

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WOODHAM LEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**SOUTH BENFLEET**

Local Education Authority: Essex

Unique reference number: 114795

Headteacher: Mrs R.Dunhill

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth - 2700

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> April-3<sup>rd</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 191693

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rushbottom Lane, Great Tarpots, South Benfleet, Thundersley, Essex
Postcode:	SS7 4DN
Telephone number:	01268 735652
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Govier
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2700	Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	Mathematics; Design and technology; Physical education.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
9595	Susan Cash	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
23870	Andy Howe	Team inspector	Science; Art and design.	
23487	Pat Kitley	Team inspector	English as an additional language; English; Geography; History.	How well does the school care for its pupils?
18814	George Crowther	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; Music; Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Woodham Leys Primary School is situated near to the centre of South Benfleet in Essex and educates pupils from four to eleven years. Most of the pupils come from private housing. The number on roll at the time of the inspection was 283, similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average, although this does not adequately reflect the social background from which the children come. The school has very few pupils from ethnic minorities. The school has 43 pupils on the special educational needs register, proportionately well below the national average. The school has a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, most of whom are at the early stages of provision for a variety of learning difficulties. Of these, 35 are on the early stages of assessment and the remainder are on the later stages, including one pupil who has a statement of special educational need. Overall, the pupils' attainment on entry is below average. The school's aims include the provision of an effective and happy learning environment where children enjoy their work in a safe and secure environment.

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

In the main, the percentage of pupils obtaining the expected levels in national tests has been improving slowly in recent years. Despite this, the school has some significant weaknesses, particularly in the consistency of practice across the school. The quality of teaching is sound overall but about one-eighth of lessons observed during the inspection were unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Most pupils reach the expected levels in National Curriculum subjects and in religious education at the end of both key stages but some pupils do not always reach the level of which they are capable. Most pupils have good attitudes to their work and behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. The value for money provided by the school is sound.

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

- The teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 1 gives pupils a good start to their education;
- The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in particular that moral and social development is good;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils in extra-curricular activities;
- The staff take good care of the pupils and there are suitable arrangements for child protection;
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school, and the level of attendance is above the national average; they relate well to one another;
- The links with parents are good and parents think well of the school.

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

- Attainment in investigative science by the end of Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory;
- There is a lack of consistency in the use of procedures and records to plan the next steps in pupils' learning;
- The quality of educational provision for pupils of similar ages in parallel classes is inconsistent;
- The monitoring of standards across the school could be developed further;
- There is a need for an improvement in the quality of teaching in some areas of the school.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made in addressing the issues for improvement. Standards are similar in most respects to those reported previously, although they are not as high in music but they have improved in information and communication technology. Significant improvement has been made in the participation of the governing body and staff in planning for further development and higher standards. Curricular planning now ensures a better coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, although the use of assessment to plan future learning needs still requires further development. The deputy head and subject co-ordinators have more opportunities to report on curricular development. Parents are well informed about pupils' progress. However, record keeping is not yet well established in mathematics, information and communication technology and the foundation subjects and the range of recording is not consistent in all classes. Standards in science are still not high enough by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has increased the length of the school day and the amount of teaching time at Key Stage 2 just meets minimum requirements. The school has a sound capacity for further improvement.

## 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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	C	D	E
mathematics	D	C	C	D
science	D	E	E	E*

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

In view of the fact that the percentage of adults in the area with higher educational qualifications is below the national average, the inspection team placed the school in the next free school meal banding for comparison purposes with similar schools to reflect more accurately socio-economic circumstances.

The school has been making some progress in recent years in improving results by the age of eleven but overall the small proportion of pupils who gain the higher levels in English and in science reduces the school's overall performance. Standards in science have not been high enough and in 2000 were in the lowest five per cent nationally. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the national average in mathematics and few Key Stage 1 pupils gained the higher levels in reading and writing, mathematics and science. Currently standards are broadly in line with expectations in all subjects, except science, in both key stages and in line with the local expectations for religious education. The school's targets are realistic and the school reached its targets in English and mathematics in 2000. There is an inconsistency in expectations in different parts of the school which means that pupils do not progress at a consistent rate throughout the school. Overall pupils' achievements are satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils' have good attitudes to their work and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the playground and around the school is good and in lessons it is satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good and they have good opportunities to take responsibility around the school, but few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Relationships amongst the pupils and between the staff and pupils are good
Attendance	Above average. Pupils are punctual for school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Eighty-eight per cent of all lessons were satisfactory or better, 43 per cent good and three per cent very good. Eleven per cent were unsatisfactory and one lesson was poor. The overall quality of teaching observed in mathematics and in English was satisfactory. The teaching of special needs pupils is often good but more demands could be made of the more capable pupils in some lessons. Most pupils concentrate on their work and try to do their best. Teaching is strongest in the Foundation Stage and Year 1. Throughout the rest of the school, there are significant inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between classes. It is the inconsistency, which reduces pupils' achievements, for example in the pace and challenge of work, and in such lessons pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to think for themselves and too many of the activities are dictated by worksheets. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. In most classes pupils' achievements are generally sound.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound. The school provides a broad and generally balanced curriculum, but it is much stronger in some classes than others. More investigation is required in science. The Foundation Stage is a strength. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented satisfactorily. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities. Improvement is needed in the work in science. Satisfactory provision is made for personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. They make sound progress in both key stages and good progress where work is well matched to their needs and they are supported well by adults.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good provision is made for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is good for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' personal development is good and they have several opportunities to take responsibility.



How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are good. Recording of pupils' progress is generally satisfactory but the systems are not consistent across the school. Inadequate record keeping is maintained in mathematics, information and communication technology and the foundation subjects. There is a lack of consistency in the use made of assessments to plan future learning.
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The school works well with parents and parents think well of the school

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. The headteacher gives sound leadership and is an effective manager. Many aspects of the school are well managed. Curriculum co-ordinators manage their responsibilities satisfactorily. Some have carried out effective monitoring of other teachers' lessons but this practice is not yet well established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The work of the governing body is satisfactory. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities and it has a suitable system of committees to manage its work. Monitoring of strengths and weaknesses of the school by the governing body is at an early stage of development.
The school's evaluation of performance	Although the school evaluates the quality of teaching and learning, action to seek improvements has not been rigorous enough. The school monitors the targets in the school improvement plan appropriately. It does not sufficiently carry out rigorous and timely evaluations of pupils' performance in national tests.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of finance and day-to-day financial management is good. Resources are used appropriately in lessons. The organisation of classes could enable teachers to work together more productively.

The school has a satisfactory number of staff and they are appropriately qualified. Accommodation is good. Learning resources are satisfactory. The school applies 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"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress;</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good;</li> <li>• The teaching is good;</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns;</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best;</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed;</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pupils do not receive the right amounts of homework;</li> <li>• It does not work closely with parents;</li> <li>• It does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons;</li> <li>• They are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive comments made by parents but some children could make better progress. During the inspection the quality of teaching was mostly sound but in some classes it was occasionally unsatisfactory. There is inconsistency in the homework arrangements between different classes but in several classes reading is a regular feature. The school works closely with its parents. Teachers provide a good range of extra-curricular activities in Key Stage 2. The school does well in keeping parents informed about their children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of children on entry at age four is below average, particularly in language and numeracy. In the Foundation Stage pupils make satisfactory progress in these aspects and in most other areas of their learning but good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children's attainment is below expectations overall in numeracy and language but meets expectations in other areas of learning.

2. Several children are not expected to reach the national expectations in their mathematical and language development by the end of the Reception year. Some pupils can recognise a selection of frequently used words but others have difficulty remembering letter sounds. Whilst some have a good understanding of number and shape, others still have difficulty in recognising number and counting accurately. In their general work a few pupils find concentration difficult and they find it difficult to sustain interest. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, the children acquire knowledge about the natural and physical world, for example learning about the parts of a plant, the forces of push and pull and what constitutes healthy and unhealthy food. They also learn about past times and are acquiring a good sense of time. Overall by the end of the Reception year, the children meet the expectations for their physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world but several pupils do not reach expectations in their understanding of number and language.

3. In the past three years, attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 has been in line with the national average but below it in reading and well below it in mathematics. The performance of boys has been below that for boys nationally in reading, equated with the national average in writing but has been well below it in mathematics. Girls have done as well as girls nationally, except in mathematics in which they have done much less well. In the 2000 national tests, the pupils' attainment in mathematics was in the lowest five per cent against similar schools. It was well below average against all schools. There have been much greater differences in the comparative performances of the school's boys and girls in reading and mathematics. Girls have been doing significantly better than the boys in reading, whilst boys have been attaining more highly than the girls in mathematics. Results in mathematics in Key Stage 1, despite the well below average standard, have been rising consistently since 1996. The national test results in 2000 were significantly improved on those in 1996 for the percentage of pupils obtaining the expected standard. However, the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher level has not improved and accounts for the continuing unfavourable comparisons.

4. Standards for reading and writing at Key Stage 1 have risen since the last inspection. Test results in 2000 were close to the national average in reading, and in line with national expectations for writing. However, compared to similar schools, standards in reading were well below average and below average in writing because the number of pupils attaining the higher level was well below average. Results in the national assessments for Key Stage 2 were average compared with all schools, but below average when compared with similar schools because only a small number of pupils reached the higher level. Results for pupils at age eleven have not changed significantly since the last inspection. Compared with their age groups nationally, the performance of girls has been slightly better than boys, but there is not a significant difference. In both key stages, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Many pupils are enthusiastic readers, although several do not challenge themselves enough with their selection of texts, often choosing books which are too easy. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can use a library well and find information in books quickly. Pupils make satisfactory progress, and by eleven years of age can read

confidently, pay good attention to punctuation for expressing the meaning of texts and talk about characters and plot. However, younger and less able older readers find it difficult to sound out unfamiliar words because their phonic knowledge is insufficiently secure. Satisfactory progress has been made in raising standards since the last inspection. The achievements of pupils in speaking and listening in both key stages are satisfactory but often they do not speak up enough in class so that it is often difficult to hear what they are saying.

5. Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of both key stages is in line with national averages and they make satisfactory progress, although quality and quantity are inconsistent across the school. Pupils write for a widening range of purposes and audiences throughout the school. Some good standards are reached in story writing in both key stages. By the end of Year 6 pupils enjoy a wide range of writing including stories, poems, play-scripts, instructions and biographies. Some good use is developing of the use of literacy across the curriculum, for example in religious education. Literacy is less developed in other lessons, such as history, where pupils copy factual information from books or fill in worksheets.

