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged at Key Stage 1.

Parents are pleased with the school and with the education that it provides. Inspection findings support this view. The inspection team found that, with the introduction of a new homework policy, staff were now setting suitable homework in most classes. There are several extra-curricular activities, some of which are run in conjunction with the local secondary school. These stimulate the pupils' interest and in the case of both the mathematics and science clubs, have an impact on their achievements. Some higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged in some lessons in the early part of Key Stage 2, but this is in only a small minority of lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards overall are well above average throughout the school. Few pupils fail to achieve nationally expected standards and many exceed them. The results of Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) at the end of both key stages in 1999 improved considerably over those in 1998, and are above those reported at the last inspection.
2. SAT results in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and mathematics were well above the national average and in line with similar schools. Results in writing were well above the national average and above results in similar schools. All pupils achieved at least the expected Level 2 in mathematics and the proportion achieving that level or better in reading and writing was well above average. The highest-attaining pupils did better in reading than in writing and mathematics. Mathematics results have shown a steady improvement since 1996, while both reading and writing results fell in 1997 but have climbed steadily since then. Although there have been some variations in results by gender, there has been no pattern to these variations from 1996 to 1999. The teacher assessments in science were very high for Level 2 and above, and were in line with similar schools; however, the proportion of pupils assessed at Level 3 was below average and well below average when compared with similar schools.
3. The improvement in SAT results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 was more marked in mathematics and science than in English, particularly at Level 5. The overall results were well above the national average and in line with similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was higher than in English and science. It was well above the national average and that of similar schools when the SAT grades of all pupils are considered. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was above the national average in mathematics and close to the national average in English and science. The highest-attaining pupils did better in mathematics. The school's 1999 targets for Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics were exceeded. The targets for the next two years are challenging, requiring a sustained improvement in standards not just at the end of Key Stage 2 but throughout the school.
4. The improving trend in the school's results from 1996 to 1999 is broadly in line with the national trend; however, it has been considerably faster since the low point of 1997. Boys achieved better results than girls in mathematics and science in 1999, the difference being greater than seen nationally, and boys' and girls' results were similar in English, although nationally girls' results were better. Boys have tended to achieve higher results in mathematics but there has been no pattern to any gender variations in either English or science. Currently there are more higher-attaining girls in the top mathematics set in Year 6.
5. Evidence from the baseline assessment of pupils and from observations of their work in the Reception classes indicates that pupils enter the school with above average attainment. They are ready to learn and settle quickly into the routine of the school. The high quality of the teaching and the learning opportunities provided for them as under fives ensure that most achieve the nationally recommended desirable learning outcomes and many already achieve at Level 1 in the National Curriculum by the age of five, particularly in English and mathematics. They make very good progress in the

development of language skills. They can use their basic phonic knowledge to identify letters and simple words in text. Many read and can write their own names. They can identify simple two-dimensional shapes and most can count aloud up to and back from 20.

6. Pupils achieve high standards throughout the school in almost all subjects. The standards achieved in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. Standards in English and science are above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and well above average in mathematics. The recent emphasis on literacy and numeracy has helped to raise standards, and some particularly good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is enabling higher-attaining pupils to achieve very good standards in mathematics. Concerns were expressed by some parents that higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This is not the case at the end of each key stage; however, there are some lessons elsewhere when there is not sufficient recognition of the learning needs of the more able and teaching is not demanding for these pupils.
7. Standards of literacy are good throughout the school and are fostered through all subjects. All elements of the literacy hour are in place and basic skills are well taught. Pupils at Key Stage 1 read well, building upon the foundations laid in Reception. They use basic phonic knowledge well and recognise many familiar words. Pupils at Key Stage 2 read with fluency, accuracy and understanding. Many read for pleasure and have appropriate research skills. Standards of writing are good throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 most pupils have good letter formation and write in simple sentences. The range of writing is good, being lively and with good use of vocabulary. Pupils at Key Stage 2 extend the range of their writing to include poetry, stories, play-scripts and reports. Clear handwriting, well used punctuation and good presentation are particular features of their work. Pupils speak clearly and confidently in a wide range of situations and respond thoughtfully to questions posed. Teachers encourage all pupils to listen carefully and use role-play and drama effectively to develop good speaking and listening skills, although the school has recognised that these opportunities could be broadened in some classes.
8. The introduction of the daily mathematics lesson is beginning to have a significant impact on the pupils' achievement in mathematics. Number skills are good throughout the school and are very good for some pupils in Years 5 and 6. Calculations are performed accurately both mentally and by written methods. Opportunities are provided for all pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to the solution of problems and to simple investigations. These skills develop particularly well at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are becoming clearer about the wide range of strategies that they might use when calculating and many can explain in detail the methods that they use. The grouping of pupils by ability across Years 5 and 6, and the further subdivision of these groups by carefully targeted activities and teaching are enabling all of these pupils to achieve well. This sharpness is not evident in other parts of Key Stage 2 and the more able make slower progress here.
9. Pupils are maintaining the standards set in the most recent SATs in their current work in science at both key stages. Almost all of the pupils are working at the expected Level 2 in Year 2 and many higher-attaining pupils are working beyond Level 4 at Key Stage 2. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards are higher at the end of Key Stage 2 with many pupils in Year 6 producing very good work. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in all other subjects with a good standard of work seen in

geography at Key Stage 1 and in history at Key Stage 2.

10. The school had been justifiably concerned that skills in information technology (IT) were not developing at a suitable rate because of shortages in resources. A new computer suite is now in operation and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have weekly lessons at the local secondary school. This, coupled with the introduction of the scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), is enabling basic IT skills to develop well and providing good opportunities for pupils to use IT to support their learning in other subjects such as mathematics. Standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with those expected but are below those in other core subjects. The school now needs to ensure that the facilities and software available are fully used to bring standards in IT up to those in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The vast majority of pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They behave very well, establish constructive relationships and take responsibility for several activities. Attendance in the school is well above average and pupils are punctual to school. It is the combination of these factors that ensures that the school is a positive experience for its pupils.
12. Pupils come to school with a willingness to learn and show very positive attitudes in all of their lessons. The vast majority of pupils are keen to be in school and develop good work habits. Throughout the school they listen to their teachers and are keen to participate by asking and answering questions. Pupils are willing to offer their ideas and opinions during class discussions, for example in a science lesson on electricity in a Year 3/4 class. The pupils were keen to talk about what they already knew about electricity, including its uses and dangers. The pupils are also able to concentrate and to sustain interest in individual activities for good lengths of time, as in a mathematics lesson in a Year 5/6 class where pupils were observed persevering with a difficult investigation. They worked at pace, many successfully predicting possible solutions and identifying patterns in their answers.
13. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection meeting are happy with behaviour in the school. Pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school. This has a positive effect on the quality of life in the school and the learning that takes place. Pupils are clear about the standards of behaviour expected; they understand and follow the school code of conduct and their classroom rules. Teachers rarely have to spend any time establishing order. Pupils are encouraged by all staff to be responsible for their own actions. This was very much in evidence in the good behaviour seen in lessons, the dining hall and playground. No pupils have been excluded from the school in the past year. Harassment and bullying in the school are rare. Pupils are friendly and polite to each other and adults.
14. Pupils form constructive relationships with each other, with teachers and other staff. These are based on the high level of mutual respect that enables the pupils to learn with increasing maturity. Pupils work very well either independently or in pairs and groups of different sizes. They frequently support and help each other, for example pupils in a Year 5/6 information technology lesson co-operated together and helped each other with difficulties. Although circle time is a relatively new experience for Year 6 pupils, there was a willingness to listen to others and to join in the brief debate. They showed that they were interested and respected views and ideas that

were different from their own. Some Year 6 pupils enthusiastically and confidently discussed how they regularly contribute towards an orphanage in Romania and the excitement they felt when one young Romanian girl attended a school concert.

