

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115159

Headteacher: Mrs A Crockett

Reporting inspector: Mr Michael Allcock
19834

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th February 2001

Inspection number: 192525

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 category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marsh Road Burnham-on-Crouch Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Elliott
Date of previous inspection:	17 th – 20 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19834	Michael Allcock	Registered inspector	English; information and communication technology; music; physical education; English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24891	Jackie Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics; science; design and technology; equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
6957	John Cook	Team inspector	Art; geography; history; special educational needs; Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary is a seven-class school in the Essex riverside town of Burnham-on-Crouch. It has 199 pupils on roll, which is broadly average. Being an aided school, it has no defined catchment and draws from a wide surrounding area. Attainment on entry to reception, as measured by the county's baseline assessment, is above average overall, though the full range is seen. About one and a half per cent of pupils come from ethnic minorities, which is very low. One pupil has English as an additional language but not at an early stage of acquisition. About 20 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, about average. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. Ten per cent of pupils joined or left the school at other times than those usual in the last school year, which is about the normal mobility rate for primary schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's is becoming an effective school. Pupils achieve appropriate overall standards, due to the sound teaching they receive. However, low pupil attainment in mathematics and science has caused the trend in standards to be downwards. Standards in these two subjects are therefore below those seen in similar schools. This is unsatisfactory, as children enter school with above average standards overall and not enough pupils reach above the expected levels of attainment by the time they leave the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. They are well looked after. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have worked hard to improve overall standards of provision. The school now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English are above average and pupils achieve well in this key subject.
- Children get a good start to their learning in the reception class.
- There are effective procedures for assessing the outcomes of the well-designed curriculum.
- Consistently high standards of care produce confident, well behaved pupils who arrive punctually and ready to work hard.
- Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development encourages constructive personal development and relationships.
- Strong leadership and management are positive forces to improve standards.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough in the core subjects of mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Able pupils, in particular, do not make the progress of which they are capable in these subjects.
- Inconsistencies, including in the quality of teaching and curriculum provision, are not being picked up in classroom monitoring by senior staff and subject managers.
- The school does not use new technology effectively enough: either to improve pupils' standards or as a powerful management tool.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved considerably since it was placed in special measures, following its first inspection in February 1997. Regular monitoring visits, and an eventual report by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), plus close co-operation from the local education authority have supported the school well during the process. In 1997, the school had significant weaknesses in key areas of pupils' standards and achievements, teaching and learning, the curriculum and procedures to assess pupils, its provision for pupils' support and guidance, including their health and safety, and in most areas of leadership and management. The governing body's responsibility for the financial management of the school's affairs had been withdrawn.

All key issues for improvement identified following the previous inspection and by HMI have been addressed, mostly in full. However, pupils still do not all make the same levels of progress in lessons in all classes. Challenge for the higher attainers and support for those with special educational needs still varies, affecting the standards they reach and the achievement they make. Standards in core subjects are still not high enough, given the average or better levels of attainment displayed by most year groups on entry to the school. Insufficient evidence exists to say positively that the school will meet its targets for mathematics and science this year. However, effective action by senior staff and governors and a heightened level of teamwork have created a culture of institutional development, which is likely to see overall standards improve still further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	A	B	A
Mathematics	B	B	D	E
Science	A	C	E	E

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

The results from last year show that standards were above the national points score in English by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. However, standards were below average in mathematics and well below in science. Compared to schools with a similar intake, standards were well above average in English but well below in both mathematics and science. The table shows how standards have declined in two out of three core subjects in recent years. This has resulted in the school having a trend in average points scored in end of Key Stage 2 tests below the national average, despite good results in English. This is because not enough pupils attain the higher Level 5 grade to score higher points for the school, because they are not challenged sufficiently in all classes to make the progress they should.

The school has set appropriate targets for year groups, based upon careful analysis of pupils' results in its own testing programme. These targets only focus on the proportion of pupils predicted to achieve the expected level, which will not be enough by itself to ensure that the school achieves average or higher overall points scores. In work seen during the inspection, standards of literacy were high. Standards of numeracy were at the expected levels. Pupils attain higher than expected standards in English, art and history by the time they leave the school. However, pupils' attainments in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and geography are below those expected. Most pupils achieve appropriately in relation to their previous attainment levels. The higher attainers do not make sufficient progress in all lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Positive. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to learn and pay close attention in lessons. They try hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave very well. A few, mainly boys, find it harder to always maintain acceptable standards of behaviour.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate positively to each other and respect each other's views. They respond well if given the opportunity to take responsibility. They are given too few opportunities to work independently.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The number of reported absences is in line with national averages. Unauthorised absences are below the national figures.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in over 93 per cent of lessons. It was good, very good or excellent in almost 56 per cent. However, teaching was unsatisfactory in nearly 7 per cent of lessons seen. This shows considerable improvement since the last inspection when about 33 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or worse. Improvements to curriculum planning and assessment have helped improve teaching, underpinned by a clear focus on the key elements of what makes for effective teaching and learning in lessons.

Teaching is good in the key subject of English, and in art. However, it is less confident in science, information and communication technology and geography. Mathematics is soundly taught in most classes. Teachers display secure overall knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum. They teach the basic skills, especially of literacy and numeracy effectively, and manage pupils well. This produces sustained all-round effort from the pupils, who show interest in their work and concentrate well. Overall, pupils' learning is satisfactory. Planning does not always distinguish between pupils of differing levels of attainment, which means that in some lessons the higher attaining are not set challenging enough tasks and the lower attaining are not well enough supported.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good at both key stages. Broadly based and made relevant to pupils by a good range of visits undertaken and visitors who are welcomed by the school. It is supported by a good range of extra curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Individual education plans contain well thought out targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very effective provision is made for pupils' social development, within the school's supportive Anglican ethos. It is good for their spiritual and moral development. Provision for cultural development is broadly satisfactory but the multi-cultural dimension is under represented.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good support and guidance provided for pupils in most aspects of the school's work.

Parents' views of the school are broadly positive. However, the school has effective links with its parents and provides them with a good level of information. The parent teacher association is a tireless

fundraising body. Many parents support the school by helping in classes and by their contribution to their children's learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Strong leadership is provided by the headteacher. Effective teamwork has resulted in the substantial improvement made overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Very effective in redressing non-compliance with statutory requirements. Supportive and active as a body, which knows its school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Data appropriately analysed and used to set targets and plan strategically. The monitoring of teaching and learning to develop them further is unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Improvements in the linking of spending to educational priorities. Governors seek best value for money they spend. Budget well managed. Inadequate use of technology wastes administrative time.

There is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of the school's curriculum. However, not all management roles are closely matched to experience, qualification and preference. Resources are sound overall. Topic boxes for history and geography are well put together. Resources for information and communication technology are now good. The well-stocked library and information and communication technology suite are both currently underused for such costly provision. The school's accommodation is cramped but well kept.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • Children are helped to become more mature and responsible. • Clear procedures are in place, for example to ensure good attendance and punctuality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour, particularly at lunchtime. • A consistent pattern to the homework children are given. • The quality of teaching. • Information the school provides about their children's progress and the curriculum. • The closeness of the partnership between the school and themselves. • The amount and variety of extra curricular clubs and other activities outside school.

Inspectors agree with most of the positive views expressed by parents but found that the higher attainers were not always sufficiently challenged, so did not achieve well enough. There was some variation between the views expressed in the parents' pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector and the responses gathered from the questionnaires. Inspectors agreed with parents that teaching quality was variable. The different amount of homework teachers provided was one indication of this. The partnership with parents is well developed. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting confirmed that senior staff and other teachers are open and accessible. There is good provision of extra curricular activities. Some parents would like to see more competitive sporting links with other primary schools. Behaviour is good in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime, both in the hall and the playground. Inspectors found that the school provided parents with helpful information about its curriculum and that annual reports were good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in English, mathematics and science, the core subjects assessed at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, have declined since the time of the last inspection. Results then published were described as difficult to confirm. However, in subsequent years there has been a verified downward trend in the school's results compared to that seen nationally. During that time there has been a revision in the way schools are compared. Previously, judgements about results in national tests were based upon the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels, Level 2 at Key Stage 1 and Level 4 at Key Stage 2. Currently, points are allocated to the levels attained and schools' average points scored compared. While the school has managed to score sufficient points in English by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, results in mathematics and science have been disappointing. This is due to the below or well below average proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5, with its heavier points weighting. Given that the school's intake is average or better, higher numbers of pupils should be achieving these standards, indicating that pupils capable of higher attainment are not being challenged sufficiently in these subjects.
2. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 results were mixed. In reading, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 was well below the national average. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was close to the national average but this left the overall points score below the average for that year. In writing, although the result at Level 2 was also below average, a well above average proportion of pupils reached Level 3. This produced an overall points score above the national average. This result was similar to that in mathematics where a below average proportion of Level 2 scores and a well above proportion of Level 3s ensured an average points score overall. As well as comparing schools to national outcomes, comparison is also made to those with similar intakes. In writing the school was above average, in mathematics close to the national average and in reading below.
3. In the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 tests, the school was successful in getting an above average proportion of pupils to the expected Level 4 in English. Results at the higher Level 5 were well above average, giving an above average overall result. Results in mathematics and science were virtually the reverse. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was below average and that reaching the higher levels well below. This produced a below average result in mathematics, while that in science was well below. When compared to similar schools, the results in English were well above average but those in mathematics and science well below.
4. There are differences in some year groups, as is normally the case, but over the last few years, girls have usually outperformed boys, as is seen nationally. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated that standards in science were well below the national average, with no pupil assessed at the higher Level 3. Teacher assessments at both key stages are accurate, although at Key Stage 1 the result in writing at the higher level was better than anticipated. The school has had much to do over the last four years and has made good progress towards meeting the targets it has been set. It has set its own appropriate targets for pupils in the end of Key Stage 2 tests, based on its assessments of the relative strengths of year groups. However, the target for mathematics was not reached in 2000 and that in science, though achieved, was at a level below the national average. Targets for the next two years appear more challenging, with the proportion of pupils expected to achieve Level 4 or above in both mathematics and science in 2001 above that in English for the first time since 1996.
5. Children's attainments on entry to the school are above average, as measured by the local educational authority's baseline assessment of this year's intake, across a relatively narrow range of capabilities. Children enter the reception class, most of them from some form of pre-school provision. They show well developed speaking and pre-reading skills on entry. Their numeracy skills are also above those expected. However, their listening skills are less well developed.

Children make good progress in the latter part of the Foundation Stage that they spend in reception and the vast majority of them enter Year 1 well prepared for the National Curriculum having attained all the early learning goals. Children achieve well compared to their prior attainment during their year in reception. Progress slows in the two key stages but pupils achieve appropriately overall. The much improved curriculum and higher quality of teaching seen, coupled with their own positive attitudes and good behaviour, ensures that satisfactory progress is made by the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs. The higher attainers are not challenged in all classes, nor in all subjects, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable. This lack of achievement underlies the school's results at the higher levels, where insufficient pupils do well enough to generate a higher points score and, more important, do themselves justice.