6. Pupils develop good handwriting skills and, by seven years of age, most are using joined handwriting and, by Year 6, many have developed a fluent style and present their work well. Standards in spelling are variable and sometimes affected by many pupils' lack of phonic knowledge.

7. In the past three years the performance of pupils at Key Stage 2 has been better than the national average in English, equated with it in mathematics but has been well below it in science. In science it was in the lowest five per cent nationally against similar schools. The overall trend of improvement in the school's results has been in line with the national trend. There has been improvement in the number of pupils attaining the expected level in all core subjects since the last inspection. In the past three years boys' results have approximated to the national gender average in English and the attainment of girls has been above that for girls nationally. Results in mathematics have corresponded to the national average for both boys and girls. Weakness has remained in science in which results have been well below average for both boys and girls.

8. Key Stage 1 pupils have not been doing well in using and applying their mathematics and in knowledge of shape and measures but there are signs of improvement. Currently, most pupils are in line to attain the expected level in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. A significant number of pupils are expected to obtain the higher level.

9. In Key Stage 2, standards in mathematics have improved over the past three years. The improvement made by the 2000 cohort of Year 6 pupils from the results at the end of Year 2 was better than the national average improvement, despite the fact that in 2000 the Key Stage 2 results, as judged against similar schools, were well below the national average. Overall, results in mathematics tests at Key Stage 2 for both boys and girls have equated with the national averages for all schools and the percentage of pupils in Year 6 in 2000 who obtained the higher level was average. Currently most Year 6 pupils are expected to obtain the expected level and a significant percentage of pupils the higher level.

10. A little, but insufficient, use is made of mathematics across the curriculum, for example in science.

11. Teacher assessments in science in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils' attainment is in line with that expected of pupils aged seven. The proportion of pupils attaining standards above average was similar to the national average. Current attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with expectations but very few pupils are expected to attain the higher level.

12. Results in the 2000 national Key Stage 2 science tests were well below the national average and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was also well below the national average. The trend of results in the Key Stage 2 tests since the last inspection has been one of gradual improvement and this is

expected to continue with the current cohort of Year 6 pupils. Whilst progress is satisfactory overall throughout the key stage, it is nevertheless inconsistent and this is linked to variable standards of teaching. At both key stages, progress and attainment in scientific enquiry are weaker than in other attainment targets.

13. In design and technology, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with expectations but there was insufficient evidence to judge attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. In art and design, music, information and communication technology, geography and history, pupils' attainments are broadly in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. In physical education pupils attain well in swimming because of the good opportunities they have to develop their skills across the school. In other aspects of physical education, attainment is in line with expectations. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus.

14. Pupils who have special educational needs make sound progress overall. In lessons where work is well matched to their needs, often in literacy and numeracy, they make good gains in learning towards the targets set for them. For example, there is a high proportion of these pupils in Year 3, and they made good progress in their mathematics class. However, in a Year 5 lesson, the mathematics work was too hard, and not explained clearly enough, so pupils with special needs struggled to understand division calculations. Pupils who have special needs make good progress in lessons where teaching assistants work closely with individuals or groups, and when they are given plenty of praise. In a few lessons, the teachers' planning takes too little account of pupils' special needs and, particularly when whole-class teaching is the main method, these pupils do not make enough progress.

15. Standards have improved in information and communication technology in both key stages since the last inspection and in reading and writing at Key Stage 1. Gradual, but insufficient, progress has been made in improving standards in science in both key stages.

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

16. Pupils, including the children in the Foundation Stage, have positive attitudes to school and to their work. They generally behave well and by Year 6 are becoming mature and responsible young people. Pupils enjoy school. They value the friendships they have made and like the challenge of some of their lessons. Many take part in the extra-curricular activities offered. Pupils' attitudes, values and interest in school and in their learning are at the same good level reported previously.

17. When the pace of lessons is brisk and they are taught well, pupils, particularly the older ones, concentrate hard, are very attentive and complete a good quantity of work, as was seen in an upper set mathematics lesson. They are keen to answer questions and take pride in presenting their work neatly. When the pace of lessons is slow or the work is not well matched to their needs, they quickly lose interest and become restless and noisy. Many of the younger pupils in particular find it difficult to listen and to follow instructions, despite the best efforts of their teachers. Behaviour in lessons overall is sound. Around the school, in assemblies and at playtimes, pupils behave well. No evidence of bullying was observed during the inspection. Pupils and their parents express confidence that the few incidents that occur are dealt with effectively. There have been no exclusions for some time.

18. Pupils are given increasing responsibility as they move up through the school. Younger pupils take it in turns to be helpers of the day. Year 6 pupils have a wide range of responsibilities. They answer the 'phone in the office at lunchtimes and help to look after younger pupils during playtimes. They perform these tasks sensibly and with pride. However, there are generally too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

19. Relationships throughout the school are good. Adults provide good role models. Most are very positive in their dealings with the pupils, praising good behaviour and good effort and valuing pupils' contributions. Pupils get on well together socially, though overall, there are too few opportunities for them to work co-operatively but they work very well in pairs in the computer suite. They show respect

for each other most of the time, though this varies from class to class. For example, in one class they laughed when their peers made mistakes, while in others they made helpful constructive comments so that performance could be improved.

20. Levels of attendance are above those found nationally. Punctuality is also good. Lessons start and finish on time throughout the day. Registration is carried out calmly and efficiently and this contributes to the calm and orderly atmosphere in the school.

21. For most of the time, pupils who have special educational needs are just as keen to learn as the rest of the class, and they respond well when the teaching is lively and interesting. They listen carefully, offer their ideas and make good efforts when recording their work. In some lessons, however, where the teaching lacks pace, or the whole-class session lasts too long, they are the first to lose interest. Some of these pupils need support to concentrate on what the teacher is saying and to focus on recording their work. Pupils who have special educational needs behaved well in almost all the lessons seen.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, three per cent of lessons were very good, 43 per cent good, 42 per cent satisfactory and 11 per cent unsatisfactory. One lesson was poor. This is broadly in line with the quality of teaching reported at the previous inspection and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching remains the same. The year groups in which teaching is strongest are the Foundation Stage and Year 1. Teaching shows a wide range of quality and there is much inconsistency in teaching practice.

23. Generally, planning is satisfactory. Long- and medium-term planning is sound but lesson planning is of variable quality. During the inspection week, teachers used a special format, which contained suitable references to help the focus of the lesson. In the main, the learning objectives for lessons were clear. In a good Year 4 information and communication technology lesson, the planning was good with clear expectations and well thought through activities. Good support was made available as planned during the activities, which helped the pupils make good progress in understanding a new program. Nevertheless the lesson plans on the whole did not indicate a clear enough statement about how the pupils' progress would be assessed.

24. Teachers' planning files indicated much variety of practice in planning lessons at other times. In general, use of previous knowledge about pupils is not used sufficiently to plan future lessons. Nevertheless, some examples were seen where the teachers were going over work which had been taught previously because the pupils had not grasped the content well enough, as in a Year 5 mathematics lesson. Usually there is a good structure to a series of lessons and teachers refer well to previous lesson content when beginning lessons. Some teachers make good use of resources, as in a Year 6 English lesson with a lower ability set, when pupils were asked to write poems about an animal. Good use was made of coloured photographs of a chimpanzee, dog and rhinoceros to evoke ideas. By contrast, too much use is made of worksheets in all subjects in determining the tasks and these often restrict pupils' creativity, problem solving and independent thinking. In a lower Key Stage 2 English lesson, pupils were limited to a phrase suggested by the worksheet when writing sentences for persuasive writing.

25. Most teachers manage their classes well and have suitable behaviour management techniques. Routines are well established in most classes. The learning atmosphere is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have suitable subject knowledge for the content being taught and convey it in language which pupils can understand. In a Year 3 art lesson about North American Indian art, the teacher used correct technical vocabulary and offered the pupils a good structure in which to carry out their work with well planned resources. She gave pupils the opportunity to experiment in making patterns for their designs. The pupils were successful in what they did because of the good planning. They concentrated well throughout, persevered to find a satisfactory method to create the shapes they needed, worked with interest, celebrated each other's successes and were proud of their achievements. However, subject knowledge is less good in religious education and in music, although one temporary teacher has very good musical skills. In religious education, teachers often do not address the ideas, which underlie the content itself, and do not teach the content to sufficient depth.

26. The pace of lessons is mainly satisfactory but in a significant number of lessons the pace is not sufficiently brisk and pupils become restless as a result and lose their concentration and interest. Some lessons were dull and lacked pace and structure and sufficient teacher involvement. An unsatisfactory Year 2 history lesson was conducted at a very slow pace and the resources were poor. As a result, the pupils became silly and restless. Time was not used well and too long was taken giving out paper, folding it in half and pupils waited overly long for further instructions. Pupils spent much of this lesson off task. The teacher spent much time telling pupils off, sometimes with a hint of sarcasm. There was no sense of urgency to complete the task. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher did not have a guided group and offered general support with no clearly defined role. As a result the pupils did not make enough progress and some of the pupils stalled on their draft writing and many pupils did not complete their written draft in the time.

27. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented satisfactorily, but there is considerable variety in practice. Some teachers engage the pupils in a brisk, opening session, which stimulates them to learn and which sets the tone for the lesson. They bring the lesson to a close with a brief revision brief session, which further extends what they have been doing. In other lessons the structure is too loose and time is not managed well and the pupils do not make enough progress as a result.
28. Marking of pupils' work is usually up to date and some teachers write comments which help pupils to make improvements in their work but this practice is not consistent across the school. There is not a teaching and learning policy to guide overall teaching and learning practice.
29. There is often a lack of investigation in pupils' learning and teaching is often too directed by the class teacher. As a result, pupils are not given enough opportunities to solve problems both in practical lessons and in other lessons. Expectations are sometimes not high enough and not enough demands are made of the pupils.
30. Pupils of the same year group are affected by the inconsistency in quality of provision and the range of content. There is no assurance that pupils of similar ages in different classes receive the same entitlement and quality of experiences.
31. The setting arrangements work satisfactorily but there is an assumption in some sets that all the pupils have similar capabilities and they are given the same work to do. Similar expectations are often made of the middle and higher groups within ability class sets in both English and mathematics. In science, little account is taken of the wide range of ability within classes when teachers set work.
32. The quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory overall but varies considerably, matching the variations seen across classes. Teachers' planning for these pupils is generally good, because it identifies specific learning objectives for lower attainers. However, in some classes, these objectives are not always realised because the methods used and the pace of the teaching are weak. Teachers are involved in devising individual education plans for pupils in their classes, but the targets set are not always precise enough to guide their planning. The individual education plans are more useful when pupils are withdrawn from lessons because learning is carefully planned to address the targets. Setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy in Years 3 to 6 enable teachers to match work more closely to the special needs of pupils, and smaller group sizes increase adult support. The special needs co-ordinator provides a good model for teaching in her work with classes, groups and individuals. Teaching assistants are well briefed and well used to ensure that pupils who have special needs get the most from lessons.