15. Pupils' personal development is very good. As pupils move through the school they display an increasing sense of responsibility and self-discipline that benefits their learning. Pupils settle to group work quickly and are able to work unsupervised. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school and willingly take responsibility for younger pupils in the playground. They are enthusiastic in their involvement with the school council. Their meetings are minuted and have provided the opportunity for pupils to express their views on the home/school agreement, the organisation of the playground and school lunches. They assume responsibility well and have taken the initiative in various fund-raising ventures for charity.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. A high proportion of the teaching is good or very good, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Much of the teaching is lively and enthusiastic. It engages the attention and interest of the pupils and enables them to learn quickly and make good progress. Over 97% of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, with over a half being good or very good. There is more of the better teaching at the end of both key stages and for the children under five in Reception, although there is some good teaching to be seen in each year group.
17. The teaching of children under five is good overall. Staff have high expectations of the children and use a wide range of teaching methods to support their learning. The children work with interest at the activities provided, show enthusiasm and pride in their achievements and learn quickly. The children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Lessons and activities are well planned from a good understanding of each child's capabilities. Work is carefully matched to their individual needs, enabling the children to progress at a good rate. Early reading skills are taught well and staff make individual reading books for the children to take home. A suitable emphasis is placed on the teaching of phonics through a literacy hour adapted to the age of the children. Number skills are given good attention with lessons often linked to other learning activities. Assessments are carried out regularly and enable staff to establish when children are ready to move on. The effective contribution of support staff enables the children to work in a secure environment in which their individual achievement is encouraged and fostered.
18. Literacy teaching is good overall, with some very good and excellent lessons. Effective links are made with other subjects, particularly at Key Stage 2, supporting the development of writing in particular. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and they are all competent in the teaching of basic reading skills. This results in pupils from a young age using their knowledge of phonics to read well and write unfamiliar words accurately. Lessons are well planned within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy, and the learning needs of pupils in mixed-age classes are managed effectively. In an excellent Year 2 lesson the teacher made very good links with previous work when teaching about character description. Swift changes from whole-class to well-chosen group activities gave the lesson pace. The plenary session was very well managed to consolidate learning. The pupils were able to demonstrate good phonic knowledge when contributing sensible suggestions for spellings. The more able pupils worked enthusiastically on the writing of information booklets about wolves.

19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual and group support from teachers and teaching assistants is well targeted and systematic. The teachers ensure that pupils participate fully in the whole curriculum, either by varying activities or by providing additional support and intervention while the pupils are working.
20. Teachers deal with the difficulties of teaching pupils in mixed-age classes with varying degrees of success. The advantage of grouping the pupils in Years 5 and 6 by ability for English and mathematics is extended in mathematics by the targeting of teaching at three different levels of ability in each set. This caters well for the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. Other teachers are not effective at times in the methods that they use to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and the full range of ability. In a small number of lessons they do not differentiate work sufficiently between those of average attainment and the more able. This results in a lack of challenge for the higher-attaining who tend to coast and not to learn as rapidly as they could. Often the extension work is given after the completion of routine tasks provided for others, rather than providing specific challenging activities from the outset.
21. The teaching of numeracy is generally good, although it suffers for the reason given above in some classes. The daily mathematics lesson has been adopted with some success in most classes but needs tighter planning in Years 3 and 4. In a very good lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils the initial mental arithmetic session was speedily undertaken. A good recap of the previous lesson reminded the pupils how to plan an investigation. This enabled the pupils to recall some of the difficulties that they had faced and how they dealt with them. The activities presented were suitably open-ended so that the pupils could decide upon the methods that they might adopt. A good framework was provided by the teacher within which the pupils were able to investigate systematically. The teacher worked effectively with each of the three ability groups in the class, questioning skilfully and probing their thoughts and ideas.
22. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and their standards of work. This creates a calm working atmosphere in most classrooms and encourages pupils to give of their best. A particular feature of much of the better teaching is the way in which teachers refer back to previous lessons before moving on to new work. This focuses pupils' thoughts and is used effectively to establish what they have remembered and where reinforcement is needed. This is often accompanied by skilfully used questioning which carefully probes what pupils understand and requires them to explain their answers in detail so that others in the class might also benefit. Lively and interesting explanations of new ideas and activities to be undertaken generate enthusiasm in the pupils and ensure that the lessons move forward at pace. The vast majority of the pupils respond well and apply themselves conscientiously to all aspects of their work. Marking, and the discussions that teachers have with pupils, enable them to gain a good understanding of the quality of their work and how it might be improved.

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

23. The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Good use is made of guidance from QCA to support teachers' planning. This helps to provide a coherent framework for the curriculum, that

supports the development of ideas and skills as pupils move through the school. There is an appropriate focus on the key skills underpinning literacy and numeracy and increasing use and development of information technology skills. The school's strategy for literacy is good and is being implemented well. The strategy for numeracy is also good, but is as yet less consistently used throughout the school. A recent major increase in resources for information technology has improved provision significantly, which now includes a suite of computers available for small group work. Funding from local industry has supported these developments. This new facility now needs to be used fully to support the development of information technology skills, as well as supporting learning in other subjects.

24. Sufficient time is also devoted to other subjects to enable their key elements to be covered and for the pupils to make sufficient progress in them. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is the connection made between different subjects, which helps to reinforce ideas and put them into other contexts. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, were investigating simple circuits in their science lessons and examining how torches were constructed and operated in design and technology. The quality of the teaching of personal, social and health education is often good, although the school has recognised the need to develop a more coherent programme that builds more consistently over time. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Joint planning between teachers who have pupils in the same year group helps to support consistency. The setting arrangements for older pupils in mathematics and English helps teachers to pitch work at an appropriate level. Consideration is also given to the needs of pupils of differing attainment in most other lessons. There are occasions, however, when higher-attaining pupils would benefit from a greater challenge.
25. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. Their individual education plans identify specific targets, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Additional support is well organised and effective. Weekly target-setting has recently been introduced and there is a clear focus on raising pupils' attainment. Pupils are supported within lessons and occasionally in small groups outside the classroom.
26. The curriculum is enriched through a range of extra-curricular activities, trips, visits and other activities, some of which are provided in conjunction with other schools. These include some sporting activities, such as football and athletics, as well as science and mathematics clubs. Some parents would wish to see the provision extended, as would the headteacher.
27. There are many contributions to the curriculum from local people, such as police officers and health workers. Good use is also made of the local environment for activities such as map work and traffic surveys. The very good relationship with the local secondary school does much to develop the interests of older pupils, through a science club for example, to support higher attainment, to offer revision programmes and to smooth pupils' transition to the next stage of their education.
28. The school promotes the pupils' personal development well. Good provision is made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully drawn together an integrated and effective programme for pupils' personal development. Daily assembly themes follow a thoughtful long-term plan. They celebrate the Christian religion, the spirituality of other world faiths and pupils' work, good behaviour and achievements. Opportunities are planned for

pupils to develop spiritual awareness in lessons through an appreciation of literature, music and the arts. Sensibilities are fostered through the school's connection with and support for a Romanian orphanage.

