

INSPECTION REPORT

BOREHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Boreham, Chelmsford.

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114937

Headteacher: Mr. S. Livingstone

Reporting inspector: David Watson
23494

Dates of inspection: 3 – 5 July 2001

Inspection number: 191813

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Juniper Road Boreham Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM3 3DB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Fran Luke
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23494	David Watson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	English; Physical education.	English as an additional language; The characteristics and effectiveness of the school; The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well pupils are taught; The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils; How well the school cares for its pupils.
9310	Brian Gilbert	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well the school works in partnership with parents.
22147	Anne Holland	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Design and technology; Special educational needs.	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.
19026	Brian Downes	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Geography; History.	Equality of opportunity.
20142	Malcolm Childs	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information communication technology; Music; Religious education.	How well the school is led and managed.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Boreham Primary School is about the same size as other primary schools of the same type, with 221 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. Pupils are taught in seven classes. Years 4, 5 and 6 have mixed age classes; boys outnumber girls (123 boys, 98 girls). The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (7.6 per cent) is below the national average. Pupils are mainly drawn from the village. There are a very small minority of pupils from ethnic minorities or who have English as an additional language. Although pupils' backgrounds are broadly similar to the majority of schools, pupils' attainment on entry is below expectations for their age; it has in the past been well below. The percentages of pupils with special educational needs (19.4 per cent) and of those with a statement of special educational need (0.9 per cent) are below the national average. There is an equal split between pupils who have learning difficulties and those with emotional or behavioural needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Boreham Primary School is a very good school. It makes learning fun and exciting so that pupils want to come to school and learn. This leads to good achievement, both socially and academically. Consequently, standards in English, mathematics and science are improving. The majority of teaching is good and is sometimes very good or even excellent. The contributions made by all those involved in the leadership and management of the school are very good. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher and the senior management team provide an exceptionally clear direction for the school.
- The consistently good and sometimes very good or excellent teaching, is raising pupil achievement on a year on year basis.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour and relationships are very good. They are underpinned by the pupils' very good social and moral development.
- The Foundation Stage for pupils aged under five provides a very good start to their education.
- The very well planned curriculum is particularly enriched by its links with the community and out of class activities.
- The school has very good systems for the collection, analysis and use of assessment information.
- Music is a particular strength of the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- There are no features at the school that require significant improvement.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in January 1997. Parents and governors are now fully involved in the school and make significant contributions to the school and pupils learning. Teaching has improved, especially in Key Stage 2. There is now more challenge for the high attaining pupils and they are achieving well. Very efficient systems for tracking pupils' progress and attainment have been introduced and ensures support is keenly targeted to raise their achievement. The curriculum has systematically and carefully developed to ensure all pupils receive a well structured and appropriate education. This is now also very enriched by a range of activities, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Although results at the age of 11 remain below similar schools in 2000, there has been an overall, and sustained, improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in all three subjects, which is also evident in the unpublished results for 2001. Pupil achievement is now good in relation to their low prior attainment on entry to the school. Leadership and management of the school have improved under the direction of the new headteacher and are now very good. The school has a strong commitment to high standards and the capacity for improvement is very good.

STANDARDS

The table below 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	B	E	E	E
Mathematics	C	D	D	C
Science	C	E	E	E

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

In the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds, standards were well below national average in English and science and below average in mathematics. When compared with schools in similar contexts, pupils' attainment was in line with the average in mathematics but well below average in English and science. Judged by their Key Stage 1 results, pupils' achievement in these subjects was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Although the performance grades in the table above indicate similar standards in 1999 and 2000, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level rose in all three subjects, but have remained at levels below the national average. The unpublished test results for 2001 show that this planned upward trend has continued. In mathematics and science, the steady improvement has been maintained but it has accelerated in English. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 has increased considerably in all three subjects, especially in English. In relation to their prior attainment, this year group has also achieved well and sometimes very well. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in work observed during the inspection are broadly in line with national expectations. These improved results and performance are due to the very good education that pupils receive at the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of provision they receive. The national

tests for 2000 showed no difference between boys' and girls' achievements either in mathematics or science. In English, however, boys achieved more highly than girls. There was no evidence in the inspection to suggest that this pattern has continued. The school has surpassed its published targets for English and mathematics in 2001, due to the very good teaching of all the staff and the effects of the Year 6 homework club. The targets for 2002 are lower than this year's due to the lower prior attainment of the current Year 5. However, their targets, if met, would still demonstrate good achievement for this group of pupils.

Standards in Key Stage 1 improved in 1999 and 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the national average was broadly in line with all schools in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. On the basis of teacher assessment, pupils' performance in science was close to the national average. When compared to schools of similar background, pupils achieved well in reading and writing, but not so well in mathematics or science. Unpublished test results show that the percentage of pupils achieving standards in line with national expectations in all four subjects fell slightly this year. However, in view of their particularly low attainment on entry to the school, the achievement of this group of pupils has been good. These results are confirmed by inspection findings. Although girls achieved more highly than boys in reading and mathematics in 2000; there was no evidence of this difference during the inspection. Standards in all other subjects are in line with national expectations in both key stages, except in art and music. They are above national expectations in art and music at the age of seven. At the age of 11, they remain above national expectations in art and are well above in music. Standards, at the age of seven and eleven, in information technology are in line with national expectations and those in religious education are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very keen to learn and their very positive attitudes contribute considerably to the learning made in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and is one of the many strengths of the school. There have been no exclusions. The atmosphere both in lessons and in the playground is tranquil and harmonious.
Personal development and relationships	From an early age, pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to encourage them to take responsibility. The very good quality of relationships is a distinctive feature of the school community.
Attendance	Pupils like coming to school. Attendance levels are above those of most other schools, and punctuality is good.

Very good behaviour in the school is typified by the many thoughtful acts undertaken by pupils. Very good relationships positively support the building of pupils' self-confidence. Pupils' attitudes demonstrate their joy in learning and promote the purposeful atmosphere found in the school. Most pupils are able to maintain their concentration for extended periods.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
50 lessons seen overall	Excellent	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good and even excellent, particularly in the Foundation Stage. The consistently good teaching has a significant impact on the pupils' thirst for learning and is the main reason why pupils are achieving so well. Sixty-six per cent of lessons were good or better, 32 per cent were very good or excellent. Thirty per cent were satisfactory and only 2 per cent were unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory lesson was a 'blip' and not at all representative of the quality of teaching seen during the week. Examples of good, very good and excellent teaching were seen in English and mathematics, and many other subjects. Pupils benefit significantly from a committed team of adults with whom they have very good relationships. Teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour and standards. Teachers and other adults manage pupils particularly well with a sensitivity that helps them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The strengths of the very good and excellent teaching lie in the detailed planning which meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The teachers' sheer energy and enthusiasm in many cases captivate and motivate the pupils to learn and to excel. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the pace, well-structured lessons, which capture their attention. Very clear explanations, well-focused tasks and the systematic teaching of basic skills from an early age effectively underpin teaching throughout the school. Teachers manage classroom activities well and create a positive atmosphere for learning, using time particularly suitably, offering encouragement and recognising pupils' achievements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The broad curriculum is exceptionally well planned and meets the needs of all pupils. The very good range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils more opportunities to develop their skills and interests.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good and pupils are given appropriate work matched to their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and a strength of the school. There are a wide range of opportunities for spiritual development and satisfactory opportunities for the development of cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures ensure that all pupils are well cared for. Staff know the pupils very well and take great care of them in a safe and supportive environment.

Very good emphasis is placed on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and these skills are used particularly well to underpin pupils' learning throughout the school in many different subjects. The high quality of provision in other subjects, especially music, encourages pupils to express themselves and develop their confidence. The school is very good at teaching pupils to tell right from wrong. It helps them to develop personal responsibility, trust and mutual respect. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about their own cultural heritage, but too few to learn about Britain as a culturally diverse and interdependent society. There are good systems for monitoring and promoting attendance and very good systems to monitor and support pupils' academic and personal development. This has led to extremely well focused support for those groups of pupils that have been identified as underachieving in the past. Parents' help with the school's activities has a very positive impact on their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership. The headteacher has developed structures and sensitive support to build a highly successful team. Although members have distinct roles and responsibilities, they all share the same clear vision for the work of the school, which focuses on high levels of achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. Members are supportive, reflective and well informed about the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has established very helpful procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school's budget is very well managed. Spending decisions are carefully considered and the school accurately applies the principles of best value.

The leadership and management of the school reflect on and evaluate its' practices, and take early and considered action to raise achievement. The school is very clean and well maintained, and the learning areas are enhanced with high quality displays which reflect the range and depth of the curriculum. The level of staffing at the school is good, as is the accommodation. The school benefits from a new information and communication technology area, a large playing field and a swimming pool.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Fifteen parents or carers attended the meeting with the registered inspector and 87 returned their questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like the school.• The good teaching.• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.• Children are encouraged to work hard and they make good progress.• The school is well led and managed.• Children are helped to become mature and responsible, and behave well.	<p>A few parents (less than 9 per cent) were less happy about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework set.• The range of extra-curricular activities.

Inspection evidence supports the positive views expressed by the parents. Contrary to the views of some parents, the school provides a very good range of out of class activities for pupils, and the quantity and quality of homework provided for pupils are good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The overall standards in the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds were well below the national average. However, in relation to their low attainment in the 1996 tests, pupils achieved well. Standards were in line for seven year old pupils who took their national tests in 2000. Their attainment on entry to school had been below the expected level for their age; they have, therefore, also achieved well.

2. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 and above in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 was well below the national average for English and science and below average for mathematics. In comparison with schools in a similar context, standards were well below average in English and science, but in line for mathematics. When compared to all schools, the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 was below average in mathematics and science and very low in English. In relation to similar schools, the proportion of those attaining Level 5 and above was well below average in mathematics and science and very low in English. Although these standards are below the average when compared to all and similar schools pupils achievement was good in relation to their attainment on entry to school, which had been very low.

3. Over the last five years, the pattern in the standards reached at the age of 11, although erratic due to the very mixed prior attainment of different year groups, has been one of steadily and improving results, especially in the last couple of years. From a point well below the national average in English and science, and below in mathematics in 1996, standards rose dramatically in 1997, when a very able year group, achieved a standard well above the national average. They then slipped downwards until 1999. Standards were then slightly better than those in 1996 in English and science, but were considerable better in mathematics. Standards in all three subjects, however, remained below the national average. In the 2000 national tests, the percentages of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in mathematics remained broadly the same as in 1999, but increased steadily in English, and significantly in science. The unpublished results for 2001 are shown in the table below. They indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 has remained broadly the same in mathematics, but has continued to increase in English and science. In all three subjects this year, there has been an improvement in the proportion of higher attaining pupils achieving Level 5, especially in English. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils are working at close to the expected level in all three subjects.

Results for 11 year olds in the national tests for the last three years:

Year	1999		2000		2001	
	Level 4 and above	Level 5 and above	Level 4 and above	Level 5 and above	Level 4 and above	Level 5 and above
English	47	N/A	57	4	65	30
Mathematics	67	N/A	74	15	72	25
Science	47	N/A	79	19	85	31

All figures are given as percentages

4. When the test results achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 are compared to their 1997 Key Stage 1 test results, the achievement of the majority of pupils has been good in all subjects, and especially mathematics. Pupils' performance has exceeded the published targets for 2001. Based on its ability to closely monitor pupils learning the school has published challenging targets for English and mathematics for 2002. They are lower than those achieved this year and reflect the very low levels of attainment in the current Year 5. These targets, if met, however, would still demonstrate good achievement for this group of pupils. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, standards were in line with the average for all schools and for those in a similar context for reading and writing. They were below average in mathematics when compared to all and similar schools. On the basis of teacher assessments, pupils' performance in science was in line with the national average, but, in comparison to similar schools, it was below. In comparison to all schools, the percentage of pupils gaining Level 3 and above was close to the national average in reading and mathematics, above in science and well above in writing. Pupils in this year group achieved well. They left the school with levels of attainment higher than those they started with.

5. Since 1996, there has been a steady improvement in the standards attained by seven year olds. From very low standards in reading and writing, and standards below the national average in mathematics, standards rose in 1997 to being broadly in line with the national average. They fell dramatically in 1998, the current Year 5, due to a year group with particularly low levels of attainment. However, since then, the steady increase in all three subjects has been greater than the national trend. The unpublished results for 2001 indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above has remained broadly the same in writing, mathematics and science. Many of these pupils entered the school with levels of attainment below, those expected for their age. They have, therefore, made good gains in their learning due to the quality of teaching that they have received. However, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above in reading has fallen from 86 per cent to 66 per cent. Attainment in reading on entry to the school for this year group was very low. For so many to achieve this result their achievement has been good, even if the overall standard remains below the national average. Inspection evidence suggests that the majority of seven year olds are currently reaching standards that are broadly in line with national expectations in all areas. This includes reading and is due to the quality of teaching and support that pupils receive in class

6. Over the past three years, girls' achievement at the age of seven, has been greater than that of boys in reading, writing and mathematics. By the age of 11, based on the last three years' results, there has been no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainments in English, mathematics or science. This is also confirmed by inspection findings. The inspection found standards to be in line with national expectations at the age of seven and eleven for all other subjects except art and music. They are above national expectations in art and music at the age of seven. At the age of 11 they remain above national expectations in art, but are well above in music. Standards in information technology are in line with national expectations and have improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards in religious education at the age of seven and eleven are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus, as they were at the last inspection. Standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy are in line with national expectations.