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

33. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum overall. At the last inspection, a significant weakness was the quality of teachers' planning, which did not cover the requirements of the National Curriculum adequately. The school has addressed this issue by devising a two-year programme, which caters for the mixed-age classes in both key stages, and adopting nationally recommended schemes of work for most subjects. Whilst this is a marked improvement, the use of these schemes of work is still weak in a significant number of lessons. At the last inspection, the amount of teaching time in Key Stage 2 was below that recommended nationally. Since then, the school has added ten minutes to the school day for the older pupils and reduced the amount of time spent on swimming lessons, so that teaching time is now similar to that provided by most schools.

34. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is planned around the recommended areas of learning and provides a good range and quality of experiences. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum, and religious education is taught in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Provision for some aspects of music is a strength. There is, however, a significant weakness in provision for science, where pupils make reasonable progress in the factual aspects of the subject, but have too little experience of experiment and investigation. As a result, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory across both key stages. In English, whilst pupils learn the sound of letters during Key Stage 1, the approach is not systematic enough to ensure consistent progress. In religious education, the curriculum focuses heavily on factual work, with fewer opportunities for pupils to reflect on religious belief and values, and to relate them to their own lives. In history, pupils learn about times past, but they do not make sufficient use of sources of evidence to investigate historical topics. Most of these weaknesses were identified in the last inspection report and the school has not done enough to tackle them.

35. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of educational visits. For example, Year 2 pupils have visited a Tudor house as part of their history work, and Year 5 and 6 pupils visited Leigh-on-Sea as part of their work in geography. The school offers the opportunity for a residential visit for the older pupils, to enhance their social development. There are some regular visitors to school, such as local clergy who take assemblies and may work with groups of pupils, and occasional visitors such as musical and theatre groups. All these events play a valuable role in enriching the pupils' education.

36. A number of the parents who returned questionnaires and those who attended the pre-inspection meeting felt that the provision of extra-curricular activities was weak. During the inspection, about 40 pupils attended the choir rehearsal and will be taking part in a local festival. A similar number attended the athletics' club, and smaller groups took part in the computer club and hobbies club. At various times of the year, there are extra-curricular activities, such as football, netball, country dancing, and homework. Overall, these provide good opportunities for the older pupils to take part in activities outside lessons, and the inspection team does not agree that the school's provision is weak.

37. The National Literacy Strategy is well established through the school and the teaching of basic literacy skills is satisfactory. Additional literacy support and booster classes are provided for some pupils. Literacy skills are developed across a number of subjects, for example in religious education. The school has also introduced the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily, though the format of some lessons seen did not strike the best balance between developing mental calculation skills and written recording. Whilst pupils' numeracy skills are used and developed through work in some other subjects, such as information and communication technology, planned links with numeracy are an area for further development.

38. The school recognises that pupils need careful support for their personal and social development through a planned programme of personal, social and health education. There are set times when classes gather in a circle to discuss personal and social issues, and these give pupils opportunities to express their thoughts and opinions. The headteacher leads a 'circle of friends' for pupils who have particular needs. Measures such as the 'friendship stop' in playgrounds encourage pupils to value social skills. The school has recently introduced a new programme, throughout the school, for teaching about health, sex and drugs education issues. Parents have attended an evening at which the new programme was explained and the books and videos viewed. As yet, however, personal, social and health education is not fully integrated into the curriculum, nor provided regularly in all classes to support personal development actively. The school aims to achieve this in the near future and training is planned for teachers.

39. The school makes good provision for the intellectual, social and emotional development of pupils with special educational needs. They are fully included in the life of the school and have equal access to the curriculum. Around the school and in lessons, there is no feeling that pupils with special needs are treated any differently to others, even though their educational needs are met in particular ways. As well as their usual lessons, many of these pupils benefit considerably from individual or small-group sessions to strengthen particular skills. Since the last inspection, the school is much more aware of ensuring that the need to improve these pupils' basic skills does not deny them important experiences in their normal lessons. The setting arrangements in Key Stage 2, and initiatives such as additional literacy support and 'booster groups', have improved the provision for these pupils since the last inspection. The pupil with a statement of special educational need receives good provision, including a designated support assistant.

40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound. There are opportunities during assemblies for pupils to reflect on the theme and they are encouraged to pray. Links with local churches support the school in this. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Religious education lessons are mostly factual and do not consider the effect different faiths have on believers' attitudes to life. Pupils rarely have the opportunity to reflect on how well they have done in their work.

41. Assembly themes and circle time make a valuable contribution to the good provision made for pupils' moral and social development. Teachers generally explain why certain behaviour is unacceptable. This ensures that pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong and what behaviour is expected. Older pupils discuss moral issues such as corporal punishment. The school supports a number of charities and entertains local senior citizens. Pupils are encouraged to take good care of the school and wider environment, and to conserve precious resources such as water. Socially, pupils are helped to make and maintain friendships and problems are discussed in circle time. The school sensibly has plans in hand to develop further this aspect of its work and to improve the quality of circle time so that it is consistent between classes. A good range of co-operative games, such as chess, snakes and ladders and skipping, is available for use at lunchtimes. Older pupils go on a residential visit and the responsibilities they are given in school make a good contribution to their social development.

42. The school makes sound provision for pupils' cultural development. They listen to music in assembly and are involved in local music festivals. Parents and visitors enjoy Christmas performances. Visits to art galleries, museums and historic houses support work in art and history. Pupils learn about other cultures through studying other faiths in religious education, Ancient Greece in history and by looking at life in an Indian village in geography. They are currently working on designs for some wall hangings for the hall, which will have a multi-cultural theme.

43. The school continues to make similar provision for pupils' personal development to that found by the last inspection.

44. The school promotes equality of opportunity through the provision it makes for boys and girls, for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and for pupils with special educational needs. It has looked carefully at the results achieved by pupils in national tests, identified discrepancies between the performance of boys and girls, and is taking action. There is, however, variation in the quality of teaching in classes that contain pupils of the same age group, giving some pupils a richer, more stimulating curriculum than others. The school has good relationships with partner institutions and particularly within the local group of 18 schools that provides initial teacher training. This extends to training opportunities for staff. Other community links include local clergy and the local health services. Business links with an international motor company have supported an information and communication technology project that has enhanced provision in school.

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

45. As at the time of the last inspection, the school makes good provision for the welfare of its pupils. Child protection procedures are in place. Those who have hurt themselves or are feeling unwell are kindly looked after. Good records are kept of such incidents and parents properly informed. Fire drills are carried out efficiently and health and safety and security are regularly assessed and concerns attended to promptly. The school is kept very clean. Pupils are well supervised at all times.

46. There is a good behaviour policy, which includes anti-bullying strategies. It emphasises a positive approach to managing pupils. They are rewarded with stickers, certificates and golden time as well as words of praise and encouragement. Most teachers use the policy well, even when dealing with pupils with testing behaviour, and rarely need to apply sanctions. However, this is not always the case and some teachers do not apply the policy consistently. Pupils have usefully discussed and agreed class rules, which are displayed in several classes.

47. Parents must phone the school before 10.30a.m. if their child is ill. The school has a policy of 'phoning home if no explanation for absence has been received by this time. This supports the good levels of attendance found at the school and the very low levels of unauthorised absence. The school has good systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance and works closely with the education welfare service when necessary.

48. Circle time is used to discuss any problems and to support pupils' personal development. The quality of this time is variable between classes. The school has plans for further training shortly and is also in the process of developing its personal, social and health education policy. Currently this provision is sound. All monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal but teachers know the children well and are able to write perceptive comments about them at the end of the year.

49. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their academic progress have now improved and a satisfactory range of assessment information is recorded for individual pupils. Procedures are best in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 where assessment in English, mathematics and science is useful, detailed and is used to plan work for different groups of pupils. Some teachers are also measuring progression over the year by marking specific pieces of work to National Curriculum expectations each term. At Key Stage 2 all teachers use the same assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science. However, not enough structured assessment takes place in mathematics and science. There is no record of shorter steps that build up to broad statements of the programme of study. For example, recording the list of multiplication tables known rather than 'knows all tables to 10x10'. Individual teachers are responsible for deciding what to assess and how to record pupils' performance in the foundation subjects.

50. Procedures for supporting pupils' academic progress have also improved since the last inspection. The results of the most recent national tests for pupils at age eleven have been analysed to identify the adjustments necessary in programmes of study and teaching to raise standards. Results of national tests in English for seven-year-olds, and reviews of optional official tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, are used to place pupils in groups of similar attainment for more precisely targeted teaching in English and mathematics. Teachers agree targets for improvement in the core subjects every term with each pupil. Teachers know their pupils very well. In examples of the best practice, they keep thorough and regular records of pupils' achievements, including samples of work, and make use of their marking to set work in the following lessons to correct weaknesses they have identified. In other lessons though, teachers do not consistently set appropriate work for different groups, and all pupils often do the same task. Such tasks are often most appropriate for pupils with average attainment, and those with lower attainment are often

given additional adult help, so they make sound progress. However, the same tasks do not always challenge pupils with potentially higher attainment. There are considerable differences in what is assessed and the methods of recording results through the school because the approach has not been standardised. As a result, there is a lack of consistency in the way in which assessment is used to support pupils' academic progress.

51. The special needs of pupils are monitored carefully. Initial concerns are usually identified whilst children are in the Reception classes, and may be raised by parents or teachers. Once a pupil is placed on the register of special needs, termly assessment and review ensure that needs continue to be met. The documentation for these reviews is of good quality, particularly that relating to the pupil who has a statement of special need. The individual education plans generated by these reviews are detailed, but targets can be too numerous, and not specific enough, to facilitate review at the end of the following term.