29. High moral standards are central to the school's vision and ethos. Moral themes are regularly planned into and explored through both assemblies and lessons. The pupils are encouraged to act responsibly and they strive individually and collectively to be thoughtful and sensible. Teachers often choose stories and events with strong moral themes to develop learning in a range of subjects. Expectations are high for even the youngest pupils, who are encouraged to take responsibility for their classroom's environment and to treat each other kindly and thoughtfully. Year 6 pupils often help with the younger classes at play and lunch times, and take a wide range of responsibilities sensibly and willingly. The pupils now lead the School Council which has representatives and deputies from all years, and which enables pupils to have a voice and impact on school life. A wide range of events such as orchestral concerts, music and drama festivals, and sports activities all foster social development. The school recognises the need to enrich the curriculum through a range of culturally diverse experiences. It has an active approach to helping its pupils, who are from an almost exclusively white community, to appreciate our wider multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school provides a caring environment in which the headteacher and staff know the pupils well, offering good support and advice. This caring approach contributes to both progress and learning and enables pupils to have high and realistic expectations in lessons, and take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered. The parents feel that the school is a safe and caring environment.
31. The school successfully ensures the health and safety of its pupils. Considerable attention is given to safety, for example full risk assessments are carried out before any outside visit. Arrangements are in place for pupils with specific medical and learning needs. Day-to-day first aid and medical support is available; there are good arrangements for dealing with accidents and emergencies and a number of staff members have first aid qualifications. There are good procedures for identifying and controlling health and safety risks. The school ensures that all features of the premises, equipment and working practices are safe. After the previous inspection the school developed an appropriate written health and safety policy; however, the school is aware that this has not been reviewed. The school has a responsible attitude towards the education and training of pupils in safety procedures as observed in many of the physical education lessons. Local child protection procedures are complied with, and systems are in place to deal with any situations that may occur. Apart from the headteacher, there has been no recent school training in child protection for all staff, including recent appointments.
32. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. A caring ethos pervades the school and this effectively supports pupils' personal development. Achievements are regularly recognised and rewarded in assemblies and a record kept in the reception area for all to see. The informal systems to monitor personal development and keep track of pupil needs work well. Individual staff are very much aware of the needs of the pupils in their class.
33. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, and the school has good links with outside agencies. There are good systems for monitoring and reviewing

the progress of pupils with special educational needs including those with statements. Useful records are kept jointly by teachers and teaching assistants. Progress against weekly targets and against the targets identified in the individual education plans is monitored carefully.

34. The school's ethos and its procedures are effective in monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school's clear expectations and strategies for control and discipline based on rights and responsibilities and the owning of one's own behaviour are clearly set out in a detailed behaviour policy. Class rules and the school code of conduct are exhibited and the reward system positively motivates pupils. There are procedures in place to deal with any incidents of harassment and bullying, but pupils were happy to confirm that their occurrence is extremely rare.
35. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor and improve attendance. Regular attendance is expected, and during the inspection many classes had no absences.
36. The need to develop a manageable system of assessment and an appropriate recording system was a key issue at the last inspection. This issue has been dealt with effectively. The school now has good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment. The use of assessment information to develop the curriculum and inform planning is in place in the early years and developing strongly in Years 5 and 6. At Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4, the process is less well developed. The school recognises this and is formulating plans to ensure that this aspect of assessment is fully developed throughout each key stage.
37. Teachers collate information on the attainment and progress of pupils and this is recorded on a pupil progress sheet and handed to the next teacher. Where teachers are using information obtained from assessments to influence planning within the curriculum, work is consistently matched to the needs of the pupils. In some classes, teachers are actively involving pupils in the assessment of their work and linking this to target setting. This is having a positive impact on pupil learning. The school is in a very good position to meet the remaining targets that it has set itself in the area of assessment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has developed a close partnership with parents. Parents are supportive of the school; most are satisfied with standards achieved and what the school provides. The headteacher makes positive efforts to strengthen this partnership, continually encouraging parents to play an active role in the life of the school and the education of their children. An example of the developing parental involvement in the life and work of the school is the Parent Council. The council has been actively involved in policy and decision making in the school, and has had considerable input into the home-school agreement and the new homework policy. Parents make an important contribution towards school life and pupil learning through helping regularly in lessons, hearing readers and supporting pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take their reading books home regularly, and most parents share reading with their children. The introduction of a homework policy has resulted in greater consistency. The new home-school folders provide a useful point of contact for parents and enable them to participate effectively in supporting their children's learning. An active and supportive Parent Teacher Association not only raises considerable funds that are used to purchase additional resources, but members also maintain the wildlife garden on a regular basis.

39. Parents have a secure understanding of the school's work; they receive copies of many of the school policies, which are also available in the reception area. Half-termly newsletters and additional letters when necessary enable parents to be kept well informed about school matters, key dates and events. Opportunities are provided for parents to gain an understanding of the curriculum and to encourage their involvement in their child's learning. In Reception this is through day-to-day contact, and the curriculum reports each term in other year groups provide detailed information about the curriculum and topic work. Meetings are sometimes held to explain curriculum initiatives such as the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson.
40. Parents are welcome to discuss any concerns with the class teacher or headteacher. They are kept well informed about their children's learning through formal parents' meetings. Annual written reports are satisfactory. They provide information on what pupils can do, including detailed information about mathematics and English; however, they do not provide parents with an assessment of strengths and weaknesses or include individual targets for future learning. There are good links with parents whose children have special educational needs. The parents participate in regular meetings to review progress and to write individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The strong leadership of the headteacher is one of the main reasons for the school's success. She provides a clear educational direction based firmly on raising standards. Since the last inspection a set of school aims have been written, which all in the school strive to achieve with considerable success. Senior managers work effectively as a team. The headteacher, staff, parents and governors share a commitment to ensuring that the pupils can achieve their best. The key issues from the last inspection have been tackled successfully, the quality of teaching has improved and standards are rising.
42. There has been a considerable turnover in staff since the last inspection, but this has served to strengthen teaching. The priority when replacing staff has been to appoint good teachers rather than considering their individual subject expertise. This has resulted in a lack of subject expertise in the co-ordination of some subjects; however, most co-ordinators are very effective in their roles. They monitor teachers' planning and are able to provide their colleagues with good advice and support. In subjects where expertise is less secure or co-ordinators inexperienced, staff are provided with training and the support of senior managers. Co-ordinators are further supported by the newly introduced curriculum teams, whose brief is to ensure that subject policies and schemes of work are regularly reviewed and updated.
43. The Governing Body has become more effective in fulfilling its role since the last inspection. It now fulfils its statutory responsibilities. The committee structure is used to keep governors well informed about the work of the school. Governors' expertise is increasing and they have a good understanding of the work of the school, its strengths and areas for development. Careful financial planning is effectively supported by a well-constructed development plan. Formal tenders are invited for all major spending and the best value for money sought. Spending decisions relate closely to the school's identified areas for improvement, such as the funding allocated for the new computer room. The current priorities are entirely appropriate for the school's needs and are framed within a long-term plan of curriculum development.