7. Assessments of children on entry to the school show that the general level of attainment for the current group of children was below the average for the county. By the time they transfer to Year 1, the children will have made very good progress in all aspects of their learning due to the very good and excellent teaching that they receive. By the end of the Foundation Stage, many will have met or surpassed the early learning goals. The prior attainment of different year groups has varied considerably and has at times been well below the expected level on entry to reception, and even at the beginning of Year 1.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the quality of support they receive. From very low levels of prior attainment, they achieve well. For example, in the national tests for 11 year old in 2001, nearly half the lowest mathematics set achieved the expected Level 4. The school is aware of the gifted and talented pupils it has. Through careful targeting, especially in teaching, they also make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes towards school and learning are good. Their behaviour and relationships are very good. These are all strengths of the school and agree with the parents' positive views.

10. Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their learning are good, and the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been fully maintained. Pupils go to school with enthusiasm for the day's events and they enjoy their time there. This has a positive impact upon their learning, and contributes well to their personal development. Pupils are always keen to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by answering the teachers' questions, and most are able to contribute their own ideas during lessons. Pupils' concentration is generally good.

11. All pupils are aware that the school has rules of behaviour, and most settle happily into school routines. Overall, behaviour is very good, as it was during the last inspection. This confirms the view of the large majority of parents. In this respect the pupils are a credit to the school. During the inspection, pupils across the age range were invariably polite to visitors and, unsolicited, would often offer assistance over and beyond the common courtesies of door opening. When their concentration does sometimes waver, teachers and their support staff exercise good classroom management techniques to prevent serious lapses of behaviour and bring them back on course again. At lunchtimes the senior midday supervisor and her team are effective in channelling pupils' energy into productive activities. No pupils were excluded from school during the year prior to the inspection.

12. Relationships in the school, between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves, are very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is a strength of the school. All members of the staff are polite and respectful to the children, who learn to accept this as the normal way to behave. Pupils in all year groups value each other as individuals and respect each other's opinions. Pupils also show similar respect for the school buildings, educational resources, and the many displays around the school. There is a marked absence of oppressive behaviour and no incidents of bullying or racial abuse were observed during the inspection.

13. The personal development of pupils is good and they use their initiative. Each week all pupils take part in a class forum. This gives them a chance to express any concerns they might have, to make suggestions about how school life could be improved, or to request additional resources. Recent initiatives influenced by these sessions include the millennium dragon project and the playground huts. Pupils in their last year at school are given the opportunity to become prefects and those in the present Year 6 have all taken this up.

14. Pupils' attendance at school was judged to be good at the last inspection and this continues to be the case and is important in the development of good personal development and a desire to learn. During the past few years attendance has been above the national averages for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is very low. In spite of being strongly encouraged by the school to keep their children at school, some parents do withdraw them during term time for annual holidays. Teachers complete the class attendance registers efficiently at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, and legal requirements are met. Punctuality in the mornings is also good and helps in ensuring that all morning lessons start briskly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall. Of the 50 lessons observed, 68 per cent were good or better; 32 per cent good, 24 per cent very good and 12 per cent excellent. Thirty per cent of lessons were satisfactory and only two per cent unsatisfactory. Teaching was excellent in the Foundation Stage, where 50 per cent of teaching was judged outstanding. Considerable improvements have occurred in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when nearly 12 per cent of lessons were judged less than satisfactory and only 15 per cent were judged good or very good. In the last inspection, there was a noticeable difference between Key Stages 1 and 2. During this inspection, there was no such difference. The vast majority of teaching in English and mathematics is good, and sometimes very good or even outstanding. The good teaching overall, in nearly all subjects, has had a significant impact on the pupils' attitude to learning and is the main reason why pupils are achieving so well. The one unsatisfactory lesson was a 'blip', and not representative of the quality of other teaching seen during the week or the good learning evidenced in the pupils' books for the rest of the year.

16. Of the many positive and very positive elements in the teaching, the elements that stood out very strongly during the inspection were:

- * The ability of teachers to make learning fun and exciting by their own enthusiasm and their knowledge of the subjects in the National Curriculum. This encouraged pupils to apply themselves well to their work with enthusiasm and good levels of concentration.
- * The constantly high expectation that teachers have of all pupils; it is expected that all pupils should try their hardest at all times. Parents certainly support the view that the school develops positive attitudes towards work in their children. Pupils, therefore, constantly acquire new skills, apply their knowledge and deepen their understanding.

- * The quality of all relationships in the school is very good. These underpin the very good behaviour that helps engender harmonious and purposeful lessons that pupils enjoy, in which they feel confident to ask for help and which, above all, boost their self-esteem.

17. The excellent teaching also comes from the teachers:

- * Clarity in knowing what pupils are to learn.
- * Superb questioning.
- * Brisk pace.

18. When these qualities combine, the teaching captivates pupils. They are all greatly excited and eager, and make very good gains in their learning. This was particularly evident in the English lesson on creative writing in Years 5 and 6, the history lesson in the same year group, the numeracy and history lessons in Year 1 and many of the lessons in the Foundation Stage.

19. In the majority of lessons observed, teaching and learning were at least good. This was primarily due to the teachers' subject knowledge, which was often good and sometimes very good. The quality of learning in a Year 4 and 5 music lesson, for example, was successful because the teacher gained and maintained her pupils' interest by using and demonstrating her knowledge of various musical instruments from around the world. The learning in an athletics lesson in Year 3 was enhanced by the teacher's very good and sometimes excellent knowledge of the subject. This gave him the confidence to structure the lesson tightly; to move seamlessly from one activity to another, and to focus on the skills required for catching a ball and running.

20. The teaching of basic skills is very good, especially in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Nearly every opportunity, planned or unplanned, is taken to reinforce the basics of language and number. On numerous occasions, teachers quickly emphasised the rules of spelling, the use of capital letters, number bonds or sequences. This constant revisiting of the basic skills ensures that pupils have a firm grasp of the knowledge on which they can build in later years. Teachers regularly use computers to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Computer programs are used in English and mathematics, for example to reinforce spellings and number bonds.

21. Overall, teachers' planning is good; it is very good in English and mathematics. In many lessons, separate activities are prepared for pupils of different abilities. This meets the needs of all pupils so that they are all appropriately challenged by their work. When necessary, particularly challenging activities are prepared for high attaining pupils and the gifted and talented. In addition, nearly all lessons have a great purpose or relevance. In mathematics for example, many lessons included aspects of real life problems. In other lessons, very good links were made between different subjects. For example, a Year 2 music lesson was linked superbly to the natural phenomena of thunder and lightning. The level of detail in teachers' planning ensures that pupils know what they have to do and are purposefully engaged at all times, and the teacher knows exactly what they are doing and what they need to do next. Consequently, pupils work at a good pace. In a very good Year

2 art lesson using mod rock and clay, pupils immediately resumed their activities after play as if there had been no interruption. The three-part structure of the Numeracy and Literacy Hours (oral work, activity and plenary) has been adopted in many lessons, all to good effect. This helps maintain a good pace to lessons. Pupils are aware of the structure and it allows the teacher to use the time effectively. In a Year 1 history lesson on holidays in the past, the plenary was used well to discuss what pupils had learnt. The teacher was also able to note what the pupils had not learnt so well, to help her plan the next lesson.

22. Teachers' expectations are high in terms of work and behaviour and the school ethos of hard work is evident in many classrooms. It is the expected norm and rarely needs to be reinforced. This is partly because the lessons are so interesting, and pupils apply so much intellectual, physical or creative effort to their work, that little time or thought is left for misbehaviour. In the very hot weather experienced during the week of the inspection, there were rare occasions when pupils became restless. At these times, teachers used their skills admirably. They quietly, firmly and very quickly restored calm and purpose to the classroom. Behaviour is good because it is built on trust and respect, and the constant use of the behaviour policy. Praise, as a positive way of reinforcing good behaviour and hard work, was regularly and effectively used during the inspection. This, coupled with the very good relationships in class, ensured that pupils knew exactly what was expected of them. As a result, pupils then tried their best, not only for their own benefit but also to please their teachers.

23. Teachers deliberately choose a range of strategies that best meet the needs of their pupils. Consequently, many different resources were used during the inspection. Resources and materials are chosen with care to ensure they best meet the needs of all pupils. The ghostly content of 'The Haunted Canal' by Margaret Nosh appealed to many of the pupils in Year 3 so that all groups in the class wanted to contribute to 'what happened next?' Pupils work comfortably in a mixture of pairs, small groups and whole-class situations. Some of the very good and excellent lessons combined all these elements, and this made important contributions to pupils' personal and social development. As a deliberate policy, lessons always include elements of past learning. This ensures the existence of good foundations, which give pupils the confidence to tackle new situations and new learning. Pupils' demonstrations are used not only in music and art, but also in athletics and games. By evaluating pupils' efforts, their classmates appreciate the skills and effort that are necessary for success.

24. Questioning is a particular strength of many of the teachers. In an excellent Year 1 mathematics lesson on counting forward, the teacher asked questions such as: How much? What is left? How do you do...? As a result, pupils were able to apply the principle of 'counting on' in calculating change to real-life money problems. The teacher skilfully drew out ideas about patterns from the more able pupils whilst keeping an eye on the middle ability pupils to see that they were involved and learning. The teacher's demand for and use of pace brought out the best in all pupils, with even the less able responding and enjoying the challenge.

25. The use of support staff is good and sometimes very good. Additional teachers are used to split classes and reduce their size. This means that in Years 5 and 6, for example, the lower attainers are taught separately in mathematics to give them plenty of individual support. In a very good mathematics lesson, the headteacher skilfully blended a demand for

good discipline with a great sensitivity to individual pupils' needs. Good use is also made of teaching assistants in many classes. They are well briefed by the teachers about their work with individual or groups, as in a Year 5 and 6 literacy lesson on descriptive writing about the Blitz, where pupils who received this support made very good progress.

26. Assessment is good and sometimes very good. During lessons much of this is based on the quality of questions asked. Teachers continually check pupils' understanding to see how far they can be extended. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson the exceptional questioning of the teacher enabled a gifted mathematician to use a rule for dividing denominators by numerators to calculate answers to three and four decimal points. Pupils are continually encouraged and guided to consider how they can improve their work. In many lessons, this is often encouraged by discussion with the teacher during the lesson. This sort of individual feedback tells the pupil exactly how to improve, and values what they have already done. In many subjects, and particularly in English and mathematics, high quality marking which uses clear targets for pupils' further development greatly improves the pace at which they are learning.

27. Overall the quality and quantity of homework are good, and its consistency has improved since the last inspection. Although a few parents felt unhappy about the quantity of homework, the vast majority were in favour. The inspection team found that the school policy reflects recent national guidance, and many pupils and parents use the homework diary appropriately. A few parents, in spite of great efforts made by the school, still fail to monitor their child's homework. Younger pupils have a core amount of work that consists of reading, spelling and number work. As pupils get older, this is steadily increased. Older pupils, therefore, have a greater amount and variety of homework that is closely linked to their lessons. This provides them with an invaluable opportunity to either extend or reinforce their class learning. Homework is regularly and carefully marked.

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

28. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school for all its pupils are good overall; at the Foundation Stage they are very good. The school meets statutory requirements, including those for the teaching of religious education. Social and health education are taught well and the provision for pupils' personal development is good; pupils' moral and social development are particular strengths of the school. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities and links with the community are particularly strong and add considerably to the learning opportunities provided.

29. The curriculum is very well planned, particularly in the Foundation Stage, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum for the children in the reception class is planned carefully in line with the national guidance for this age group. There is a particular focus on the development of the children's speaking and listening and social skills. The provision for outdoor activities is very good. An appropriate area attached to the class is well used to support the curriculum. Care is taken to ensure that the curriculum is presented in a lively and interesting way for young children. The reception area is well equipped with a wide range of resources. These, like those in the rest of the school, are well labelled and accessible. The wealth of information that the school has about its pupils and for those

children who are starting school for the first time is used to ensure that the curriculum is tailored to meet their needs and aptitudes. In all the subjects of the National Curriculum, the school has adapted the most recent advice to meet the needs of its pupils. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully in place; the elements of the literacy hour are still used, but have been rearranged to meet pupils' needs. The success of these strategies can be seen in the achievement of the pupils and the increasing proportions of pupils reaching the expected levels for their age.

30. A particular strength of the curriculum lies in the way that relevant links are made between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 read the story of Joseph in their religious education lesson and used an art program on the computer to design their visions of his coloured coat. They then made their version of the coat as part of their work in design and technology. There are also particularly good links between English, mathematics and other subjects of the curriculum. The school has adopted a clear policy on making good links between different subjects and uses them to extend literacy and numeracy skills through consistently planned opportunities for pupils to use them to support learning in all subjects. The links made between English and history, for example, are particularly good. The creative writing in Year 5 and 6 based on the bombing of London is a very good example of this. Mathematics is also used extensively in other subjects such as music and information and communication technology. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 reinforced their understanding of angles when they programmed a robotic floor device. This is helping to raise pupils' achievement and develop their confidence.

31. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There are many opportunities in the school for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. The school is a safe and healthy place; all pupils are made aware of their own and others' health and safety. This is done in physical education, for example, by discussing the importance of 'warm ups' and a healthy life style. These themes run through many science topics, assemblies and class forum discussions. In these ways subjects such as drugs awareness are covered in a coherent and sensitive manner so that pupils know that they have the power to make choices. The headteacher and the school nurse sensitively teach a programme of sex education according to the agreed policy. The informative and structured programme greatly assists pupils in their personal development.

32. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the curriculum. Staff endeavour to find a quality, skill, interest or aptitude in each pupil that can be valued and developed. No one pupil or group is in any way marginalised. Through its detailed and computerised monitoring systems, the school is very aware of the academic needs of its pupils, such as the underachievement of boys or the needs of the gifted and talented. Effective action to meet their needs is taken to ensure that they reach their potential by matching the teaching to their learning, in either individual or group work in class or with learning support assistants. Boreham is a very inclusive school. Teaching effectively promotes equality of access and everyone involved in the work of the school is committed to ensuring that all pupils participate fully and benefit from all lessons and other activities.

33. Pupils with special educational needs have clear and precise targets in their individual education plans, particularly for literacy and numeracy but sometimes also for behaviour. Additional support staff are well trained and therefore, very effective in their work. The school includes support staff in its planned training. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are set on a termly basis and reviewed regularly so that they are always closely matched to the changing needs of individual pupils. There is a clear focus on raising attainment. Pupils are mostly supported within classes, but on a few occasions are withdrawn to work outside classrooms, where pupils undertake work of a similar content but where the tasks are targeted to meet their individual needs. These needs are clearly and accurately identified in their individual education plans. Consequently pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as in the case of the current Year 6, where the majority of pupils with special educational needs achieved the expected level for their age.

34. Even though a few parents feel that there are insufficient extra-curricular activities, the inspection team find that the provision for extra-curricular activities is very good; their quality and diversity add considerably to the learning opportunities at the school. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. A good range of visitors has included a practising Buddhist, a Japanese visitor, and professional musicians, for example, the London Opera Players, and members of the village community. Regular visits are made to places of geographical or historical interest. A recent visit to the seaside inspired a Year 2 art lesson on making large sculptures out of balloons and mod rock. Year 6 pupils take part in a residential, outdoor activity visit that contributes significantly to their personal development.

35. The school offers a very wide range of sports, clubs and activities that pupils can enjoy. These allow the many participants to develop and extend skills learnt in class and develop their interests further. For example, many pupils learn to swim at school and then, as 'club swimmers', they develop their skills further. Pupils benefit from an exceptional range of musical activities, such as recorders, handbells, the choir and the orchestra. Both pupils and their parents enthusiastically support a wide range of sports clubs and teams, such as netball and hockey. Success in football tournaments and competitions, such as the televised national finals of the Futebol de Salao at the Aston Villa football ground, is testimony to the pupils' ability to play as a team and honour the traditions of good sportsmanship. The Year 6 'Revise Wise' homework club, established this year to help parents and pupils work together in preparation for the national tests, was a success. Support for this was strongest from pupils expected to gain Level 4 or higher. Parental contributions to this structured academic support have been beneficial in improving their children's attainment. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above was higher than the school had anticipated. Due to its success, the homework club will start in September next year.

36. The school has very good links with the village community. For example, members of the teaching staff were founding members of the village choir that now regularly rehearses at the school in preparation for its public performances. The very good links between the school and the local village during the course of Millennium celebrations joined the two in the creation of the school's Millennium dragon and the Millennium Mural in the village hall, and a community pageant and firework display. This celebratory project was initiated and coordinated by the school. Local villagers are often in school retelling their own experiences and bringing history to life. Links to the Internet mean that many pupils have also established links with the wider community. The school has good links with other schools and groups, especially the local playgroup. The school is involved in several tournaments

with other schools and good links with secondary schools eases the transfer of pupils on to the next stage of their education.

37. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Regular assemblies include the recognition of a supreme being and the sharing of moral and social values. Opportunities for prayer and thoughtful reflection, make them good spiritual moments. All assemblies meet statutory requirements as acts of collective worship. There is a spiritual element in lessons such as English, where pupils are encouraged to express their feelings about texts they have read, and in music when pupils express their feelings about the music they are studying. A spiritual element can also be found in subjects such as religious education, science and geography. In purposefully planned activities pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and others' values.

38. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. A strong moral dimension is found in lessons, where teachers constantly emphasise a code of good behaviour and consideration for others. All staff consistently apply this across all classes and around the school at breaks and lunch times. Systematic procedures are in place for rewarding good work and behaviour. Assemblies are held each week to celebrate pupils' achievements. The adults in the school provide positive role models. Pupils know right from wrong and the school is a happy, orderly community.

39. Very good provision for pupils' social development includes opportunities in the majority of lessons for developing social skills such as working together, sharing and taking turns. There are good opportunities for taking responsibility, such as tidying up in the classroom, helping in assembly and looking after younger pupils. Pupils respond well in discussions and show sensitivity to the views of others. A good range of trips, public performances and extra-curricular activities during the year provides opportunities for pupils to develop their social relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils are courteous to visitors and are happy to talk with them. The school sets great store by good behaviour and all adults in the school act as very good role models for the pupils. School and class rules are clear and uncomplicated. The emphasis is on praise and reward rather than punishment, and this was seen to be effective throughout the inspection. If incidents occur, they are carefully recorded by both teaching and support staff and appropriate action is taken. Personal development is well planned and culminates in all Year 6 pupils' being prefects. This involves some elements of assistance to and supervision of younger pupils, which works well. Those pupils who have individual education plans as part of their special educational needs provision are encouraged to attend their annual review meetings. One of the medium term priorities in the school development plan is to involve pupils further in self assessment and personal target setting.

40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There is a cultural contribution made by the study of other faiths in religious education lessons. Some emphasis on the multicultural element of music is evident in the use of musical instruments from around the world. The cultural element in subjects such as English, in well known authors and fairy tales, geography and history, in visits to the coast and an understanding of the impact of the Blitz on children, are used well to develop pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions. This is also particularly evident in knowledge that pupils have of different composers, instruments and musical styles such as jazz and classical. The school arranges a

number of trips, to places of local interest, which make a good contribution to cultural development. These are supported by numerous visitors who help to develop pupils cultural understanding; for example the use of residents from the village. In general, pupils have good opportunities to study their own culture and heritage. Opportunities to study the richness and diversity of other cultures are rather more limited. This is seen in science, where few acknowledgements are made of the contribution of other cultures to ours, and in history where the world wide influence of cultures such as that of Ancient Egypt are not fully recognised. This gives limited preparation for life in a culturally diverse society such as ours.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the school's arrangements for child protection, are very good. The school has many good systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance, personal development and attendance. This information is used very well to raise achievement and to support personal development. The standard of care that the school provides for its pupils has been greatly improved since the last inspection, when it was a key issue for action. It is now a strength of the school.

42. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. In the Foundation Stage, the teachers use the county baseline assessment identifies each child's strengths and weaknesses, and, even at this early stage, any gifts or talents. These initial results are carefully monitored by discussion with parents and support staff, but most importantly by the detailed records and the observations continually made by the teacher. This ensures that the needs of all pupils are met and, as is the case this year, they make good and sometimes very good progress.

43. The school has a comprehensive set of systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress; these conform to the most recent guidance and regulations. The consistency of their use ensures that they are effective throughout the school, guiding and supporting pupils, informing in curriculum planning and helping to measure the school's overall effectiveness.

44. A range of commercial and government produced tests, particularly in English and mathematics, are used to assess pupils' attainment. Consequently, for each pupil a good store of statistical data about their prior attainment now covering a number of years. This information is stored on a computerised system that allows its quick, accurate and detailed analysis. Teachers therefore, have a precise understanding of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, especially in English and mathematics. This statistical information informs the setting of numerical targets for the end of each year and for the end of key stages for both individuals and groups, such as boys or the high attainers. These precise targets meticulously measure the progress of individuals, groups and the school's effectiveness. Some of the commercial tests measure pupils' learning potential and how this is matched to their actual performance. From this, the school identifies particular groups or individuals and target further support and resources in their direction. In all other subjects, class records are adequately kept and follow national guidelines. Teachers assess and track the progress made by individual pupils by measuring them against key skills or concepts that have been taught. Through the discussion of different pupils' work, teachers have a good understanding of

what levels are expected for pupils of different ages and abilities. Teachers have a good all-round view of a pupil's academic abilities. The numerical data is supplemented by teacher's personal knowledge, and records of pupils' personal qualities such as their ability to concentrate and their independence.

45. Individual pupils' targets are written on the basis of assessment data and teachers' knowledge of their pupils. The school has a long history of whole-school targets that could be related to either personal or academic development. From these whole-school targets, class targets were derived, making them highly relevant. During the course of this year, this system has been extended so that class targets have also become part of pupils' individual written targets. The written targets from pupils' end of year reports are discussed with both pupils and parents in the autumn and spring terms. This has had a positive effect in focusing both pupils' and parents' efforts on raising achievement. Written targets are continually reinforced by interventions of the class teacher during the lesson and the very good marking of pupils' work. In the very best marking seen, teachers refer back to previous targets, evaluating their continued impact. Good quality marking also continually acknowledges pupils' achievements and encourages them to achieve more. This is supplemented by the school's weekly Reward Assembly and by the public recognition that pupils' work receives in class by being cited as a good example during discussion or being prominently displayed.

46. Assessment information is also informs decisions about curriculum planning and school organisation. For example, to determine the allocation of pupils to mathematics sets based on their prior attainment, and the targeting of additional support from the teaching assistants. Class records inform teachers about the teaching of topics, such as history and The Blitz, and what historical skills needed to be developed or introduced. The analysis of pupil performance has led to the modification of the Literacy Hour. Taking into consideration pupils' prior ability the Literacy Hour now includes a greater range of activities. This ensures pupils maintain their concentration for longer, as well as developing their literacy skills more fully. The school's information on personal development, attainment and progress informs discussion and decision-making. For example, the decision not to have English sets was made after considering all the information about the pupils' development, both personal and academic.

47. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and the school has very good links with outside agencies, including the local medical practice. There are good systems for reviewing and monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the teachers and support staff keep careful records. Progress is monitored carefully against the identified targets on the individual education plans. The school provides very well for pupils with

statements of special educational needs, and allocates resources beyond the minimum required, thus ensuring their good progress. The school's focus sheet identifies and monitors the needs and the progress of gifted and talented pupils. This has enabled teachers to focus support on these pupils in school, as in the case of mathematics, or direct them to support outside school, as in the case of a talented musician. The school is currently revising its good practice for identifying and supporting gifted and talented pupils to take account of recent guidance.

48. The welfare of children is a high priority at the school and it is handled well. The good provision for pupils' welfare and personal guidance noted in the last inspection report has been at least maintained. The high level of care at the school is typified by the fact that pupils and their parents are allowed into the playground ten minutes before school starts and pupils may enter their classrooms five minutes before morning registration commences. This allows for a calm and smooth start to the day's work. Members of staff know the pupils very well and they have a caring attitude both in and out of formal lessons.

49. Pupils who are unwell or suffering minor injuries are very well looked after. All midday supervisors are able to give initial care in these instances and, when necessary, they are seen by the welfare assistant or one of two other members of staff with formal first aid qualifications. Although there is no designated medical room, first aid procedures are very good. They are carried out efficiently, and proper records maintained. Whenever it is considered necessary by a first-aider, a note is sent home, for example when pupils suffer bumps on the head. First-aid boxes are well maintained with the correct contents.

50. The school's procedures for child protection are very good. Members of staff are suitably trained and they are all aware of what they should do and to whom they should refer if they have any concerns. There is also effective liaison with external agencies, such as the social services, where this is required.

51. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Parents are reminded, through newsletters or in person, of the importance of good attendance for their children's education. The welfare assistant checks the attendance registers each morning and liaises closely with class teachers and the headteacher. Regular monitoring is also carried out by the local education authority's (LEA) education welfare officer. Whenever a pupil is absent without sufficient reason being provided from a reliable source, the welfare assistant makes contact with the family during the day. This first day contact is well received by parents.

52. There are very effective measures in place to promote good behaviour, and teachers and support staff are consistent in applying them. Praise and encouragement play an important part and teachers always emphasise the positive rather than the negative. The school's procedures are clear and unambiguous so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Learning support staff and midday supervisors have received training in behaviour management, which has increased their effectiveness in dealing with difficult situations. The senior midday supervisor and learning support assistant leads her teams of supervisors and support assistants well. She has introduced systems to provide good supervision of pupils which, combined with the training, results in an atmosphere of mutual respect at lunchtimes.

53. Health and safety issues are taken seriously by the governing body and the senior management team, and the school is a very safe place for pupils. Risk assessments are made

at regular intervals, with the active involvement of the school caretaker. Routine checks of fire alarms and equipment are properly carried out. There are fire evacuation drills every term and the time taken for pupils and adults to reach a place of safety outside is down to under two minutes. Office routines are good in ensuring that entry to the school is restricted to bona fide visitors, who are all properly recorded .