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

52. Parents express positive views about the school. The school keeps parents well informed about what is going on through frequent letters and a newsletter. The prospectus and governors' annual report are both very readable and useful documents and contain all the required information. Parents are invited into school each term to meet their child's teacher to discuss progress. Reports at the end of the year are good. They give very detailed information about the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and include targets so parents can help their child improve. Foundation subjects are less detailed as they outline the course covered and do not include information on how well the child is doing, unless they are particularly good or bad at the subject. Parents are invited in to watch a literacy and a numeracy lesson each year and many take advantage of this. The reception class teacher sends home a detailed outline of the work covered each week so that parents can reinforce at home what has been learned in school. There is no curriculum information for other year groups. Overall, parents are well informed about the work of the school and the progress their children are making.

53. Parents can communicate easily with the school, through home/school contact books and reading records or personally with office staff, individual teachers and the head teacher. The school is a welcoming place to visitors. While almost all parents confirmed that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with a concern, a significant minority of parents felt that the school does not work closely with them but the inspectors could find no evidence of this. There are good opportunities to visit the school for social events at harvest, Easter and Christmas and these events are always well attended. The Parent Teacher Association is very active and raises considerable sums of money to provide extra facilities for the school. For example, it has recently funded the projector so that a computer screen can be displayed for all pupils to learn how to perform a task. Many parents hear their children read regularly but a significant minority do not. A few mothers are available to help in the classroom and the school values this help. The school is working hard to involve parents, who make a sound contribution to their children's learning.

54. The school has a good partnership with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. Parents are consulted and informed appropriately, and all reviews have a parent present. Their involvement is encouraged and welcomed.

55. The school has maintained its good relationship with parents since the previous inspection.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher provides sound leadership. Together with the deputy headteacher and the governing body, she has provided a clear direction for the school's recent development, combining a caring ethos with a determination to raise standards. However, while there have been improvements in attainment since the last inspection, there remain significant weaknesses in teaching that have not been fully addressed and which prevent pupils achieving all they are capable of. The school is well managed on a day-to-day basis. There have been some improvements in management since the last inspection. For example, the roles of deputy headteacher and governors have developed, but the general picture remains satisfactory.

57. The school's aims are broadly appropriate but insufficiently focused on raising standards for all, similar to the situation noted in the last inspection. There is a strong emphasis on promoting positive relationships and inclusion, which permeates the work of the school. The school aims to create a safe, secure, well behaved and positive environment. During the inspection it was evident that it succeeds in doing so. The school is a bright, secure and happy place where pupils behave well in and out of the classroom.

58. The school development plan is a comprehensive document that clearly identifies the school's priorities and is carefully costed. Staff and governing body have been involved in setting the priorities for improvement in the plan. The targets are often challenging and the underpinning ethos is one of raising attainment. There has been an improvement in strategic planning since the last inspection.

59. Teaching is monitored by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and mathematics co-ordinator. There have also been reviews of planning, and sampling of children's work in English and mathematics. However, there is no monitoring policy and no teaching and learning policy that might provide an agreed framework when evaluating teachers' work. Records of monitoring show that targets for improvement have been identified and set. Training is then identified and used to improve staff skills and directly benefit the school. This has not been effective in some cases. The procedures remain insufficiently rigorous to raise standards of teaching and attainment. There has recently been some analysis of test results, but it is too soon to say if this will have a positive effect on results. The school is on its way to becoming self-evaluative but has to establish this approach firmly. A good performance management policy is in place and staff have had targets set and are observed at least termly.

60. The governing body aims to act as a critical friend to the school. It fulfils its statutory requirements and is developing an accurate sense of the school's strengths and weaknesses. An appropriate committee structure and regular full governing body meetings, to which senior staff report, help to ensure involvement. Members of the governing body are linked to subject co-ordinators in order that the governing body can develop an independent view of standards, but this system is still in its infancy.

61. The school's budget is managed effectively. Expenditure is linked to school priorities for development. For instance, additional funding has been allocated to setting to enable extra teaching time for these groups. Co-ordinators' budgets are allocated in line with the agreed priorities in the school improvement plan. The school has moved to running its own cheque book account which enables the headteacher and governors to keep a closer check on expenditure. Opportunities are sought to maximise income, for example through lettings and by bidding for grants. For instance a bid to Essex County Council has resulted in greatly improved security procedures, including CCTV provision. The office staff manage the day-to-day administration of the school efficiently and the caretaker looks after the building conscientiously, ensuring it is clean and safe at all times. He also undertakes minor repairs and decoration, thus providing good value for money. The monies intended for special educational needs work are spent appropriately and effectively.

62. Delegation of responsibility is satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators have budgets, but in many cases do not monitor their subjects. In some cases, for example in art, recent changes of responsibility mean that co-ordinators have had little opportunity to develop their subjects. In general, staff work well as a team. However, the organisation of year groups does not promote the sharing of planning, which in turn does not promote consistency of provision.

63. There is an adequate number of teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum, although recruiting good quality staff has recently been a problem for the school. Support staffing levels are adequate. Members of the support staff are a valuable asset and support pupils' learning effectively on many occasions. The school's site manager is a highly valued member of staff and carries out his work thoroughly.

64. The school's accommodation is bright, spacious, clean and well maintained. Teaching space has been maximised by the conversion of open areas into teaching rooms. There is a specialist area for information and communication technology which has had a great impact on improving standards in the subject since the last inspection. Classrooms for the younger children are large and well equipped. Outdoor play is well catered for and particularly enhances the provision for the youngest children. Flexible use is made of spare rooms to enable setting and work with pupils with special educational needs to take place. The open plan arrangement of some classrooms was noted as having a negative, noisy effect on pupils' concentration in some classes during the inspection. There is adequate storage. The grounds are also a useful asset for science work. In particular the wild area has been designed well and provides a very good natural area attracting various species of wild life. It recently won an award.

65. Learning resources are satisfactory or better in most subjects. The induction of new staff is very supportive and has enabled a newly qualified teacher to make a sound start to her career. The school is also involved in providing initial teacher training and is able to provide good support for students.

66. Best value principles are applied: challenging targets are set for staff and pupils; expenditure is generally subject to competitive evaluation; staff and governors are all consulted at different times. The budget is managed carefully to ensure that best value is obtained and expenditure can be focused on the school's development priorities.

67. The unit cost of the school is average. The standards on entry to the school are low. The broadly satisfactory provision and sound standards at the end of Key Stage 2 mean that the school gives satisfactory value for money overall. This is a similar situation to that at the last inspection.

68. The leadership and management of the special educational needs aspect of the school's work are good. The special needs' co-ordinator organises the provision effectively and provides valuable support for colleagues. The policy statement is clear and informative, though teachers would benefit from more guidance on implementing individual education plans. Currently, future development focuses mainly on improving provision for gifted and talented pupils, but the lack of specific success criteria for this initiative is a weakness. There is also little in strategic planning about strengthening the already good provision for those pupils on the special needs' register, such as ensuring that the requirements of individual education plans are fulfilled consistently in lessons. Nonetheless, provision for pupils' special needs is an important priority for the school and is central to plans for improvement.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. Since the last inspection, the school has made sound progress in addressing some of the weaknesses that were evident in its work. There are, however, still significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, which prevent many pupils from making consistent progress. Results of national tests for pupils in their final year have improved, but are still below those achieved by similar schools. Within this context, and to continue the improvement already achieved in standards of work and pupils' achievements, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- raise standards in science, as planned, by:
  - improving evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, so that weaknesses are identified and addressed;
  - ensuring that, in all lessons, the work set advances pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and provides appropriate challenge, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils;
  - placing greater emphasis on developing pupils' skills in the experimental and investigative aspects of the subject;
  - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and making full use of improving expertise. (Paras 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 31, 34, 91, 95, 99)
- raise the standard of teaching in the classes where there are weaknesses, by:
  - having high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and ensuring that the tasks set are appropriately challenging, particularly for higher attainers;
  - injecting more pace in teaching, and encouraging pupils to make the best use of time;
  - enabling older pupils, in particular, to take more responsibility for their own learning by ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between whole-class teaching and pupils working independently;
  - ensuring that, where pupils of the same age group are in different classes they receive the same good standard of teaching and learning;
  - improving teachers' knowledge in the subjects where they are least confident;
  - enabling all teachers to observe and learn from existing good practice. (Paras 22, 24, 26, 29)
- make better use of the information gathered about pupils' achievements and attainment to ensure that the work they are given is neither too hard nor too easy. (Paras 50, 52, 93, 97 )
- improve evaluation by senior staff of the quality of teaching and learning so that strengths and weaknesses are identified, and action taken to improve standards. (Paras 124, 139 )
- improve the implementation of plans for raising standards, by:
  - focusing more clearly on the most important priorities for improvement;
  - evaluating more rigorously the progress made towards achieving those improvements;
  - ensuring that all staff are clear about the part they must play in raising standards, so that improvements are reflected consistently in all classes. (Paras 78, 95, 101, 107, 114, 124, 135)

### Other issues

- Ensure the quality of marking is consistent across the school; (Paras 28, 92, 98 )
- Develop a teaching and learning policy to guide those teachers whose practice is not as good as others. (Paras 28, 59, 69 )
- Ensure consistency in the provision of personal, social and health education. (Para 38)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

73
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

29
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### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	43	42	11	1	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		247
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		39

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	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	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	00	20	19	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	17	18
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	34	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (79)	87 (83)	90 (91)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	18
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	32	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (74)	87 (74)	90 (60)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
	00	19	29	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	15
	Girls	22	18	19
	Total	36	32	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (73)	68 (76)	71 (70)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	15	13
	Girls	15	18	17
	Total	23	33	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (76)	69 (67)	63 (70)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

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

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

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

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

***Teachers and classes***

**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Year 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	28.7

**Education support staff: YR – Y6]**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Financial information***

Financial year	00/01
	£
Total income	555,219
Total expenditure	558,276
Expenditure per pupil	1,946
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,100
Balance carried forward to next year	25,052

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	287
Number of questionnaires returned	82

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	45	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	60	1	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	49	13	5	4
The teaching is good.	45	48	4	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	56	12	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	50	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	41	4	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	43	20	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	51	4	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	57	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	46	26	0	9