6. Inspection evidence indicates that the present Year 2 class will achieve higher standards in reading than those in the 2000 National Curriculum tests. Standards in writing will be broadly similar, with a higher proportion achieving the expected Level 2. Standards in English overall are in line with those expected. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards in mathematics and science are close to the expected level, with pupils achieving appropriately. This is broadly confirmed by draft teacher assessments, based on the very detailed records kept by the Year 2 teacher. Inspection evidence at the end of Key Stage 2 differs from the school's predictions and targets, as attainment in English was found to be above that expected nationally and that in mathematics and science below. This is much as was the case in 2000. Insufficient progress is made during the key stage in these two subjects. It is unsatisfactory in science and barely adequate in mathematics. Teacher competence in some aspects of mathematics is not secure in all classes, so that insufficient challenge is set for individuals and groups of pupils, particularly for the higher attainers. Too little time is devoted to science to cover and revisit all the programmes of study for the subject in depth. Pupils achieve well in all elements of English. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are at the expected level by the end of Key Stage 1 but below by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall, as they do not achieve well enough during their junior years. In the foundation subjects, standards are above those expected in art and design at the end of Key Stage 1, with pupils achieving well. Standards in other subjects, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, are at the expected level, with pupils making satisfactory progress overall. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in art and history are above those expected with pupils achieving well compared to their previous attainment. Standards in design and technology, music and physical education meet the expectations for pupils of this age. Satisfactory progress is made in these subjects. However, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in geography, so do not achieve the expected levels of attainment.
7. By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards are above the expected levels in all the three strands of English, speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils make good progress, achieving well in relation to their previous attainments. They are given regular opportunities to listen and talk in whole class sessions, groups and pairs. Drama and play-readings are well used to address identified weaknesses in listening skills. Pupils in Year 2 listen agog to their class teacher's compelling story-telling in role, asking detailed questions, showing how well they have assimilated a story built up over time. Year 6 pupils read 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', listening carefully to get their cue and speaking expressively. They are given regular opportunities to speak fluently in lessons across the curriculum and in assemblies and extra curricular activities, including drama. Key Stage 1 pupils are taught phonics and a good range of other strategies to support their reading. Language support is well targeted to promote key literacy skills. Pupils build progressively on these early reading experiences. They develop confidence and fluency and quickly acquire good reference skills. However, the library is not used sufficiently to further develop these skills. By the time they leave the school, pupils read widely from a good range of material, showing well developed understanding when discussing genre and character by referring to key features of the text. Pupils at Key Stage 1 write in narrative and non-narrative forms widely across the curriculum, showing good handwriting standards and appropriate awareness of grammar and punctuation. The school has worked hard to address weaknesses in this area of its work identified by Her Majesty's Inspectorate. In classes throughout the school, reports in science and topics in history are well used by teachers to raise pupils' standards in writing. By

the time they are eleven, pupils write with increasing confidence, with an assured style and appropriate awareness of the conventions, for different audiences and in a good range of forms.

8. Standards in mathematics are at the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 but below by the end of Key Stage 2. This is because the higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged in all classes. Teachers' planning does not always identify their needs and, consequently, too little is expected of them. The school has worked hard to improve its provision for mathematics. This has not yet led to raised standards, especially at the higher levels, for pupils. However, higher targets agreed by the school and the local education authority for the next two years, indicate that this is now expected. Pupils have secure knowledge of mathematical language and use it appropriately. Teachers use the helpful features of the National Numeracy Strategy to build progressively on pupils' prior attainments. Pupils at Key Stage 1 use number bonds to ten when adding and subtracting, understand simple fractions, measure straight lines accurately in centimetres and know the names and major properties of shapes. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have sound numeracy skills, add and subtract decimals and name and describe the properties of simple solids. Numeracy is well planned across the curriculum, so that pupils' skills are used and applied widely in subjects including science and design and technology. Progress is satisfactory overall.
9. Standards in science are in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils have sound experimental skills, developed through a good level of practical activities. They use subject specific terminology appropriately when discussing their work. Their progress is satisfactory over the key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below those expected. Pupils experience work in all areas of the curriculum in this key stage. However, they have not been allocated sufficient time to study science to acquire the appropriate depth of knowledge and skills of enquiry to reach the expected standards. Expectations in some lessons are not high enough. Unsatisfactory progress is made through the key stage.
10. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils use a mouse and keyboard showing sound word processing skills. They save, load and print their own work with help. They use an appropriate range of software to support their work across the curriculum, including in mathematics, science and art. By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainments in ICT are below those expected. There is little evidence that sufficient time has been spent acquiring helpful skills or using them to support work in other subjects. The classroom computers and printers are not all reliable and the impressive new ICT suite is only just coming on line. By the end of Year 6, pupils have had experience of all strands of the National Curriculum but not at sufficient depth to develop skills and understanding of the way events can be controlled, physical conditions and data sensed, models used to simulate those in the outside world allowing predictions to be made, or information exchanged. Pupils do not yet achieve well enough in ICT.
11. The children identified with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Across the rest of the school, pupils make satisfactory progress against the action plans that are set out for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The children in the Foundation Stage have very positive attitudes to school. They come into the reception class calmly and happily at the start of the day. The children show good levels of independence and they respond very well to the very clear expectations and procedures of the teacher and learning assistant.
13. As reported at the last inspection, the pupils come to school with good attitudes and this has a positive impact on their learning. Ninety five per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children like coming to school. Pupils enjoy their schoolwork, they settle promptly to set tasks and want to learn. Year 5 pupils were very attentive when their teacher was explaining to them about databases. During a Year 3 dance lesson, the pupils worked hard when improvising fairground rides, even though the teacher's instructions were not very clear.

14. A significant number of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire do not feel that behaviour is good. Inspection findings disagree with this view as pupils' behaviour, both in and out of class, is judged to be good overall. A small minority, mostly boys, find it hard to maintain consistent high standards of behaviour. Pupils respond readily to the requests and instructions of teachers and learning assistants. Lunchtime behaviour was reported as a concern at the last inspection and this has greatly improved. The midday assistants receive behaviour management training, they meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss any concerns and individual assistants are linked to classes, so that they can get to know the pupils better. The pupils are polite and courteous to each other, to all staff and visitors. They are trustworthy and show respect for property, treating the resources they use with care. No bullying was seen during the inspection. Bullying is discussed in circle time, personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and assemblies and the pupils know that any incidents will be taken seriously. There were no exclusions from the school during the year prior to the inspection.
15. The personal development of the pupils is good. They have good relationships with fellow pupils and adults, built on mutual respect and tolerance for the work, ideas, beliefs and values of others. Through assemblies and PSHE, the pupils develop a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. They work well as individuals, in pairs and small groups and they are learning to take turns and help their classmates. Many pupils take responsibility in the life of the school. For example, they deliver registers to classrooms, organise equipment for assemblies and look after the youngest children at playtime and lunchtime and read with them in their classroom. The school council is a very good medium for the pupils to be involved in the running of the school. The council is currently discussing 'handy hints for school life'. They are investigating interesting ways to display school rules, so that all of the pupils can understand them. The pupils support charities through fund raising activities, many of which they initiate, including Operation Child at Christmas. They also set up events to buy additional school resources. As reported at the last inspection, some of the lessons are still too teacher directed to allow the pupils, and particularly the higher attainers, to extend their abilities. Throughout the school pupils are unable to further develop their independent learning skills through the extended use of information communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.
16. The level of attendance is satisfactory. It is in line with the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. The marking of registers was an issue at the last inspection. This has been rectified and all registers are marked correctly in the morning and afternoon sessions, so that legal requirements are now met. Parents are reminded of their responsibility for their children's punctuality and attendance in the prospectus and newsletters.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory overall. It has improved significantly, both since its first Section 10 inspection in 1997 and in subsequent HMI evaluations. In 1997 about 33 per cent of lessons seen were graded unsatisfactory or worse for teaching quality. This had improved by 1999, when HMI inspected, following several monitoring visits. Then, twelve per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. In lessons seen during the present inspection, 93.3 per cent of teaching was sound or better, with 6.7 per cent unsatisfactory teaching seen. Excellent and very good teaching was seen in almost 25 per cent of lessons, with good teaching in a further 31 per cent. This is quite a high proportion of good and better teaching. It has been achieved as a result of a clear focus on teaching and learning, through a detailed needs analysis. Curriculum planning is much improved, as is assessment, so that teachers can now plan more effectively what they intend pupils to learn and more accurately assess the outcomes of lessons, to help plan what pupils need to learn next. Teachers' assessments indicate a clear understanding of the relative attainments of individuals and groups within their class. However, specific planning for tasks to extend the higher attaining or to support those with special educational needs, or with lower attainment, is not always made, so that pupils often attempt broadly similar tasks but make differing responses to them. This is inhibiting the number of pupils the school is getting to the higher levels in National Curriculum end of key stage tests, except in English, and the challenge it is presenting to its ablest pupils.

18. Parents stated prior to the inspection that elements of teaching were inconsistent across the key stages and within them. They identified specific provision for groups of pupils as a weak feature. They also cited the setting of homework as one major area of weakness. The inspection team support the parents' assessment that homework is better for the younger pupils but do not find it unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. However, the school may wish to improve the preparation it makes for pupils prior to Key Stage 3 by reconsidering the amount of homework expected from older pupils and ensuring that it is always set, marked and discussed in all classes. Very few examples of homework being set, collected or even referred to were seen during the inspection. Although in a Year 6 science lesson, the teacher made effective reference to previous homework when introducing a lesson on the rotation of the earth. In Year 4, mathematics homework was seen to be appropriately set. Detailed records of homework set and a portfolio of examples of completed work are a strong feature of the Key Stage 1 provision.
19. Teaching varied most in Key Stage 2. All the excellent teaching was seen there. However, so was all the unsatisfactory teaching, which comprised over 12 per cent of that seen at the key stage. However, a supply teacher taught one of the unsatisfactory lessons seen. Therefore, the proportion of lessons where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in a lesson delivered by a permanent teacher was about eight per cent. Significantly, these lessons were in mathematics and science, where standards are lagging compared to all schools and to those with similar intakes to St Mary's. Teaching quality is a strong feature of the work in the Foundation Stage, with standards in reception almost always high. Teaching was also good at Key Stage 1, though there were differences noted in the levels of planning undertaken by teachers. Variations in planning and any other weaknesses are not routinely picked up. The school has not developed a programme of planned monitoring visits to assess the quality of teaching and learning or the impact of curriculum development, despite giving all co-ordinators non-contact time. It understands that this should now take place to help assure consistency of provision and facilitate further improvements in standards.
20. The school has implemented effective strategies for teaching key skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers have improved the level of technical language they use when talking to their pupils, so that the correct terminology is used in English and mathematics and most other subjects. The teaching of English is good overall. Standards of teaching are often high in mathematics also. However, there are weaknesses in some teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, which is not as secure as in English, reducing the speed at which new concepts are acquired by pupils and the standards they achieve. This affects the number of pupils the school gets to the higher levels, diminishing the overall points score the school achieves in mathematics in end of key stage tests. Teachers have worked particularly hard to remedy reported weaknesses in writing and speaking and listening within English. Writing is now well taught across the curriculum. Pupils write extended pieces for a wide range of purposes, for instance in history and religious education, as well as in English lessons. The teachers' use of play writing and drama generally is promoting better oracy skills, though some pupils are still more apt to speak than listen.
21. Teachers display satisfactory subject knowledge in most other areas of the curriculum. Art is well taught, with teachers displaying high personal skill levels. However, weaknesses in science and geography adversely affect standards pupils are achieving in those subjects. Teachers in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 show secure levels of subject knowledge overall. At Key Stage 2, a wider variation in subject competence and confidence is seen. One result of this is the differing amounts of evidence seen of direct teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) skills and the use of ICT to support work generally across the curriculum.
22. Lesson planning is satisfactory. Tasks are better matched to pupils' needs in English and mathematics. Some teachers persist in working pupils in mixed ability groupings, when attainment levels rather than social settings seem more appropriate to focus extension tasks and levels of support more closely on need and help raise standards. Otherwise, teachers have appropriate expectations of their pupils. They are expected to behave well and try hard. Pupils respond positively with sustained effort being made and considerable interest in their work

displayed. They are becoming increasingly independent, however, infrequent access to computers and the small amount of time using the library for research, or any other purpose, is delaying the process. Pupils have good attitudes to most of their work. In some classes, relationships are very positive, allowing a constructive classroom management style and excellent ethos to prevail, as in Year 5. This enables the teachers to dispense with overt discipline and allows lessons of great pace to challenge pupils intellectually and physically. Almost all teachers are effective managers. Some have large numbers in their classes, some unpromisingly small rooms to work in. Several had been struggling, as had the pupils in the weeks up to and including the inspection week, with illness. Few lessons are significantly affected by disciplinary problems. Those that are, are usually rescued by consistent application of the school's code of conduct.