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. A key Issue in the last inspection report was to improve the school's partnership with parents. The governing body, the present headteacher and the staff have worked hard to address the points raised and many improvements have been made. The partnership is now judged to be good and a considerable improvement upon the findings of the last inspection.

55. Parents are positive about the school, what it stands for, and the education it provides. There was a good response to the pre-inspection parents' questionnaire, with 87 forms returned, representing nearly 41 per cent of the number of pupils at the school. Fifteen parents attended the meeting for parents. Only a very small minority expressed concerns. These were about the amount of homework their children were given and the range of extra-curricular activities the school provides. Inspectors judged these concerns to be unfounded, as the homework provided is appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

56. Parents are encouraged to offer their assistance in school. Although only a minority of parents do so, the level of practical support they provide is good. Some are able to commit themselves to helping in the classroom on a regular basis and this is a valuable additional resource for the school. The help they provide varies according to their skills and preferences, but it is always supervised by teachers. Other parents assist in decorating the school, organising after-school clubs, including those for football and hockey, and helping on educational visits out of school. During the inspection week, the school hockey tournament was highly organised, well attended by parents and much appreciated by the pupils. An active parents' association runs various social and fund-raising events, and at the time of the inspection, many parents were busily involved in getting ready for the summer fete. Overall, parents' help with school activities impacts very positively on the children's educational experiences.

57. The quality of information provided for parents is good. Newsletters providing general information are sent to parents each term. This keeps parents closely informed about events at the school. Other letters are sent home by class teachers or curriculum co-ordinators for more specific matters which help keep parents informed about curricular issues or class topics. Newsletters issued by the governing body inform parents about the running of the school, whilst others are written by the parents' association. Parents have a few minutes to ask questions or exchange information with teachers at the beginning and end of each school session and the headteacher is often available for a quick word at these times. Appointments are readily available when required. Consultations with parents about their children's progress are held every term. On these occasions, they can also see the work their children have done and receive reports on their progress.

58. The prospectus is an excellent document, comprehensive in range and detail, and a very useful source of information about the school. It is also attractive, with a number of

photographs, and is easy to read and understand. The governors' annual report to parents is a more functional document. A few items, which should be included, are omitted so it does not fully comply with statutory requirements. These have been noted by the school and are to be remedied.

59. The annual reports on pupils' progress give a good picture of what each pupil can do. There are specific targets for each individual to work towards and a section covering the pupil's general progress and personal development. They provide a very useful guide to parents but no information is given about the number of times the pupils have been absent from school. The reports did not, therefore, comply with the regulations. The reports for the end of the current school year are to include this information.

60. The school tries very hard to involve parents in its work and initiatives, with varying success. OFSTED-style questionnaires have been used to assess parental satisfaction in 1999 and 2000, although the level of response was not encouraging. A good induction programme for new parents of children in Key Stage 1 consists of five sessions. Home-school diaries have been introduced to allow for a two-way dialogue, particularly with regard to homework. Their use by parents is variable and a significant minority of parents do not participate. Feedback forms relating to the annual reports in 2000 were returned by 44 per cent of parents. The school has made available a parents' suggestions box in the reception area but it has not been used during the past two years. Governors and the senior management team recognise the need to continue to reach out to the parents who are not normally active in the partnership. It is a key medium term objective in the present school development plan.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The leadership and management of the school are very good and are strengths of the school. All those involved in it provide an exceptionally clear direction to the school in its efforts to raise standards. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance by the headteacher, senior management team and governors are very good. They very effectively support the raising of pupils' achievement by taking the most appropriate action. To this end, resources are used very well and the school makes good use of the principles of best value to ensure that it provides good value for money. The quality of leadership and management has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was judged as requiring some improvement.

62. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, and senior teacher provide very good leadership that gives the school an exceptionally clear sense of purpose. Since his appointment two and a half years ago, the headteacher has developed a strong team spirit amongst his senior managers and the whole school. They work so well together that they perceive themselves to be 'one team'. The cohesiveness of this team has raised the quality of the school from good to very good. Their success is based on a very strong ethos of mutual support and trust. This is well balanced against the very good delegation of responsibilities to staff. Staff knows that all their efforts are important and will be valued. Their contributions to improving the school have therefore been significant.

63. The school's aims have an appropriate balance between a commitment to high attainment for all pupils, and the creation of a secure and caring environment in which

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be fully addressed. The high quality of relationships, the very good behaviour and the academic achievement demonstrate the commitment of pupils, staff, governors and parents to these aims.

64. Governors play an active and effective part in the life of the school and provide strong and committed support. At the same time, however, they are prepared to question and challenge when they feel it is appropriate. The range of their expertise is impressive and this is harnessed effectively in the service of the school. The committee structure is logical and well organised. The governors use several approaches to monitor the school's effectiveness. These include written and verbal reports from the headteacher and staff, published statistical information and their own direct formal and informal observations. The governors therefore have a very perceptive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have used this information very well to identify the school's future developmental needs and to make an important contribution to the production of the school improvement plan. They are especially effective in identifying clear, achievable and measurable criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of the actions. Very good examples of are these used to monitor and improve the quality of learning and pupils' levels of attainment.

65. Under the strong and effective leadership of the chair and vice-chair, the Governing Body exercises its statutory responsibilities well. They have made many difficult decisions in order to maintain the present levels of teachers and support staff; they have always done this in the best interests of the pupils, and only after comprehensive consultation. There are a couple of small omissions from the annual report to parents, but these do not diminish or detract from the overall high standards and effectiveness of the governing body.

66. The senior management team and the relevant subject co-ordinators have directly observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The teaching of all subjects other than physical education and design and technology has been observed. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is extensive and rigorous. It involves governors, as well as some monitoring by teachers of each other. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when the monitoring of teaching was a Key Issue for action. Development points fed back to teachers are clear and direct. These points are central to the staff development interviews and the yearly performance management interviews. They have had a considerable impact on raising the quality of teaching. The school has introduced performance management procedures very well and has involved all staff in the process. The achievement of *Investors in People* status reflects the value that the management places on staff development as an essential part of school improvement. The good use of the additional numeracy training provided by the local education authority is testimony to this.

67. The senior management team and all co-ordinators regularly undertake intensive monitoring of planning and assessment records. This has helped to identify a few aspects for inclusion in the school improvement plan, namely the development of the school library, and the introduction of drama to support the development of speaking and listening. All members of the school community, including governors, make suggestions for future school development using the 'chitty' system. This is an important reason for the success and relevance of the school improvement plan. Suggestions written on a 'chitty', (a form) are discussed, given a priority, and then included in the school improvement plan, if considered relevant. The plan is therefore comprehensive in its scope; very well structured; has the most appropriate priorities, and above all is fully understood by all. The plan's over riding focus is

the continued improvement in pupil achievement. It has many varied strategies aimed at increasing this and raising standards. These are continually reviewed and modified to ensure that every pupil achieves their best. This is not a complacent school; it is reflective, and it evaluates its practices. It knows exactly what further work is required and the continued effort that it will require. With strong leadership and effective management in place, and with all the key issues from the previous report thoroughly addressed, the school is well placed to continue to improve standards further.

68. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. The school makes good use of the funds allocated for special purposes. Support is carefully targeted to best effect. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and they make good progress. Support staff make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning.

69. The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching and support staff match the requirements of the school's curriculum, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. Most teachers are very experienced. All have appropriate qualifications, either from their initial training and attendance on training courses, or from experience. There is a good balance between those teachers who have been in post for six years or more and those who are relatively new to the school. Teachers are very well supported in the classroom by a capable team of learning support assistants. There is very good provision of peripatetic music specialists.

70. Training for teachers is considered during annual performance management interviews and half-yearly professional development interviews. The emphasis is on improving teaching and learning, and the priorities identified in the school development plan are taken fully into account. The training is provided in-house, by joint training with other schools, or by specific courses. The current intensive support and training that the school has received from the local education authority for numeracy has had a positive impact on teaching and learning. Appropriate training is also provided for teaching assistants, who also have staff development interviews, and midday supervisors. There is an effective induction programme for newly qualified teachers. An experienced mentor oversees this and provides good support and guidance. Progress interviews are frank and open, with good opportunities for exchanges of views.

71. Accommodation is good overall. The school building is structurally sound and classrooms are of the recommended size, with cupboards for storage of learning resources. Other resources are stored in appropriate areas within the school and they are readily accessible. There is one classroom, which is not designated for use by a specific class, is used for group work or for pupils temporarily withdrawn from their classes for educational support. There is no designated medical room or a shower or wash-down facility. The playgrounds are well able to accommodate pupils at play, with a number of attractive and useful features for quiet areas and specific play activities. The Millennium dragon, commissioned by the pupils is a significant feature of the outdoor environment. It adds a uniqueness to the site, and a place in history for those whose names are engraved on it. There are also a sports field suitable for team games and a heated swimming pool. The school is well resourced to support all areas of the curriculum. For example, there is a wide and interesting range of new reading books in the classrooms and these have a positive impact on developing pupils' interest and skills in reading. The range of computers and other hard ware has made a considerable impact on the quality of the education in

information and communication technology that pupils; receive. In all subjects, the range of resources adds to the good teaching and learning witnessed during the inspection.

72. Financial control and administration are very good. The school's office manager provides a very effective support service to staff and governors. The school makes good use of information and communication technology to underpin the whole curriculum, to analyse information relating to pupil progress, and to aid the overall management systems used by the school, especially those relating to finance. Attention is given to achieving best value in its ordering of resources and services. Specific grants are used appropriately. The school and the governing body closely monitor expenditure. The governing body has a clear and realistic view of future priorities, and of the difficulties that the school faces as its roll falls due to the naturally changing demographics of the village. To this end, they have prudently kept a larger carry forward than is recommended to ensure that the best interests of the pupils can be met.

73. The school has numerous strengths. Leadership and management are very strong. Teaching is good, and sometimes very good and even excellent. Relationships are very good, and built upon strong moral and social development. Even though results are not yet high enough when compared to similar schools, they are improving year on year. From levels of attainment below the county level, pupils' attitudes are good and behaviour is very good, and they achieve well. Although the school has higher than average income per pupil, it is lower than the county average. The school is therefore providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. This is a very effective school and there are no issues that the school needs to address to raise pupils' achievements. However, the headteacher, governors and staff may consider the following point for inclusion in an action plan.

- The development of pupils' multicultural awareness.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20*

- * Due to the 'one team' management style of the school many interviews usually held on a one to one basis with staff, were undertaken as group discussions where several aspects or subjects were covered.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	24	32	30	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	221
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

Special educational needs	YR– Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	47

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

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
	2000	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12]
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	24	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (77)	89 (86)	89 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	89 (86)	89 (87)	89 (93)
	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
	2000	27	20	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	16	21	19
	Girls	11	14	18
	Total	27	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	57 (47)	74 (67)	79 (47)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	16	22	20
	Girls	12	16	16
	Total	28	38	36
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	60 (43)	81 (47)	77 (37)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	190
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1:1
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff:**YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	495701.00
Total expenditure	465455.00
Expenditure per pupil	2144.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	15283.00
Balance carried forward to next year	45529.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	87
Percentage of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	28	8	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	59	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	56	6	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	50	17	3	1
The teaching is good.	36	61	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	53	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	40	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	59	8	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	43	53	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	56	6	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	56	9	1	6

Other issues raised by parents

The great majority of the 15 parents who came to the meeting had favourable views of the school, particularly in relation to pupils' attitudes and behaviour, standards, the information provided to parents and the overall improvement of the school since the last inspection.

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

75. The previous inspection did not report separately on the provision for children under five, but the teaching of the children under five in the reception class was reported as very good. The school has maintained its high standards in teaching in the Foundation Stage. Overall, provision for the under fives is a strength of the school.

76. The reception class is housed in the main building with easy access to a secure, hard surfaced, outdoor area. This area is used to link the curriculum to outdoor activities. The reception class is very well equipped with a wide range of resources.

77. Admission arrangements are sensitive to the needs of young children. Children are admitted in September and in January. Those with birthdays in the summer term, attend part time until Easter. Staff work hard to establish a good relationship with parents and to involve them in their children's learning. Assessments of the children on entry to the school suggest that the general level of attainment on entry to the school is below the average for the county, in all areas of their learning. It has, at times in previous years, been well below. Teachers' also judge that levels of confidence and self-esteem are also below average. By the time they transfer to Year 1, the children have made very good progress in all aspects of their learning and will meet or surpass the early learning goals, although this has not always been the case with previous year groups.

78. The teaching and quality of the curriculum offered to the children give a very good foundation to their school life. They make very good progress. Very good provision is made for children with particular needs, and they make good progress. Carefully planned lessons, including the outdoor curriculum, are in line with the recommended curriculum for children of this age. The teaching is excellent overall; teachers have very high expectations of what children of this age can achieve. Careful assessments of the children determines the future needs of the children which the teachers then accurately meets. The senior teacher also manages Key Stage 1. As a result, very strong links between the two key stages lead to very well planned learning environment and experiences. This is also supported by very good links with the pre-school providers. Their contribution to the development of the children before they come to school is highly valued.