The results of National Curriculum tests are analysed and challenging targets set which are used to evaluate the success of the developments in English and mathematics. Recent improvements to computer equipment and facilities have already begun to have a positive impact on standards.

44. The school is good both at identifying its strengths, and at taking steps to eliminate any weaknesses. Good systems are in place to monitor the work of teachers. Annual staff development interviews and observations of teaching enable good practice to be acknowledged, weaknesses identified and support provided to enable teachers to improve the quality of their work. Co-ordinators are increasingly involved in this process. The performance of pupils is analysed to identify any areas that need to be developed. Some weaknesses in pupils' writing have been identified and plans introduced for their improvement.
45. The most recent financial audit, which took place at the end of the previous term, contained a few minor areas for the school's attention. Plans are already in place to deal with them. The school makes good use of funds allocated for special purposes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed effectively. Support is carefully targeted, the pupils have full access to the curriculum and they make good progress. The use of teaching assistants is having a positive effect on the pupils' learning.
46. Staff are suitably qualified, with a good spread of experience to teach the school's curriculum and religious education, and meet the needs of all pupils. Induction arrangements are good. The school has recently been successfully involved in the training of two new teachers. The allocation of classroom support staff has increased considerably since the last inspection. Classroom assistants are suitably trained; some are seeking formal qualifications.
47. Accommodation is satisfactory and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Two new classroom conversions have been recently completed. The new room for computers will benefit the learning of information technology skills. Outside, the school benefits from a large grassed areas, a wild life garden, and a swimming pool that is used in the summer term. Generally the quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory for the school's curriculum and pupils. Resources are easily accessible with the exception of music, where there are plans to move them. Resources in information technology, history and music are good and well used to benefit pupil learning; however, although resources in religious education are suitably used, there are shortcomings in their quantity and range. The school library area, although a thoroughfare, has sound stock and is in good order. It is supplemented by good book areas in most classrooms, and most pupils have easy access to a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction material. Recently attention has been given to the range of cultures represented in books and to resources to interest boys. There is a need to extend access to books for a few classes which use the library less frequently and for which class book areas are not so well resourced or used.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should build on the good progress made in recent years to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are consistently challenged by: (paragraphs 6, 8, 20 and 35)

- using assessment information more effectively to identify their learning needs
- setting challenging targets for their attainment in all subjects
- requiring teachers to identify for all lessons the methods and activities to be adopted for higher-attaining pupils.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Produce a coherent plan for the teaching of personal, social and health education. (paragraph 24)
- Provide regular up-to-date training in child protection for all staff. (paragraph 30)
- Ensure full use of the new IT suite to support pupils' learning and to raise standards. (paragraph 10)
- Implement fully the school's plans for assessment. (paragraphs 35 and 36)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	13	44	39	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	283
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	24	20	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	24
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	41	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (76)	95 (95)	100 (95)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	23	24	24
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	43	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	98 (89)	100 (95)	100 (97)
	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	15	16	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	24	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	77 (71)	81 (63)	81 (81)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	24	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	77 (73)	84 (75)	84 (80)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	253
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92

Financial information

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

	£
Total income	413435
Total expenditure	406717
Expenditure per pupil	1530
Balance brought forward from previous year	13000
Balance carried forward to next year	19718

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	283
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42.5	53.4	2.7	0	1.4
My child is making good progress in school.	31.5	61.6	4.1	1.4	1.4
Behaviour in the school is good.	35.6	63	0	0	1.4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19.2	56.2	17.8	5.5	1.4
The teaching is good.	27.4	67.1	2.7	0	2.7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24.7	63	6.8	4.1	1.4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	27.4	5.5	0	4.1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45.2	52.1	0	2.7	0
The school works closely with parents.	31.5	56.2	4.1	2.7	5.5
The school is well led and managed.	32.9	58.9	5.5	0	2.7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31.5	60.3	5.5	0	2.7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20.5	50.7	23.3	4.1	1.4

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents attending the pre-inspection meeting expressed a concern that higher-attaining pupils were not sufficiently stretched at Key Stage 1 and that they would like to see more extra-curricular activities.

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

48. Children are admitted to the school in September or January, some starting full-time and others part-time. From Easter, all attend full-time. Most children have previously attended local nurseries or playgroups and the school maintains close links with the pre-school providers. Great care is taken to ensure that all children make a smooth and positive transition to the school. All children visit the school before entry. There is a meeting for parents, who are encouraged to fill in a booklet, *Journeying Together*, to give the school information about their child's pre-school experiences.
49. Assessments when children start school show that standards of attainment of the majority are above those expected in children of this age. Assessment information is well used when planning activities. The needs of each child are quickly identified and regularly reviewed. This enables targets to be set for individual children. This information is regularly shared with parents, and the school works hard to establish a good partnership. All six areas of learning in the nationally recognised curriculum for children of this age are included in the school's provision and children make good progress. As soon as children are ready, they move smoothly into the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and continue to make good progress. By the age of five, most children attain standards at least in line with expectations for this age group in all of the areas of learning and the majority are already working on the programmes of study of the National Curriculum, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
50. The resources for indoor activities are generally good. Those for outdoor activities are satisfactory. The self-contained accommodation is satisfactory. Currently, the outdoor area is mostly shared with older pupils, though used in part at different times. The school is aware of the need to develop a secure outdoor area with easy access for these children and has plans to adapt an appropriate area for this purpose.
51. Since the previous inspection, strengths in the department have been maintained. In addition, staff have attended several courses and this is resulting in increased expectations of work, behaviour and independence.

Personal and Social Development

52. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development. They are confident and happy to come to school and settle into school life quickly. At the time of the inspection a third of the class had been in school less than a week, and they were already aware of class routines and enjoying class activities. The children have very good relationships with each other and with the adults in the classroom. They concentrate well for long periods. They stay on task, remaining involved in any activity until it is completed. The children have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic, interested and eager to participate. They behave very well in class and group activities, as well as when playing or working independently. Children are developing a clear understanding of right and wrong. Equipment and the classroom environment are treated with care and respect, and children tidy up willingly after activities. They take turns sensibly and listen to their peers patiently. The children's spiritual and cultural development is fostered through assemblies which they attend

on a regular basis.

53. The quality of teaching is mostly very good. High, but achievable expectations are made of their behaviour and independence. Staff support the children very well as they grow in independence and confidence. All staff offer good role models, particularly in the way in which they talk to, question and encourage the children to take care of the classrooms and equipment. Support staff make a good contribution to children's learning.

Language and literacy

54. Children are making very good progress in language and literacy. The literacy hour has been adapted by staff to a level appropriate for the age range. Children are able to sustain concentration for long periods. They take part in shared reading, for example a big book of traditional rhymes containing *Little Miss Muffet* which has links with their current topic on spiders. Their speaking and listening skills are enhanced by teacher questioning. They move purposefully to group writing activities, which are carefully matched to the needs of individual children. The development of phonic skills is reflected in their ability to identify, for example, words beginning with 'm' and an increasing ability to recognise letters in written text. Most children can recognise their own name and many can write it. Letters are generally orientated correctly. All of the children show enthusiasm for books. They understand how books are organised and most can talk about and retell their favourite story.
55. The quality of teaching is very good. Staff encourage children to answer questions, offer opinions and talk about their own interests. Staff make individual reading books for the children with key words to introduce them to more formal texts. Children take these home and there is a home/school diary in which to record parent and teacher comments. In school, there are many opportunities to share books, and children are encouraged to use the book corner and read quietly. Assessment is used very well. In this and other areas of learning, each task is assessed and the assessment used to plan daily activities. This ensures that tasks are well matched to children's abilities and to their learning needs. Detailed records are kept to monitor individual progress.