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

70. Attainment on entry to the Reception classes is below national expectations. Tests shortly after the children enter show a consistent picture of weaker early language and mathematics development, although their social skills are stronger. Children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning in the Reception classes, due to effective, well-planned teaching. However, several children are unlikely to achieve the national expectations, called Early Learning Goals, by the end of the Foundation Stage particularly in aspects of numeracy and language and literacy. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been fully implemented for Reception aged children and children are given a suitable range of experiences. Aspects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented appropriately. There are good relationships with parents, including open mornings, and regular formal and informal consultations. Teamwork between staff is a positive feature of both classes, and helps to ensure that children enjoy activities, which are well matched to their needs. Relationships are good. Assessment is satisfactory: thorough procedures underpin testing shortly after entry and reading, writing and mathematical development is tracked conscientiously. The teacher with responsibility for the Foundation Stage has a sound grasp of the strengths, weaknesses and priorities for the development of the provision. Provision for the youngest children was good at the time of the previous inspection and remains so.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

71. Most children are on target to reach the expected standard in their personal and social development and make sound progress. Many children are able to work and play independently as well as co-operatively. All children appear confident and enjoy school. They generally respond well to adult-directed tasks. However, a significant number find it hard to maintain concentration and will find it difficult to reach the expected target for maintaining attention, concentrating and sitting quietly when appropriate by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are always interested in practical activities, but also become easily excited in lessons, such as music and physical education, and then do not respond promptly to instruction. Nevertheless teachers remain calm and positive and the teaching of this aspect is good. They persevere in encouraging good listening and turn-taking, and still manage to maintain a good pace in whole-class teaching. Teachers also plan carefully to provide a varied and stimulating learning environment. Children in both classes are given good opportunities to take responsibility. For instance, helpers are designated to set out the tables for snack time. Children are given opportunities to consider their own and others' feelings, such as the nature of friendship and the emotional significance of body language. Nearly all children in Reception can undress independently for physical education, although some find it harder to dress afterwards without adult support. Children are offered choices in some activities, fostering sensible decision making. They are all able to express preferences. Teachers encourage children, on occasion, to review their own learning and to persevere with demanding tasks.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

72. The quality of teaching in this aspect of the children's development is good and pupils make good progress in this aspect of their work, although standards are still below expectations by the end of the Reception year because of the below average attainment on entry. Just over one half of the children are in line to attain the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Many opportunities are offered to help children develop oral language skills. Teachers encourage discussion through questioning and seek to develop vocabulary, using subject specific terms such as 'doubling' in mathematics or 'vibrating' in science. Children listen with enjoyment to stories and teachers work hard to encourage

good listening skills. However, a significant number find it hard to maintain attention or follow instruction. Informally, children are given the opportunity to use language to act out adult roles and express ideas and feelings in role-play contexts, such as the shop. Children also have many opportunities to communicate with adults in small group contexts. The majority are confident to ask questions, express preferences and explain a simple sequence of events. Most children are developing a useful sight vocabulary which enables them to identify words in reading books. This is fostered at home as teachers send home words to be learned by sight. There is an effective partnership with parents in reading with their children at home. Teachers also ensure that classrooms are language rich environments. All children can turn pages correctly, identify the title of a book and follow text appropriately. They can also talk about the story line of a simple reading book. Higher attaining children show good word recognition, self-correct and can work out regular single syllable words using their knowledge of letter sound relationships. All children have some knowledge of letter sound relationships, but for some it is not yet sufficiently well developed to enable them to attain the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. Lower attaining children are at a very early stage of relating sounds to letters. All children are starting to write in a cursive style. They write in different contexts, such as names, labels, menus, and sentences reflecting work in different subjects. They can also write in independent play. They are starting to become aware of conventions regarding sentence structure. A few children can spell regular single syllable words independently. Overall, good teaching is promoting good learning in language and literacy activities, but children's attainment shows some weaknesses, notably in listening skills and knowledge of letter sound relationships.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

73. The children's progress in their mathematical development is satisfactory and the quality of teaching is sound. Children are learning to count forwards and back from zero to twenty. They make satisfactory progress in ordering numbers to ten independently, but at least a quarter cannot count reliably or recognise some numerals consistently and will not reach expectations by the end of the Reception year. Children are learning to identify simple two-dimensional shapes, but some find this difficult. Children are learning to sort low value coins, measure in non-statutory units, add one more and continue a simple pattern. Teachers plan carefully in line with the National Numeracy Strategy, ensuring that children practise mental skills and enjoy a good range of activities that consolidate counting and one to one correspondence. Teachers use rhymes, games and a good range of apparatus to demonstrate basic number concepts. Lower attaining children make good progress in activities that are well managed by support assistants. Members of staff constantly interact with children supporting, challenging and questioning. They encourage children to predict and explore number relationships. Teachers assess carefully in mathematics and set individual targets for children, which promotes progress and ensures lesson objectives and activities are appropriate to individual needs.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

74. The teaching of this aspect is good because of the good range of stimulating activities, which promotes the children's learning, and as a result the children make good progress. Children are encouraged to investigate the natural and physical world. They have, for example, planted seeds and grown beans. They can name the principal parts of a plant, report on weather in a chart and experiment with different materials to find which is waterproof. They show good understanding of forces, such as pushes and pulls and enjoy practical lessons where the teacher encourages first-hand scientific investigation. They are learning to observe using all their senses. Teaching encourages children to ask questions and to find out for themselves. They are learning about food and the importance of some foods for a balanced, healthy diet. They also have opportunities for play with sand and water, which provide experience of materials. Children also make objects such as puppets or models, having thought about a design first. They have many opportunities for construction play. Pupils show they have a developing sense of the past and of time passing, considering how they have changed since they were babies and

what their futures might be. They are finding out about other places and cultures, having the opportunity to discuss African artefacts and hearing stories from other countries. Children enjoy using the information and communication technology area and also use the computer in the classroom to draw simple pictures and improve their mouse control, for example. Children are able to use a tape recorder to listen to stories. Overall, all pupils make good progress and evidence from the inspection indicates that they will attain all the expectations in this area of their learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

75. The provision for the children's physical development is satisfactory and the quality of teaching sound overall, enabling the children to make satisfactory progress and attain national expectations by the end of the Reception year. The children have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills. Children use a range of tools, such as scissors, pencils, pens, paintbrushes and rollers, with increasing skill. The use of malleable materials, such as plasticine, develops skills such as rolling, squeezing and joining. Construction toys help children fix components together purposefully. Children are learning to play simple musical instruments with control. Careful assessment of skills on an ongoing basis is a positive feature of teaching, as is the good adult support. Children enjoy regular physical education sessions, including dance in which the teaching is sometimes good because of the teacher's enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. Teachers ensure that children warm up and cool down, learn to use space and can, for example, balance in a variety of ways. They give clear instruction and use children to demonstrate activities effectively. Children also go outside to run, jump and climb. Their co-ordination is good. Lessons provide good exercise and children are beginning to become aware of the effect of this on their bodies. Their attainment is satisfactory.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

76. The overall quality of teaching in this aspect is satisfactory and the children make sound progress overall, most attaining national expectations by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is better in art and design than in music. Children are given many opportunities for artwork in both two and three dimensions. They can paint, draw from observation, print and make patterns, and learn skills, such as painting with a simple wax resist technique and colour-mixing. They make simple models and weave with both paper and wool. They make collage pictures using various materials, such as pasta and paper. Teaching is characterised by a high level of adult support, a good practical approach and useful demonstrations. This leads to some examples of good work. Children make satisfactory progress in developing musical skills. The teaching often features singing, so that children are learning to sing a number of simple songs from memory. Children are learning to control different instruments to accompany songs, changing the volume and playing at given times. Teaching effectively involves all children in the activity and focuses on using the correct terms for instruments. However, insufficient emphasis is given to rhythmic patterns. Children enjoy musical activity but many find it hard to listen and discuss what they hear.

## **ENGLISH**

77. Standards of reading and writing in Key Stage 1 have risen since the last inspection, but not at a faster rate than generally found. Test results in 2000 were close to the national average in reading, and in line with national expectations for writing. However, standards in reading were well below average, and standards in writing below average, when compared with similar schools because the number of pupils attaining the higher level was well below average. Results in the national assessments for Key Stage 2 were average compared with all schools, but below average when compared with similar schools because only a small number of pupils reach the standard required for the higher level. Results for pupils at age eleven have not changed significantly since the last inspection. Compared with their age-groups nationally, the performance of girls has been slightly better than boys, but there is not a significant difference.



78. Trends over time have been variable in both key stages. Between 1996 and 1998, standards rose and were at least the same as the national average, but they have not risen at the same rate as schools nationally. Taking into account their attainment on entry, inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is satisfactory overall. Satisfactory progress has been made in raising standards since the last inspection, although aspects of the subject still require further improvement.

79. Pupils in both key stages generally pay attention to instructions in literacy hour, and are keen to speak in class discussions. Their achievements in speaking and listening are average overall but there is a wide variation in pupils' ability to express their ideas and feelings fluently and audibly. When teachers use good questioning techniques, pupils explain their ideas in full to the class. However, when questioning does not involve pupils actively, both boys and girls become restless and their progress is restricted. Good teaching leads to significant progress for some pupils. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, high teacher expectation and good demonstration transformed stilted poetry readings into animated performances. Most pupils speak correctly in standard English, but they do not project well and opportunities are lost in some lessons, circle time and assemblies to develop confidence in speaking clearly to a larger audience.

80. Pupils in both key stages enjoy reading and their attainment is close to national averages. Reading materials are well chosen for their high interest, clearly graded for difficulty and attractively displayed in classrooms. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read fluently and with expression. They recognise a good range of vocabulary by sight and use clues, such as the text surrounding a word to help them understand its meaning. However, the teaching of phonic skills is not organised consistently within the literacy hour and younger and less able older readers find it difficult to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils make satisfactory progress, and by eleven years of age can read confidently, pay good attention to punctuation for expressing the meaning of texts and talk about characters and plot. More able readers predict what might happen next and can speculate what they might do if they were a character in the story.

81. Enthusiasm for reading is evident in all years, particularly for fiction, which is promoted well in silent reading sessions each day. Most parents and carers enjoy sharing books with their children at home, although the school has a very ordinary system for sharing information with the class teacher. The reading record books are flimsy and are easily damaged; replacement exercise books do not contain the list of helpful comments to guide parents in supporting their children, and most entries only record books read. The reading choices of keen older readers are not monitored enough and they tend to choose modern fiction that does not challenge them. Older pupils are confident in finding books in a library and in using non-fiction books and CD-ROMS to find factual information, which helps them to learn in all subjects.