Personal, social and emotional development

79. Considerable emphasis is placed on the personal and social development of the children in the reception class. By the time the children transfer to Year 1, they achieve at least the expected standards in this area, and many have more advanced social skills. This represents very good achievement and reflects the sensitivity of teaching and support staff to the need to develop confidence in the children. The development of independence and

confidence is supported by the activities planned for the children. The teaching is at least very good and mostly excellent. Children are already being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. All children make very good progress in this aspect of their learning, including those with particular needs. This progress reflects the very high quality teaching they receive. Children are very aware of routines and they come into school smiling, eager to learn. They tidy up at the end of lessons and take care of equipment. They work well together when in a group, and they are able to sustain concentration for very long periods. Children take turns sensibly and learn to listen to others in whole-class lessons.

80. All staff provide good role models and actively involve themselves with the children during activities. The children's spiritual and cultural development is fostered through stories, assemblies and the general ethos of the class. Children develop very positive attitudes to school and to learning, which provide a very good foundation to their school life.

Communication, language and literacy

81. Children are making very good progress in language and literacy. Teachers and support staff emphasise the development of speaking and listening skills. Very good use is made of praise and encouragement to support the development of these skills. All staff use every opportunity to develop and extend the children's language. The meanings of words, stories and rhymes are carefully explained.

82. Elements of the literacy hour are taught. Phonics are introduced through effective word, sentence and text level work, using stories and rhymes. In a literacy lesson observed, phonic development was encouraged with the singing of a rhyming song. The children participated with great enthusiasm because learning was fun. In addition, good cross-curricular links are established. The teacher used a big book, 'Our Bean Diary', to support the learning of phonemes. This related to work the children have done on planting beans. Most children can write their names and recognise their name in written form. Group activities are very well planned to support learning.

83. Writing is encouraged. There are emergent writing areas in the classroom. Children are aware of where to start on the page and are very happy to explain what they have written. They show an increasing awareness of how to form letters and this ability is reinforced during carpet sessions by the teacher. Early reading skills are encouraged. Children take books home to share with their parents. They are happy to share their books and talk about them with adults. By the time they leave the reception class, several children are reading simple books with confidence. They are aware that the pictures tell a story and that the print conveys meaning. Higher attaining children are writing and reading independently.

84. Most children have achieved the early learning goals in all the aspects of language and literacy. They have made very good progress in the subject. This progress reflects the excellent teaching they receive, the careful planning to meet their needs at all levels and the skilful deployment of support staff.

Mathematical development

85. This area of learning is particularly well taught. Children count to ten with confidence, and many can count beyond that. Children can recognise error in number. For example, when the teacher counted missing out a number, they corrected her with confidence.

86. Children are encouraged to recognise and use mathematical language, for example 'more than', 'less than'. Lessons have pace and purpose and group activities are designed to consolidate and extend children's knowledge and understanding of the subject. Links are made with other subjects. For example, to support number work on pairs, the teacher reminded children of work they have done on Noah and the Ark. Very good resources are available and these are used well to support teaching in the subject. Teachers and support staff intervene effectively to move learning forward.

87. All children, including those with particular needs, make at least good progress, and mostly, progress is very good. Teaching of the subject is excellent. The teacher has the ability to make learning fun. For example, to reinforce the concept of counting in twos, the children play a game, whispering the number if it is odd, shouting it if it is even. As a result, they remain totally absorbed in the lesson and their learning is enhanced. Most children have attained the early learning goals and a significant number are already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

88. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developed through a variety of activities which draw their attention to the world around them. They have regular access to water and are encouraged to think about its properties. They are encouraged to think about growth. For example, they look at the factors which contribute to the growth of beans and they know that the plants must be watered if the bean is to survive. They are developing an awareness of how to travel from one point to another. Children are introduced to contrasting climates by relating the animals that went into the Ark to the area of the world they came from. They know that some animals are only found in hot countries, and some, such as Polar Bears, are only found in cold countries.

89. In a lesson observed, children were learning about habitats. They demonstrated very good progress by their ability to match animals to the right environment. For example, they knew that a hedgehog lives in gardens and hedges. They also knew that the hedgehog is a nocturnal animal and that it hibernates.

90. Attainment is well in line with that expected for children of this age. The quality of teaching that the children receive ensures that very good progress is made. All staff question children carefully. They are encouraged to find things out for themselves and the school grounds are used to support learning in the subject. The activities provided make learning enjoyable and exciting. Children can select resources and use tools safely. They control the mouse with confidence and know how to click, drag and drop pictures, and how to change the screen. They use the 'roamer' (electronic floor robot) with confidence.

Physical development

91. Children are making good progress in their physical development. In the outdoor area, they use equipment which encourages them to go through and under apparatus, and apparatus to increase their skills in body control is readily available. In an outdoor physical education lesson observed, most children got ready for the lesson with little assistance. Most children rolled the ball to their partner with confidence but they found bouncing the ball more difficult. Children are very well behaved and show an awareness of routines.

92. Teaching is at least satisfactory and mostly very good. All children except those with particular needs are on course to attain the early learning goals by the age of five. Teachers take care to teach the skills required. For example, children are taught how to cut safely. As a result, children acquire safe control of these movements. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the children's learning in this area of their development.

Creative development

93. Children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the age of five, and some are already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The excellent teaching that they receive ensures that they make sustained progress. The activities provided for them ensure that they have a wide variety of experiences which support the development of their creative skills.

94. Children participate in the creation of collages using a wide range of resources, for example, a big picture of Noah and the Ark and a display on 'The Rainbow Fish', both of which relate to a general topic on water. They have opportunities to take part in role-play. Children use paints with control; handle tools with confidence, and cut and stick with care. Music is used very well to support the curriculum. The teacher uses singing to support literacy and numeracy lessons. Assemblies support class music and children sing with enthusiasm.

95. In all aspects of this area of learning, children are encouraged to think about what they are doing and there are very good links to other areas of learning.

ENGLISH

96. The level of language development on entry to the school is below, and sometimes well below, national expectations. Standards in English in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 were well below average, when compared both to all schools nationally and to schools in similar situations. When compared to both all schools, and those in similar situations, the percentage of pupils' reaching Level 4 was well below average, and the proportion of those reaching Level 5 and above was very low. In relation to this year group's prior attainment, however, pupils' achievements have been at least satisfactory, including those of higher attaining pupils. Standards have fluctuated over recent years, but the underlying trend has been one of steady improvement, even if standards have not reached the national average.

97. Pupils' attainment at the age of seven in reading and writing in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 was in line with the average when compared nationally and to schools in similar contexts. In writing, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 was broadly average when compared to similar schools, but well above average at Level 3. When their prior attainment is considered, pupils' achievement has been good in both reading and writing; and for the most able very good in writing. Except for a dip in 1998, when pupils in the current Year 5 took the tests, standards have been steadily rising in the national tests in both reading and writing.

98. Inspection findings for pupils aged seven are that standards in writing and reading are at least in line with national expectations due to the quality of teaching they receive. Standards in speaking and listening are marginally below national expectations and reflect the attainment of many pupils on entry to the school. In the unpublished results of the tests in 2001, similar proportions of pupils gain Level 2 and above in writing as in previous years. However, test results show a drop in the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above in reading. However, the results for both reading and writing are impressive when compared to these pupils' prior attainment, which was very low in reading, and clearly indicate that pupils' achievement has been good. Over the last three years, girls' achievement has been greater than boys' in reading and writing. However, the gap has narrowed in each successive year and boys' achievement is now broadly in line with that of girls. Standards at the age of seven have remained similar to those reported at the last inspection.

99. The unpublished results for the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001, along with inspection findings, clearly indicate further improvements. The percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 and above in the national tests has increased. In 1999, it was 47 per cent, and in 2000 it was 57 per cent; it is now 65 per cent. In 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was very low at only 4 per cent when compared to a national average of 29 per cent. In 2001, the school's percentage has increased dramatically to 30 per cent. When compared to their 1996 Key Stage 1 test results, the majority of pupils' achievement has been good. Over the last five years, standards have varied so much from year to year that it is difficult to establish a trend. Starting from a point below national averages in 1996, standards rose in 1997 due to the high prior attainment of that year group. In 1998 and 1999 standards slowly fell back to 1996 levels and then rose slightly in 2000 due to the good education that all pupils received. Current standards at the age of 11 are broadly in line with those reported by the last inspection because of a further increase in the proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 and above. Although in the 2000 national tests boys' results were better than girls there was no such difference evident during the inspection. The school has set challenging targets for 2002. These are lower than those reached this year and reflect the lower prior attainment of this year group as compared to the present Year 6. Due to the quality of support and clearly focused targets on individual education plans, pupils with special educational needs have also made good progress. Many pupils from very low levels of prior attainment have achieved Level 3 and a small number have reached Level 4 in their tests.

100. Although speaking and listening skills are currently in line with average for children in the Foundation Stage, they have, in the past, been below and even well below. They remain below the expected levels for pupils aged seven and eleven. Standards are lower than those reported at the time of the last inspection and reflect pupils' low prior attainment in this area. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 have made satisfactory and sometimes good progress when their

current ability is measured against their prior attainment. Teachers continually expand pupils' vocabulary by introducing and carefully explaining new words. They ask challenging questions to encourage pupils to explain their answers and to use newly learned words correctly. In their efforts to develop pupils' confidence in speaking and raise their achievement, teachers often structure their lessons to include conversation and discussion. For example, pupils are encouraged to evaluate each other's techniques in athletics or to explain their ideas in science. In these instances, pupils do explain themselves, but they are not confident, nor do they always elaborate their answers fully. They frequently show an ability to listen carefully to their teachers and each other without being distracted. They understand the questions well, offer clear answers and freely contribute to class discussion. Speaking is further developed when pupils take on different characters in role play activities, when they are given the 'hot seat' to deliver an idea or explanation and in the structured class forum discussions. These are all effective in developing speaking and listening across the school, and for all abilities. The school accurately perceives that this area, however, needs further development. The planned use of more drama to raise pupils' achievement in speaking and listening has a very high priority in the school improvement plan for next year.

101. Although children in reception are currently reading at an appropriate level for their age, pupils in previous years started the school with attainment in reading below and sometimes well below the expected level. In the provisional results for 2001, the percentage of seven year olds reaching Level 2 and above has fallen to its lowest point in two years. In 2000, 86 per cent of pupils reached Level 2 and above compared to 66 per cent this year. This is a reflection of the very low prior attainment of this year group. These results, however, demonstrate good and sometimes very good achievement and this is due to the high-quality and intensive support that they receive. The teaching of basic skills in reading is good. A significant emphasis is placed on the development of a range of word attack skills, including phonics and word recognition clues. A structured reading scheme supports the emergent readers and a good range of fiction books in class-based libraries captures the imagination of most readers, especially boys.

102. In the inspection, the majority of Year 2 pupils read their chosen texts they had chosen, fluently and accurately. Confidence with the most common sight words enabled the low attaining pupils to read their chosen texts unsupported. Other pupils have word attack skills that allow them to use their phonic knowledge to break down words into syllables. All pupils have a real enjoyment of books, regardless of their ability. All pupils had some difficulty in retelling the plot of their stories. The low attaining pupils relied heavily on pictures of frogs and witches to assist them; others were able to report in a simple narrative the key events of their chosen book, but were unable to provide detailed descriptions. They were, however, able to respond with laughter to the slapstick humour of throwing food over teachers and the more serious principle of good versus evil in many books about magic. This added considerably to their moral development.

103. Pupils' reading standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations for their age. In relation to their test performance in 1997, pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well due to continued good teaching. Time is set aside each day for quiet reading when pupils of all abilities enjoy reading to their class teacher on a one to one basis. Throughout the school the excitement and fun of the written word are obvious in many lessons and classrooms. This delight in literature is transmitted to pupils so that they have developed a similar enjoyment of books. Reading records show that books are regularly taken home and

read. Most written comments in pupils' 'Reading Records' are evaluative and offer praise and encouragement. Many also offer support and guidance to the pupils and those hearing them read. The great majority of teachers' class records are detailed and offer clear targets on 'What to do next'. In Year 6, the most able pupils read aloud with a sound level of accuracy and understanding. High attaining pupils are suitably challenged by their choice of text for example, Michael Morpurgo's 'Friend or Foe', based on the evacuation of children in World War II and providing good cross-curricular links with the history topic. This favourite children's author was read with fluency and good inference and deduction.

104. The quality and quantity of mainly non-fiction books in the school library is adequate and pupils' steadily develop their study, research and library skills. Pupils in Year 2 are aware that they can go to the library 'to find things out' whilst the high attaining pupils are aware of how to use a contents page. All pupils in Year 6 are aware of the classification system but have not had a great deal of experience using them. They are provided with books for research in topic boxes based in classrooms; they are able to adequately research their geography and history topics using these resources. However, the limited content of these 'boxes' hinders the full development of pupils' research skills. The development of the library is a school priority next year and a co-ordinator has already been appointed. Homework, especially for the older or more able pupils, is based on independent research. Many topics in history and geography are planned specifically to encourage pupils' to use the Internet or CD ROMs.