Mathematics

56. Children make good progress in mathematics. Most children can count aloud to and back from twenty. They are encouraged to write numbers correctly. Most children can identify simple shapes such as circle and square. They learn vocabulary such as 'few', 'more', and 'less'. They are confidently applying what they have learnt in the written tasks and activities that follow.
57. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well paced and structured to hold the children's attention, and they are often linked to other activities. For example, recognition and understanding of the number eight was carefully linked to work on spiders. Learning objectives are shared with children and they are given many opportunities for oral mental calculations. There are occasions when children would benefit from more practical activities to consolidate their understanding. Assessments are thorough and enable the teacher to determine who is ready to move on and who needs further practice. Support staff are used effectively both to support activities and assist with assessments.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Children are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They have a secure knowledge of the seasons, and through this, their understanding of chronology is developing. They know that summer is hot and winter is cold, and they are aware of the need to adapt clothing accordingly. Children can discuss the use of water with confidence. They have knowledge of insects. Children use the computer confidently; they are learning how to save in their own file and to print. Those observed, used the mouse with satisfactory levels of speed and accuracy. The quality of teaching is good. Every opportunity is taken to extend and practise vocabulary during activities.

Creative development

59. Children are making good progress in their creative development. They are offered a range of activities. They are imaginative and express their ideas through drawing, model making, collage and role-play. They use a range of materials to produce interesting effects, for example, biscuits and black icing to make spiders. They all are happy to include adults in their ideas and can explain what they are doing and why. They enjoy joining in songs and listen closely to taped music. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan a wide range of appropriate activities for the children.

Physical development

60. Children are making good progress in their physical development. Their fine motor skills are being developed well. They use scissors and glue with confidence and are encouraged to extend their writing skills in more formal lessons. In their physical education lessons in the hall, they demonstrate an appreciation of their own space and that of others. They are beginning to refine their skills. There are occasions when children would benefit from more regular access to large outdoor apparatus to increase their skills in, for example, ball control and balance. The quality of teaching is good. Praise is used to reinforce and encourage good behaviour and techniques. Activities are well planned and offer challenge to children at all levels.

ENGLISH

61. In the 1999 SATs for eleven-year-olds, approximately eight out of every ten pupils achieved the expected level in English, a proportion above the national average and close to the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level was above the national average; however, the performance in English lagged behind that in mathematics and science at this higher level. Boys and girls achieved similar results. The school's commitment to high standards and developing an enthusiasm for the subject helps to ensure that both boys and girls are interested in reading and writing and work hard to do well.
62. In the 1999 SATs for seven-year-olds, approximately nine out of every ten pupils achieved the expected level in reading, a proportion well above the national average. In writing, the proportion was slightly higher and well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving a higher level was above the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing. There was no significant variation in the performance of boys and girls.
63. There has been an upward trend in results since 1997. The school exceeded its

English target for 1999 and has set challenging targets for the future. It has recognised the need to extend the more able pupils. Recent staff training for the literacy hour and improved arrangements for teaching literacy, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are having a beneficial impact in classrooms. The school has well-considered plans to continue these developments across the school.

64. Progress is at least satisfactory throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and is good in the majority of classes. The books of many pupils show positive results from the recent efforts to raise standards. Pupils have personal targets for improvement. Some teachers encourage awareness of these targets, referring to them as they teach, and this good practice helps pupils to focus their efforts.
65. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from regular, thorough assessments and carefully targeted support. They make good progress and their confidence and self-esteem are high.
66. Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. From the youngest class to Year 6, pupils are encouraged to listen carefully, follow instructions, take turns and answer questions. Good standards are achieved by the end of Key Stage 1. By Year 6, pupils are confident speakers in a wide range of situations, respond thoughtfully to questions and develop viewpoints and opinions logically and well. Good examples of the development of speaking and listening skills through drama and role-play were seen. In Year 2, a group consolidated spelling skills while acting out teacher and pupil roles in the literacy hour. Year 5 and 6 pupils developed their skills in the summarising of character and plot by retelling the Greek legend of *The Wooden Horse*. The school has recognised that speaking and listening opportunities could usefully be broadened in some classes.
67. Standards in reading are good at both key stages. The foundations are well laid in Reception and by the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils are developing confidence in reading aloud, and reading unknown words and simple stories. They understand the structure of books, handle books with care, use basic phonic knowledge well and recognise familiar word patterns. They are developing a good understanding of what they read and many have firm opinions about their favourite types of books. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read increasingly difficult texts with fluency, accuracy, good understanding and expression. Their attitudes to reading are very good. Many read for pleasure as well as for information, and use an appropriate range of library and research skills. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make good progress with reading.
68. Standards in writing are good for the majority of pupils at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have good letter formation and clear handwriting. They write simple sentences that develop their ideas in a logical sequence. Most pupils understand the use of capital letters and full stops; higher-attainers are already using them consistently and correctly. The range of writing is good. Children in one Year 1/2 class made good progress in understanding and using speech marks correctly and creating their own written dialogues. In the Year 2 class, after stimulating teaching, many pupils were able to construct their own books about wolves independently, complete with cover page showing title and author, and with a contents page. They wrote in lively styles and with good use of vocabulary.
69. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils are extending their ideas logically in both factual and creative text. They undertake a wide range of writing, including stories, poetry,

play scripts, analysis and reports. Many use punctuation and paragraphing well. Most write with speed and accuracy, and have a range of skills to tackle the spelling of unfamiliar words. They plan and organise their work effectively. Many are able to adapt their style of writing to suit purpose, and are able to skim and scan and note-take. Throughout the school, there are high expectations of clear handwriting and good presentation and most pupils achieve a good standard by Year 6.

70. The quality of teaching is good overall, never less than satisfactory, and with examples of very good and excellent teaching. All lessons are well planned with precise learning objectives defined for pupils. Work is well matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment in most classes. On the whole, teachers manage the learning needs of mixed-age classes effectively. Most teachers incorporate a good range of questioning techniques and pace lessons well. In the most effective lessons, tasks are particularly well chosen to capture interest, match abilities and meet needs. The teaching style is lively and includes frequent praise and encouragement. The plenary session at the close of a lesson is often particularly well used to consolidate understanding and prepare pupils for the next stage of their learning. Literacy is fostered through all subjects of the curriculum. Effective links are made between English and other subjects and this is particularly evident in work at Key Stage 2 in history and science.
71. The school has a well-constructed plan for implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. All elements of the literacy hour are now securely in place, and basic skills are given strong emphasis and well taught. The school has recognised the need to spread its best practice to all classes and ensure that the staff continue to develop their skills, for example in the teaching of writing. Further training and support is planned to increase the skills and confidence of staff, particularly in the group work section of the literacy hour, where practice is weaker in some classes. Teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory and often good. English resources have been well supplemented recently to support teaching and to encourage a wider range of learning in line with the National Literacy Strategy.
72. Support staff are effectively used to assist reading and writing improvement. The school also benefits from parental help in classrooms, particularly with reading. Reading is a strong feature of the home/school partnership from Reception upwards. A widening range and quantity of homework tasks for English are introduced as pupils move up the school. Year 6 pupils take their homework seriously: school policy and good liaison with the local secondary school are helping to prepare them well for English lessons and homework in Year 7.
73. The school has actively and successfully tackled issues raised in the last inspection report relating to English in Key Stage 1, handwriting in Key Stage 2, and the monitoring of provision for English. Progress since the last inspection is good. Teachers' planning is carefully scrutinised, and teaching is observed and supported in the classrooms. In view of the recent changes in staff, the school plans to continue to use the co-ordinator's skills and those of other very effective teachers of English to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards, particularly in writing.