23. Sound teaching methods are employed. Most teachers introduce lessons carefully, stating clearly what pupils should do. The helpful structure of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well used. However, not all teachers use the review session planned to take place at the end of lessons to reinforce learning objectives or to celebrate pupils' achievements fully. Classrooms are appropriately organised. Most lessons proceed at a reasonable rate. Excellent examples in Key Stage 2 display breathtaking pace, with very well thought out routines enabling pupils to self-resource very effectively. More pedestrian work is seen when extended introductions to lessons leave learning assistants under-employed or formulaic use of video material is not lively enough or made challenging to pupils. Teachers at Key Stage 1 use questions effectively to assess pupils' understanding and move it quickly on. Most teachers use marking helpfully to show pupils what they must do next to improve their performance. Redrafting is a good feature of pupils' work, showing a good response to teachers' initial assessment of their output. Pupils learn well in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The learning of Key Stage 2 pupils is satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils apply good levels of creative, intellectual and physical effort. They concentrate over long periods, showing real interest in the work they are set.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage is good. This is because of the focused teaching and support which is given and the early assessment and tracking systems which are in place. Across the rest of the school, teaching is satisfactory. Planning for lessons usually identifies the range of needs in the class and the work is matched appropriately. Support staff give valuable help to pupils with special educational needs, as in a mathematics lesson about fractions in Year 3. A more difficult task, not particularly well taught at first, was carefully explained and supported by the learning assistant to all the pupils in her group. In some isolated cases there was a lack of attention to the specific needs of pupils, such as in a geography lesson in Year 6, or not enough use made of learning assistants in recording progress made during lessons.

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

25. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good. Overall it is relevant, broadly based and provides satisfactory equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. It is becoming better balanced due to revisions of the time devoted to core subjects, such as science and information communication technology, though these changes are not yet securely in place. It now meets statutory requirements and has improved further since the monitoring visit of Her Majesty's Inspector in 1999, when the curriculum was deemed to be sound. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and work at appropriate levels is provided for all pupils in these lessons. Literacy and numeracy are also developed effectively across other curriculum areas and registration periods. In science, for example, relevant words related to the class investigation of night and day are displayed on the topic notice board in a Year 5 classroom, these include rotate, orbit, revolve, spin and axis. In design and technology in Year 6, pupils take part in a discussion where they estimate the size in centimetres of a bridge they are about to design and further estimate the weight they want it to support. In a Year 1 registration period, pupils calculate the number of pupils present when the teacher tells them how many pupils are absent.
26. The curriculum for the other subjects is now sound with strengths in the areas of history, art and

design and technology. The school is in the process of changing the curriculum focus of science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, history, geography and art to bring them into line with the nationally produced schemes, while still using those aspects of the previous schemes which were felt to be successful within these subjects. Teachers are monitoring the changes in order to ensure that continuity and progression are satisfactorily addressed. In science, for example, this has meant that two year groups are studying the same topic. However, in geography the new curriculum is not yet sufficiently well developed to ensure that continuity and progression are ensured. The curriculum for design and technology, music and ICT was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum for design and technology is now good and music and ICT sound. However, except for literacy and numeracy, the planned provision for the whole range of pupils' abilities is variable and consequently the provision for abler pupils is sometimes lacking in challenge. The school's recent analysis of the time allocations for the various curriculum areas has resulted in an increase in time for science and religious instruction and reduction in literacy.

27. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The required areas of study, including sex education and drugs awareness, are covered well through a combination of science, religious education and circle time. In an effective session in Year 1 for example, pupils listed as a class the people who help to keep them safe at various times in their day, and how this is achieved. Documents related to this area of study, however, are in draft form at present.
28. A good range of visits and visitors who share their expertise supports the curriculum. These have included a visit to the British Museum, a power station, local shops, and a nature reserve, as well as a residential visit for Year 6 pupils to the Isle of Wight. Recent visitors have included a travelling theatre group and representatives from the local council, who came to talk about recycling. There are good and effective links with local churches. The number and range of extra curricular activities is also good. These include drama, choir, recorders, art, netball, guitar, sports and games. These are well attended by the pupils and are of good quality. The school maintains sound links with its partner schools. They are involved in sporting competitions, for example. However, parents identified this as an area they wished to see further developed. A link, which will enhance the provision of ICT, has recently been developed with a local secondary school. The reception class teacher has usefully established links with local playgroups and other settings to look at the wider implications of the new Foundation Stage curriculum. However, curriculum links with partner primary schools are limited.
29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school is implementing the Code of Practice satisfactorily and the relevant identified pupils have individual education plans. Targets for these are well thought out and measurable when reviewed.
30. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good and has improved since the last inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The daily act of worship provides an effective focus for this. Through participation in whole school assemblies, pupils develop a feeling for spirituality in the world around them. Pupils in Year 2, for example, share their own poems with the school and share their thanks and appreciation for the gift of communication. These occasions and individual class assemblies enable the pupils to reflect on a wide range of issues in a calm and positive atmosphere and to reflect on and determine their individual responses to them. In a Year 4 class assembly, the teacher enhances the pupils' empathy with various characters by sensitive questioning throughout the story, based on faith and trust, which she is reading to them. During religious education and other curriculum time too, pupils' sensitivity and spirituality are enhanced well. In Year 5, pupils consider words like stunning, amazing and astonishing and relate events and personal observations to these. "Flowers are breathtaking the way the colours blend" is one pupil's contribution to this lesson, while another pupil expresses wonder at the way a poem unfolds. Informative and well-presented displays around the school are positive reminders of the spiritual aspect of life, as for example the Hindu display in Year 3 and photographs of the school's offering at Christmas in the form of a nativity play. Regular visits to the local church and visits to the school by local clergy also contribute well to the provision for the pupils' spiritual development.

31. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. All staff ensure in their day-to-day dealings with the pupils that they are aware from an early age about right and wrong behaviour and the impact that their actions can have on others. Staff are good role models for this and treat pupils sensitively and with respect, implementing the school's behaviour policy well. The small minority of pupils, usually boys, who behave in an anti-social way are given time and the opportunity for discussion and guidance. During curriculum time and when discussing issues to be presented at the school council, pupils have the opportunity to examine issues of rights and responsibilities and to develop their own responses to these. In a Key Stage 1 assembly, for example, pupils learn about a friend of the school who is doing charity work in Romania and consider the implications of being a nine year old child there and being unable to go to school. Consequently, pupils develop a good understanding about what is right and wrong.
32. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. All classes contain pupils of mixed abilities and they are expected to work collaboratively in various combinations of groups as appropriate. This they do very well from an early age. Pupils in Year 2 work on compositions in pairs in music. Pupils in Year 5 set decimal tasks for each other. Both these occasions enhance the learning experiences very well. The existence of the school council ensures that pupils in each class have opportunities to discuss and come to a consensus of opinion on a variety of issues. Pupils of all ages are given responsibilities in class and around the school, helping in day-to-day organisation. This fosters well their sense of responsibility to others. Older pupils are encouraged to care for the younger pupils in the school and all pupils are encouraged to develop a social conscience by being involved in charity collections. Older pupils are given the opportunity to benefit from a residential visit and this contributes well to their social development.
33. Provision for cultural development overall is satisfactory and is supported adequately through literature and other cross-curricular provision. Knowledge of local culture is built up through studies of the local area to support work in history and geography, for example. Visits to museums and famous houses enhance the pupils' knowledge of the wider British culture. In music lessons and during assemblies, the pupils are introduced to an appropriate variety of musical pieces, including some from other countries. This has been developed further through the visit of an African drumming group. In art, they are introduced to the work of a variety of artists. A range of visitors, who share interests and expertise, also make significant contributions. The provision for multicultural development is underdeveloped however. The school does include reference to other cultures in its curriculum areas where appropriate but it does not yet provide the pupils with a sufficient depth of understanding of the range of ethnic groups living in multicultural Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school takes good steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, which is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when it was reported to be less than satisfactory. The school has worked hard on this aspect of its work, with a positive impact on the quality of provision, both procedural and in practice. This has resulted in higher standards of teaching and in better lunchtime behaviour. However, apart from in English, higher standards in the core subjects have not to date accrued from improvements made. There are good relationships at all levels and pupils feel confident that there are sympathetic adults to whom they can go with any problem. All staff work hard to maintain positive relationships, so they are able to monitor personal development both informally and formally. The comments on the annual reports show that the teachers know the pupils well.
35. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy in place. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has set up a programme of regular risk assessments, which are reported to the governing body. The parent teacher association, the Paddlers, also carries out risk assessments for any events that they organise. Fire practices take place regularly and are recorded. There are now suitable arrangements in place for first aid and medical support. An appropriate number of staff has received first aid training and this is updated regularly. The arrangements for child protection have improved since the last inspection and they are now good. The headteacher is

the named responsible person and has received training for this role. Through staff meetings, all staff are kept up to date with the latest local authority guidelines regarding child protection procedures. The school effectively promotes healthy and safe living through personal, social and health education lessons, circle time, assemblies, physical education and science lessons.