105. Although children in reception are currently writing at an appropriate level for their age, pupils in previous year groups started school with attainment in reading below and some times well below the expected level for their age. Standards in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds were in line when compared either to all schools nationally or to similar schools. The unpublished results for 2001 indicate that the same percentage of pupils reached Level 2 and above as last year. Inspection findings support the 2000 test results. Based on their prior attainment, pupils achieved well in their writing tests in 2000, and very well in 2001. This is due to the consistently good teaching they received and the emphasis placed on developing literacy skills across the curriculum

106. Independently pupils across the school produce a very wide range of written work. Imaginative and original expression is greatly encouraged, although there is also a good emphasis on the technical aspects of punctuation, spelling and sentence structure. At the end of Year 2, the high attaining pupils write in complete, neat sentences that are correctly demarcated. The low attaining pupils continue to struggle with these basic requirements. The high attaining pupils use simple sentence connectives and choose words for their effect. In a story 'The Magic Car', one of them wrote, 'I saw the shimmering moonlight.' The majority of pupils sequence their stories, and the most able have a clear beginning, middle and end.

107. At the age of 11, pupils are reaching standards in writing that are at least in line with national expectations, and, in relation to their prior attainment, they have achieved very well. In the lessons observed, many were reaching standards beyond the expected level for their age due to the very well planned curriculum, and the very good and sometimes excellent teaching they experience. Consequently pupils carefully build upon their past experiences and skills to ensure growing levels of confidence and very good levels of achievement. The love of language shown by many of the teachers enthuses all children with the same passion.

In many cases they were spiritually uplifted, not only by the process of writing but also in the pride they had for their finished work. Teachers provide a good range of writing strategies, such as editing and planning sheets, that greatly support all pupils in their creative efforts. Pupils organise their work well and have increased the range of their vocabulary and complexity of their sentence structure. The standard of the part-finished work that was read during the course of the inspection week was at least good for all pupils. A high attaining pupil wrote of the bombing of London, 'Tom, dizzy and searching for breath scrambled to this feet weakly.' All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well and benefit from the process of drafting, editing and discussion with both classmates and teacher. A low attaining pupil, on the special needs register wrote, with great feeling:

'The immenseness of the noise deafening my ears like corks in wine bottles, then there was the complete silence. All of a sudden an infinity of brightness filled the rough sky, the crash of the titans was beginning.'

108. The school has implemented a very structured programme for the learning of spelling and some success has been achieved at improving pupils' accurate use and knowledge of spelling rules. Spelling across the school is broadly in line with the expected level for their age, and this demonstrates a good level of achievement for many pupils. However, the weak speaking skills exhibited by many of the pupils make this an uphill struggle. A great deal of effort has been put into improving handwriting. The whole school closely follows and practises a cursive handwriting style and pupils make very good progress. Handwriting standards are generally good and, when pupils achieve a fluent and constant cursive script, they can write in pen. It is a mark of their continued lack of confidence that many pupils continue to write in pencil. There is an agreed, progressive and co-ordinated scheme to ensure that all pupils have planned opportunities to read, speak and write an increasing range of different texts for different learning purposes in different subjects. Literacy skills are developed very well in all other subjects of the curriculum. This is primarily due to teachers' focusing on the introduction and use of subject-specific terminology, but also the level of oral work undertaken in many lessons. Information and communication technology is used widely, especially in Key Stage 2 for word-processing. For example, pupils in Year 4 had to produce a piece of written work using the same format as a newspaper.

109. Across the school, the quality of English teaching observed in lessons is good, with some very good and even excellent elements. Ninety-two per cent of lessons were good or better, with nearly half the lessons observed being either very good or excellent. This is a great improvement on the previous report in 1997. The scrutiny of work and lesson observations indicate that the impact of much of this good teaching is reflected in pupils' good achievement.

110. In many literacy lessons, a tool or 'scaffolding' is taught, such as writing frames, editing, word lists, and drafting plans. Pupils use these to help them to structure or improve their work. Class teachers carefully build on the previous lessons, so providing a series of progressively challenging activities in the course of a lesson and a week. Overall, but

especially in the outstanding teaching in Year 6, a high proportion of questioning checked the pupils' understanding – 'explain what you mean...give me an example'. Many teachers have in-depth knowledge of their pupils and were able to ask questions that offered them all the best levels of challenge to encourage them to think.

111. The completed training for the literacy hour and the support given by the co-ordinator have resulted in a good level of knowledge and understanding amongst teachers and they are able to teach the basics of spelling and phonics. This has helped pupils gain a good understanding of the basic elements of English. Lessons have a very brisk pace and pupils enjoy these lessons. Teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour. Pupils respond to this by trying to do their best. In all cases, the plenary is used effectively as a time to share work. Pupils' enjoy having their work valued and shared, and learn a lot from evaluating each others' work. Teachers also use this opportunity skilfully to assess the quality of work achieved and whether the lesson has met its objectives. Consequently, they are able to plan the next learning experience in such detail that it meets the needs of all pupils in the class. Classroom assistants and additional literacy support personnel are very effective in ensuring that lessons run smoothly, and that all pupils during the course of the week gain some additional adult support. Homework is used to support the learning and teachers are careful to mark and assess it appropriately

112. The co-ordination of the subject is very good and provides a very good lead in developing the subject. The co-ordinator has provided an excellent role model for the teaching of the subject. Teaching and learning have been carefully monitored. The results of many classroom observations undertaken by the senior staff and the subject co-ordinator have formed the priorities of the subject's action plan. The broad and well-planned curriculum, encapsulated in a clear planning structure, is closely and regularly monitored by the co-ordinator to ensure consistently good learning is being offered. Regular assessments of pupils' reading and writing are very good and have improved greatly since the last report. A detailed analysis of pupils' and groups' strengths and weaknesses informs lesson planning as well as curriculum development. Pupils are systematically tracked as they move through the school to ensure that they all have the best possible provision to meet their needs and fulfil their potential. Many staff confidently make use of class and group targets to focus pupils' learning. This year the school has piloted different ways of using individual written targets for all pupils. Many have been successful and have led to a marked improvement in pupils' writing. Based on the evaluation of the trial, a consistent style of written targets is to be used throughout the school next year.

MATHEMATICS

113. Although children in the current reception group have passed many of the mathematical early learning goals, in years gone past most pupils have entered the school with standards below and sometimes well below the expected level for their age. Standards in national tests for mathematics for eleven and seven year olds in 2000 were below the average for all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, standards were below average for seven year olds but in line for 11 year olds. Pupils have achieved well

and sometimes very well due to the good quality teaching that they receive. Since 1998, standards for seven year olds have been rising faster than those found nationally. No clear pattern on standards at the age of 11 exists, as standards vary considerably from year to year due to pupils' different prior attainment. From a very low point in 1996, standards for 11 year olds peaked in 1997, fell in 1998 and again in 1999, but rose in 2000.

114. Provisional results in 2001 for pupils aged 11 indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 and above has remained broadly the same as in 2000 (75 per cent in 2000 and 72.5 per cent in 2001). However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level has risen from 15 per cent in 2000 to 25 per cent in 2001. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils in the current Year 6 have achieved well and sometimes very well. Evidence gained during the inspection confirms that the majority of pupils are working in line with national expectations. In the light of this judgement, standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be below national expectation. The school has set challenging targets for 2002. These are lower than those reached this year and reflect the lower prior attainment of this year group as compared to the present Year 6. Unpublished results for seven year olds indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 and above in the 2001 national tests has remained broadly the same. In 2000, 89 per cent of pupils gained Level 2 or above and 22 per cent gained Level 3 and above. In 2001 from a year group of only 26 pupils, the percentages are now 81 and 27 respectively. Standards at the school have remained broadly the same for the last two years, but with a significant improvement in the proportion of higher attaining pupils this year. Inspection findings confirm that the majority of pupils are working at the expected level, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and that high attainers are being suitably challenged.

115. Comparing boys' and girls' achievement over the three years 1998 to 2000, girls achieved more highly than boys at the age of seven. By the age of 11, however, this gap has decreased considerably as a result of the school's success in addressing boys' underachievement. There was no observable difference between boys and girls during the course of the inspection. The previous report indicated weaknesses in practical and investigative mathematics in Key Stage 2. This has been remedied with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and further training. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons. Because of this, they achieve well and make good progress towards their individual targets. In the current Year 6, nearly half of the lower mathematics set achieved the expected Level 4.

116. In Year 2, pupils were observed working on time, using analogue and digital clock faces. Most were able to interpret 'A quarter past ten' on an analogue clock face as '10.15' on a digital clock face. Nearly all have secure understanding of place value to hundreds, and some pupils work confidently with larger numbers. All pupils are used to carrying out mathematical investigations, and they can name a number of two- and three-dimensional shapes. By Year 6, most pupils have secure understanding of place value to thousands, and a few go well beyond this. They understand linear measure to kilometres and square measure to hectares. Most understand the difference between volume and capacity, and cubic measure up to a metre cube. The majority have reasonable understanding of fractions,

decimal fractions and percentages. They enjoy carrying out investigations and recording their results in tabular and graphical forms. Understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes is generally secure. In lessons observed, pupils had plenty of opportunity for working together, and for speaking and listening, as they worked at solving a range of problems. The way in which pupils with special educational needs or those who find mathematics difficult are supported is a particular strength.

117. Overall, the quality of teaching in lessons observed during the inspection was very good. Eighty-six per cent was good or better, and 57 per cent very good or excellent. This represents a significant improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection, when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The excellent and very good teaching observed is characterised by:

- * High expectations;
- * High quality joint planning;
- * Good subject knowledge and the confident use of mathematical language;
- * High quality monitoring and assessment procedures which are used effectively to inform lesson planning and set individual targets for pupils;
- * High expectations of the pupils and of the teachers themselves;
- * Clear, well-written learning objectives;
- * Good pace.

118. This quality of teaching is reinforced by pupils' own motivation, and by their good relationships with their peers and with the adults in the school. They applied themselves well to the many interesting and challenging tasks that they were given. Consequently, the rate at which pupils were learning in the lessons observed during the inspections was good. They were continually learning new skills and facts, and applying them to new problems. All pupils worked hard and produced good quantities of work. They took pride in their work and responded very positively to the teachers' high expectations of them in terms of work and behaviour.

119. The co-ordinator provides good leadership, and together with her colleagues, has established a clear strategy for the continuing improvement of pupils' achievement. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well. Teaching and learning are closely monitored by the co-ordinator, the senior staff and the LEA. Concerns over standards by the local education authority led to the school's receiving five days of intensive numeracy support. The teaching and support staff have used the additional help very well, further raising the quality of teaching. There are comprehensive computerised systems for gathering information about pupils' attainment and for monitoring their progress. This information is used to inform teachers' planning and the setting of individual numerical and written targets. In this academic year, major targets for improvement have been discussed with both pupils and parents. This has had a positive effect on focusing both pupils' and parents' energies on raising achievement. The quality of marking across the school is good, it affirms what the pupils have done as well as giving them pointers as to how their work might improve. There are sufficient resources, including computers, to support the curriculum, and these are used well by both teachers and pupils. The co-ordinator has developed a carefully planned programme of links between mathematics and other subjects. This ensures that numeracy skills are used well in many subjects, but especially science, design and technology, and

geography. For example, measuring in design and technology, the concept of distance and angles in the use of the floor robot and, data handling in science. These good links help support learning in these subjects but also develops and extends mathematical understanding at the same time, thus raising pupil achievement in this subject. There have been sound improvements in the subject since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

120. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and concepts are below, and sometimes well below the expected level for their age when they start school. Standards in science in the national test for 11 year olds in 2000 were well below the average when compared nationally to all schools and to schools of a similar background. Judged by their prior attainment, however, pupils' achievement was at least satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been improving but at a rate slightly below the national trend. Standards, based on teacher assessments, in 2000 for pupils aged seven were in line with the national average. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils in this year group had also achieved well.

121. Provisional results for pupils aged 11 in 2001 indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 and above has continued to rise. Forty seven per cent reached Level 4 and above in 1999; in 2000 it was 79 per cent and in 2001 it is 85 per cent. Similarly, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 has increased from 19 per cent in 2000, when the national figure was 34 per cent to 24 per cent in 2001. Evidence gained during the inspection confirms that the majority of pupils are working in line with national expectations. When their current performance is compared to their 1997 Key Stage 1 test results, it is clear that the majority of pupils have achieved well. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection.

122. Unpublished teacher assessments for seven year olds in 2001 indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 and above has remained broadly the same as last year. In a year group of only 26 pupils, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 has decreased slightly from 25 per cent to 11 per cent. This is due to the different nature of the current year group, and their low levels of prior attainment. Given their well below average attainment on entry to the school, they have all achieved well and some very well. Inspection findings indicate that the majority of pupils are working in line with national expectations, and at standards similar to those reported in the last inspection.

123. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls or between the four aspects of the subject. The previous report indicated weaknesses in scientific enquiry and in the study of physical processes. These have been addressed. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons. Because of this they achieve well and make good progress towards their individual targets.

124. By age seven, pupils are beginning to develop the basic vocabulary associated with science. Pupils in Year 2 study the life cycle of a caterpillar and can understand the process by which a caterpillar turns into a chrysalis and then into a butterfly. They had previously had very good experience of watching life develop and change, as a caterpillar in the classroom was eventually released as a butterfly. Pupils carry out simple investigations and

can make sensible predictions about what may happen. For example, pupils in Year 2 carried out a test to find out which type of surface allows a toy car to travel furthest, and were able to make sensible predictions about the possible results. Pupils usually write up results of investigations for themselves, often with the aid of worksheets, and they use simple graphs and tables to present evidence.