MATHEMATICS

74. SAT results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well above the national average and in line with results in similar schools. These results were a considerable improvement on those of 1998 and are above those reported at the last inspection.

All pupils achieved at least Level 2 and the proportion achieving Level 3 was close to the national average. Although boys achieved better results in 1999, there has been no significant pattern to any variation between the results of boys and girls over the last four years. SAT results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. These results were, as at Key Stage 1, a considerable improvement on those achieved in 1998 and were above those reported at the last inspection. Results in mathematics were better than in English or science. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or higher was above the national average and the proportion at Level 5 was well above average. As at Key Stage 1, boys achieved better results than girls, a pattern consistently repeated since 1996 but more marked in 1999. This is unlikely to be continued in 2000, as there are considerably more higher-attaining girls than boys in the top Year 5/6 set.

75. Standards of numeracy are good overall throughout the school, with some of the more able at the top end of Key Stage 2 having very good number skills. The daily mathematics lesson has been introduced with varying levels of success across the school. Where it has been introduced successfully, as in Years 5 and 6, the structure of the three-part lesson is planned carefully and taught well. Mental arithmetic sessions are lively and use a number of different activities to sharpen mental recall and to give pupils greater confidence when calculating. Lesson introductions refer back to previous work, reminding pupils what they have learnt and how they dealt with any problems that they faced. Groups are carefully organised within the classes taking account both of the pupils' age and their prior attainment. This ensures that within each set, three groups are identified and tasks provided accordingly. Pupils learn quickly here and make very good progress, not only in the acquisition of new skills but also in their application to mathematical investigations and the solution of complex problems. Plenary sessions are used well to consolidate the pupils' learning and assess their understanding.
76. The results achieved by pupils in the most recent SATs are reflected in the standards of work currently seen at both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop basic calculating skills using whole numbers satisfactorily at Key Stage 1. The pupils can add and subtract accurately and some higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 are beginning to develop a good recall of their two, five and ten times tables. They can spot the pattern and complete simple number sequences, and they recognise and write basic fractions such as a half or three-quarters. Place value up to and beyond 100 is understood by many in Year 2 and most can identify common two and three-dimensional shapes, describing them by their characteristics such as the number of faces, sides and edges. They can apply their knowledge to basic problems and simple investigations, opportunities to develop these skills being regularly provided in all classes. Good progress is made by pupils overall at Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs, but more so in Years 5 and 6. While all but a few Year 6 pupils are working at Level 4 there are a considerable number achieving at Level 5 in all aspects of mathematics. The four rules of number are confidently used when calculating with whole numbers; the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages is understood and pupils can use negative numbers. Place value to 1000 and beyond is understood, as is the significance of each decimal place. The pupils can plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants and calculate the area of composite shapes. Most pupils understand the language of probability and can present, analyse and interpret data. Higher-attaining pupils have good investigative skills. They can work logically and systematically, using a wide range of mathematical skills; they can predict, search for patterns and in some cases

express these algebraically.

77. Teaching is good overall, with more of the better teaching at the end of each key stage. Many of the important features of an effective mathematics lesson were to be seen in a Year 2 class. Good use was made of the registration session to introduce mental arithmetic. A lively start with the pupils counting on in tens and then fives was followed by a discussion of how to total money beyond £1. The teacher extended the higher-attainers by asking them more difficult questions, giving them time to explain to everyone the thinking behind their answers. The group tasks were well organised and the teacher intervened effectively to remind pupils about some of the main points that had been introduced at the beginning of the lesson. The average and above average pupils could add accurately within 100, some being able to record repeated additions of 10 pence as a multiplication sum. The plenary session focused on the consolidation of skills learnt, giving the pupils further opportunities to apply their skills to other problems.
78. The structure of the daily mathematics lesson has been less effectively introduced in Years 3 and 4. Here teachers' planning is not sufficiently sharp to identify clearly what each group of pupils is to learn. Tasks and activities are then too similar, in particular for pupils of average and above average ability. Consequently the higher-attaining are often not suitably challenged and make slower progress than they could. Some plenary sessions also lack impact, being rushed and not consolidating the pupils' understanding of new ideas.
79. A suitable focus is being placed on mathematics through the school development plan. This is supporting the effective introduction of the daily mathematics lesson. The school has identified from lesson observations that the teaching of mental arithmetic is an area that needs development. Some training has already been provided and more is planned. The planned future focus for lesson observations should help to identify any remaining weaknesses quickly. The school also needs to ensure that teachers' planning is sufficiently clear to identify how the higher-attaining pupils are to be challenged effectively through direct teaching and group tasks.

SCIENCE

80. The teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were broadly in line with the national average and those in similar schools, although the proportion of pupils judged to have reached the higher Level 3 was comparatively low. The pupils' attainment in experimental and investigative science and in physical processes was weaker than in the other two attainment targets. Results in the Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 were above the national average and in line with those in similar schools. This is similar to results in English, but below those in mathematics. A high proportion of pupils reached Level 5, above that expected for their age group. This matched the proportion of pupils reaching the same level in mathematics. The performance of the boys was much higher than that of the girls. Results at Key Stage 2 have risen each year from 1997.
81. Results in external tests are matched by the pupils' work in lessons. Almost all pupils are working at the expected level at Key Stage 1 and overall attainment is higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Although few pupils are working above the level expected, higher-attaining pupils are being extended by the depth in which they study topics. In a Year 2 lesson for example, higher-attaining pupils were encouraged to think about the size of the force needed to carry out a particular task

in addition to categorising it as a 'push' or a 'pull'. Attainment in lessons at Key Stage 2 has also improved since the previous inspection, with most pupils continuing to work at the expected level, but with a good proportion working above this towards the end of the key stage. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 are familiar with the idea that forces affect motion, and can work with the idea in a variety of contexts. Many are also aware that a stationary object may be being acted upon by a combination of forces. Pupils work at appropriate levels, regardless of gender. There is no evidence of any significant variation in the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different attainment targets. Older, higher-attaining pupils, however, are not consistently basing predictions for investigative work upon their scientific understanding and this is limiting attainment in this aspect.