82. Pupils' attainment in writing in both key stages is in line with national averages. Overall, progress in writing across the school is satisfactory, although it masks inconsistencies in the quality and quantity of written work between classes and different groups of pupils. Work is planned so that pupils learn to write for a widening range of purposes and audiences. By Year 2 pupils are writing simple letters, science reports and poetry. Good standards are reached in story writing when there is a clear link between the use of planning frames and work sheets. This technique supports pupils' independent work. Pupils of average attainment are writing at length with words chosen to catch the interest of the reader. In classes where pupils have not been given this structured support, the unaided writing of higher attainers lacks confidence and their sentences describe simple sequences of events, while lower attaining pupils leave most pieces of work unfinished.

83. By the end of Year 6, pupils enjoy a wide range of writing, including stories, poems, playscripts, instructions and biographies. Pupils are successfully using the characteristics of various kinds of writing. For example, Year 3 pupils write fables which have a clear moral. Year 4 combine appropriate features of information text as well as narrative skills in their project on 'Science: Fact or Fiction'. Year 5 have used information and communication technology skills to print and design covers for their own stories, whilst Year 6 explore language in their poems. Information is clearly expressed in factual accounts, but few pupils use the formal language, complex sentence patterns and paragraph structures expected at the higher level.

84. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were seen. One lesson was very good and other lessons were good or satisfactory. In the good and very good lessons, teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work. In general, teaching is guided by the National Literacy Strategy, but there are wide variations in practice which affect pupils' progress. For example in a Key Stage 1 lesson, all pupils made good learning gains because they were set very clear, but realistic, expectations by the teacher. Planning was based on the targets of the literacy framework and both parts of the lesson had a clear focus that reinforced what pupils needed to do to improve their story writing. However, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work over time indicate that teachers in the same year group do not plan together closely enough and there are inconsistencies in the activities set during group-work in lessons. For example, while worksheets can be used to support pupils with lower levels of attainment, or to reinforce learning of grammar, no work is set after to assess how well skills have been understood or applied. In some classes their overuse limits opportunities for other pupils, especially the most able, to write freely or in more depth. Teachers' marking is helpful and often gives pupils a clear indication of where they have been successful and what they need to do to improve. Target sheets in books involve pupils in their own learning. These are based on individual's needs, are attainable and reviewed every term.

85. The results of recent initiatives to look at ways of co-ordinating literacy opportunities with work in other subjects are shown in very attractive displays in main areas of the school. Some teachers plan good opportunities in religious education for extended writing and these are particularly effective. However, literacy skills are less developed in other lessons, such as history, where pupils copy factual information from books or fill in worksheets. Pupils develop good handwriting skills and by seven years of age most are using joined handwriting and, by Year 6, many have developed a fluent style and present their work well. The accuracy of spelling many common polysyllabic words is affected by many pupils' lack of phonic knowledge. Appropriate resources support the guided reading element of the literacy hour, in both key stages, and they have been chosen to appeal to both boys and girls. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but more use could be made of assessment information in designing tasks suitable for pupils at different levels of attainment, particularly those with the potential to reach the higher level. Pupils from Year 3 on are placed in two ability groups within their own age group, rather than in mixed-age classes, but more monitoring needs to be done to eliminate differences in the quality and quantity of work done between sets. Resource provision is satisfactory. The co-ordinator manages the subject soundly. Good features of the subject's management have been the focus on improving the use of English skills through other subjects and the recent analysis of national test results to identify learning areas for further improvement.

## MATHEMATICS

86. Key Stage 1 boys have been doing better than the girls in mathematics over the past three years but overall, Key Stage 1 results have been well below the national average. Few pupils have been obtaining the higher level at age seven in national tests. In 2000, the results compared with similar schools were in the lowest five per cent of all schools and well below average against all schools. Key Stage 1 pupils have not been doing well enough in using and applying their mathematics and in their knowledge of shape and measures. There are signs of improvement. Currently, whilst most pupils are in line to attain the expected level in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1, a significant number of pupils are attaining more highly.

87. Progress has been better in Key Stage 2 and standards have shown some improvement over the past three years. The improvement made by the cohort of Year 6 pupils from the results at the end of Year 2 was better than the national average improvement, despite the fact that in 2000 the Key Stage 2 results, as judged by free school meals, were well below the national average. Overall, results in mathematics tests at Key Stage 2 for both boys and girls have equated with the national averages for all schools and the percentage of pupils in Year 6 who obtained the higher level was average. Currently most Year 6 pupils are expected to obtain the expected level and a significant percentage of pupils the higher level. In both key stages pupils' attainment is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.

88. National Curriculum Programmes of Study are fulfilled, although a greater emphasis could be given to application of mathematics and to a greater range of ways in representing data in both key stages.

89. Key Stage 1 pupils understand the concept of odd and even numbers and doubling and halving. They appreciate number pattern when adding 9 or 10 to a series of consecutive single digit numbers. They can add three single digit numbers together. They can identify right angles and understand mathematical symbols for greater and less than. They can make simple number sequences. Pupils are beginning to understand place value for two digit numbers and more able pupils can calculate change from 50 pence. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and some pupils are making good progress. Their achievements are generally appropriate but some are achieving well.

90. Key Stage 2 pupils can order a series of four and five figure digit numbers from the highest to the lowest, understand fractional parts and measure accurately. They can calculate for example  $\frac{9}{10}$  of £8. They have a good understanding of symmetry, including rotational and reflective symmetry. They understand the terms mode, median and mean and can use them to interpret data. Most can multiply by 10 and 100 and explain the effect. They can solve problems using the four rules of number. They have a good appreciation of probability, perimeter and area. Key Stage 2 pupils overall make sound progress and it is good in the upper sets in Years 3 and 5 because of the good quality of teaching and high expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in mathematics because of the good arrangements made for them and small group tuition.

91. A little, but insufficient, use is made of mathematics across the curriculum. In Year 4 pupils have investigated tree diagrams in information and communication technology and placed materials into different sets including intersecting sets. Insufficient use is made of mathematics in science, although a little was observed in information and communication technology when pupils in Year 2 made simple graphs of favourite food types.

92. Pupils generally maintain their concentration well during lessons and contribute well to discussion and are keen to answer questions. They complete appropriate amounts of work in most lessons. When teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory, this affects pupils' interest and they lose their

concentration and progress is unsatisfactory. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually good throughout the school. Marking is up to date but teachers are not consistent in their expectations of presentation. As a result some work is neat and well set out. In other instances work is untidy and presentation is sloppy. The lack of consistency in expectations for setting out work is leading to some inaccuracies as pupils work out their examples.

93. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is sound in both key stages. It ranges from unsatisfactory to good in Key Stage 1 and from poor to good in Key Stage 2. In the most successful teaching, the mental warm up is crisp, explanations are clear and the level of challenge for different groups is appropriate. In a Year 5 class, pupils worked against the clock to complete a set of mental calculations rounding up numbers to the nearest ten and the nearest hundred for each example. The increase in challenge was evident in the later part of the mental session when pupils had to multiply  $3 \times 60$  increasing to  $3 \times 600$  and to  $3 \times 6000$ . The explanation, pace and structure were good so that pupils began to gain confidence in their understanding of partitioning numbers to assist them in ways of multiplication. In a Year R/1 lesson, pupils learned strategies for counting similar coloured cubes set out in a circle so that their counting would be accurate. One pupil decided to set the first cube she counted away from the others so she knew where she had started from. When teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, the explanations are confusing, expectations are low and the match of work to pupils' capabilities is inappropriate; it is too hard for some and too easy for others. Additionally, class management procedures do not ensure that all pupils are paying attention to explanations.

94. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has monitored some mathematics lessons and drawn conclusions for teachers about strengths and areas where improvements might be made. The record keeping system is too broad and does not enable teachers to record sufficiently the progress which pupils are making in understanding particular concepts. The lack of a portfolio of work for different levels hinders teachers' expectations and judgements. The policy and scheme of work are satisfactory. Resources are generally adequate.

## **SCIENCE**

95. The results of the 2000 teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 were in line with national averages for pupils aged seven. The proportion of pupils attaining standards above average was similar to the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in Year 2 is broadly in line with expectations, but very few pupils are attaining at the higher level. The school's results in the 2000 national science tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below national averages both for the expected and higher levels. The trend of results in the Key Stage 2 tests since the last inspection has been one of gradual improvement but overall insufficient improvement has been made in science results by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 progress is inconsistent but overall it is satisfactory and there are signs of some improvement this year. Nevertheless there are variable standards of teaching in the subject throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relationship to their prior attainment in both key stages. At both key stages, progress and attainment in scientific inquiry are weaker than in other attainment targets. Currently, standards of work in science are inconsistent. Pupils have acquired a satisfactory knowledge base in both key stages but their investigative skills are unsatisfactory and below expectations throughout the school. Their achievements are satisfactory in knowledge but unsatisfactory in investigation.

96. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can classify food types and observe using all their senses. However, they have been given limited opportunities to develop the skills of scientific investigation. In one lesson seen there was an appropriate emphasis on "finding out for ourselves", but this was not the general picture. Teachers use appropriate scientific vocabulary and explanations and instructions are usually clear, indicating satisfactory subject knowledge. They use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding. Planning and preparation of lessons are always sound. However, teachers do not always build on the scientific knowledge that some pupils have and so progress is limited. Pupils are able to name common materials and identify some of their properties, such as transparency. Pupils understand

that a balanced diet is necessary for a healthy life. They demonstrate understanding of forces such as pushes and pulls and are also aware that altering forces will have different effects. The use of a range of stimulating practical activities and a really scientific approach, in one lesson, enabled all pupils to make good progress, including those with special educational needs. Use of information and communication technology to record examples of work on physical forces helps to ensure pupils understand the concept. Overall teaching is satisfactory.

97. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' skills in scientific enquiry are insufficiently developed. They show some understanding of the concept of a fair test and can make sensible predictions. They have done some measuring and graphical recording. However, their work shows a lack of systematically developed investigative skills. They cannot, in some cases, explain how to make their particular tests fair. They do not understand what a variable is. There is little evidence that they base their predictions on scientific understanding. This is because progress in developing these skills across the key stage is inconsistent. In some classes containing younger pupils investigations feature more measurement, recording of results in tables, the teaching of fair tests, and drawing conclusions from data. In other classes much work is copied from textbooks and worksheets and there is very little evidence of practical work.

