

INSPECTION REPORT

PYRGO PRIORY SCHOOL

Romford, Essex

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102320

Headteacher: Mr N P L Emes

Reporting inspector: Ms A M Grainger
20782

Dates of inspection: 25th – 29th June 2001

Inspection number: 193085

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Settle Road
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Essex

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Day

Date of previous inspection: 5th July 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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20782	Ms A Grainger	Registered inspector	English English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19664	Mr J Bayliss	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?
10611	Mr M James	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education Special educational needs Equality of opportunity	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23610	Ms J Denton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education The Foundation Stage	
27426	Mr T Aldridge	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated on a large housing estate in Harold Hill, Romford. With 268 boys and girls aged four to eleven on roll, and a further 45 children attending the nursery part-time, the school is bigger than many other primary schools. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (29%) is above the national average, as is the percentage with a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils on the school's register of special educational needs have learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (31%) is above the national average.

There is some movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual time of starting or leaving. Last school year this amounted to a turnover of 15 per cent of the school's population. The nursery serves other schools as well as Pyrgo Priory School. About half the children who attended the nursery last school year are now in the reception class. Taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. In particular, children have low attainment in their personal, social and emotional development and in their speaking skills. Attainment remains below average for children moving to the reception year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are some significant areas of strength, such as the progress made by pupils aged five to seven in the key areas of English and mathematics. Standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, although attendance is well below the national average. There are some areas of weakness in which improvement is required. Standards in a number of subjects are low for eleven year olds, and are particularly low in English. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils aged four to seven. It is satisfactory for those aged seven to eleven although teachers' expectations are not always high enough. The leadership and management of the school are good, and there is a firm focus on improving standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The combined experiences provided in the nursery and reception classes give children a good start to their education.
- Pupils make good progress between the ages of five and seven, particularly in the key areas of English and mathematics. This is a result of good teaching that meets their individual needs well. Standards for seven year olds are rising.
- Most pupils respond positively to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. They get on well with each other and with the adults in the school.
- There is very good care for pupils' personal well being so that they are happy at school.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide a good educational direction for the school and are well focused on raising standards.

What could be improved

- At the age of eleven, standards are well below the national average in English, and below average in science, art, geography, history, information and communication technology and music.
- Teachers' expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining are not high enough from the age of seven onwards, especially between the ages of nine and eleven. This restricts the achievements of the most able pupils in particular.
- There is too little use of assessment information to ensure that work is set at the right level for pupils aged seven to eleven.
- Not enough attention is given to pupils' spiritual development.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in 1999 it was judged to have serious weaknesses. It was found, however, that the school had improved sufficiently since an inspection just two years earlier when it required special measures because it was failing to provide its pupils with an acceptable standard of education. The school has made satisfactory progress overall since its last inspection in 1999, maintaining the picture of improvement found at that time. While there are still areas in need of improvement, the school no longer has serious weaknesses. The school has been clearly focused over the last two years in dealing with the key issues from the last inspection. Good progress has been made in raising pupils' attainment in speaking, listening and writing at the age of seven. Further work is needed, however, to bring about the same improvement in English standards at the age of eleven. Pupils' progress in science throughout the school has improved, although standards are still not high enough. Teachers' expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining are now much higher for pupils up to the age of seven, and this is reflected in the good progress pupils are now making up to the age of seven. Expectations are still not high enough of those aged seven upwards, especially those aged nine to eleven. The school now provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities overall, but there continues to be some areas in need of attention in those for pupils aged seven to eleven. The overall provision for pupils' personal development has improved and the moral and social aspects are now good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development remains unsatisfactory. Satisfactory progress has been made in setting targets to guide school improvement. The planning for improvement is now based on a reliable evaluation of the quality of education in the school.

There have been improvements in areas that were not key issues. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are higher and there are more opportunities for pupils to develop responsible behaviour. Behaviour has improved as a result, and it is now good. Teaching and learning are better for pupils aged five to seven. The leadership of the school is stronger, with the headteacher and key staff now giving a good educational direction for the school. Recent progress has been hampered by staff absence in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	D	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	A	A	A	
science	A	B	C	C	

The above table shows that standards in 2000 were well above the national average in mathematics, broadly average in science, and well below the national average in English. The picture is just the same when comparison is made with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The evidence of pupils' school work shows a very different situation, at this point, for pupils now aged eleven. Present standards continue to be well below average in English. They are now average in mathematics and below average in science. In relation to the low standards achieved by this year group of pupils when they were seven, their progress has been good in mathematics and satisfactory in English and science. The standards of pupils now aged eleven are not as high as when the school was last inspected in 1999, based on average point scores. The school sets targets for improvement in English and mathematics results but these are low and insufficiently ambitious. They were exceeded in 2000, even in English.

Pupils now aged seven are achieving broadly average standards in English and mathematics and below average standards in science. They have made good progress since the age of five in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in science. The standards at age seven now, based on the evidence of school work, are considerably better than the test results over the last four years.

Standards in all other subjects are as expected nationally at the age of seven. They are below average in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology and music at the age of eleven. In religious education, design and technology and physical education standards are average at the age of eleven. Pupils make good progress in geography and history between the ages of five and seven, and unsatisfactory progress in music between the ages of seven and eleven. In all other subjects, progress is satisfactory. The combined progress made in the nursery and reception classes is good. Children achieve average standards in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year, except in communication, language and literacy in which progress is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils involve themselves well in lessons. Those aged four to seven, in particular, try to do their best. When teaching is not challenging enough, some aged seven to eleven lose interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and there is little inappropriate behaviour. The school is an orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Throughout the school, relationships are harmonious. Pupils respond positively to opportunities for their personal development, although these are few for older pupils in lessons.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below the national average. Too many parents take their children away on holiday during term-time. Punctuality in the mornings is generally good.

Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and relationships, together with their positive response to opportunities for their personal development, contribute to an environment conducive to learning. The poor levels of attendance adversely affect the learning of the pupils involved.

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.