125. By the age of 11, pupils develop a satisfactory factual knowledge and a range of scientific vocabulary. They understand terms such as habitat, food chain, photosynthesis, chlorophyll and carbon dioxide. When conducting experiments, pupils recognise the need for fair tests and they use equipment with care. They describe the most important factors in making sure that tests are fair and sensibly predict what the outcomes may be. This was clearly demonstrated by pupils in Year 6. They were able to set up a test to see if different materials muffle sounds more effectively than others. In discussions later in the lesson, higher attaining pupils were able to describe any shortcomings in their methods and make suggestions as to how the test procedure could be improved. Pupils write up the results of tests and investigations using written descriptions and graphs which they produce themselves. This is an aid to both their literacy and their numeracy development, especially for higher attaining pupils who can develop their writing style and have opportunities to write at length.

126. The quality of teaching and of the learning it promotes is good. Teaching is satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons and good in over half. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in one lesson during the inspection. In the light of the broad evidence of teachers' planning and pupils' learning, this was a 'blip' and untypical of the normal high quality provision. Teachers have very good class control that is achieved without fuss and with good humour. Teachers and pupils show a high level of respect for each other and this contributes strongly to the relaxed but businesslike atmosphere found in classrooms. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this means that pupils gain a high level of factual information. This combines with good organisational skills so that all aspects of practical work are carefully thought out in advance. Pupils are given clear instructions so that they know exactly what to do and no time is lost during lessons. Teachers place an emphasis on pupils discussing their ideas and on investigating for themselves. It is this that has led to the improvement in scientific enquiry since the last report and the increasing number of pupils who are achieving the higher levels. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to produce tables, graphs and databases.

127. Classroom assistants make a significant contribution to supporting pupils in lessons. This is particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and is a contributory factor in their good progress, especially where their individual targets include improvements in behaviour. In the vast majority of lessons pupils behave very well. Where they work together in-groups, relationships are very good and pupils are always ready to help each other with difficulties. It is the combination of very good pupil's attitudes and good quality teaching that is the main factor in the steady rise in attainment.

128. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Improvements since the last inspection have been significant. Although standards have not improved dramatically, pupils' achievement has and so has the teaching of science. The senior management of the school and the subject co-ordinator provide a high level of effective monitoring and support of teaching. This ensures that good practice is shared so that the quality of teaching improves. Very good

procedures are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for ensuring that there are no gaps in the curriculum provided. Good use of the assessment data has enabled the school to set targets for improvement and to check where strengths and weaknesses exist. The subject co-ordinator and other staff have shown a high level of commitment to re-drafting the scheme of work in a very short time to take account of changes recently announced. This provides a detailed and progressive programme that is having a positive impact on standards. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to study, and reflect upon, the world and the environment, and this makes a strong contribution to their spiritual development. The adults in the school provide positive role models. In discussions pupils learn to listen to and appreciate the views of others, thus developing their social skills as well as their speaking and listening. Social development is further enhanced by good opportunities to work together, share and take turns. Pupils have opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility by organising equipment and tidying up after lessons. Cultural development is satisfactory, overall, but there is no strong emphasis on the wide range of traditions from which scientific thinking and ideas have come. Accommodation provides safe areas for practical work. The subject has good resources, which add to the quality of learning.

ART AND DESIGN

129. Standards at the end of both key stages are above those expected nationally and all pupils' make satisfactory progress. These standards represent an improvement since the last inspection.

130. By the age of 11, most pupils approach their work critically and concentrate on the task in hand. In a Year 5/6 class, pupils sketched the treasures they thought they would take away with them if they were evacuated. They were careful to arrange the articles in a suitable group and concentrated on shading, light and dark. They took time and patience to gain the best effect. The teaching points were well matched to the differing needs of the pupils, and those with special educational needs were supported effectively.

131. By the age of seven, pupils have gained confidence in using a range of media and techniques. They experiment with colour mixing, pattern and texture and their work is often linked effectively with other subjects. For example, a collage on the sea related to topic work on the properties of water. Year 2 responded to good teaching and worked with enthusiasm to create a class sculpture whilst another group worked outside, carefully undertaking observational drawing. Pupils are familiar with different materials and how to use them.

132. In the majority of lessons, teaching was good. In these lessons, pupils were challenged by the teachers' high expectations of what the pupils could do. In all the lessons, teachers planned carefully and the learning objectives were shared with the pupils. Appropriate resources were readily available.

133. An examination of work throughout the school showed that pupils are making good progress over time. Displays of work in classes and the public areas of the school show that a wide variety of materials has been used. In particular, in the hall, some fine examples of a school tapestry and banners relate to environmental work. Art is particularly well used to support other areas of the curriculum. Several displays, such as one on Joseph and his coat of many colours, provide evidence of cross-curricular links in the subject. Sketch books are used to good effect in both key stages and pupils are well used to designing their ideas before working on them. Pupils are introduced to the work of artists such as Monet, and his style is explored within their own colourful and interesting paintings. Good co-ordination of the subject has improved provision. Schemes of work and the development of assessment in the subject are supported by a national scheme. Planning is good and supports the development of knowledge, skills and concepts over time. Although pupils are regularly introduced to the great artists of the western world but their appreciation of different cultural styles and influences is not as systematically developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. Only one design and technology lesson took place during the period of the inspection. An examination of work in both key stages and the observation of this lesson indicate that the standards reached by pupils in both key stages are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils of all abilities achieve well over their time in school when their previous learning is taken into account. The school has sustained the standards reported at the time of the last inspection.

135. In the lesson observed in a Year 4 class, the teaching was good. Pupils were designing and making musical instruments. The lesson had pace and purpose and the pupils were able to explain what they were doing. For example, one group knew that, in order to make a wind chime, the chimes must be able to touch each other when blown by the wind, and that to vary the sound, the chimes must be of different lengths. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have designed and made jackets for Teddy Bears. In Key Stage 2, good examples of containers made by pupils have details of the design attached. A Year 5/6 class has designed a mathematical net which will form a vase, and there are good examples on display of curve sewing. In an information and communication technology lesson, pupils were observed using a graphics program to assist them in designing a coat of many colours for Joseph. Each project undertaken has a clear emphasis on the processes expected, so that aspects of designing and evaluating products are being learned by the pupils.

136. Co-ordination of the subject has been effective. Planning is good, with clear learning objectives. Schemes of work and the development of assessment are supported by a national scheme. Each project shows a good understanding of the processes involved. The subject is used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, such as numeracy and literacy by offering the pupils to write their own instructions and evaluations as in the case of Josephs' coat, or their knowledge of shape and measurement in Years 5 and 6.

GEOGRAPHY

137. Because of timetable arrangements, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Key Stage 1. Judgements for this key stage are based on analysis of pupils' work, discussions with staff and scrutiny of teachers' planning.

138. Attainment is in line with that expected of pupils of the same age, both at seven and at eleven. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support in lessons and make satisfactory progress. When attainment on entry is taken into account, pupils achieve well during their time in the school.

139. By age seven, pupils are able to use maps and plans of various types, and they show satisfactory development of drawing and mapping skills. There is a strong link with their work in history and most of their work is linked to a visit to a local seaside resort as part of a history project. From this pupils learn to describe the features of holiday resorts, to know something of their development, and to make simple comparisons between holiday resorts and their own village. They develop a satisfactory geographical vocabulary and can, for example, distinguish between physical and human features on a map. There is limited evidence, either in pupils' work or on display, that they are beginning to develop the skills of using graphs and tables for interpretation or to display data.

140. By age 11, pupils have a satisfactory factual knowledge and a working geographical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6, for example, do work on marine erosion and can understand and explain such terms as erosion, deposition, cliffs, stacks and caves. They are beginning to appreciate the effects of human activity on the environment and can, for instance, give details of a proposed housing development in the area and its likely positive and negative impact. In Year 6, pupils are developing the skills of research and interpretation. Interesting work was done, using some basic information provided, about where they would locate certain features such as power stations and lighthouses on a stretch of coastline. Nevertheless, pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their skills through the more subtle aspects of the subject, such as posing their own questions, carrying out relevant research and writing their own conclusions.

141. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have very good control of their classes and behaviour is very good. Where pupils work together in pairs or groups, they do so very well, and the very good relationships between pupils and with their teachers are a strong feature of all the lessons. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge and are able to teach the basic factual knowledge of the subject. This does not extend consistently into those aspects of the subject which require pupils to think about issues and investigate for themselves, or to look at studies on a world wide scale. Teachers have appropriate expectations of pupils' work and pupils respond well by showing care over the presentation of their written and drawing work. Assessment of pupils' work is good and books are regularly marked and corrected. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to word-process some pupils' work and to produce graphs and tables. This is an area that still needs further development.

142. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The monitoring and support of teaching are good. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator and teachers have shown a high level of commitment in completely revising the scheme of work to take account of recent changes and to introduce a new National Curriculum. This now provides good continuity and will help to overcome inconsistencies in coverage previously experienced. Good procedures for assessment are in place, which enable teachers to record pupils' attainment and progress, and to look for weaknesses in the curriculum provided. The contribution of geography to pupils' literacy development is satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to learn a satisfactory range of geographical vocabulary. There are examples of pupils' extended writing, but limited evidence of systematic use of the subject to improve overall writing skills, especially as part of individual research. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In many lessons there are opportunities to reflect on the environment. Pupils are able to work together and are taught to share, take turns and listen to the views of others. Trips out of school and regular visitors enhance both the social and cultural aspects of pupils' personal development.

HISTORY

143. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of the same age, both at seven years old and at eleven. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support from teachers and classroom assistants and make good progress. Pupils of all abilities achieve well over their time in school when their previous learning is taken into account.

144. By age 11, pupils have developed an understanding of a number of periods of history, including those of Ancient Egypt, the Victorians, and World War II. Pupils' sense of chronology is well developed and they can use timelines to work out various periods in history. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the periods they study. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were able to explain the reasons for the policy of evacuation. Pupils have some knowledge of the main characters in the periods they study, such as Hitler, Churchill and Chamberlain. Some higher attaining pupils produce good individual research pieces using word processing and pictures, and demonstrate their ability to use a number of sources of information. However, these are exceptions, and there is limited evidence that pupils use a range of primary and secondary sources of information for their own research, or that they can interpret the value of the sources being used. Pupils are able to appreciate the feelings of people at the time and produce good work, for example, on the mixed feelings of evacuees as they were being moved out of cities.

145. By age seven, pupils are able to distinguish between past and present and understand that different events happen in different periods of time. They are able to recognise that changes occur over time. In their topic on seaside holidays, pupils in Year 2, for example, can recognise the changes in clothes and transport that have taken place since Victorian times. Pupils are able to use timelines and can place events in the correct order. Pupils are beginning to use historical sources such as photographs, visitors and books to find information. They have good opportunities to develop their writing style with a range of descriptive and factual writing and this is especially beneficial to higher attaining pupils.

146. The quality of teaching and of the learning it promotes is good. There is very good and excellent teaching in nearly half of the lessons seen. Where teaching is at its very best, lessons are planned in great detail and the objectives of the lesson are shared with pupils, so everybody is clear about what they are doing and pupils have some knowledge of their own learning. A strong feature of all the teaching is very good class control. Where it is at its best, the teacher appears to make no effort to achieve it. Very good use of praise and encouragement improves pupils' self-confidence. As a result relationships in classes are excellent. Teachers have very good teaching methods. These include the use of videos, a range of written and pictorial sources and visitors, as well as discussion and written work. In discussions, teachers make very good use of question and answer sessions to encourage pupils to think beyond the factual information into why events occurred and why people acted as they did. This range of teaching methods provides challenging work as well as interest and variety. In these excellent lessons pupils respond with great enthusiasm, excellent behaviour and a high level of interest. The range of sources does not yet extend to an organised use of information and communication technology. The rich variety of information available in websites, for example, is largely unused.

147. The co-ordination of the subject is good. There are clear and realistic priorities for development. Attainment is rising and monitoring of the work in classrooms has developed well. The scheme of work has been extensively revised to introduce a national scheme in line with recommended changes in the curriculum. This also provides good assessment procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and progress and for looking for any gaps in provision that may occur. The well-planned curriculum has made many links between history and other subjects, particularly English. Consequently the well established teaching strategies of discussion, debate and empathetic writing all strongly support the development of literacy skills. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by enabling pupils to consider the thoughts and feelings of people from other times, and to learn about their heritage and that of people from other parts of the world. It is not so strong on acknowledging the contribution that other cultures, such as Ancient Egypt, have made to cultures such as ours. There is a strong moral dimension in lessons where pupils are taught right from wrong, to listen to others when they are speaking and to respect their views. The range of trips out of school and visitors to it further enhances the social and cultural impact of history. Year 1 pupils interviewed a grandparent of a pupil about her childhood recollections of holidays to add a personal and relevant dimension to their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

148. Attainment by the ages of seven and eleven is in line with national expectations, and pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when attainment was below national expectations across the school. Key factors in this improvement have been:

- * the effective co-ordination of the subject;
- * the considerable improvement in provision of resources;
- * the increased teacher confidence;
- * the provision of a teaching assistant dedicated to information and communication technology supporting the work of the subject.