98. The overall quality of teaching in science is unsatisfactory. It is sound in Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. Marking varies greatly. Some books feature comments that focus on scientific understanding and method, but others do nothing to develop scientific thought. Teachers use questioning to check understanding. For example in one lesson seen, the teacher discussed the concepts of pollination, fertilisation and germination with pupils. As it became clear that a number of pupils had not understood the ideas, she went over the ground again to consolidate understanding. In another lesson the teacher used questions to help pupils think through the process of planning and recording an investigation. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and pupils are able to develop their understanding of scientific terms, for example of the parts of a flower. Pupils show satisfactory understanding of seed dispersal and what conditions plants need for growth. Pupils have briefly covered work on materials, and can classify state as liquids, solids and gases. They have conducted simple tests to measure permeability and absorbency. The coverage of work on materials is better in the younger classes than the older ones. There is considerable work across the key stage on space, and some pupils have understood basic work on forces, such as pushes, pulls, friction and gravity. However, lower attaining pupils in some year groups clearly do not understand work on measuring forces, sound and space. Weaknesses in teaching seen in some lessons include poor use of time, low expectations and a lack of match between pupils' needs and the activities. In other lessons a practical approach, the encouragement of scientific thinking and thorough teaching that includes all pupils, are having a positive effect on attainment. Overall, the inconsistencies in teaching across the key stage lead to unsatisfactory attainment.

99. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are variable. Where lessons have good pace and involve them in practical activity behaviour is good. Where lessons focus on the simple recording of facts, pupils drift off task and chatter. The recording of science work across the key stage varies greatly. Many pupils do not take sufficient care and pride in their written work or present it methodically. There is very little evidence of the use of information technology in Key Stage 2 science work.

100. Adherence to national guidance materials and a two-year programme that covers all the attainment targets in science ensure that the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. Assessment practices are not underpinned with work on agreeing levels or a portfolio of examples of levelled work. There are good science records available, but not in all classes. Analysis of test results is also in its early stages. Assemblies make a contribution to science work, encouraging understanding of the natural world, but also revealing the uncertain understanding of many pupils.

101. The science co-ordinator is new in post. She has already undertaken some monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, but this important management practice is in its infancy. She has written the new subject policy and altered the subject scheme to ensure that the new curriculum is adequately covered. Science is now seen as a priority for development in the school. Although attainment and teaching show

weaknesses, the co-ordination of the subject is enthusiastic and is combined with a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The subject is adequately resourced, although the extensive use of a published scheme has not impacted positively on standards. The school grounds are a valuable resource for the teaching of science. Some improvements have been made in pupils' knowledge since the last inspection but investigation remains an area of concern.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils are making good progress in both key stages from a low baseline on entry to the school. For example, pencil control skills on entry are generally poor, but by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can make careful observational drawings in various media. This is due to good teaching and the creative climate of the school, which owes much to the headteacher and staff. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages, often because of the high level of support they are given.

103. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to draw confidently, make detailed and regular patterns and express opinions about their own and others' work. They have experience of a range of media, such as paint, printing, weaving and collage. They are able to discuss the need to improve aspects of their work. They are given many opportunities by teachers to explore media, using techniques such as wax resist and water colour. They learn to mix paint carefully to achieve different tones. Observational drawings in pastels and pencils show a developing sense of line, detail and shading, although the absence of sketchbooks in both key stages detracts from the systematic development of drawing skills and a visual vocabulary.

104. The quality of teaching in art and design is good in both key stages. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to express their preferences and justify their views. They encourage careful observation and provide clear explanations and demonstrations. Lessons are well prepared and pupils are often engaged because artwork is purposeful, leading to displays, or thematic in nature. Teachers show good subject knowledge. The use of support assistants or other adults ensures that discussion takes place during activities and the development of fine motor skills is well supported for all children. Pupils use information technology to draw pictures. There is evidence of careful planning for design activity as well as the actual making of images, so that art and design is seen as a creative process.

105. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to make attractive collages from ethnic foods, produce successful printing that requires attention to detail and careful design, and draw with watercolour pencils or pastels with good control and concentration. Teachers are able to communicate the visual excitement of the objects they use as stimuli. They have clear objectives for lessons and build on previous work to ensure pupils can develop their ideas over a period of time. Pupils are given useful opportunities to explore new media and acquire a range of skills. Again, the creative process incorporates design as well as image-making and there is a good focus on skill development. Activities are purposeful and stimulating and pupils react with co-operation and interest. Three-dimensional work undertaken includes papier-mâché masks and printing on fabric. Each year a range of work by artists is used as a starting point for image-making. Work based on pictures by Monet, Klee, William Morris, Lowry and Picasso in Key Stage 2 shows increasing understanding of a range of styles. Images from other cultures are also used in this way. During the inspection, pupils worked from African patterned cloth as a stimulus, for example.

106. Pupils take pride in presenting artwork. They observe carefully and benefit from the wide range of experience offered. They celebrate each others' achievements and really enjoy their work. Pupils can persevere and show application to tasks, despite the practical challenges presented by weaving or printmaking.

107. Although the co-ordinator has taken on another subject recently, the deputy headteacher is fulfilling this responsibility adequately. There is no monitoring of standards or record keeping, although during the inspection a photographic portfolio of recent work was seen. There is no up to date policy, but staff are using national guidelines as a basis for planning. The co-ordinator has a clear view of priorities in the subject, which include the more systematic development of skills in three-dimensional work. The subject is well-resourced, both in terms of media and in terms of stimulating resources for knowledge and understanding in art. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject is enriched by visits to galleries in London and by the use of the local environment as a stimulus. In turn, the displays of art around the school add greatly to the quality of the learning environment.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. Design and technology is a developing subject under the direction of a recently appointed co-ordinator who is keen to improve the quality of work. She is awaiting training so that she can fulfil the role effectively. The work in design and technology broadly meets the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in Key Stage 2 but there was insufficient evidence to judge standards in Key Stage 1 but the subject is planned for.

109. Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy design and technology work. Year 5 pupils thought of some imaginative ideas for desert hats and drew designs, which included corks, and a solar panel, which powered an electric fan. Year 3 and 4 pupils were in the process of designing a book with moving parts. Currently, insufficient attention is being given to the use of tools and working with resistant materials. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject.

110. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. In the best work, the teacher showed the pupils different ways in which books could contain moving parts and pupils were very interested in the presented features. They immediately had an opportunity to make a sample page using one of the ideas. All pupils produced a satisfactory outcome. Generally, insufficient opportunity is provided for pupils to make and problem-solve. At present, too much emphasis is given to practising skills out of context. Insufficient attention is given to developing skills through working out problems in practical and creative situations. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. A satisfactory policy is in place. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject in addition to another subject responsibility and not yet had time to develop the subject. She is aware of what needs to be done. The overall position is similar to that at the time of the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. Standards in geography are similar to those at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress and, by the age of eleven, they achieve standards that are close to those expected for their ages. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress learning about physical and human features of geography through their study of an island. They use information and communication technology skills to draw maps of the island and use correct geographical vocabulary to label features. They express their views on what people need to live and work in this environment, and use literacy skills to write four reasons to persuade holiday makers to visit the island. Their work is attractively displayed in some classrooms and in the entrance to the school.

112. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 gain a understanding of where places are located through the use of plans, maps and atlases. They use secondary information sources: aerial photographs and good quality photographs of physical features, in the study of their locality. They study a village in India and compare it with their own area. This topic contained useful information on environmental change. Topical information about the earthquake in India earlier this year was built into the unit of work.

113. Older pupils undertake fieldwork investigations in their study of Leigh-on-Sea. Their use of geographical enquiry skills includes some opportunities for them to interpret results. For example, they made a comparison of traffic flow between morning and afternoon. However, all pupils in both year groups produce the same pieces of work; the only difference between the work produced by the different age and attainment groups is in the length and quality of writing. Their work is prominently displayed around the school and has valuable links with other subjects in the curriculum.

114. Insufficient lessons were seen during the inspection to judge the quality of teaching. However, from the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, it is evident that the good practice and high standards of presentation found in some classes, in both key stages, are not developed consistently throughout the school. Opportunities to deepen the knowledge and understanding of all pupils, especially the high and lower attainers, are not planned and this leads to superficial learning. The current scheme of work lists topic areas to be taught on a two-year cycle in the mixed-year group organisation of the school. It does not give guidance to teachers planning together across year groups to ensure that work is consistent, challenging and progressive for pupils in different attainment groups and at different ages. The current co-ordinator has not undertaken any monitoring of teaching in the subject but has surveyed staff to assess their need for resources and support.

115. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and materials in use in classrooms are of good quality. However, when pupils have to share, for example laminated aerial photographs and maps, the pace of their work is slowed. Teachers write termly comments about pupils' progress in geography in reports that are sent annually to parents and carers.

## **HISTORY**

116. Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the age of eleven their attainment is close to what is expected for their age. At both key stages, pupils' chronological understanding and knowledge of people and events in the past are satisfactory. However, compared with the previous inspection's findings, there is little evidence of challenge for pupils at Key Stage 2.

117. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are actively involved in finding out about the past and bring in artefacts and evidence for the museum displays in classrooms. Kitchen utensils from the past are on show, and in their writing, pupils identify the objects and describe their characteristics and explain how they were used, and give modern equivalents. Pupils have asked older relatives or friends to write down memories of seaside holidays in the past. These accounts are being used, with photographs, books and artefacts, to teach pupils how to discover the past.

118. As part of their study of life for the rich and poor in Tudor England, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 visited Southchurch Hall, and some have written at length about this glimpse of Tudor life. However, little of the rest of the work on this topic has been linked to this first-hand experience. Books contain factual accounts and cut-out pictures of aspects of everyday life. Work for some classes attempts to be more evaluative, and simple commentaries accompany comparisons between objects owned by Tudor children, their parents and themselves. Older pupils study Ancient Greece and Tudor explorers. They visit Kentwell Hall.

119. Teaching at Key Stage 1 ranges from unsatisfactory to good, but overall it motivates the pupils well and they show much interest in their work. Evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the teaching of older pupils is inconsistent and lacks challenge. It requires them to find out information from a variety of sources, including artefacts, books, pictures information and



communication technology and videos. However, these sources are not identified or evaluated by pupils in their work. For example, sheets to help assess how much pupils have learnt about a topic ask what they 'read' about rather than what the evidence was for their knowledge. Another sheet, used to describe an artefact, asked limiting questions, such as, whether or not there was a pattern. It did not stimulate or enable the pupils to be creative or imaginative.