36. Since the last inspection, the procedures for monitoring attendance have improved and they are now good. The administrative assistant checks the attendance registers every day and instances of unexplained absence are promptly followed up. The school receives regular visits from the education welfare officer, who monitors the registers for attendance and punctuality. There are good procedures for monitoring and encouraging good behaviour. The school has reviewed and updated the behaviour policy and shared it with parents. The policy includes a system of rewards and sanctions and it is consistently implemented across the school. There are some pupils, particularly boys in Year 2, who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour but this is improving through the consistently firm approach of the teacher and learning assistant. Many parents are happy that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.
37. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. They have improved since the last inspection. The assessment of literacy, mathematics and science are good. All pupils undertake the standard assessment tasks at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and optional National Curriculum tests between these in English and mathematics. Ends of topic tests are completed in science. A reading profile is regularly completed for each pupil to track progress in this area. Class teachers also regularly assess the attainment targets of 'Speaking and Listening', 'Using and Applying Mathematics' and 'Scientific Inquiry'. The results of all these tests are analysed and used well to identify learning groups within the classroom, gender differences in attainment levels and groups of pupils who may not reach the nationally expected levels without extra support. Assessment procedures in the other areas of the curriculum are less rigorous, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), and are in the process of being developed. Pupils' skills in ICT and music are accredited when achieved, though this is more regularly completed at Key Stage 1. In all subjects where written or photographic evidence can be collected, folders of work annotated with National Curriculum levels where appropriate are being built up. Each pupil has an assessment folder in which samples of work are also kept. Teachers maintain appropriate records in class assessment folders and use these well in monitoring pupils' progress. Class teachers' annual reports to parents are informative and provide them with information about the curriculum, an assessment of standards in the core subjects, an analysis of what has been achieved and a target for future development. Assessments in all subjects are recorded and passed on to the appropriate secondary school.
38. The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning is satisfactory overall. It is more effective in English and mathematics than the other subjects. It has improved since the last inspection. The quality of teachers' day-to-day assessment is good, but the use they make of their recorded assessments to guide planning is variable. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and learning objectives are clearer. In the most effective lessons these are displayed, shared with the pupils and reviewed at the end of lessons. This gives these teachers a clear understanding of what has been achieved and enables them to plan work suitable for their pupils' needs. Some lesson plans show written evidence of lesson evaluation and adjustment of subsequent planning, for example adjustment of a mental mathematics session in Year 1. The quality of teachers' marking is satisfactory overall.
39. Pupils with special educational needs are placed at the appropriate stage on the special needs register. The special needs co-ordinator and teachers identify pupils who require extra support at an appropriately early stage. The individual education plans are appropriately monitored and the reviews regularly carried out. The identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. Records are well-kept and satisfactory help received from outside agencies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Overall, the school has a good partnership with parents. Although there was a low response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting, generally parents and carers indicate that they have satisfactory views of the school. Parents expressed some concerns. These included the belief that their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home; the lack of information they receive on the progress that their children are making; a feeling that the school does not work closely with them; and the lack of extra curricular activities.
41. There is no evidence to support the views of parents who feel that they are not kept well informed about their child's progress. The written annual reports to parents are good. They give a good picture of the advances pupils are making, National Curriculum levels are shown and some targets are set to improve pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science. The pupils write about their progress during the year and parents have an opportunity to discuss the reports with the teachers during the summer open evening. The reported attendance information is now correct. The teaching staff are approachable and happy to talk to parents with concerns or for more information on their child's development and there are also formal parent/teacher consultations during the autumn and spring terms. Eighty nine per cent of parents would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.
42. The school has a homework policy, which was drawn up after the last inspection. Parents have been sent a copy of the policy but some parents would like more guidance on how they can further support their children to help them fully achieve their potential. The inspection team agrees with the views of the parents that the pupils do not get the right amount of work to do at home in all classes. It judges that the school needs to review the quality and usefulness of what is being set in order to better prepare pupils for the secondary stage of their schooling. The inspection team considers that the school is providing an enriched curriculum through a range of extra curricular activities and the variety of visits and visitors.
43. The 'Newslines' keep parents up to date with the day-to-day life of the school, and the prospectus and the termly summaries provide good information on the curriculum. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents and they now contain all of the required information. Meetings were held for parents on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and parents are invited to a science fair, sports day and services in St. Mary's Church. The good induction procedures for the youngest children into the reception class also ensure that their parents and carers feel welcome and comfortable in the school. Since the last inspection, the parents have set up a very effective parent teacher association, the Paddlers, and parents are supportive of the school through fundraising events including a mini Christmas bazaar, quiz nights and a bouncy fun day. All of these factors show that the school has a good range of links with parents and carers that have a positive impact on learning. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show parents have more positive views of the school now than they did at the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The previous inspection in 1997 found a catalogue of failings in the leadership and management of the school, concluding that there was no effective governance, management or leadership. There was a large financial deficit. The local authority had taken over the management of the school budget because of concerns about financial efficiency. By February 1999 when the school came out of special measures, HMI reported that strong leadership and determined staff development had largely overcome the previous difficulties. The key issues now for the school to develop were the management structures and roles of governors, senior staff and co-ordinators to reflect the new conditions of the school. Overall, satisfactory, and in some cases good progress, has continued to be made against a range of leadership and management aspects. A programme to re-establish the systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is the key outstanding area that remains to be addressed. The school is about to implement changes to improve its use of information and communication technology in management and financial affairs, which it acknowledges is currently unsatisfactory.

45. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. She has a clear vision for the educational direction of the school. She continues to manage and lead the school in a very proactive way through a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Advice and guidance has been sought from the local authority and the management structures at all levels continue to evolve and gather strength.
46. The headteacher and governors identify the right sort of priorities for development through the school's development plan. It is clearly focused on raising standards across a wide range of aspects of school life. The plan, still in its draft form, appropriately defines success criteria, cost implications and those responsible for its implementation. It is based on a review of progress from the action plan written immediately after the 1999 inspection. Evidence for this has come from internal monitoring by the headteacher and governors, supplemented by two local authority reviews. The governors have begun to assess the effectiveness of its initiatives, for instance the improvements in reception class provision and the difference made now that the school has a deputy headteacher.
47. The governors effectively fulfil all their statutory responsibilities. This marks good progress from the bleak situation, previously, where legal requirements were not met basically because governors and staff were unaware of them. Governors now are well informed, and work very hard in support of the headteacher in charting the direction of the school. The governors are determined to continue to improve and have made good progress against a new target to further develop their own monitoring and evaluating role. Governors are now linked to curriculum areas, visit the school to look at their designated subject and receive monitoring reports from co-ordinators. A rota has now been set up to ensure governors visit on a regular basis. Some governors visit school very regularly and offer good classroom support in the process.
48. The headteacher and deputy headteacher now have regular meetings with clear agendas, actions and minutes. This supports the partnership model by the senior managers. A School Support Group made up of some of the co-ordinators is the next line of management to meet with the headteacher and deputy. Because this is a newly established structure, it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness though some meetings have begun.
49. The post-holders monitor some of the planning, review policy and resources and provide specific support for staff. Currently the majority of subject co-ordinators are not involved in evaluating work samples or in the regular and systematic monitoring of classroom practice. This limits their ability to see variations in expectations and standards throughout the school. The lower attainments in science and geography at the end of Key Stage 2 are a good case in point. Apart from formal school inspection, even the headteacher's monitoring has recently been conducted in an informal way. Formal systems are now about to be reinstated in the context of the Performance Management (PM) appraisal system.
50. Working relationships within the school have improved considerably. Teamwork is a characteristic that many staff and governors identify as a strength of the school. Staff work well together, sharing ideas and generally supporting each other. The rapport between teachers and learning support assistants is good. The specific strengths of assistants in the reception class and Year 2, for instance, are utilised very well by the teachers concerned.
51. The school has specific aims directed towards high standards in work, a richly varied curriculum, a love of learning and promoting Christian values through its ethos and teaching. It is partially successful in meeting these aims. The ethos of the school is good and it is a stimulating, secure and friendly environment. The children are confident and in subjects such as history or art are benefiting from the varied curriculum and specific subject study skills offered. Standards, however, have fluctuated with trends, upward in English but downward in mathematics and science. This contradicts with the overall motto of "aim high".
52. A satisfactory response has so far been made to the new national systems for appraisal and PM. The school is committed to implementing a PM policy and discussions and training have taken place at staff and governor level. The policy has now been formally adopted. The principles,

timescale and processes that are required have also been agreed and communicated. Management systems and structures are being put in place to monitor the performance of teachers against agreed objectives.

53. The special educational needs provision, overall, is soundly managed. The funding received by the school for identified pupils with special educational needs is mainly used to buy in staff. The support assistants and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) identify and target the pupils' development well. The job description and current role of the SENCO, however, is not fully established. It is mainly an administrative post which, given the numbers of children on the school's register, is inefficient. Not enough time is given to working alongside and supporting pupils and teachers. This limits the SENCO's influence on planning and the quality of teaching.
54. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, not all management roles undertaken by teachers are closely related to qualification, experience and preference. Staff work well together and the support staff provide valuable help to teachers and pupils. It has not been possible for the school to enter into the training of teachers during the time the school was under special measures. The headteacher now has plans to re-establish links with teacher training providers. There are staff who are clearly very capable of mentoring and providing the right sort of role model for beginner teachers.
55. The environment of the school is well cared for by a conscientious school-keeper and his assistants. Some classrooms are rather small, particularly those that accommodate Key Stage 2 pupils. However, since the last inspection several improvements have been made to the site despite the pressure of limited finances. Conversion of classrooms has led to the formation of a much larger and more appropriate reception setting. This now has its own outdoor area thanks to funding raised by the parent staff association. They are also working towards an adventurous play area on the school field and quiet areas close to the playground. The field area is extensive and well used for a variety of purposes. Outdoors, also, is a heated, covered swimming pool used during the summer time for swimming lessons. The indoor accommodation is adequate to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively.
56. Overall, the resources are sufficient to support the teaching and learning in the curriculum. Some of these are carefully stored in the resources room. Topic boxes for history and geography are well put together. Resources for the under fives are satisfactory. Equipment for information and communication technology is now good. The implementation of the literacy strategy has been effective and has helped to raise standards. This includes in the provision of appropriate texts to support work during the literacy hour and overall, for instance in the library. However, the library is underused as a resource to further develop pupils' research and study skills and, therefore, their independence as learners. Inspection findings confirm a similar picture for provision as in the last HMI inspection.
57. The school is now in control of its own budget and the financial resources available to the school are satisfactorily managed and administered. This marks a significant improvement from previous inspections when administration of the budget had been withdrawn from the school. Governors participate with the headteacher in decision-making about school expenditure and receive regular information, which enables them to monitor the budget. Decisions on spending are appropriately linked to educational priorities. The governing body carefully monitors the effect on standards that planned improvements have had. Specific grants are used for the intended purposes. The governors and headteacher have a secure understanding of best value principles and apply this to curriculum development and the award of contracts, for instance the new computer suite and external fencing. The school also benefits from funding from the Burnham United Charity Trust, which has helped with the purchase of new equipment including flexible staging for the hall, audio-visual equipment and new computers. The use of computer aided administration to support school financial management is under-developed and better networking needs to be established within the office areas.
58. Taking into account the newly established financial efficiency of the school, the satisfactory quality of education provided and the considerable improvements that have been made since the

last inspection, offset by the underachievement of the higher attainers and the declining trend in standards of mathematics and science, the school provides satisfactory value for money overall.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In their work to further raise standards and improve the quality of education at the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should now:
 - (1) Raise standards of attainment in lessons, and in end of key stage National Curriculum tests, and the rate of progress all pupils make in the core subjects of mathematics, science and information communication technology by:

- ensuring that all teachers have secure subject knowledge in these core curriculum areas; paras. 6, 19, 20, 21, 86, 114
- ensuring that sufficient challenge is provided in lessons to extend the higher attaining pupils to enhance the proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 and above and Level 5 and above in tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2; paras. 1, 5, 6, 8, 11, 15, 17, 26, 58, 80, 85, 86
- ensuring that subject planning takes full account of the differing needs of pupils in the objectives and activities for lessons; paras. 8, 17, 19, 21, 26
- making full use of assessment information already available in mathematics and science to ensure that the nature and content of tasks set appropriately extend pupils; paras. 17, 34, 38
- developing appropriate assessment procedures in information and communication technology, so that pupils can progressively acquire new skills and teachers plan systematically what pupils need to do next; paras. 37, 112
- establishing that consistently high expectations are set for all pupils in all classes; paras. 8, 9, 11, 92, 114
- reappraising the time allocated to these subjects, to ensure that each has sufficient to allow appropriate progress to be made by pupils. paras. 6, 8, 10, 25, 26, 91, 112, 113*

(2) Eliminate inconsistencies in teaching and curriculum provision by:

- using non-contact time that senior staff and subject managers already receive to monitor teaching and learning directly to allow more focused support to colleagues and further develop the school's curriculum; paras. 19, 44, 49, 82, 93, 105, 109, 114, 115
- making best use of the information gained through existing monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' completed work to further raise standards. para. 49, 88, 93, 101

(3) Improve the use of information and communication technology throughout the school by:

- making sure that classroom computers and the new suite are well used to enable pupils to develop helpful skills to inform their work widely across the curriculum; paras. 6, 10, 11, 21, 22, 78, 79, 83, 88, 92, 112
- using technology designed for administration more efficiently to avoid duplication of tasks and waste of time. paras. 44, 57*

In addition to the above, the following points for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- While implementing planned curriculum changes, raise standards attained and progress made by pupils in geography. paras. 6, 21, 26, 49, 102, 104, 105
- Consistent setting and marking of sufficient homework to prepare pupils appropriately for their secondary education. paras. 18, 40, 42, 81
- Provide more opportunities for independent study, including using the library for research. paras. 7, 11, 22, 56, 78, 83

*Items already identified for action by the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.4	20.0	31.1	37.8	6.7	-	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		199
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		37

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	13	13
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	23	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (83)	83 (86)	87 (86)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	11
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	24	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (79)	83 (90)	80 (100)
	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	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	9	11
	Girls	14	11	14
	Total	25	20	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (81)	67 (78)	83 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	8	10
	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	24	20	24

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (84)	67 (84)	80 (91)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	182
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3:1
Average class size	28.4:1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