Fifty-eight lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these 90 per cent were at least satisfactory, including five per cent that were very good and 36 per cent that were good. Teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in ten per cent of lessons. Instances of very good teaching were seen in the lower Year 2 English group, in mathematics in the lower Year 3 and 4 group, and in religious education in another Year 3 and 4 class. The unsatisfactory teaching was in one Year 5 and 6 class and in other classes for pupils in the seven to eleven age range in which there were temporary teachers.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, is good for pupils aged five to seven and satisfactory for those aged seven to eleven. While the standards at the age of eleven in mathematics reflect good progress over time since the age of seven, the present quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory rather than good.

Teaching and learning are good in geography and history between the ages of five and seven, and unsatisfactory in music between seven and eleven. In all other subjects, they are satisfactory. Teachers meet pupils' individual needs well up to the age of seven. While there is satisfactory attention to individual needs between the ages of seven and eleven, the most able pupils in particular are not always challenged enough.

In the nursery, teaching and learning are good in personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development. In the reception class, they are good in mathematical, personal, social and emotional development, and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. All the required areas are covered in the nursery, reception class and for pupils aged five to nine. There is insufficient depth to the work in art and design, geography and history for pupils aged nine to eleven. The work in music is not demanding enough for those aged nine to eleven.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are identified and given the support they need to make good progress towards their specific targets. In lessons overall, they are supported and make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. There is good provision for pupils' moral and social development. While cultural development is satisfactory, with many appropriate opportunities provided, there are few visits to places of worship of different faiths. Insufficient attention is given to pupils' spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There is very good care for pupils' personal well being. While procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, information from assessment is not used well enough, especially for pupils aged nine to eleven.

The school's partnership with parents is good and contributes to the effectiveness of pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior staff are very clearly focused on improving the school. They are working effectively as a team to achieve this.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are adequately involved in checking its effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is a wide range of procedures for checking the school's performance. These are well co-ordinated by the senior staff who ensure that action is taken to deal with weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending is well targeted on priorities for improvement. Specific grants are used effectively for their intended purposes. The governing body satisfactorily ensures that the school's resources are used to provide the best value for parents and pupils.

The school has sufficient teachers, support staff and resources to meet the demands of the curriculum. The accommodation is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable approaching the school. • Their children are expected to work hard. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour is good. • Their children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The amount of staff absence in classes for pupils aged seven to eleven.

Inspectors agree that the school is well led and managed and that it is approachable. They agree with parents' other positive views in relation to the provision for pupils aged up to seven. They also find justification for parents' concerns about the high amount of staff absence in classes for pupils aged seven to eleven. The amount of homework is judged to be satisfactory overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery at the age of three is below average in all areas of learning. Particular areas of weakness are children's personal, social and emotional development and their speaking skills. Children make good progress while in the nursery in their personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development and in speaking. In all other areas progress is satisfactory. Not all children move from the nursery to the reception class as some transfer to other schools. About half the children who attended the nursery last year are now in the reception class. These children have made good progress this year in their mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They have also made further good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Satisfactory progress has been made in the other areas of learning. Although overall progress in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory in both the nursery and reception classes, there are aspects in which it is good. In the nursery, this is specifically in speaking and the development of new vocabulary. The learning of sounds linked to early reading and writing skills is good in the reception class. By the end of the reception year, children are achieving average standards in all areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy.
2. Pupils' results at the age of seven in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 were below the national average in reading and well below the national average in writing and mathematics, based on the average point scores. The picture is a little better when the results are compared with those achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. When these comparisons are made, standards in 2000 were average for similar schools in reading and below average in writing and mathematics, but not well below. Although standards were low in 2000 compared with the national picture, there was improvement within the school since the last inspection in 1999. This was evident in the percentage of pupils reaching at least the level expected of seven year olds. Girls have done significantly better than boys in the tests in reading and writing. In mathematics, there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Teachers assessed pupils' performance in science in 2000 as well below the national average although these assessments do not have the accuracy of the tests in reading, writing and mathematics.
3. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, pupils' results, based on the average point scores, were well above the national average in mathematics, average in science but well below in English. The picture was just the same when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In mathematics, standards were high because the percentage of pupils reaching at least the level expected of eleven-year-olds was well above the national average and the percentage reaching a higher level was above the national average. In science, the percentages reaching at least the expected level and the percentage reaching a higher level were both average. In English, in contrast, the percentage reaching at least the expected level was below the national average and the percentage reaching a higher level was well below. Standards had been just as high in mathematics in the previous year when the school was last inspected. In English and science, however, standards were lower in 2000 than they had been in 1999. In that year, the science results had been above the national average. Boys did

significantly better than girls in the 2000 tests in mathematics and science. Although boys did better than girls in English, the difference was not as great as in mathematics and science.

4. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows a very different picture from last year's tests for pupils now aged seven. At this point, the present Year 2 are achieving average standards in English and mathematics and below average standards in science. The significant improvements in English and mathematics are a direct result of the effectiveness of the school's efforts to raise standards. In particular, they reflect the good teaching that pupils are now receiving and the effective team work of staff as they focus on improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils now aged seven, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress since the age of five in English and mathematics. Their progress in science has been satisfactory.
5. The school work of pupils now in Year 6 shows lower standards than in the last two years for mathematics and than for the last four years in science. At this point, standards in mathematics are average and in science they are below average. English standards remain well below average. This year group of pupils achieved low standards at the age of seven. The overall progress of pupils in this year group, including those with special educational needs, has been satisfactory in English and science. Their progress since the age of seven has been good in mathematics. Their performance has, however, been adversely affected by a high amount of staff absence in all three of the Year 5 and 6 classes this school year. Even though progress over time has been good in mathematics, the present quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory rather than good. There are also areas of provision that the school needs to improve in order to raise standards at the age of eleven. In particular, teachers' expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining are not high enough. This was also a weakness at the last inspection. It has been rectified for pupils aged five to seven but not for those aged seven to eleven. It is particularly evident in the teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school sets targets for improvement in English and mathematics results but these are too low and are insufficiently ambitious. They were exceeded in 2000, even in English.
6. At the age of five, many children lack the confidence to speak clearly for any length of time although they have the expected skills for their age in listening. All children handle books correctly and recognise some familiar words in print. They use picture clues to 'read' these words in repetitive sentences. They recognise the letters of the alphabet and try to sound out words. Only a few higher attaining children, however, have the expected skills in reading simple sentences, using sounds to read words, and in understanding stories. Most children write their first name and behave as writers in play situations. All children hold their pencils securely to form letters correctly and most write a few recognisable words or letters in a sentence. Only the highest attaining children successfully write a simple sentence. Most children are familiar with numbers in everyday situations and count beyond 20. Many recognise numbers up to 20. They solve simple number problems effectively. Most recognise the addition and subtraction signs and use these operations with numbers up to five or nine, although lower attaining children are less secure in their understanding of this. Most have the expected awareness of simple two-dimensional shapes. They understand mathematical concepts such as 'heavier' and 'lighter' or 'faster' and 'slower'. All children have the expected simple knowledge of position such as 'before', 'between' and 'after'.