149. By the age of 11 pupils were observed in an excellent history lesson competently using the Internet and extract from it information about the lives of children during World War II from the Imperial War Museums web site. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are knowledgeable about information and communication technology and its uses in the modern world. This makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. They know and understand that the Internet is a valuable aid to communication, entertainment and commerce. In Year 6, all pupils have a good understanding of the way in which text and pictures can be combined to make an impact. Lower attaining pupils have designed clear, well-presented posters and higher attaining pupils produced sophisticated folded leaflets. They use CD ROMs confidently to access information in subjects such as history. They enjoy carrying out simple investigations and record the information they have obtained in tabular and graphical forms using a computer. Most pupils can confidently program a simple robotic device, and take photographs using a digital camera.

150. By the age of seven, pupils successfully access a word processor and type in different fonts; they competently colour their text. They know how to use a mouse, keyboard and CD ROM, and they load the computer programs that they are working on and save the work that they have done. Pupils understand how to use a programmable robotic device to follow a series of instructions in order to reach a given destination. Most pupils are able to collate simple data in tabular and graphical forms using a computer.

151. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which computers are used across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about the story of Joseph in their religious education lessons and use a computer drawing program imaginatively and with skill to design their versions of his coloured coat. They then make their version of the coat as part of their work in design technology. In the Year 2 lesson observed, the teacher confidently used a projector linked to a computer to increase pupils' understanding of the way in which a CD ROM can be used to access information. All pupils showed a good understanding of the reasons for using a CD ROM and, when given the opportunity, were able to use a computer mouse to highlight areas that they wished to investigate. The lesson clearly achieved its objectives and pupils' understanding was reinforced. In the very good lesson observed in Year 4 relating to the production of a newspaper article, there was lively pace and challenge right from the start. The teacher had secure subject knowledge in relation to computers and very good understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Both were brought together very effectively in this lesson, where pupils showed that they understood the importance of well-chosen illustrations, clear and accurate reporting and the significant effect of a striking caption using an appropriate font to attract the attention of the reader. Most pupils understood how to use a mouse correctly and had good understanding of the purpose of icons and menus.

152. The recently appointed co-ordinator works effectively with the teaching assistant to provide good leadership. They work very closely with their colleagues, and have been effective in improving teachers' confidence and in raising levels of pupils' achievement. Clear objectives for future development have been identified in the good subject improvement plan. In particular, priorities are the completion of staff training, the acquisition of additional learning resources, such as CD ROMs, and the further development of control and modelling in the juniors. The curriculum is enriched by the many exciting opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology, such as the controllable robotic device, and the chance to operate a projector linked from a notebook

computer or to take and print their own digital pictures. Skills learned in literacy are reinforced and developed across the school as pupils refine their word processing skills. There are strong links with mathematics. Pupils use computers to consolidate their understanding of place value, the four rules of number, and two and three-dimensional shapes. Evidence of data handling and the presentation of information in tabular and graphical forms is also present across the school. Assessment is adequate and follows national guidelines; teachers are able to track the progress made by individual pupils. Portfolios of their best work are kept, selected jointly by the teacher and the pupil. The provision of resources is good, especially in the new computer suite, and hardware and software are managed and used very well. Pupils treat the computers and other equipment with great care and respect.

MUSIC

153. Music is a strength of the school. It permeates and enriches many areas of the curriculum. The quality of performance is high; standards at the age of seven are above those expected nationally, and they are well above at the age of 11. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well due to very good musical provision at the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection which found attainment to range 'from above to below national expectations'.

154. Pupils' singing in lessons and assemblies is very good; it is in tune and sung with a sense of enjoyment, ample volume and good diction. Rhythm skills are secure. Pupils in the school orchestra, and those in the handbell group, show very good control of instruments when they perform publicly in assembly, and also in practice. The pupils' sense of spiritual uplift and enjoyment was very apparent as they listened and sang on these occasions. In lessons, pupils across the school show good knowledge of instruments and of how sounds are produced. Most pupils play tuned and untuned percussion in instrumental work when they play their own compositions. Pupils learn to read music well. They listen carefully to each other and to recordings in lessons and in assembly. They appraise sensibly and use an appropriate technical vocabulary. General musical knowledge, of instruments, artists, forms, styles, well-known pieces and composers is good, although knowledge of musical styles outside the western tradition is less well developed. Nevertheless, pupils do have opportunities to experience music from beyond Europe in both music and dance.

155. Teaching is very good and benefits from the musical knowledge and training of many of the staff. Learning is good overall, because of the richness of the experience provided. Work in lessons develops instrumental, vocal and music reading skills to enable pupils to achieve well in performing, composing and listening. Teaching is dynamic and rigorous; high expectations push the pupils so that they make first-rate progress. Pupils practise well and this supports learning. Clear routines are established and the lessons proceed at a fast and lively pace so that pupils are successfully engaged, stimulated and motivated in enjoyable music-making. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher and pupils experimented together using a range of tuned and untuned instruments to try to compose a musical presentation that interpreted the cycle of a storm in sound. The levels of concentration, the perceptive contributions of the pupils and the final result were quite striking. By the end of the lesson, pupils were looking forward with eager anticipation to the next lesson when additional sounds were going to be added. Similarly, in a very good Year 4 lesson, the teacher and

pupils worked together on a song about the wives of Henry VIII with the words ‘divorced’, ‘beheaded’, ‘died’, ‘divorced’, ‘beheaded’, ‘survived’. Singing unaccompanied, the pupils worked at accurately adding pulse, rhythm and ostinato.¹ By the end of the lesson the classroom was full of the exciting sound of four groups of pupils combining together, one providing the pulse, two providing the ostinato using the words ‘divorced’ and ‘beheaded’ respectively, and the last singing the words – an excellent achievement.

156. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards music across the school. Their very good behaviour supports good achievement. Pupils are friendly, open, responsive, good humoured and respectful towards staff and each other. They use equipment sensibly, work well collaboratively and remain on task. They show initiative and willingly enjoy taking responsibility when leading others in performance.

157. Many pupils benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. In addition to the recorder and handbell groups, there is the school choir and the school orchestra. Pupils have the opportunity to receive instrumental tuition from five peripatetic teachers in strings, reed, flute, guitars and brass. Good opportunities for performance range from school concerts to performances in Chelmsford Cathedral at Christmas and at harvest time, and in the Albert Hall in support of Barnado’s. The input of specialist visitors boosts standards. For example, the school was one of six selected primary schools from Chelmsford to take part in Opera 2000. This involved Year 4 children in music, drama and stagecraft workshops for two professional productions, ‘Amahl and the Night Visitors’ and ‘Carmen’. This was a wonderful opportunity for pupils’ personal development.

158. The music co-ordinator is providing high quality leadership, which effectively harnesses the talents of other staff and of pupils. The curriculum is exceedingly well planned. Planning is based upon recent national guidance and a commercial scheme, and organisation is very good. Work on time signatures and rhythm supports numerical development. Music also supports literacy well when acting as a stimulus for written work such as poetry, or when pupils compose to match the feeling of a piece of writing, or when they set a text to music. Assessment is adequate and based on national guidance; it enables teachers to track the progress made by individual pupils. Homework is set when appropriate. For example, recorder players and other instrumentalists have to practise for the next week’s lesson. Provision of resources is good, and they are accessible and used well. There are links with information and communication technology through the use of electronic equipment and instruments but the use of computers themselves is under-developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. During the course of the inspection, only lessons in athletics and games were available to be observed. On the basis of these lessons, standards in physical education are in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. All pupils make sound progress and achieve well. Standards have remained broadly the same since the last inspection. The majority of pupils aged 11 are able to swim 25 metres. Many pupils at the school benefit greatly from a very wide range of out of school activities, in which they can

¹ A persistent phrase or rhythm repeated through all or part of a piece of music.

extend their skills and talents. The school has been successful in a number of sporting events, particularly football.

160. By the age of 11 pupils have a good understanding of the importance of warming up before physical exercise and the need for exercise in a healthy life style. They know the starting position and techniques to run a sprint race, and are able to use these in a relay race where they successfully used the 'change over zone' to swap batons. By the age of seven, pupils know how to throw and catch a ball and to be a successful fielder during a game of rounders, passing the ball to fourth base. Pupils understand that games have rules for fairness and safety, that games are won by team effort as much as individual merit, and that running a team member out is not good sportsmanship. Using their knowledge of tactics and ball skills, they were able to have an enjoyable game of rounders.

161. Overall, the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory. Pupils enjoyed the lessons, and even though it was exceptionally hot during the week of the inspection, they persevered and tried their hardest. Teachers have at least sound, sometimes very good, and even excellent subject knowledge. This provides them with the confidence to structure the lessons carefully and move from one activity to another, emphasising skills and building up pupils' confidence. Consequently, most pupils acquire and refine their skills. Teachers also emphasise the qualities of good sportsmanship; this makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development. In the Year 4 and 5 lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to walk, jog and then run around the lines marking out the playing field rather than have a free for all sprint round the field. Through mutual respect and the use of praise, lessons are safe and controlled. Lessons are well organised and a good array of resources is readily accessible which pupils treat with care. Good questioning skills, particularly at the start of a lesson by the teacher encourage pupils to explain their previous learning and the healthy living aspects of their work. As an effective way of reinforcing and introducing new skills, teachers and pupils also give good demonstrations which pupils then evaluate. For example, in the Year 3 games lesson on the field, the teacher gave a demonstration of best and worst running styles. Consequently, during the actual game pupils modelled themselves on what was done well and improved their running styles.

162. The co-ordination of the subject is sound. The subject is well planned and uses a combination of the most recent guidelines and a commercial scheme to support teachers and provide a range of good learning experiences for the pupils. Assessment techniques are in line with current guidance and teachers are aware of who is talented, who is competent and who needs extra support and guidance. The teaching of physical education at the school benefits greatly from having a playing field, a good sized playground, a hall, and an outdoor heated swimming pool. Able swimmers are encouraged to develop their talent as 'club swimmers', and the school offers specialist coaching for sports such as tennis. The school also has numerous and popular teams and clubs, such as netball and hockey. During the inspection, both parents and pupils enthusiastically supported the hockey tournament, organised by parents. Pupils have also been very successful at their competitions in local leagues and tournaments. On a national level, pupils reached the televised finals of the Futebol de Salao competition.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

163. Attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus, which has been introduced since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection.

164. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure understanding of the structure of the Christian Bible and the different types of genre that it contains. They sensitively discuss the purposes behind the different parables of Jesus and can compare them with Aesop's fables. Pupils are able to identify similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity and they are aware of the major festivals of other faiths, such as the Hindu/Sikh festival of Diwali and the Muslim festival of Eid. Their written work shows that they are able to write about what they have learned at a level appropriate for their age, and to reflect on difficult moral issues such as those raised by stories like "The Good Samaritan". Scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 2 demonstrates that pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity and Judaism, and an awareness of the major festivals of faiths, such as Hinduism. It is evident from their writing that pupils enjoy hearing stories from the Bible, especially the stories of Joseph and his coat of many colours, The Good Samaritan and The Christmas Story.

165. On the evidence of observing two lessons and analysing pupils' work and teachers' planning, the quality of teaching is good. This is an overall improvement on the last inspection when teaching was judged variable. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils with different prior levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. In the very good lesson observed at the end of Key Stage 2, the teacher used discussion well to consolidate and extend previous knowledge of the Bible. The lesson had good pace and the teacher used her good subject knowledge to make the lesson stimulating and challenging. Most pupils were interested in the stories, listened attentively and responded keenly to questions. Discussion with teachers confirms that their subject knowledge is secure, even when they are teaching units relating to faiths of which they have no direct experience.

166. It is evident, in the pupils' work and in the lessons observed, that pupils' literacy skills are used well; for example, when identifying the different genres of biblical texts. In lessons, pupils discuss sensitively difficult issues such as human suffering. Such opportunities support pupils' social and personal development. Across the school, pupils are regularly given opportunities to offer personal reactions to the beliefs of others, to develop perceptions of right and wrong, and to contrast behaviour within their own and others' societies, thus adding to their moral and cultural development. For example, they compare life in Japan with their lives in Boreham.

167. The co-ordinator is providing satisfactory leadership. The subject curriculum meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and is based on recent national guidance. A broad, well-balanced programme is extended well through school assemblies, the very good moral and social education provision and the use of the class forum. Assessment procedures based on national guidance are adequate to enable teachers to identify the progress of individual pupils. Artefacts and other resources are sufficient and teachers use them well to create a respectful environment for learning, and a deeper understanding of different faiths. Pupils of all ages understand the importance of handling religious texts and artefacts with respect. A small number of visits to places of worship, such as the local parish church, take place to enrich the curriculum. Assemblies add to the learning experiences in religious

education. They have been made relevant by visits, for example, from the local vicar and a Buddhist. Information and communication technology is applied well to support the religious education curriculum. Word processing is used to write about such subjects as the meaning of Lent. An art program is used to help design and colour pupils' own versions of Joseph's coat of many colours.