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	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	406668
Total expenditure	379280
Expenditure per pupil	1772
Balance brought forward from previous year	1146
Balance carried forward to next year	28534

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	190
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	42	2	3	-
My child is making good progress in school.	36	53	9	-	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	54	13	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	56	26	2	-
The teaching is good.	31	56	9	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	54	20	2	-
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	47	7	4	-
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	51	2	-	-
The school works closely with parents.	29	49	16	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	44	3	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	63	2	2	-
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	56	11	2	4

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

60. The last inspection report described the progress of the children under five as unsatisfactory. Their above average skills were not being built upon or extended. There have been considerable changes and improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since then. The reception classroom is a lively, attractive environment and the overall good teaching and broad curriculum is having a positive impact on the children's learning.
61. Most children come into the reception class with above average skills particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and personal and social development. This is confirmed by the initial assessments made using the local authority's baseline assessment scheme. By the time the children are ready to start in Year 1, just about all children achieve the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. Many are beyond this and are already attaining levels within the National Curriculum. Systems for tracking and assessing the children are thorough and the class teacher and her support assistant are very alert to the help and support required for pupils with special educational needs. Consequently all children are making good progress in the reception class, they are interested in their work and very keen to learn.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Starting from a high base the children continue to thrive and develop, so by the time they leave the reception class they are easily achieving the early learning goals in this area. The children settle in well each day and work and play together confidently. They know and follow class routines and respond really well to the adults around them. This is because all staff are extremely consistent in their use of praise and encouragement. This raises self-esteem and fosters the very good behaviour, which is the expectation of the classroom. Arguments and disagreements are rare and the children show that they can take turns and listen to each other. It is a harmonious, safe and secure setting.
63. One of the features of the children's abilities is their good attention and concentration span. They can concentrate for long periods on a chosen activity, for instance in looking at books or making models. They are keen to take part in any new activity readily having a go at drawing a map out in the school grounds. Similarly, they listen well and eagerly take part in small group activities in the classroom. This is the predominant teaching style and is always well led. It is an intensive approach that the children respond to. Opportunities are planned for role-play, though this area and its place in providing independence and creativity for children is underused.
64. Staff work hard to develop the children's attitudes in this area of learning at all times. Teaching is good overall. In addition, there are planned sessions on the timetable for specifically promoting personal development. In one of these the teacher led a very good discussion about the people who help us. Good questioning prompted thoughtful answers by the children. When one child said he would ask for help from someone he didn't know, the class teacher very sensitively reminded everybody about "stranger danger".

Communication, language and literacy

65. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is good and just about all children meet and many exceed the early learning goals. Reading is an area of particular strength, the children respond well to the pictures and text stories. Throughout the inspection week a very creative and lively approach was maintained to the story of the Three Little Pigs. Children re-enacted the story, tape-recorded their own versions, wrote warning notes to the pigs, celebrated the end of the wolf with party invitations and each day talked about relevant parts of the story. It is no wonder that their interest in books

is high and the motivation to read and write is strong. Higher attaining readers already recognise familiar words and are well into the reading scheme books. They use their knowledge of sounds, as well as searching the pictures for clues, to attempt more difficult words. All children handle books carefully, know that print carries meaning and can talk about books that they like.

66. Elements of the literacy framework are well adapted and used in the teaching programme. A good understanding of phonics is promoted in short sessions or group activities such as the focus on hearing and identifying initial sounds in words. Children then use this in sounding out unknown words for themselves when trying to write their invitations to the Three Little Pigs' party. They are prepared to have a go at different forms of writing, such as in speech bubbles or captions under drawings. Attainment is high and for some already at early National Curriculum levels.
67. All adults use talk and questioning to good effect in order to draw out the children's language development. Plenty of speaking and listening opportunities are provided throughout the course of the day to organise and clarify thinking and feeling. In the course of one lesson, these ranged from children spontaneously wanting to retell the story to their teacher, making tape recordings of the story or through the voices of glove puppet characters. Consequently, children are confident and inventive speakers in their play and learning.

Mathematical development

68. Teaching in this area of learning is particularly good and by the end of the reception year most children will have reached or exceeded the early learning goals. Children make good progress because of a wide range of activities and very effective direct teaching. The teacher makes good use of everyday situations, such as register taking and counting games and number rhymes to develop mathematical thinking. The role-play area is used to develop learning in simple shopping activities. The guidance from the National Numeracy Strategy is used and forms the basis for the teacher's very comprehensive planning.
69. Children's counting skills and knowledge of numbers is good. Most children are secure with counting to ten and several well beyond this. They can say and use the number names and begin to find one more or less than. In one lesson, the teacher organised some very practical situations to develop this theme. She introduced a washing line and dice for the children to roll to decide how many items should be taken from the line. With plenty of talk, questioning and encouragement for example, "How many have you got?" "How many left behind?", the children quickly began to understand the language of taking away. This was followed up outdoors where the children searched for missing objects –"You've got to find 5.... How many more to find?" Later, indoors, the children worked in groups consolidating their knowledge building towers with cubes and then taking away. Children can recognise shapes such as circles, rectangles, squares and triangles and use them in collage making.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. The teacher ensures that children experience a wide range of activities that extend their learning in this area. Good teaching ensures that children reach and go beyond the expected learning outcomes by the time they move into Key Stage 1. They are able to make models with a range of construction materials. During the week they built a delightful set of houses of straw and card for the three pigs, trying to make them "wolf proof". They assembled them carefully and the finished products were of a good standard. The teacher brought in a fan to test with the children the resilience of their models. They develop mouse control and have learnt to draw using the computer. They also learn how to operate the tape recorder in the context of their literacy work.
71. Children have a good awareness of their local area and can draw picture maps talking about the hills, trees, woods, railway line and fence. This was in the context of a lesson in the school grounds, where the children tried to draw a map locating where they would build a house. Part of the inspiration for this came after the visit of a parent, who was a mapmaker herself. Children

also learn to record observations on simple charts. All these experiences also contribute to developing vocabulary and encouraging purposeful talk.

Physical development

72. Children's levels of attainment in physical development, control and mobility are in line with the levels expected for children of their age. The planned provision in this area of learning includes both hall lessons and outdoor play provision. Teachers also plan regular opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills. They manipulate scissors and larger tools, use crayons, pencils and brushes with appropriate accuracy and care. Many show good fine motor control when using the mouse to interact with the computer. The acquisition of gross motor skills is promoted by well-planned tasks involving small toys and construction materials and work both in the hall and outside, which promote teamwork and team spirit.
73. It was a rainy week so only the indoor activities could be observed. During this session, children show that they can control their movements and follow simple instructions such as moving in different directions in different ways. They have a good awareness of others and use the space well as they travel around the hall. The children work hard and enthusiastically because of the class teacher's positive and encouraging approach. Teaching is good overall. The children seem to enjoy exercise and are becoming aware of the effects it has on the body. In this lesson, however, there were missed opportunities to extend and further develop the children's work. More teaching points could have been made and extra attention given to developing the children's achievements. Staff help the children to develop good health and hygiene habits. The children are gaining in independence in changing for physical activity.

Creative development

74. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and meet the early learning goals by the time they go into Year 1. They have the opportunity to use texture and some different painting techniques. There are opportunities for rhymes, songs and the use of musical instruments. A painting table is often set up with different brushes and sponges in the afternoon. The children produce reasonable paintings and collage work using paper and fabric to make the pictures. The potential, however, for extended learning is not realised. Some activities are over controlled and not enough opportunities are made for the children to paint or work imaginatively and spontaneously. Teaching in this area is sound overall. The teacher acknowledges that this is an area for further development. A reasonable attempt is made to use display interactively. The role-play area is underused for creative and imaginative play.

ENGLISH

75. Standards of attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with the national expectations in speaking and listening, reading and writing. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, standards in all three strands of English are above those expected. This shows substantial improvement from the previous inspection when only reading was above the expected standard. It also indicates that pupils achieve well in their Key Stage 2 years. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 or above was close to the national average in reading but well above in writing. Using the method of allocating points to levels achieved to enable comparison between schools, this indicated that compared to all schools and to similar schools, reading was below average and writing above. The 2000 Key Stage 2 tests indicated that standards in English were above average compared to all schools and well above those attained in schools with similar intakes. This was based on points achieved by an above average proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above and a proportion well above the national average attaining Level 5 or above.
76. The school has achieved an upward trend in pupils' attainments in English by the time they leave the school over the last five years. However, marked differences in year groups have occurred.

Girls outperformed boys over the period, as is the norm nationally, but both did well. Overall, both girls' and boys' results indicated standards in the subject about one and a half terms' progress above the national average. Standards observed during the inspection confirm these results. Children join the school with standards above those expected in all but listening skills. Pupils leave with above or well above average attainments compared to all and similar schools. Almost all pupils are making good progress across the school but it is slower at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. Standards of literacy are good across the school. The school has an effective action plan for developing the subject further. This has been notably successful in raising pupils' attainments in writing and is beginning to pay dividends in elements of speaking and listening.

77. Children enter the reception class with well-developed speaking skills but their listening skills are less secure. Teachers take every opportunity to further enhance these skills through question and answer sessions, discussions, circle time and by a well-thought out emphasis on drama. This takes many forms, including the use of puppets in Year 3 and the use of Shakespeare plays for group reading texts in Year 6. It is one response to an identified need to focus concentration on pupils' listening and discussion skills. This is now a strong feature in work within literacy hours, English generally and widely across the curriculum. At Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to their teachers and think carefully before answering. In Year 1, pupils answer confidently their teacher's questions on their big book 'Scrapman'. Pupils in Year 2, almost 75 per cent boys, and usually more slow to settle and prone to answer without consideration, listen rapt as their teacher, an excellent story-teller, develops an ongoing story she has written herself, dressed and in role and with a range of magical artefacts to entrance the class. Pupils answer 'Vanya's' questions, referring accurately to previous events that have taken place, and enter discussions willingly about the drama of which they have been part. Lower attaining pupils re-enact the story, trying hard to use their voices expressively. By the end of Key Stage 2, speaking and listening are strong features of the school's work with above expected standards achieved. Year 5 pupils are attentive and alert when listening to their teacher. They are genuinely reflective and consider carefully before answering in work classifying texts, related to their motivational topic on the Ancient Greeks.
78. Well developed pre-reading skills when children enter the school, and good teaching of Communication, Language and Literacy in reception, get children off to a flying start in reading. Parents in their discussions with inspectors identified this clearly. Progress through Key Stage 1 is only satisfactory at best, as reading standards over the last two years have been disappointing by the time pupils are seven. The present Year 2 is on line to achieve average results. Inspection evidence confirms teacher predictions but recognises that in a class of 29, containing 21 boys, there are other compelling reasons for achievement to be as it is. Teachers use opportunities across the curriculum to encourage pupils to read from books, whiteboards, overhead projectors and screens. In Year 2, challenging texts are chosen for pupils of all levels of attainment. Appropriate use of technical language means that the higher attainers can use words like homophone in their answers. Phonic skills and other strategies are appropriately taught to support reading and are consistently applied in work across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading and talk in simple terms about favourite books and authors. Pupils at Key Stage 2, build on this sound beginning. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 develop accurate reading alongside an increased awareness of technical terms such as "blurb" and glossary. Pupils from an early age are confident when locating information in both fiction and non-fiction texts. Their reference skills and capacity for independent study are not sufficiently tested however, as too little use is made of the school library or computers. By the time they leave the school, reading standards are above those expected. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils discuss knowledgeably favourite genre, identifying key themes and characters and unravelling complex plots in such works as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', referring to the text to support their views. Lower attainers have more difficulties with complex words in unknown texts but apply word attack skills competently and read widely with confidence, displaying good attitudes to books. The monitoring of reading is thorough. Pupil records kept by teachers and additional literacy support staff are evaluative and useful.
79. The school has achieved considerably improved standards in writing since Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) reported in 1999 that writing was not well enough developed across the

curriculum. This may be one reason why reading standards have declined at Key Stage 1, as the current emphasis has been firmly on improving writing. The development of writing skills is good overall. Pupils enter Year 1 with self-confidence as writers. They are given regular opportunities to write in all classes for a variety of purposes and in a range of narrative and non-narrative forms in work in most subjects, for example when writing reports in science and extended topic work in history. Year 2 pupils use imaginative language when writing stories. A higher attaining pupil describes a 'glimpse of the dragon' in a piece showing lively style and a clear awareness of the reader. Average attainers show expected levels of spelling and grammatical awareness but above expected understanding of punctuation, including the accurate use of exclamation marks. All, including the lower attainers and those with special educational needs, use a cursive hand, usually securely. Standards by the end of the key stage meet those expected nationally. Year 3 pupils writing to a clear purpose, advertise their puppet plays or the local pantomime persuasively when designing a theatre poster and programme. The higher attaining pupils use distinctive advertising features, jingle like, catchy phrases such as "Captain Hook – what a crook!" Spelling is sometimes erratic. An average attaining pupil spells scare 'sceger'. Many lower attaining do not use capitals or separate sentences, often spelling common words incorrectly. No dictionaries are in evidence. By the end of Key Stage 2, writing standards are above those expected. In Year 6, well kept topic books and work in religious education are vehicles for extended writing, using paragraphs, well sustained arguments and accurate punctuation, including when identifying dialogue. Lower attainers have a go at words they are not sure about but wondered whether comes out as "wounded weather". However, a higher attaining pupil uses the word finger-smith for pickpocket. Not enough evidence is seen of pupils using computers to redraft or present their work.

80. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are good overall. They are often very good, especially at the top of Key Stage 2, where pupils show a mature approach towards their studies and willingly volunteer for classroom duties and responsibilities. Pupils behave well overall but can get excited in lessons displaying weak classroom management. They listen carefully, most of the time, to their teachers and classmates. They work well in pairs and groups at a wide range of tasks, well focused on raising speaking and listening and social skills. They are trustworthy when working at independent tasks during the literacy hour. Not all teachers use attainment groups for English lessons, which can lessen the challenge provided for the ablest and the support the teacher can give to the lower attaining. However, when working in mixed ability settings, good relationships are seen and helpful support is provided by the higher attainers.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and very good teaching was seen in Year 2 and 4. The previous inspection identified teaching as satisfactory, so good progress has been made in this key area. This is a major factor in the improvement to pupils' learning in lessons and in standards of pupil attainment seen since the last inspection. There are no weak features in the criteria by which teaching is assessed, though the provision of homework was seldom mentioned during the inspection in English lessons. Excellent subject knowledge, classroom organisation and resourcing were features of the very good teaching seen in Year 2. Very good understanding of the needs of the pupils and of the National Literacy Strategy, coupled with very effective teaching of the basic skills of English, are seen throughout the school, especially at Key Stage 2. However, weaknesses were seen in the lower part of the Key Stage 2 when expectations were too low and time slippage occurred. Planning has improved, based on a thorough scheme of work. Teachers assess effectively both through questioning and in the telling interactions they make with groups and individuals. This is also seen in the way lessons are modified to take account of assessments made, so that pupils are given more appropriately challenging tasks. Plenary review sessions are well used to reinforce learning objectives, already made clear to pupils in the better lessons. Teachers use this time well to celebrate achievement and effort. Other key features of the National Literacy Strategy are also used to good effect, so that pupils are more confident with reading and spelling due to careful emphasis placed on English at the word and sentence level by most of their teachers.
82. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator is well qualified and enthusiastic. There is now good subject documentation. Action planning to improve standards further is securely in place. Both medium term and daily planning are detailed and firmly based on the National Literacy

Strategy. Regular informal and formal tests, including optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 are used, which give sufficient information for strategic planning and target setting for groups. A helpful portfolio of moderated, annotated pieces of work is kept. The school has made significant strides in the use of assessment and other measures to establish the value it adds as pupils move through the school. To date, very little classroom monitoring has taken place. The subject managers are, therefore, unable to gauge standards in teaching and learning and see the impact made upon standards of planned improvements to the curriculum and resourcing. This is a weakness. The literacy governor is a valued partner in the improvement process. She is a tireless worker both in the classroom and within the governing body.

83. The school is appropriately resourced overall for the effective delivery of its curriculum. The library is well stocked and there is a new information and communication technology suite but the teachers do not make the best use they could of these resources. Some classrooms are small for the number and size of pupils they contain. However, all teachers make their rooms exciting environments for the effective learning of English. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, particularly in the use of drama both within the curriculum and as an extra curricular provision.

MATHEMATICS

84. National test results for the Year 2000 indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2, the level that an average seven year old can be expected to reach or above, is below the national average. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 or above is above national figures. Overall at this key stage, the school's results are below the national average and well below the results of similar schools. However, when considering an average points analysis, the school's results are close to national figures. The test results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that the percentages of pupils reaching Level 4 is below the national figure and at Level 5 is well below. At this key stage, the average points score is below the national average. Overall, the school's performance is well below that of similar schools. At both key stages, girls perform better than boys. It is unsatisfactory that pupils' attainments in mathematics are so low, when the school promotes high standards in English. Improvements made in mathematics have been slow to feed through into raised standards for pupils. However, higher targets set for the next two years suggest that this is now expected to happen.
85. The standard of work of the older pupils at Key Stage 1 is in line with that expected nationally. Most pupils of average ability have a secure knowledge of the appropriate language of mathematics and are able to use the number bonds of ten in addition and subtraction of larger numbers. However more ambitious additions, adding eleven to two-digit numbers, for example, are not accurately completed. Pupils have an understanding of simple fractions, measure straight lines in centimetres and know the names and some of the properties of simple plane shapes. Higher attaining pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately, understand the place value of three-digit numbers and recognise whether a three-digit number is a multiple of five. They know the names and some of the properties of a wider range of two-dimensional shapes. The attainment of the older pupils in Key Stage 2 is below the standards expected nationally. Pupils of average ability have a sound understanding of number and the four operations. Their understanding of decimals is developing and they add and subtract numbers with decimal parts. Able pupils divide whole numbers by units to produce answers that have decimal parts and find percentage parts of specific quantities. However, they are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons and not enough of them are performing at higher than expected levels in all aspects of mathematics. Most pupils know the names of the simple solids and describe their properties. They understand that data can be represented in various ways. Pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in relation to their individual attainment levels, though it is brisker at Key Stage 1. The pupils' competence in numeracy is well supported across the curriculum, through the use of measuring and weighing in science, estimating and measuring lengths in design and technology and refuse data analysis in

geography, for example. Standards of attainment have been maintained in Key Stage 1 and fallen in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection.

86. The quality of teaching seen in lessons was satisfactory overall. No comparison can be made with the quality of teaching at the last inspection, as no overall judgement was made at that time. However, the quality of teaching over time has not been sufficiently effective to raise standards in mathematics to those expected for pupils of primary age. A scrutiny of Key Stage 2 pupils' completed work indicated that too often all pupils were set the same tasks, with insufficient constructive comments made by teachers to help pupils improve their performance. This has resulted in pupils at Key Stage 2 being less secure in their acquisition of skills and understanding than pupils at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good. At Key Stage 2, it ranges from a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching to very good teaching but overall it is satisfactory. Teachers are effective in developing appropriate mental strategies in the pupils and reinforce these skills satisfactorily at the start of each lesson. Pupils in Year 2, for example, improve their accuracy at counting on in tens from seven to 127. An effective preparation for the main focus of the lesson is seen, when pupils develop the skill of adding nine to another number by adding ten and taking off one. In most mental arithmetic sessions pupils are kept alert by the sound use of whole class activities, which enable all pupils to enhance their numeracy skills. However, little use of resources like number cards or fans, which would enable teachers to ask more open questions to challenge a wider range of abilities, was evident. Teachers generally display sound and sometimes, good subject knowledge. However, in a minority of lessons teachers' explanations are unclear and limited subject knowledge is evident, restricting the learning of able pupils in the classes. All sessions are well planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are provided with appropriate and relevant activities to which they respond in a motivated manner. In Year 1, for example, the pupils estimate the position of numbers on a number line. A group of particularly able pupils use a number line with only zero and 130 marked on it, while a group of lower ability pupils, supported by the teacher, work with a number line marked in units from zero to 20.
87. Teachers use the allocated time efficiently. Most lessons are suitably structured and well organised, with relevant resources and instruction/task sheets ready to hand so that minimum time is spent during lessons on unnecessary organisation. This maintains the motivation of the pupils and encourages purposeful activity as the norm. Teachers use, and further encourage, the positive relationships in the classroom well by providing tasks to be completed in pairs or small groups. In an effective lesson, based on decimal place value in Year 5 for example, pupils worked in pairs for short periods of time throughout the lesson, setting each other appropriate check questions and enabling the teacher to assess understanding and pupils' levels of independence. In general, teachers' questioning of pupils is sound and well focused, as pupils' strengths and weaknesses are well known. Consequently, pupils of all abilities are involved in class question and answer sessions, and this they do with appropriate confidence. Good relationships are evident in classrooms and because of this pupils are able to accept constructive criticism as part of their learning process. They are prepared to offer answers in whole class sessions when they are not totally sure about their responses. Learning assistants are used effectively and make positive contributions to the pupils' learning by their competent reinforcement of the teachers' objectives. In Year 3 for example, pupils identified simple fractions and represented these by shading appropriate parts of a rectangle. Lesson review sessions are used satisfactorily to reinforce learning but are variable in their effectiveness and quality of pupil participation. In the most effective of these sessions, there is good pupil input. In a Year 6 lesson based on angles, for example, pupils competently use the overhead projector to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Generally pupils' written work is well marked and helpful to the pupils, however the quality of marking is variable. Homework supports learning satisfactorily and classrooms contain good quality displays of pupils' work.
88. The curriculum complies with national guidelines and the National Numeracy Strategy is well established. The effective implementation of the Strategy and the emphasis on improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills are already having a positive impact on pupils' progress. A well-organised co-ordinator, who monitors teachers' planning and pupils' learning appropriately, effectively leads the subject. She has already looked at curriculum links with other subjects, in order to support

pupils' mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. The assessment procedures are good and the results are monitored and analysed well in order to ascertain pupils' progress and assist in the identification of pupils who may be under-performing. A bank of pupils' work to include all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and annotated with National Curriculum levels is also being built up to further refine teacher assessments. The school has already identified the use of assessment to identify mathematical topics, which require extra input from teachers as a focus for further development. Parents are kept regularly informed about their child's progress and curriculum. The curriculum and assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is underdeveloped. Resources are adequate.