7. By the age of seven, most pupils give clear answers to questions in one-to-one situations, and many speak well giving extended answers. They usually listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. Many pupils are confident, fluent and accurate readers of fiction and non-fiction texts. They have effective strategies for working out what an unfamiliar word might be, such as by splitting it into sections or using letter sounds. They have satisfactory skills in reading comprehension. Pupils write at good length and for a suitable range of purposes. They are developing an awareness of the reader and, for example, use adjectives well to create a setting for a story. Most make good attempts to spell words as they sound. Overall standards of spelling and grammar are satisfactory. Many pupils have neat, evenly formed handwriting and a significant number are starting to join their writing. Pupils count to 100 in twos, fives and tens, and have a secure understanding of place value to 100. Higher attaining pupils understand place value to 1000, while lower attaining pupils work confidently with numbers up to 50. Most pupils are familiar with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, although few use these operations in their heads when solving complex problems. Most have good mental arithmetic skills, the expected awareness of shapes and recognise and use coins up to £1 in shopping activities.
8. At the age of eleven, pupils' speaking and listening skills are poor. Only a few higher attaining pupils speak audibly and clearly in class. Many do not listen with the care and attention expected at this age. Reading standards are below average. Higher attaining pupils have favourite authors and read accurately and confidently, but they do not have the depth of understanding normally found at the age of eleven. Many other pupils read accurately although not fluently. Overall, there are weaknesses in reading comprehension and in the use of non-fiction books to find information. Writing standards are weak. While most pupils write at satisfactory length, for a suitable range of purposes and use paragraphing correctly, standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are considerably lower than expected at this age. Most pupils write in only short simple sentences and there is insufficient use of a wide enough range of vocabulary to describe events or characters and to create a desired mood or atmosphere. Pupils do not have the expected skills in drafting and redrafting their writing to achieve the required style and content. Few pupils join their writing. Most pupils have good skills in mental arithmetic and work confidently with very large numbers. Most have a secure understanding of place value, competently use the four operations of number, and understand the link between equivalent fractions, percentages and decimals. They have the expected knowledge of shape, space and measurement. Pupils are less confident, however, in handling data and recording it as line and block graphs.
9. Standards of literacy and numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum are as expected nationally between the ages of five and seven. Between the ages of seven and eleven literacy standards are too low in subjects such as geography and history. Indeed, pupils' poor literacy skills adversely affect the standards they achieve in many other subjects. Numeracy skills are applied to a satisfactory standard in subjects such as science and design and technology between the ages of seven and eleven.
10. In science, by the ages of seven and eleven, pupils successfully undertake investigations. Many of those aged eleven understand what makes a test fair. A significant minority of pupils aged seven and eleven have difficulty in finding the appropriate scientific vocabulary to explain their work. This is the main weakness

that results in standards being below average. In the main, pupils have the expected body of knowledge across the areas of study required by the National Curriculum, although there are a few weaknesses. In their work on materials and their properties, pupils aged seven lack confidence in identifying which are man-made and which are natural. At the age of eleven, a significant number are uncertain in distinguishing between the different parts of a flowering plant, are unclear about the processes of dissolving and evaporation, and cannot explain how shadows are formed.

11. Standards in information and communication technology are as expected nationally at the age of seven but they are below at the age of eleven. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. By the age of seven, pupils are confident users of the computer. They change the size and colour of a text, combine illustrations and text and use programs for drawing and recording statistics as graphs. They give appropriate instructions to a programmable robot toy and understand the control of appliances in everyday situations. Pupils aged eleven undertake a number of activities using computers, such as word processing, using spreadsheets and CD-Roms and presenting data as graphs. Their knowledge and skills in these areas are not, however, as well developed as is normally expected at this age. Their competence in using e-mail and the Internet, using computers for research and their skills in using adventure or control programs are particularly underdeveloped. The weaknesses in the standards at age eleven result from past weaknesses in provision which have now been largely rectified. The improvements in provision have come too late, however, for those currently in Year 6 to achieve better standards. Pupils do not use computers as well as expected for their age in many subjects.
12. In religious education, standards at the ages of seven and eleven are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects at the age of seven, and in design and technology and physical education at the age of eleven, standards are as expected nationally. At the age of eleven, standards are below those expected nationally in art and design, geography, history and music. Pupils aged five to seven make good progress in geography and history. Progress in music is unsatisfactory between the ages of seven and eleven. In all other subjects, pupils make satisfactory progress, even where standards are lower than expected. Standards are better at ages seven to nine in the subjects in which they are below average at age eleven. This indicates that standards are improving but also points to continuing weaknesses in the provision for pupils aged nine to eleven.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the specific targets set for them. More widely in lessons and in other subjects, their progress is satisfactory overall although good gains are made when they receive the focused attention of learning support assistants. Progress is supported by their targets being regularly evaluated and reviewed, with new targets being set. The progress of higher attaining pupils is good between the ages of five and seven, but it is unsatisfactory between the ages of seven and eleven. This is particularly because of a lack of challenge in lessons and in the work set, especially between the ages of nine and eleven.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Children in the nursery and reception classes have good attitudes to learning and they behave well. They settle into school routines quickly, learn to take turns and develop independence. In the nursery, this is seen as they form a circle together or

play in the 'baby clinic' role-play area. In the reception class, they readily follow the teacher's instructions, for example to line up or to change activities. When they have the opportunity to choose what they are to do, they readily make decisions about their preferred activities. When playing together, children take turns. Those in the reception class are very polite when asking each other if they can have a turn in using particular toys, for example in pushing the baby buggy. Children help to tidy away at the end of sessions. They have a good awareness of how to behave in different situations, such as when at assembly.