82. The pupils' well-developed literacy and number skills are often used to good effect. As pupils get older, science activities increasingly draw upon these skills to develop understanding of the language of the subject and accuracy in gathering and interpreting experimental data. Limited use has been made of information technology, although the recent addition to resources, including science based CD-ROMs and equipment to monitor physical data, are set to have a significant impact.
83. The pupils are well taught, with teaching good overall and particularly strong with older pupils. It is never less than satisfactory, often good and sometimes, as in a Year 6 lesson investigating the stretching of elastic bands, very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Planning is good and consistent between teachers with pupils in the same age range. There is a clear focus on what the pupils are expected to know by the end of the lesson, with some recognition of the different needs of pupils of varying attainment. Introductions, explanations and support and guidance during group work are consequently well focused. Sometimes, however, gifted and talented pupils are not fully stretched. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and generally manage them well. In return, pupils are usually interested in their work, concentrate well and work effectively, often independently. They maintain a good focus on what they are supposed to be doing, put a good effort into their work and maintain a good pace of activity. Teachers use questions effectively to find out what pupils already know and to provide good links to previous work. There is a good focus on language, with opportunities taken to reinforce basic literacy work.
84. Good use is made of classroom assistants and other adults, such as parents, to support the pupils' learning. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils acquire new ideas and increase their understanding particularly well. Good feedback from teachers usually provides pupils with a good sense of how well they have done, but this does not always extend to how they might improve.
85. The curriculum is taught in a more consistent and coherent way than at the time of the last inspection, and resources are now much more accessible. Links with the local secondary school have developed a great deal and do much to support Year 6 pupils' interest, through the science club, and attainment, through revision sessions. The co-ordinator is providing increasingly strong leadership and the profile of science is increasing across the school. This now needs to be developed into more direct monitoring and support for classroom practice. The procedures by which teachers assess the progress that pupils are making are also improving.

ART

86. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in art throughout the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils have individual sketchbooks with examples of work in them. These books show that cross-curricular links are made, particularly with history and religious education. There are displays around the school in which progress in the subject can be identified and a range of media can be seen. For instance, there is some collage work on display and some paintings in the style of well-known artists. Most art work is well presented. In Year 2, pupils were working hard and with interest on producing material pictures, embroidered with wool in wavy patterns to reflect the sea. In a Year 3/4 class, pupils showed great interest in piecing together Roman vases. In another Year 3/4 class, pupils were developing the concept of tone based on the work of Van Gogh.
87. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject was satisfactory, and clear instructions were given. Further explanation, as the teacher moved around the class and assessed each pupil's need, encouraged progress. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and work hard. Co-operation between pupils is good; they help one another willingly and are eager to explain what they are doing.
88. The school is aware that there are aspects of art that need to be developed. The strands of art in the National Curriculum are being covered, but there is a lack of breadth and depth in the content. There is cultural awareness but the school recognises that there is a need to use art from other cultures more, particularly in terms of techniques and styles. Team planning has resulted in greater consistency and progress in the subject but it is an area that the school has rightly identified for continued development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. Attainment is in line with expectation at both key stages. Standards have been maintained overall since the previous inspection. There is now also more emphasis on the broader aspects of the subject, such as investigating and disassembling products and less emphasis on simply making. Year 2 pupils were careful in their observations and able to identify axles and chassis on a variety of toy vehicles. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to identify the materials used in various parts of a torch. Higher-attaining pupils were able to relate the material and its simple properties to the function of the component. Pupils of all ages develop an understanding of the associated technical language well.
90. The teachers' planning is good, with appropriate use made of guidance from QCA. There is a clear focus on what the pupils are expected to be able to do as a result of the lesson. Very good connections are made with other subjects, such as electricity in science. Good use is made of the pupils' well-developed literacy skills, and some activities support the development of specific and technical language well. The contexts used stimulate the pupils' interest and they concentrate well on the activities. They think about what they are doing and how things work. Consequently they maintain a good pace throughout lessons.
91. The curriculum structure is now much better planned, and the subject has a clear identity and contributes well to a broad curriculum. Leadership of the subject is good, but the co-ordinator also has responsibility for information technology, which takes

much time and effort. The school needs to consider reallocating this responsibility if the subject is to continue its development into the next phase of the National Curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

92. Standards at Key Stage 1 are good overall and have improved since the previous inspection. Activities are often based on well-planned practical experiences. The pupils draw and write about features of their locality after a walk in the neighbourhood. They identify aspects of their surroundings which they like, for example in their play area, and aspects which might be improved. They are aware of different buildings and some of their uses such as the church, houses and the post office. The pupils make good progress in extending their basic geographical vocabulary. As they worked together on making a map of an imaginary Scottish island, they began to use terms such as “jetty”, “harbour” and “loch” correctly. They identified and compared natural features and those made by people. These pupils were particularly enthusiastic because the work about the fictional island was stimulating and engaged their full attention.
93. Standards are satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 use and understand appropriate vocabulary. They have a good factual knowledge of work covered in previous terms on the rain forests and the water cycle and have a satisfactory understanding of some of the related environmental issues. In a lesson on mapmaking, pupils made good progress in applying their knowledge and skills to solve a problem. They have a satisfactory grasp of basic grid references.
94. Three lessons of geography were seen during the inspection, one at Key Stage 2 and two at Key Stage 1. Overall the quality of teaching was very good. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and develop a good atmosphere for learning. Lessons move at a good pace and the teachers inspire interest and enthusiasm. Lively teaching and challenging tasks motivate the higher-attaining pupils, and those pupils with special educational needs are given well-focused support. In one very good lesson at Key Stage 1, the teacher extended the higher-attaining pupils by talking briefly about early mapmakers, and later moved effectively round the classroom to ensure that all lower-attainers could manage the mapmaking activity. The pupils’ attitudes to geography are very good. They respond very well to the teachers’ high expectations of work and behaviour.
95. The teachers set relevant written work to reinforce and extend the pupils’ learning. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their language skills. There are some examples of very well presented, neat work at Key Stage 2. Standards of presentation in written work and drawing in geography vary from class to class, showing some inconsistency in the expectations of different teachers.
96. The recent introduction of a new scheme of work is having a beneficial effect by giving teachers clear guidance for their planning, and ensuring that lessons have a clear focus on skills. Links are made with other subjects, for example history, science and mathematics, which enhance the pupils’ understanding of the world.

HISTORY

97. Overall, standards in history have been maintained since the last inspection. No

lessons were observed during the inspection at Key Stage 1. Pupils' work shows that they are developing an understanding of chronology, for example looking at old buildings which demonstrate how there have been adaptations over time, and how materials have been developed to improve living conditions. An example of this is their comparison of a local old building, the Dutch Cottage, with modern houses. There is evidence that they are learning to understand that the past is represented in different ways, through artefacts, written accounts and museum displays. There is good use of English in the subject and close links with art are identifiable. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in the subject.

98. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good knowledge and understanding of different periods in history and different societies in the past. Work in Years 5 and 6 indicates that they are developing skills of investigation through the study of books, photographs and maps. They use computers to support this work. At Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities make good progress in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the past. Throughout the key stage, there are good examples of links with English, art and music. Pupils are making good progress.
99. Pupils consolidate their skills in the subject well, as teachers plan lessons to build pupils' skills systematically. Good use is made of the local environment to support the subject, and pupils visit museums and Colchester Castle to support their understanding of the subject. A visit to the Globe Theatre in London was organised to support work on the Tudors. Pupils are encouraged to produce extended writing in the subject.
100. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Lessons are planned effectively with a good range of activities and resources to motivate pupils. Classroom management in Key Stage 2 is good. Homework is used to support the subject. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for the subject and they remain on task for long periods. They work very well in small groups and present their work to the class with confidence.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Attainment is broadly average, with pupils working at the expected levels by the end of both key stages. Most pupils are competent and confident users of IT and their basic skills are well developed. Pupils in the Reception class know how to save their work and print it. They have a basic understanding of files and folders. By Year 2 pupils have developed an awareness of the use of specific keys, such as the backspace, when editing their work. They are also developing an appreciation that a computer needs accurate information if it is to work effectively. In Year 3 pupils can change the style and edit text, and print their work without support. Their use of terminology is developing well and they use words such as cursor, cut and paste accurately and confidently. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have used spreadsheets to explore data, such as traffic surveys, and to produce graphs and charts. They also understand the need for accuracy in framing questions when interrogating a database. Many pupils have access to IT at home, including the Internet. This access supports their learning well.
102. The teachers' planning is good. It has a good focus on what the pupils are intended to learn and the activities support these intentions well. Questions are effectively used, as in a Year 5/6 lesson on information sources, to provide links to previous work, consolidate ideas and to encourage the pupils to apply and extend their ideas.

Some good use is made of teaching expertise to extract small groups to use the new suite of computers and provide intensive work for them. Good individual help and guidance is provided and this encourages the pupils to apply themselves and develop the confidence to experiment. Effective links are established between the development of IT and other basic skills. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils' literacy skills were used well to enable them to work with text. In a Year 2 lesson, IT work helped to develop the pupils' spelling.

103. Provision for IT has improved significantly since the last inspection. The Governing Body, through its IT committee, has been influential in supporting developments. Resources are now good and the curriculum plan provides a secure framework for the development of the pupils' skills. An assessment and recording system is being developed which will enable monitoring of attainment and progress to take place. The improved resources will enable the development of a broader range of skills such as monitoring physical data in science and geography.

MUSIC

104. The contribution that music can make is valued and the school is making efforts to maintain standards. The standards achieved by pupils are satisfactory throughout the school, and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils who have instrumental tuition generally achieve above average standards.
105. At Key Stage 1 the teachers make appropriate use of taped music and a newly acquired scheme of work. The pupils in Key Stage 1 quickly learnt the words to a new song and sensibly developed suitable actions, although the teacher missed some opportunities to improve the quality of their singing. They accompanied their song with untuned percussion showing a satisfactory awareness of the pulse and holding the instruments correctly.
106. At Key Stage 2 pupils listen to music from different cultures. They make satisfactory progress in using their musical knowledge to interpret and explain what they hear. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 listened attentively as they compared pieces of Greek music. They applied their knowledge of music and musical terminology to describe what they heard, referring correctly to pitch, tempo and different beats. Composition work is developed appropriately, with the pupils writing and performing their own music. In a good lesson in Years 3 and 4 the pupils learnt well as they listened to and discussed a range of music from different cultures. The teacher made very good use of this lesson to challenge and correct some assumptions about India. The pupils became very interested in the contrasting styles of Indian music, and in comparing the range of electric and acoustic music they had heard.
107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in Key Stage 2. All teachers manage behaviour well and this has a positive impact on learning. The teachers know the pupils well and during activities ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are taking part. Positive intervention contributed to significant progress being made by one pupil in a lesson in lower Key Stage 2. New commercial schemes of work are being introduced to guide teachers' planning. Very effective links are established with other subjects, for example history, geography, science and English. There have been a number of staff changes and the school no longer has a music specialist or a pianist on the full-time staff. The quality of the part-time specialist music teaching is good, and often very good, challenging and motivating the pupils, who make good progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. The standards achieved by pupils have been maintained since the last inspection and are satisfactory overall at both key stages. The best lessons seek to challenge pupils to extend themselves and increase their work rate and skills. Year 2 pupils are able to plan and perform simple footwork skills safely. With practice they are able to develop a complex sequence of linked jumps and steps. They understand the need to warm up their bodies at the start of a lesson and undertake this exercise enthusiastically. Good work was seen in two dance lessons at Key Stage 2. The pupils were able to produce imaginative dance sequences in small groups, interpreting music rhythmically, practising and repeating a series of movements. They were perceptive in their evaluation of their own and others' performance, and used advice effectively to develop and improve their work.
109. Lessons are usually thoroughly planned and well structured, with satisfactory warm-up and close-down activities and a main activity which engages pupils well. There is very thorough attention to safety, and behaviour is well managed in almost all lessons. Most lessons proceed at a satisfactory pace; however, on a very few occasions, too much time is spent in sitting and discussing performance and too little in physical activity. Sometimes, the important close-down activity at the end of a session, although planned, is omitted. Opportunities are taken to reinforce the school ethos and, for example, teamwork, support for each other and appreciation of the music of a range of cultures, are all fostered successfully.
110. Facilities for swimming are good and allow pupils of all ages to receive swimming lessons. Records indicate a good standard in swimming for most pupils by the end of Key Stage 1. Year 5/6 pupils also have access to a water survival skills course which is a valuable addition to the curriculum.
111. Satisfactory progress has been made in tackling the weakness in assessment reported at the previous inspection. During this inspection, teachers were seen to help pupils evaluate their own performance and to assess pupils against the lesson objective for the session. On occasions, teachers focus on the work of a few individual pupils to help them improve. Careful reports are compiled of pupils' progress over each year and communicated to parents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainments are in line with the standards outlined in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average, with the higher-attaining pupils achieving very good standards. This is similar to the position at the last inspection.
113. As they move through Key Stage 1, the pupils begin to appreciate that people belong to different faiths. They gain an understanding of celebrations such as Hanukkah, Diwali and Christmas, and they recall events in religious stories such as the birth of Jesus and the story of Rama and Sita. The pupils respond thoughtfully to the natural world. Year 1 pupils showed a good understanding of life cycles during a lesson introducing them to the concepts of Buddhist and Christian beliefs about life after death. Progress in religious understanding was limited, however, because the teacher introduced too many ideas in one lesson.
114. At Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to develop an understanding of the ways in which

religious beliefs affect people's behaviour. By the age of eleven, pupils have considered aspects of major faiths and have a good basic knowledge of the rituals, stories and symbolism in these religions. They appreciate that some people do not believe in God, and the average and higher-attaining pupils show a mature understanding of the people's need for ceremonies to mark important events such as birth, marriage and death. The pupils gain a good understanding of the complexity of human beings. They discuss their strengths and weaknesses with some honesty. In Years 3 and 4 pupils show a good understanding of the parables that they hear and are able to relate these to their own lives.

115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teachers recap effectively on previous work, drawing well on pupils' understanding. The positive relationships which teachers develop enable the pupils to discuss ideas in a sensible and reflective manner. At Key Stage 2 the teachers set relevant written work which effectively extends and consolidates the pupils' understanding and promotes the use of language skills. Standards of written work vary between the classes as some teachers have higher expectations of pupils' understanding and presentation.
116. The school is currently introducing a new and detailed scheme of work at Key Stage 2. This scheme is based on the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The teachers have already found this very valuable. Once the full scheme is in place, the school has identified the need to develop assessment procedures. Links with the community are developed well by visits to the local church and by visits to the school by the vicar. The school acknowledges that there is a continuing need to develop the range and quality of artefacts in the school and to extend the range of visitors.