120. The curriculum is based on national guidelines and a policy is in place. The scheme of work lists topic areas on a two-year cycle but lacks sufficient detail to help teachers to incorporate historical interpretation and enquiry into an integrated programme of work. The co-ordinator has purchased some good quality artefacts since the last inspection and supplements these with materials from the library and county museum service. Assessment systems have not yet been devised for the subject. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall but the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. Since the last inspection, there have been clear improvements in the provision for information and communication technology, which are gradually raising pupils' standards of attainment. The new suite of seventeen computers is giving pupils far greater opportunities to learn skills in all aspects of the subject but, as yet, these skills are not being used and developed consistently in the classroom to support pupils' work in other subjects.

122. At the end of each key stage, pupils' standards of attainment are close to those expected nationally and have improved since the last inspection. For example, Year 2 pupils have used a simple graphics program to 'draw' good representations of Tudor houses. They have used computers to generate graphs of their favourite foods to complement work in science, and word processing to record a number of pieces of writing in subjects, such as science and religious education. Observation of these pupils in lessons shows that they are confident in using the mouse and keyboard. They know how to load programs from a menu, how to save work and how to print it. They are learning more complex skills such as how to minimize a screen. By Year 6, pupils have developed sound skills in a range of work, though the benefits of the suite have yet to take full effect. These pupils have used the Internet to research material prior to a fieldwork visit to Leigh-on-Sea, and those attending the computer club show a good level of proficiency in searching the Internet to select images for inclusion in a presentation using 'power point'. All Year 6 pupils have used desktop publishing, for example to make posters for a school production. Their use of word-processing is sustained and varied, as seen in their autobiographies and letters of thanks to visitors. Most Year 6 pupils are confident in their use of the mouse and keyboard, though many are not yet fluent. Throughout the school, pupils' achievements are sound, and there are examples of good achievement, as seen when Year 3 and 4 pupils wrote programs to draw shapes and letters. The only aspect in which current attainment is weak is using information and communication technology to sense physical data. The school has the equipment to teach these skills and plans to do so in the near future.

123. In the four lessons seen, the quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory, and it was good in two. Teachers plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. They explain tasks carefully and monitor and support learning effectively. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in providing extra support for pupils, particularly those with special needs. As a result, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress in lessons, and for many progress is good. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration, or complete a task early, and teachers are not quick enough to re-focus the whole class so that the pace of learning is maintained. Pupils enjoy their lessons in the information and communication technology suite, generally concentrate well on the tasks, and cooperate successfully. All these factors improve their progress. There are still weaknesses in some

teachers' confidence and expertise, but they often spend considerable time ensuring that they are fully prepared for lessons. Teaching focuses on specific skills, rather than just supporting pupils, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The information and communication technology technician provides valuable support for both teachers and pupils, often solving problems that would inhibit learning.

124. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory support for colleagues in planning and teaching. There are suitable plans for future development, which are a strong feature of the school improvement plan. However, evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is not yet systematic enough to enable the school to identify and tackle weaknesses. An assessment system is being trialled so that teachers will have a better grasp of pupils' attainment and will be able to plan work accordingly. Resources are good in the information and communication technology suite, but the lack of similar machines in classrooms makes it difficult for teachers to extend pupils' skills consistently. Despite this, the school is well placed to raise standards still further.

## MUSIC

125. At the last inspection, music was the strongest subject of the curriculum, but the talented music specialist no longer works full-time at the school so there are not the same range and quality of activities. Nonetheless, from the evidence available, pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage is still close to that expected for their ages, and there are examples of higher attainment in singing. In the lessons seen, pupils made at least satisfactory progress, enjoying practical involvement in the varied activities. They sang tunefully, and older pupils all participated enthusiastically in their weekly hymn practice, responding to the very good teaching.

126. Year 2 pupils know that instruments make sounds in a variety of ways, and that the size of an instrument affects the sound. They play their instruments purposefully, following the tempo set by the teacher. They understand pictorial notation and, after a rehearsal, follow the 'music', playing their instrument at the appropriate time. These pupils listen carefully, offer views about the quality of playing, and thoroughly enjoy the activity. Year 6 pupils combine drama and music with their study of 'Macbeth' in English. They describe the mood of the background music and explain how it makes them feel, before they creep through a dark wood at night. In this activity, the pupils' singing of a difficult song was weak, which was in sharp contrast to the good standard seen in hymn practice and choir.

127. In the lessons seen, the quality of the teaching was satisfactory. Teachers are well prepared, but they do not have a good enough understanding of the subject to teach skills methodically or to know what it is reasonable to expect from pupils. In the Key Stage 2 hymn practice and choir rehearsal, however, the quality of teaching was very good because the teacher knew exactly how to challenge the pupils to reach high standards. For example, a strong focus on correct breathing, diction, the duration of notes and phrasing led to rapid progress in the quality of singing. Good use of the teacher's own singing voice and skilled accompaniment on the piano supported pupils' progress. In a lesson for Years 5 and 6, good questions encouraged the pupils to articulate why the piece of music created images in their minds, and all responses were valued and encouraged.

128. The school is using a nationally recommended scheme of work as the basis for planning lessons, but this does not provide sufficient guidance for teaching. There is currently no on-going assessment of pupils' achievements. The school is well equipped with tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Organisation of the subject across the school is satisfactory, though the temporary co-ordinator does not have a strong influence on future developments. Extra-curricular opportunities for choir, who take part in local festivals, and recorders help some pupils to reach a good standard in these aspects, whilst musical productions, such as 'Alice.com' performed at Christmas, are an enriching experience for many pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129. Physical education is a developing subject in the school. The co-ordinator is new and keen to improve the quality of work. The scheme for physical education is quite broad and there is a risk of repetition in different year groups. However, there is a sufficient range of work, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Pupils have good opportunities for swimming and they reach a good standard by the end of Key Stage 2. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular sporting activities including netball, football and athletics, and some of these activities are organised by the parents. Year 6 pupils have an opportunity to take part in an outdoor pursuits activity week in Wales. Overall, standards are in line with age expectations at the end of both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress.

130. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can throw bean bags underarm into a hoop from a distance with reasonable accuracy. Both girls and boys can slowly maneuver a large ball round skittles with their feet. In dance they cooperate well, stretching and bending to the music as they 'pick up space'. They practise rolling and pushing movements in time to the music and can balance with their arms to counteract a rolling movement. In a Year 1/2 class they put a lot of effort into their work as they imagined they were climbing a rope ladder. They made good progress as they gained from the teacher's instruction to show expression in their bodies and in their facial expressions.

131. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know why they should warm up before activity. Pupils can work in pairs and mirror each other's self-chosen balances and then copy each other's changing balance position. In games lessons, they learn how to throw correctly and are taught and apply the correct stance for throwing long distances.

132. Pupils demonstrate a good spirit when they engage in physical education lessons and most are keen to take part and demonstrate their movements to others. In most lessons pupils behave well, show a good attitude and play fairly with a keenness to succeed.

133. The quality of teaching in physical education is satisfactory overall in both key stages but occasionally unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. In the best teaching, the pupils progress noticeably because the teacher can demonstrate good techniques. For example, in a Year 1/2 dance lesson the teacher helped them to improve by drawing their attention to aspects of the music encouraging them to work at different levels and different speeds. Occasionally the teaching is unsatisfactory, as in a Year 5 lesson, when too much noise is tolerated, the class is not managed well and not enough constructive comments are made about pupils' movements to help them to improve. Insufficient time was given to activity and too much to disciplining pupils and giving overlong instructions about what they were to do.

134. Resources for the subject are adequate. The hall is of a good size and reasonably well equipped. The grassed area is of a satisfactory size and condition.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

135. Since the last inspection, the school has not done enough to improve weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning that were identified. As a result, whilst pupils' standards of attainment at the end of each key stage continue to be broadly in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, their achievements are inconsistent between classes and across the school.

136. Year 2 pupils have a growing knowledge of the Christian tradition and know some of the beliefs and customs of other religions. For example, they know the story of Moses, left as a baby in the bulrushes, and about Jesus healing the sick. Through the story of St Francis, they learn about the

importance of saints, and link this to the theme of caring. They learn a little about Guru Nanak as an important figure in Sikhism. They consider special times, such as their own birthdays and festivals in the Christian calendar. In doing so, they begin to relate religious beliefs to their own lives and to consider the use of symbols. By Year 6, all pupils have a sound factual knowledge of the main beliefs of Christianity, and they can relate these to stories in the Bible. For example, they study Holy Week, including the events that play an important role in Christianity, such as the Last Supper, and symbols such as the cross. In studying Jesus' life, they also consider their own 'journey of life', reflecting on their past and future. A substantial study of the beliefs and central figures of Hinduism enables these pupils to contrast belief in many Gods with belief in one God, and also helps them to understand that festivals such as Divali are similar to the celebrations held by other faiths. It is good that, through the beliefs of contrasting faiths, teachers are prepared to tackle difficult questions, such as what happens when someone dies.

137. Scrutiny of pupils' work revealed considerable variations in its content, quality and quantity between classes containing the same age group. It is a significant weakness that pupils do not receive the same curriculum and that their achievements are so variable. This was noted as a weakness at the last inspection and there has been insufficient improvement. Across the school, the curriculum focuses heavily on factual work, with fewer opportunities for pupils to reflect on religious belief and values, and to relate them to their own lives. This was also a weakness at the last inspection and results in the subject making only a modest contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

138. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in two, but unsatisfactory in one. Teachers explain new facts and ideas well, but they do not always involve the pupils sufficiently in discussion and debate, which would help them to express their own thoughts. In a lesson for Year 2, however, the teacher used a good illustration of a stone circle, and her own knowledge, to help the pupils consider why it was a 'special place' and how they might feel if they were standing within it. Pupils enjoy their lessons and listen patiently to the views of others. Too often, however, the written tasks that follow whole-class work are not challenging enough, and do not stimulate thought about the religious ideas.

139. The co-ordination of the subject has been sound. The co-ordinator has organised in-service training for staff and developed a programme of work, which addresses the local Agreed Syllabus. A religious education policy has been written and she has monitored planning and undertaken work sampling. Resources, including videos, artefacts and books are now readily available to support staff. Despite this, the quality of pupils' work and their achievements vary greatly across the school because the freedom teachers have to interpret the plans is leading to some inconsistency. Learning resources, such as books and artefacts, have improved since the last inspection.