15. The attitudes of pupils aged five to eleven, both in and out of the classroom, have improved since the last inspection and they are now good. Even on occasions when teaching is not sufficiently challenging, most pupils do not take advantage and continue to involve themselves in the lesson. Pupils, especially those aged five to seven, listen carefully to the teacher and try to do their best. They enjoy taking part in question and answer sessions, during which they are happy to take turns without inappropriate shouting out. They show an interest in what they are doing and readily involve themselves in whatever activity is presented to them. When not appropriately challenged or when there are weaknesses in teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, a small number of pupils display attitudes that are unsatisfactory. While they do not misbehave, they show little interest in the lesson and make very little effort to do the work set.
16. Good behaviour is a feature of much of what goes on in the school. There is an orderly and purposeful atmosphere within the school both in classrooms and during break times. The need for quieter and more appropriate behaviour in the dining hall and during school assemblies, identified at the time of the last inspection, has for the most part, been effectively addressed. There are still occasions in assemblies, however, when older pupils do not pay sufficient attention. While no pupils were excluded in the last school year, there have been two exclusions this school year. In both cases, the pupils were excluded for appropriate reasons. Rewards for good behaviour and good work are keenly sought, and pupils are proud to have their achievements recognised at the weekly award assemblies.
17. Pupils relate well to each other and have good relationships with adults. They enjoy being with each other and talking with adults. In lessons, they work together amicably. This was seen, for example, in the lower Year 2 English group when pupils worked in pairs to use letter sounds and split words into smaller more manageable parts to identify unfamiliar words. Pupils share resources well in design and technology lessons. Nothing was seen to suggest that when misbehaviour occurs it is oppressive. There is no evidence of vindictive bullying, racism or sexism within the school. The school is a harmonious community. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others and this is apparent in the way they relate to each other both in lessons and elsewhere. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds mix well together at playtimes and lunchtimes.
18. Pupils respond well to the school's overall provision for their personal development. There continues, however, to be too few opportunities for older pupils to display independence in the classroom and assume responsibility for their own learning. This weakness was identified at the last inspection. When given the chance, pupils respond well to the opportunities to assume responsibility, which steadily increase through their school life. Pupils are conscientious in fulfilling their classroom and school monitor responsibilities. They also readily involve themselves in charitable activities showing recognition of the need to help those less fortunate than

themselves. Members of the school councils take their responsibilities seriously. The involvement of the pupils who are representatives contributes positively to their own development and that of other pupils. This is because all pupils know that they have a voice through their representatives and that the school takes their views seriously.

19. Levels of attendance are poor. As a result of a significant number of parents organising annual holidays during term-time, attendance is well below the national average. However, truancy is not a problem. Levels of unauthorised absence have improved since the last inspection, and they are no longer higher than the national average. Punctuality in the morning is generally good. When instances of lateness occur they are mostly of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons.
20. Pupils enjoy school. Their good attitudes to learning, good behaviour and relationships, and positive response to the opportunities provided for their personal development all help to create an environment conducive to learning. Absence from school restricts the progress made and standards achieved by those involved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good for children in the nursery and reception classes and for pupils aged five to seven. It is satisfactory overall for those aged seven to eleven, although it is better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection for pupils aged up to seven. There is also evidence of some improvements, though not as many, for those aged seven to nine. During the inspection, 58 lessons were observed. Of these, five per cent were very good, 36 per cent good, 49 per cent satisfactory and 10 per cent unsatisfactory. Very good lessons were seen in the lower Year 2 English group, in the lower Year 3 and 4 mathematics group and in a religious education lesson in another Year 3 and 4 class. There were instances of good teaching from all class teachers except those in Years 5 and 6. The unsatisfactory teaching was in one Year 5 and 6 class in English, geography and music and in two other classes, in Years 5 and 6 and Years 3 and 4, in which there were temporary teachers.
22. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, is good for pupils aged five to seven and satisfactory for those aged seven to eleven. There are variations, however, in the teaching quality in these two key areas throughout the seven to eleven age range. It is better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. This is particularly so in mathematics where instances of good and very good teaching by permanent teachers were seen. Teaching and learning are good in geography and history for pupils aged five to seven and unsatisfactory in music for those aged seven to eleven. In all other subjects, teaching and learning are satisfactory for pupils aged five to seven. In the nursery, there is good teaching and learning in personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development. In the reception class, teaching and learning continue to be good in personal, social and emotional development, and they are also good in mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Within the area of communication, language and literacy, there is good teaching and learning in speaking and the development of new vocabulary in the nursery, and in relation to the application of sounds in early reading and writing skills in the reception class. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. Teachers are sensitive to their needs and provide appropriate work.