SCIENCE

89. Teacher assessment results for the year 2000 indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2, the level that an average seven year old can be expected to reach or above, was well below national figures. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 or above was also well below national results. Overall, the results are well below those of similar schools. Assessments indicate that the area of experimental and investigative science is the strongest area at Level 2 but one of the weakest at Level 3. The school has responded promptly to these results and has recently placed an increasing emphasis on learning and assessment with respect to practical investigations with these younger pupils. At the end of Key Stage 2, national test results indicate that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was below the national average and that of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 or above was well below national figures. Overall, the school's results at this key stage were very low compared with similar schools. However taking the last three years together, the performance of pupils was slightly above the national average, though much reduced by the 2000 result. By then, the pressure of concentrating on literacy, in particular, reduced the amount of time devoted to science. Girls performed better than boys over time.
90. The standard of work of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly typical of that expected nationally. Most pupils have developed sound experimental skills, gained through a good range of practical activities that stimulate their curiosity. They describe processes using appropriate terminology. Pupils develop a sound understanding of life processes and living things and know that living things reproduce and that a balanced diet and exercise are important for healthy living. They recognise the differences between plants and animals and, through investigations, find out what condition plants need in order to grow, for example. Pupils know the names of the different parts of a plant. They understand that materials have different properties and use appropriate language related to these in their examination of forces and motion with respect to the surfaces used in their investigations. In Year 1 for example, a group of higher attaining pupils describe why their model car goes further on the smooth table than it does on the carpeted floor after it has run down the same slope. By the end of the key stage, pupils are beginning to appreciate the importance of a fair test. They achieve appropriately compared to their previous attainment. The standard of attainment has been maintained since the last inspection.
91. The standard of work at the end of Key Stage 2 is below that expected nationally. Pupils do not achieve well enough compared to their previous levels of attainment. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of the required skills and knowledge related to electricity, which they have studied this year. They are also developing an appropriate understanding of the earth, sun and moon and periodic changes, being studied at the time of the inspection. However, the curriculum coverage indicated by the quantity and range of written work in this year is low and when questioned the pupils' knowledge of other topics covered in previous years is limited. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the required range of work has been covered. For example, pupils in Year 3 have a reasonable knowledge of the passage of light through different materials and most pupils understand the difference between transparent, translucent and opaque. The knowledge of pupils in Year 4 about the human skeleton is satisfactory but their ability to suggest ways that changes due to growth could be tested is limited. Pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of night and day and the reasons for these occurrences. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have gained knowledge across the programmes of study and gained some valuable experience in

experimental and investigative work. However, the time allocated to science has been low, although now adjusted, and this has precluded pupils from acquiring the appropriate depth of knowledge and skills of inquiry across all learning objectives. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress relative to their individual abilities. Attainment has gone down in this key stage since the last inspection.

92. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1, it is good overall. At Key Stage 2, it ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent, but is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. However, pupils are not achieving high enough standards, partly due to the below average amount of time devoted to science but also to teachers' unsatisfactory expectations of pupils seen both in lessons and in an analysis of pupils' completed work. This results in barely adequate learning in too many classes, especially at Key Stage 2, though it is satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning is sound overall. In the most effective lessons, teachers ensure that the learning objectives are clear at the start of the lesson and that there is a review session at the end, which includes an evaluation of these, so that pupils have an awareness of their progress. Most lessons are well organised and this enables teachers to include a good variety of interesting and relevant activities. In Year 2, for example, pupils are extremely motivated by the presence in their classroom of a baby and a toddler. This enables the pupils to evaluate clearly the changes brought by human growth and learning. However, in less effective lessons the task does not challenge the pupils appropriately or engage their enthusiasm. This causes problems in pupil management and slows down the pace of lessons. In a significant number of lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils and consequently the varying abilities of pupils are not catered for appropriately in practical sessions. In an effective lesson in Year 1, volunteer parents are used well to work with groups of pupils examining the movement of articles down a slope and to help them to record their results. This enables the teacher to extend the task for higher attaining pupils in the class and to include a review of this in the plenary session at the end of the lesson for the benefit of all the pupils. In the most effective Year 5 lesson based on day and night, the teacher builds a sense of anticipation and curiosity into the lesson. This combined with the imaginative use of homemade resources ensures that the pupils' interest is captured, learning is effective and the pupils' enjoyment of the process is evident. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is limited but is being developed both as an aid for research and for data collections.
93. The curriculum complies with national guidelines and the school is now following the national published scheme. The change of scheme has resulted in some adjustment of topics taught in each year and the timing of these but this has been noted by the school and adjustments monitored. The curriculum provision has improved since the last inspection. Pupil assessment is good. This includes the assessment of pupils developing skills of scientific inquiry, end of topic testing and a growing collection of samples of pupils' work. The analysis of the results of national tests is undertaken appropriately. The subject is well co-ordinated and teachers' planning and pupils' work is monitored. The role of the co-ordinator in the monitoring of teaching and the support of colleagues in the classroom is underdeveloped. Staffing is appropriate for the effective delivery of the curriculum and accommodation and resources are adequate. The support of the subject by information technology is in the process of being developed.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Because of timetabling arrangements, only two lessons in art and design were observed during the inspection. However, judgements can be made on current displays, a scrutiny of planning and through talking with pupils and teachers about their work. The attainment of both seven and eleven year olds is above that expected for their age. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were described as average and progress in lessons unsatisfactory. Since then, the school has improved on its co-ordination of the subject and adopted a scheme of work based on nationally produced guidelines. The parents at their meeting confirm this positive view, seeing art and display as strong features of the school's work.
95. Beginning in Year 1, pupils show that they can closely observe and use pencils to sketch careful representations of a bicycle wheel. A Year 6 pupil supported the work of a small group by

showing them how to walk around the wheel and look at it from different angles. This helped them to enlarge and improve upon original drawings. Pupils in Year 2, work practically and imaginatively using a range of styles and media to good effect. They record with confidence what they can see and imagine. For instance, pupils were painting with watercolours trying to enlarge upon the details of a small photograph. This was of a landscape or vibrant scene. They very successfully use the media to blend in with the original picture and then continue to develop their paintings in a lively way, some showing the ability to use perspective. The school benefits from the considerable skills of the learning assistant in this class who is an artist herself. Throughout one of the lessons, she took the major responsibility for half of the class whilst others worked with their class teacher on a design and technology project. She sensitively helped and prompted the pupils' development through astute comments and questioning: "Be careful, you will really need to work at the colour there!" "What do you think about those dots?" "What will you do with them?" "Could you use a finer brush there?" The pupils rose to the high expectations and when they came to show their work to the rest of the class there were spontaneous comments of "Wow!" and "Brilliant!" The class teacher made relevant teaching points in appreciation of the work.

96. At Key Stage 2, the quality of this work is built upon, particularly in observational drawing. Specific links are made to other subjects, such as in Years 5 and 6 with the history projects. Pupils in Year 5 use sketch books well and a range of pastel, painting and drawing techniques to good effect in representing various aspects of their study of the Ancient Greeks. They plan to continue this work in situ at the British Museum. By the end of the key stage, the pupils are confident in a wide range of media and show that they can select appropriately for different purposes. For instance, the foyer display of work inspired from reading the Michael Rosen poem "Tomato" included paintings using carefully controlled colour to differentiate or emphasise particular features. They draw cross sections of the vegetable with good tonal information. The pupils know specifically about modern artists, researching them and considering their influence on the time. Specifically, pupils talk about Andy Warhol and his use of colour and representation and then very successfully try their own drawings and fabric paintings in a similar style. The pupils are very enthusiastic about their art and design and talk knowledgeably about the range of techniques they use, such as screen-printing, press printing, the use of diffusers and when is the right occasion to use them. The particular feature of all the work is the consistent high standard based on the high expectations of their teacher.
97. The consistency of the work in art and design is ensured because of the good subject knowledge of some key staff and the use of the national schemes for guidance. The subject co-ordinator, also the deputy headteacher, is very knowledgeable and leads the subject well and by example. She also runs an art club where skills and understanding are further explored by groups of interested pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. The attainment of pupils at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. Standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1 and improved in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are well aware of the stages of plan, do and review. Pupils in Year 1 plan and make their own choice of cards for special occasions, using a variety of finishes, folding techniques and hinges. They develop skills in handling equipment and an awareness of safety, when using knives to make fruit salad, for example. Pupils in Year 2 work with a range of materials by, for example, making hand puppets and sandwiches for a Mad Hatter's Tea Party. They investigate ways of producing movement, for example a balloon and tube used to open an egg box creation. By the end of the key stage, pupils use materials and equipment appropriately and express sensible opinions about the completed articles.
99. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils plan and make their own soup and compare this with a variety of purchased soups, commenting on their findings. They investigate ways of making rigid frames. Design and technology is effectively linked with learning in other areas of the curriculum. In Year 4 for example, pupils make textile bags and links are made with mathematics through measuring and reference to nets of three-dimensional shapes and symmetry. Pupils at the top end of Key Stage 2 engage in a variety of challenging tasks. Pupils in Year 5 make a variety of

jams, design the jam jar labels and evaluate the resulting product for appearance, flavour, texture and packaging. They also evaluate effectively the helicopters they have made and tested under 'fair test' conditions, suggesting changes in design features to eradicate twisting, for example, as a helicopter nears the ground. By the end of the key stage, the pupils are confident in suggesting ways by which a product can be evaluated by testing. In a Year 6 lesson where pupils discuss the planning of a bridge they are to design and build, pupils discuss issues related to the span of the bridge, the weight it has to support and how it can be tested for wind effects, for example. Overall pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress across the two key stages.

100. Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection, so no overall evaluation on the quality of teaching can be made. Teachers' planning is sound and the quality of the lessons observed was satisfactory.
101. The curriculum complies with national requirements and an effective scheme of work is now in place. The subject co-ordinator is very well organised and has ensured that the medium term planning is clear and of very good detail. It includes for example, the skills the pupils require, a wide variety of links with other curriculum areas, a good range of relevant vocabulary to include in teaching and suggestions for teachers' evaluation of the pupils' completed work. The curriculum has improved well since the last inspection. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and keeps an up-to-date portfolio containing evidence of work done in each attainment target for each year group, evaluated to National Curriculum levels. Resources are adequate.

GEOGRAPHY

102. The last inspection found that pupils' attainment met national expectations at the end of both key stages and that progression in learning was satisfactory. Currently, pupils still meet national expectations for seven year olds but by the time they are eleven they are lower and there is under achievement. The principal reasons for this deterioration are weaknesses in the teaching and curriculum planning for the subject.
103. It was only possible to observe two lessons, so judgements also take into account an analysis of the pupils' work and discussions with both pupils and teachers. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of places near and far. They can name and place the constituent countries of the United Kingdom (UK) and demonstrate their knowledge of the local Burnham area through simple map work and written accounts. Teaching emphasises a practical approach, which includes fieldwork and visits. For instance, quite recently the class had visited a supermarket to survey who goes there and where the produce comes from. This helps to develop enquiry skills, which encourages pupils to ask and respond to questions about the topics they study. After the visit pupils plotted the information gained, some in graph form, some on a world map.
104. Pupils at Key Stage 2 do not make the progress they should in key skills and understanding of geography. A Year 3 lesson about the effects of pollution on the environment was partially successful in that the pupils did discuss the likely effects of an oil spill in the river Crouch with some understanding. However, an attempt to role-play the situation did not work because few attempts were made to develop the pupils' response to the drama. There were also missed opportunities to develop vocabulary and mapping skills in the lesson. Some useful comparisons between Burnham and Basildon and in the study of rivers take place in Years 4 and 5. However, a systematic programme of lessons, which identifies key enquiry and fieldwork skills alongside relevant knowledge and understanding, is only at a very early stage. Consequently, by Year 6 pupils' locational knowledge of principal cities or rivers in the UK is still weak. They also have a limited knowledge and understanding of environmental issues and sustainability. Overall, not enough work has been completed and fieldwork approaches and skills are limited. Planning difficulties arose when a supply teacher taught an unsatisfactory geography lesson about weather with the oldest pupils. Much of what was taught had already been covered in previous lessons. The pupils did have a good knowledge of temperature, wind direction and how to use measuring instruments including a sensor linked to a computer. However, the long question and answer

session did not explore new learning and was not appropriate as a challenge to more able pupils and little support was given to pupils with special educational needs.

105. The school has responded to the recent national changes in the curriculum by outlining the general headings for what is to be taught in geography. However, planning for the actual content of lessons and how this develops skills and understanding is still at an early stage. This currently leads to an ad hoc approach. There is no monitoring of the teaching and learning so the gaps in development go unrecognised. The subject co-ordinator acknowledges a lack of expertise in this area of her curriculum responsibilities and seeks in-service training.