23. What distinguished teaching in the three very good lessons seen was the very strong focus on clearly identified learning intentions, together with the teachers' high expectations of the standards all pupils were capable of attaining. There was much encouragement given in the English lesson in the lower Year 2 group and in the mathematics lesson in the lower Year 3 and 4 group. This boosted pupils' confidence and helped them to make very good progress within the lesson. The effective teaching of basic skills was also a strong feature. In the Year 2 English lesson, pupils were helped in the use of strategies to read unfamiliar and long words. In the Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were supported in furthering their understanding of multiplication tables. In the very good religious education lesson in another Year 3 and 4 class, pupils' knowledge of Sikhism was extended through discussion of challenging questions, opportunities to examine exciting resources and the experience of a reverential reading, followed by the eating of food as at a celebration.
24. The teaching and learning in personal, social and emotional development are good in the nursery and reception classes because staff manage children well and provide good role models for behaviour towards others. In the reception class, the need to allow space for others when the class is gathered on the carpet is emphasised. In the nursery, the importance of taking turns is communicated clearly, for example as children play together in the role play 'baby clinic'. Expectations of behaviour are high in both the nursery and reception classes and praise is used to reinforce good responses. Such praise builds children's self-confidence.
25. There is effective promotion of speaking skills in the nursery as adults talk to children during play activities. New vocabulary is introduced through interesting topics linked to children's experiences, such as birthdays. The focused teaching of sounds and groups of letters promotes early reading and writing skills in the reception class. Similarly, counting skills are developed well in the nursery through regular focused activities. Higher attaining children are better challenged in mathematical activities in the reception class than in the nursery. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are promoted in the reception class through well-focused questions and comments, for example as children participate in a make-believe play about what might happen in a fire station. There is also good use of stories and resources to support learning in this area. In the nursery, physical and creative skills are developed well through well-planned activities.
26. In good lessons for pupils aged five to nine, teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that the activities provided are well selected to promote learning. In a Year 2 lesson for the upper English group, for example, the teacher pretended to be a character from the book the class were reading together. Through questioning the teacher as this character, pupils' understanding of the text developed well, especially their awareness of the relationships between characters and the levels of meaning within the story. In good mathematics lessons, teachers' lively presentation engages pupils' interest. Activities linked by a common theme are effectively drawn together at the end of lessons as pupils share their findings. These are preceded by brisk mental mathematics sessions. There is particularly effective support for special educational needs pupils in good mathematics lessons, so that they make good progress along with other pupils.
27. Lively presentation is a feature of good science lessons. In a good art and design lesson in one Year 3 and 4 class, the teacher gained pupils' interest through sharing

his own water colour paintings with them to illustrate the use of tone. In a good design and technology lesson in a Year 1 and 2 class, pupils not only developed skills through the teacher's well focused questions but they gained in independence as they were expected to select materials for themselves from a central area. All good lessons are characterised by a good pace. Good geography teaching for pupils aged five to seven is distinguished by the way in which pupils are encouraged to question and think for themselves.

28. In satisfactory lessons, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They use the correct terminology of the subject to reinforce and develop pupils' understanding. This is seen, for example, in science, art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology. Demonstration of skills is an effective feature of lessons in physical education and information and communication technology. Activities such as work with computers in information and communication technology are managed effectively. There is good regard for pupils' safety in physical education and design and technology. While questioning is used to check pupils' understanding, it does not always probe sufficiently to develop it. There are also missed opportunities for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. An English lesson in one Year 5 and 6 class was too tightly directed by the teacher, so there were few opportunities for them to take responsibility for their learning. Overall, this is a weakness in the teaching of Year 5 and 6 pupils. Insufficient attention is given to developing their skills and confidence as independent learners.
29. In English lessons for pupils aged seven to eleven, there is insufficient challenge for pupils. In particular, there is a need for teachers to have higher expectations of pupils with potential for higher achievement. This is even evident in the lower sets where the most able pupils in the group are not pushed on well enough in their learning. The need to challenge the most able pupils more is also evident across other subjects. This weakness was identified at the last inspection. While there has been improvement for pupils aged up to seven, there has not been enough progress for those aged seven upwards, and in particular those aged nine to eleven.
30. In mathematics lessons, as at the last inspection, there are still too few opportunities for the practical application of mathematical knowledge and understanding. In the nursery and reception classes, there is also insufficient challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics, such as in problem solving related to number or shape. Marking is carried out regularly and there are some examples of good practices, such as in English for pupils aged five to seven. More widely, especially for pupils aged nine to eleven, there is insufficient use of marking to give pupils pointers as to how they might improve their work. Weaknesses identified through marking, such as in basic punctuation, are not sufficiently followed up to ensure that they are rectified. The use of homework is better now than at the last inspection and it is satisfactory overall. The involvement of learning support assistants has also improved. There is still, however, too little use of computers to support pupils' learning in many subjects.
31. There are common features to the unsatisfactory teaching of music in the seven to eleven age range, and other individual lessons in which teaching was found to be unsatisfactory. In all these cases, teachers' expectations of the standards pupils are capable of achieving were too low. There were weaknesses in the teachers' subject knowledge and the activities provided were insufficiently interesting to gain pupils' interest. There are also occasions, such as in a religious education lesson for pupils in one Year 5 and 6 class, when pupils are not managed effectively. The result of

these shortcomings was that pupils showed little interest and did not make adequate gains in their learning.

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

32. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are satisfactory for pupils of all ages. All statutory requirements are met. In the nursery and reception classes all the required areas of learning are covered. The combined learning opportunities provided by the nursery and reception classes help to give children a good start to their education. They support the good progress made in most areas of learning. Together with good teaching in these classes, the learning opportunities contribute to children's overall attainment being average by the end of the reception year. There is, however, insufficient linking of the nursery and reception class provision, for example through the planning for pupils' ongoing development in each area of learning across both nursery and reception.
33. The learning opportunities for pupils aged five to seven include suitable provision for all subjects. A satisfactory balance is achieved in the emphasis given to each subject and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. For pupils aged seven to eleven, all subjects are covered but there are some weaknesses in the depth of coverage. At the time of the last inspection, the balance between subjects was poor. There have been some improvements, although there is a lack of depth of coverage in art and design, geography and history in Years 5 and 6. This is a factor that is preventing standards from being better in these subjects. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not consistently developed. This relates in geography, for example, to the use and interpretation of maps. In geography and history, there are inconsistencies in what pupils in the three Year 5 and 6 classes are taught. There are also some weaknesses in the provision for music. The learning opportunities in music are not sufficiently demanding for pupils in Years 5 and 6. In many subjects, insufficient use is made of computers to support and enhance the learning opportunities provided.
34. A significant amount of time is allocated to English. This is used well in Years 1 and 2 and is contributing to improving standards. It is not being used effectively, however, for pupils aged seven to eleven, especially for those in Years 5 and 6. The time allowed for both guided reading and sustained writing is not supported by a clear and consistent approach. Consequently, these activities are not raising standards for the older pupils. At the time of the last inspection, shortcomings were noted in the provision of practical activities in both mathematics and science. These have been rectified in science, but in mathematics pupils still have too few opportunities to enhance their knowledge and understanding through practical problem-solving.
35. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with varying degrees of success. The Numeracy Strategy has been most effectively implemented for pupils aged five to seven, with an appropriate use of mental activities in lessons and a ready use of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum. For older pupils, however, the implementation has only been satisfactory with limited use of the mental and oral activities in Years 5 and 6 in particular. In literacy, the pattern is similar, with lessons for pupils aged five to seven being carried out correctly, and with opportunities being provided for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills, both within English itself and across the range of curriculum subjects. This has helped the school to raise the standard of work in English for pupils of this age significantly. For older pupils, however, lessons are not always carried out appropriately. On occasions, for example, there is an absence of focused group

work in which activities are matched to the range of pupils' needs. Insufficient use is made of other subjects to help develop older pupils' writing skills. The school's strategy for literacy for pupils aged seven to eleven is unsatisfactory, particularly because of weaknesses in Years 5 and 6.

36. Appropriate and relevant policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, and they contain detailed and suitable information to give full coverage of these subjects. This information should ensure a steady and progressive development of each subject through the school, although in a number of subjects this is not the case in relation to pupils aged seven to eleven. This is because, for pupils aged nine to eleven in particular, there are inconsistencies in the implementation of planning. Planning based on the schemes does not always make adequate allowance for the various needs of pupils, particularly those who are higher attaining in English, mathematics and science. Again, this weakness concerns mainly the nine to eleven age range.
37. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for the equality of pupils' access to the whole curriculum, with the staff generally making sure that pupils are involved in a full range of activities. The lack of provision of suitable work for higher attaining pupils is, however, unsatisfactory. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. Aspects of sex and drugs education are fully covered both within lessons and when the school receives visits from the nurse and the police. Other aspects of healthy living, such as the contents of a healthy diet, are covered in science.
38. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Clear procedures are in place, which closely follow the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of pupils. Individual education plans are provided for pupils who are at Stage 2 and beyond on the school's special needs register. While these are carefully and thoughtfully prepared, at present they contain too many targets to always clearly identify the main priorities. This was also a weakness at the last inspection and it has not been rectified. Individual education plans are reviewed each term. Pupils with statements of special educational need are provided with good support, in line with the requirements of their statements. Their statements are reviewed annually. Additional opportunities are provided outside lessons for higher attaining pupils, such as through after school clubs. The school also takes advantage of other opportunities offered locally to provide support for higher attaining pupils.
39. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities including football, netball, athletics, cricket, basketball, recorders, choir, drama and art for pupils aged seven to eleven, and music and reading clubs for those aged five to seven. The school welcomes many visitors, including the police, fire officers, artists, authors, an ornithologist and local clergy, as well as drama and music groups. A wide range of educational visits is arranged to places such as Colchester Zoo, the Science Museum and the National Gallery. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit to west Wales. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects.
40. The school has good links with the local community. Suitable use is made of the local area in subjects such as geography and science, and there are strong links with the local church. Pupils' sporting skills have benefited considerably from visits to the

school by members of local football, basketball and cricket clubs. A local businessman has made a considerable donation towards the cost of the computer room, and this has greatly supported pupils' learning in this area. Pupils, especially the school choir, regularly entertain local residents. The school has close ties with other local primary schools and in particular, regular curricular, sporting and musical links have been established. Strong links have also been forged with the comprehensive school. The school uses a number of the comprehensive school's facilities, and offers work placement opportunities in turn. These links particularly help pupils when they move on to the comprehensive school at the age of eleven.

41. Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their cultural development. There has been improvement in these areas since the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development, however, is unsatisfactory as it was at the last inspection. An act of collective worship takes place, which meets statutory requirements, but does not consistently provide for pupils' spiritual development. Although interesting music is used for entry to assemblies, too little attention is paid to it. The assembly hall is a stark environment for reflection without a focal point when resources are not used. Time for reflection or saying a prayer is added to the assembly but it is not always respected by a number of older pupils. A good contribution to pupils' spiritual, reflective development took place when a Year 3 and 4 class presented music throughout the ages and considered its role in the lives of slaves in Africa and gospel music in America. This was well presented and involved all pupils joining in the chorus of the rendition of 'Africa.' There are inadequate opportunities on a systematic basis for pupils to reflect on beauty or awe in art and design and literature. Attention is not paid to it in the planning of subjects, except in religious education. Here, steps have been taken to develop an understanding of the spiritual dimension of Christianity and other faiths. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 and 4 class when pupils were invited to listen respectfully to the reading from a Sikh holy book.
42. Developments in the provision for pupils' personal and social education contribute effectively to their moral development. They provide a good basis from which pupils can discuss personal responses to specific issues such as tormenting elderly people or writing graffiti on walls. Through reflection on a situation from different perspectives, pupils are helped to have an insight into how behaviour affects others. Consideration for each other is promoted within classes by 'circle time' when it is understood that a circle is continuous and all within it are equal. At these times, pupils sit together in a circle and share their views and feelings. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to consider bullying, belonging to gangs and the use of drugs. The community policeman makes an effective contribution to the provision when he visits to talk about drugs, bullying and criminal responsibility. The headteacher and staff are good role models and ensure that pupils recognise the difference between right and wrong.
43. The school councils contribute well to pupils' social development and have given all pupils a voice in decision making in the school through their representatives. Pupils have been taught how to vote democratically and to discuss topics rationally. Pupils have opportunities to consider treatment of the environment and to write letters to the local council about issues that affect them and people who live in the locality. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility as house captains or prefects. Satisfactory opportunities are made for pupils to provide help around school, such as preparing music for assembly or raising funds for charity. By collecting harvest produce for those less fortunate than themselves, pupils are given

the opportunity to think of the needs of others. Performance by the choir at senior citizens' homes and a local hospice provides pupils with effective opportunities to serve the community.