HISTORY

106. Standards are much better now than when the school was last inspected. At that time progress was unsatisfactory with little building upon pupils' understanding of the past and present or learning through research or using artefacts. This is no longer the case. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is higher than levels normally seen. Pupils achieve well compared to their prior attainment. The school teaches a lively history curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 2.
107. By the age of seven, pupils show a sound understanding of the differences between past and present based on their walks in Burnham and in talking to visitors. They spot that in the old village school the desks had inkwells, lift up lids and all the children faced the front. Their drawings and writing on the subject show an understanding of some of the changes over time and a developing sense of chronology. The presentation of work is neat and careful. This work is successful because history is being taught in a meaningful way. By the age of eleven, the quality of the pupils' project folders about Britain since the 1930s is very good. A high priority is given to pupils' researching independently and asking and answering questions about the periods they choose, such as the "Ecstatic Eighties" or "Fabulous Fifties". They are able to write long accounts with great insight and empathy, drawing also from the range of visits, interviews with parents and appreciation of the arts and music of the time, which are all part of the taught curriculum. They create well-organised and structured work with good use of terms and dates. They show a strong factual knowledge and understanding of the time period and can recognise changes within it. Causes and consequences are discovered. For instance, pupils write succinctly about how the Second World War started and then go on to find out that the black market, the formation of the United Nations and the petrol crises were part of the aftermath.
108. The quality of teaching is sound overall. It is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6. Both teachers place a strong emphasis on cross-curricular approaches without losing the subject distinctiveness of history. So in a literacy hour lesson in Year 5, the teacher referred directly to the pupils' recent learning about the Ancient Greeks. He used an extract from the story of Persephone to make a range of very good teaching points about myths, legends and fables. This consolidated the work in history and introduced new learning in English. Pupils in Year 4 also have a strong factual knowledge of Tudor times. They, too, can use timelines and make interesting comparisons between the Tudor monarchs. The teacher clearly has an interest and enthusiasm for the subject that is communicated to the pupils. By contrast, a Year 1 lesson lacked some of the same drive and vitality. The pupils watched with interest a video of transport in the past. A question and answer session was quite well led but the follow up activity of drawing from memory the transport they had seen was not really appropriate for the age of pupils and less effective.
109. The subject is well co-ordinated. The scheme of work based on the national guidance provides a structure that teachers find helpful and this is supported by a good collection of resources. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has developed a comprehensive policy for history, which covers the key areas of planning and assessment. Time free from classroom responsibility is provided but monitoring of the teaching has not yet begun.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. Since the time of the last inspection, satisfactory progress overall has been made in information and communication technology (ICT). Statutory requirements to teach all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are now met. An appropriate scheme of work is now in place, so that teachers can better plan what pupils must do in order to improve their skills and understanding of what this powerful tool can do. Standards have risen but they are not yet high enough. Pupils do not achieve well enough, especially at Key Stage 2, where progress is unsatisfactory.
111. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with those expected. Pupils carry out basic word processing and enter data to generate a range of graphs. They use 'Splosh', a package to enable them to make paintings. With support, they save work to their own folder, load work from it and use mouse and keyboard to move text around. They plan the route a programmable roamer should take, knowing that their commands determine the path it will follow. Pupils experience other ICT products, such as cameras and tape recorders, routinely in their work. Pupils' achievements are commensurate with their prior attainment.
112. At Key Stage 2, pupils have had a limited exposure to all the elements of the National Curriculum. However, too little time is spent developing ICT skills and using them widely in work across the curriculum. Little evidence is seen in lessons or as part of displays of regular experience of ICT being offered to pupils in every class. Too few examples of computers being used to support pupils' work is seen in pupils' books and folders, through the word processing of stories or reports. Most evidence comes from Year 5. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments in ICT are below those expected. They do not achieve enough during the key stage. Pupils write a limited variety of word-processed text using a restricted range of styles and layouts, generally when drafting stories. They can explore data on CD-ROMs or in simple databases, as in Year 3 work analysing the waste in school dustbins, as part of a project on recycling. Older pupils sense physical data using ICT systems, when predicting what happens to a range of materials at different temperatures. They then appropriately record their findings. This experience appears to be restricted to a single class. However, no comprehensive record is kept of pupils' experiences or attainments to log skills, avoid undue repetition and allow pupils to build sequentially on previous experience. Partial awareness of the power of ICT to make things happen and monitor the outcomes has been gained. Some evidence of Year 4 using computer models exists but it dates back to 1998.
113. The new ICT suite is just beginning to make an impact on pupils' attainments. Initial exchange of information using e-mails has begun. Year 6 pupils had their first lesson in the suite during the inspection. They were shown how to use Powerpoint, to enable them to make presentations, by an outreach worker from St Peter's, their partner secondary school. Much more time, at least corresponding to that indicated in the curriculum audit, will be needed to get standards sufficiently high. During the inspection, one sweep of classrooms, between 9.00 and 9.50 a.m., showed that in only one of the six Key Stage 1 and 2 classes was ICT in use. Four Year 1 pupils were using the roamer. Computers were switched on in each class but not in use in any of them.
114. Pupils display positive attitudes to ICT. They work well together co-operating on a task, when given the opportunity. Sometimes the context in which the work is carried out is not conducive to calm and concentration. Year 6, generally very responsive and well behaved, found sharing 14 computers with nowhere near enough chairs to go round eventually demotivational. This was compromised further by the huge over-running of the lesson, compared to its planned timetable slot. Insufficient evidence of direct teaching was seen to securely judge its quality. However, from the limited evidence available there appears to be sufficient confidence and competence amongst Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teachers but that it is less evident at Key Stage 2. Some of the tasks pupils are given indicate that expectations are too low and knowledge and understanding of the subject insecure.
115. The co-ordinator is capable and well informed. Much of the work presented as evidence dated back to the time when he taught ICT throughout the school. Current practice is for all teachers to take responsibility for their own class, whether ICT is taught and used in the classroom or the suite. Considerable professional development will be required to ensure standards are raised and

the large investment made in ICT gives appropriate value for money. Monitoring of teaching and learning does not happen at present. This will be essential if progress is to be made, and seen to be made.

MUSIC

116. As was reported following the last inspection, few lessons were seen during this inspection, only one at each key stage. However, from them and evidence from assemblies and extra curricular activities, it is possible to make secure judgements. Attainment meets national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils build progressively on skills developed previously, so that they achieve appropriately. This represents a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection when attainment was found to be below that expected and progress unsatisfactory.
117. Pupils at Key Stage 1 sing sweetly and tunefully, both in class lessons, assemblies and in their own choir. They sing with expression, remembering words and melodies accurately. When composing their own pieces in groups, Year 2 pupils select appropriate instruments to represent a particular kind of weather. They devise appropriate symbols to write their compositions on a score and perform enthusiastically to the whole class, trying hard to play as an ensemble. Classmates listen appreciatively, suggesting improvements, which the performers are happy to consider, showing good awareness of the notion of audience. Pupils at Key Stage 2, sing expressively and in tune. They play an appropriate range of pitched and unpitched instruments in class and instrumental lessons. They listen carefully to other players and singers to fit their own part into the whole performance. In Year 5, pupils show above expected levels of attainment when working in small groups on their own compositions, fitting the beats they expect to play onto bar lines. They are introduced to a wide range of music, developing an appropriate musical vocabulary with which to frame their responses to it.
118. Pupils display positive attitudes in lessons and appreciate the contribution of others. They behave well and happily contribute ideas, take turns and share musical instruments and other resources fairly. The Key Stage 1 choir respond enthusiastically to action songs they sing. Older pupils listen carefully to music used to support the week's theme in assembly. They appreciate the context in which it is used, as it is part of a unit on relief work being carried out in Romania by an ex-pupil.
119. The limited amount of teaching seen was good overall. Teachers display secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and use the commercial scheme well to raise standards. They have high expectations of their pupils and manage them sensitively. Pupils are fully engaged in the work, so lesson pace is brisk. Teachers use praise effectively to build up pupils' confidence. They interact well with groups to keep the lesson well focused and noise levels acceptable in creative instrumental work.
120. Music now fully meets all statutory requirements to teach all the elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study, showing good improvement. The co-ordinator has produced a helpful policy and a scheme of work, well designed to support the work of the non-specialist classroom practitioner. The school has also improved the way resources are stored. The music trolleys help make them readily accessible to teachers. Music is a good showcase for pupils' talents. Major performances are regularly given, including 'The Creation Jazz' at a millennium event, Burnham Youth 2000. The choir enjoys a considerable local reputation and has recently performed at the Music for Youth Festival, as far away as in Norfolk.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. Standards in physical education have improved overall since the last inspection. All elements of the National Curriculum are now taught in full, including dance, which was under-developed previously. Teaching quality is higher, with no unsatisfactory lessons seen. The development of a scheme of work has enabled teachers to build progressively on pupils' skills to ensure better progress over time.

122. By the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards in line with those expected. Pupils achieve appropriately, compared to their previous levels of attainment. Pupils in Year 1, in an ongoing series of lessons developing their 'Cornflake Dance', use their bodies and faces to indicate shape, levels and mood. They listen carefully to the good range of instruments played by their teacher to establish the speed and nature of the response that their dance must show. Clear and helpful judgements from classmates help individuals to evaluate and improve their performances. Year 2 pupils in a more formal dance are well balanced and fluent in their movements. The higher attaining pay close attention to the music and effectively repeat patterns. Not all are so co-ordinated and without the teacher's guidance some random and disjointed movements are seen, lacking the changes of direction and creative elements the lesson requires. In gymnastics, Year 2 pupils show good control when balancing and transferring their weight onto various parts of the body. They link these into well-planned sequences.
123. Not all lessons seen at Key Stage 2 display the same standards or progress. In a Year 4 lesson, broadly similar to the one seen in Year 2, attainment was little better. Pupils were unable to put out the simple apparatus required without close supervision and simple tasks like transferring weight from feet to hands were not undertaken appropriately by all. In an excellent lesson in Year 5 of breathtaking pace, pupils were challenged to construct imaginative sequences using symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes, based on their work on the Ancient Greeks, on and off the apparatus. They explored a good variety of levels and different pathways on the various pieces of equipment, connecting them with well-held balances. Movements are fluent, the quality of performance above that expected of pupils of this age. Confident self- and peer-evaluation is a very positive feature. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils show good sense of space when using the hall for gymnastics. The majority are well balanced in their movements and perform challenging tasks energetically. A small number of pupils are more lethargic and display poor bodily control. Pupils move confidently on, off and around apparatus, changing direction and adding rolls, bridges and held positions, which they quickly develop into a repeated sequence. The higher attaining move elegantly and finish off performances with a flourish. One repeats forward rolls along a high plank, before holding a headstand on the table to which it is attached. Lower attainers land noisily in poorly extended positions, with unconvincing rolls to finish.
124. Teaching is good overall. In very good or better work, pupils are fully kitted out, often barefoot for sensitive movement, teachers model performance and use a good level of pupil demonstration and evaluation to augment their own. Pupils behave well in the majority of lessons but it largely depends on the subject knowledge and expectations of the class teacher. Attitudes are unsatisfactory and learning barely sound when the pace and challenge of the teaching does not inspire or motivate. In the small amount of weaker teaching, the class teacher does not give sufficient demonstrations, may not be changed for vigorous lesson leadership and does not pay sufficient attention to safety features, such as the removal of watches and the use of thorough warm up and cooling down sessions.
125. The lack of direct monitoring of lessons and the widely varying amounts of time devoted to the subject in the different year groups have conspired to impede pupils' progress. Not all teachers use the same methods or display confident personal skills. Where this corresponds with a low intended proportion of teaching time, a lowering of attainment is almost guaranteed. The co-ordinator is a physical education specialist. She is ideally qualified to help improve consistency and pupils' standards and achievements, as she has done in the good level of extra curricular activity undertaken. Accommodation is adequate, for while the hall is small, the hard and grassed outside play areas are spacious. The swimming pool is a particular benefit, helping to ensure high standards in one of the optional elements of the curriculum.