44. Pupils learn about their own culture through participation in music festivals and dance and drama clubs. Other aspects include festivals throughout the year, traditional stories and poems. This is extended into stories from around the world to introduce a range of cultures. Videos are used to present aspects of cultural life that cannot be directly experienced. This provides a reflective topic on different cultures within our society and their lifestyles. In English, a particular text has been acquired to help pupils in Years 3 and 4 appreciate the dilemmas faced by different cultures being put into a school where they do not know the language or customs. This is further enhanced through religious education when pupils have opportunities to reflect on beliefs and lifestyles. A visit from a representative of the Gurdwara is arranged to build on this understanding. A visit from a Ghanaian drum band furthered pupils' awareness of African music and helped them in their understanding of influences on music moving across cultures and countries. While there are strong links with the local church, there are fewer opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development through visits to the places of worship of different faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school has improved its provision for the physical welfare, health and safety of its pupils since it was found to be generally satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Pyrgo Priory School is a welcoming school that looks after its pupils very well. The very sensitive support provided is based on detailed welfare procedures that are school specific and of good quality. The staff, especially the permanent teachers, know their pupils well. As a result, they respond sensitively and positively to pupils' personal needs. All pupils, whatever their circumstances, are provided with personal support that recognises their individuality. There is a supportive atmosphere within the school, especially for the younger children, which aids learning. Lunchtime supervisory staff, who relate well to the pupils, provide effective support that contributes effectively to behaviour and safety. Pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice.
46. Staff and governors have proper regard for the health and safety of pupils. Drawing on the specialist expertise available within the governing body, they are vigilant in identifying problems in and around the school. As a result, risks to health and safety are minimised. Overall, despite a minor problem of uneven slabs leading from the car park to the school entrance, the school has worked hard to ensure that the well-being of all members of the school community is protected. First aid and fire safety arrangements are good overall with some very good features such as the specialist medical room. The school's procedures for dealing with the very occasional accident are effective and appropriate records are maintained. Child protection arrangements are excellent and meet statutory requirements. The designated person is very experienced. His requirement to be attentive to the needs of all pupils within the school has a high profile with all staff who undertake this responsibility conscientiously and well.
47. The school's procedures for checking and improving attendance are good and have improved since the last inspection. Records of attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. Procedures for recording lateness and unauthorised absence are rigorous. There is good liaison with the school's

education welfare officer and there are good procedures for contacting parents in the case of unexpected absence. The school has made significant efforts to raise overall attendance levels further than has been the case so far. There is further scope, however, for making parents aware of how taking their children on holiday during term-time disrupts their education. The measures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There is an expectation of good behaviour that has been further developed since some weaknesses were identified at the last inspection. Rewards and sanctions are well understood and accepted by pupils.

48. The school's arrangements for checking and promoting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Formal arrangements include the 'Tree of Life Book'. This is a book that stays with a class as they move up through the school. In it, pupils record their own and class targets which may, for example, relate to behaviour or friendships. Teachers' records and summaries in pupils' annual reports are satisfactory further methods of recording non-academic success. The maintenance of individual records, regular staff discussions, a positive rewards system, the school councils and charitable activities all contribute effectively to the school's provision for the non-academic development of its pupils. There is a weakness, however, in the school's provision for its pupils to take personal responsibility for their own learning in lessons, especially in Years 5 and 6 where skills in learning independently are under-developed. Informal arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development, which benefit from teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals, are good.
49. Pupils with special educational needs are regularly assessed, and a wide variety of information is recorded to help check their progress and identify their attainment. The information gained is used effectively to provide suitable work for the pupils. The learning support assistants, working with pupils with statements, keep detailed records that help ensure that the tasks provided for them are particularly relevant to their present needs.
50. In the nursery and reception classes, satisfactory procedures are in place for assessing children's attainment in all areas of learning. The formal assessments made when children enter the nursery are used to provide suitable work in the nursery class. Records are updated regularly, using detailed information noted during classroom observations. Assessment information is used in half-termly planning within each class to ensure that the needs of all pupils have been considered. They are used effectively to identify pupils with special educational needs. All records are passed to the reception teacher at the end of the year. The reception teacher uses them to plan the curriculum.
51. The checking of pupils' academic performance and personal development throughout the five to eleven age range is satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection. There are termly formal assessments made in reading and all pupils meet termly with their teacher to set targets for development. The school has effective procedures for checking attainment in English and mathematics, including at the end of each school year. In Years 3 to 5 optional annual national tests are used to assess progress in English and mathematics. These record National Curriculum subject levels and the results are thoroughly analysed by the assessment co-ordinator and used to set targets and monitor progress. These results are used to group pupils in three ability sets across Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6, at the beginning of each year. The analysis of the annual test results is also used to see which areas require an additional focus and which pupils in Years 2 and 6 need extra

help to reach the expected levels for their age. The results of this analysis are also passed to the special educational needs co-ordinator. However, despite the hard work the assessment co-ordinator has undertaken, the information is not used effectively by all teachers, especially those in Years 5 and 6, to set appropriate work. Insufficient use is made of National Curriculum assessment levels to check pupils' progress in reaching the standards expected for their age. Assessments by teachers at the end of Year 6 show big discrepancies with the test results. A more rigorous approach to assessment, clearly linked to planning, is needed to ensure that all teachers match work more closely to the needs of pupils.

52. In subjects other than English and mathematics, there is little formal assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. A skills assessment sheet has recently been introduced in information and communication technology, which will be added to as pupils move through the school. However, in science, religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, there are no whole-school systems to check what pupils know, understand and can do. In these subjects, teachers use their own systems. The school does not record what pupils know, understand and do in the different subjects in a form that can be passed on to the next teacher and help in the planning of new work. The school recognises that this is an area in which development is necessary.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents have very positive views about the school. They are proud of it and think it is a very good school. They feel that their involvement has increased since the last inspection and that the school has developed its links with them well. They consider that their children make good progress, that behaviour is good, and teaching is good with expectations that their children will work hard. The school is thought to work closely with parents, keeping them well informed about their children's progress. Parents are very comfortable when approaching the school with questions or problems. They feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and that it is well led and managed. Inspection evidence finds much support for these views although the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is satisfactory overall rather than good between the ages of seven and eleven. A small number of parents have concerns about the amount of homework, although inspectors judge this to be satisfactory overall. Some who attended the parents' meeting or who wrote to inspectors have justified concerns about the effect the recent unsettled staffing arrangements for pupils aged seven to eleven have had on the educational provision for their children.
54. Parental support both in school and at home is good. The school actively seeks the support of parents in its work and their increased involvement. Many parents help in a variety of ways including support in the classroom, involvement in the additional literacy project, helping with extra-curricular activities, as parent governors and with school visits. The contribution of these parents is valued and contributes much to pupils' learning. Parents actively support the fundraising events that are organised by the well led and committed parents' association. These provide very welcome additional funds that are well used to support and broaden pupils' experiences as well as successfully fostering relationships between home and school.
55. The quality of information provided formally by the school is good. There is no reason for parents to feel ill informed about any aspect of their child's or the school's activities and achievements, providing they take advantage of the opportunities

presented to them. Newsletters, including the curriculum information supplied each term, and a variety of liaison activities including workshops and information sessions, keep parents well informed about school activities. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are very comprehensive but somewhat formal documents in presentation. The prospectus provides parents with all the required information and gives a good picture of what the school offers their children. The annual report to parents provides a very good review of school activities and achievements, but the required information on school finances and the professional development undertaken by staff is somewhat brief.

56. Parents are provided with good opportunities to be informed of their children's progress and development on a termly basis through open evenings, and annually through a written report. While there is some variation from teacher to teacher, the quality of the written reports is generally good. The reports reflect much thought by most teachers indicating a good knowledge of the pupils as individuals. They provide parents with detailed information about what their child has done and can do. There is some weakness, however, in indicating to parents how attainment compares with that expected for the age of their children except at ages seven and eleven when statutory assessment results are provided. The better reports provide well-focused targets for improvement that can potentially help parents to support their children's learning.
57. There are regular opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents to meet with teachers to discuss attainment, progress and the curriculum. The headteacher makes himself available to parents at any time showing a willingness to provide whatever help and advice parents might require. Class teachers are very ready to meet parents whenever they can, subject to teaching commitments. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of the reviews of their children's individual education plans, so that they are fully aware of the provision being made for them. Parents of pupils with statements are invited to the annual review meeting.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. When the school was last inspected in 1999 it was judged to have serious weaknesses. It was found, however, that the school had improved sufficiently since an inspection just two years earlier when it was considered to have been failing to provide its pupils with an acceptable standard of education. The picture of an improving school found at the last inspection has been maintained, with further satisfactory progress having been made. There are now many good features to the provision for pupils aged up to seven. Weaknesses remain in the provision for pupils aged seven upwards, most particularly for those aged nine to eleven. The most significant of these are the low standards in English at the age of eleven and teachers' insufficiently high expectations of pupils. There is no doubt that there is still much work to be done to ensure that all pupils receive an effective education. Equally, there is no doubt that the headteacher and key staff provide a good educational direction for improvement and that they have the determination and capacity to succeed.
59. The headteacher is very focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education for pupils at Pyrgo Priory School. He has a keen awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and recognises the action needed to rectify the shortcomings. He is satisfactorily supported in the day-to-day management of the

school by the deputy who is making a good contribution in areas such as the development of assessment procedures. Her leadership role has been restricted recently due to having a full-time teaching load as a consequence of staff absences. She has also had to oversee the work of another class that has had temporary teachers for a considerable part of this school year. This situation should be rectified next term when the deputy will no longer have a class but will be a 'float' teacher working across the seven to eleven age range to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

60. The teacher with responsibility for leading the Year 1 and 2 teaching team and for co-ordinating English is making a good contribution to the improvement of the school. She has been a key player in raising standards in English at the age of seven. She has been very well supported in this by the strong teamwork of all staff responsible for Years 1 and 2. While she has not been effective in raising the standards of pupils aged eleven in English, it is not for want of trying. She has worked with individual teachers to improve their practice and has led training sessions for teachers tailored to the seven to eleven age range, as she has also done for the five to seven age range. The deputy, who was a literacy co-ordinator in a previous post, has supported her in this work. While this is starting to show results in Years 3 and 4, the two year groups that the deputy co-ordinates, it is having little effect in Years 5 and 6. A weakness that undermines present attempts to improve the provision in Years 5 and 6 is that the teachers in this part of the school are not as effective in working together as a team as those in Years 1 and 2. This is exacerbated by the high amount of staff absence in all three of the combined Year 5 and 6 classes this school year. In reviewing the deployment of teachers for next term, the headteacher has wisely decided to move the English co-ordinator to Years 5 and 6 where she will be responsible for leading the teaching team. Other staff changes for next term in Years 5 and 6 should further strengthen this focused move to eradicate low expectations and raise standards in this part of the school, especially in English.
61. The leadership and management of other subjects are satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was taking responsibility for mathematics owing to the absence of the co-ordinator who is also the Year 5 and 6 team leader. The headteacher, deputy and co-ordinator have worked well together to ensure that the National Numeracy Strategy is implemented and to raise standards. This has been effective for pupils up to the age of nine. As with English, although not to such a great extent, improvements are required in the provision for pupils aged nine to eleven. Many other subject co-ordinators provide informal support and guidance for colleagues but are less sure of the specific strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and what needs to be done to develop them. This is largely because, as the school has moved from a low base over the last two years, the emphasis has been on the key areas of English and mathematics. Nevertheless, co-ordinators do have appropriate areas for development. In geography, for example, the co-ordinator recognises the need to rewrite the subject policy to bring it up-to-date with recent initiatives.
62. The nursery and reception class teachers each manage the provision in their areas effectively. While children have a good start to their education through the combined experiences provided in these two classes, there is insufficient overall co-ordination of the provision for children aged three to five to ensure a more cohesive and even more effective approach. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator keeps extensive

records, and the progress made by pupils is carefully checked. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs regularly visits the school to check on the work being done by pupils, and to offer support to both staff and pupils. Special educational needs is also a regular topic for discussion at full governing body meetings.

63. The checking of the school's provision, especially teaching and the curriculum and their contribution to pupils' learning, is good. A good range of strategies is used, including lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work and the analysis of performance data. As part of the analysis of performance data, there is an examination of the comparative performance of boys and girls. There is effective involvement of the deputy and English and mathematics co-ordinators, although the programme of lesson observations for this school year has been difficult to adhere to because of staff absence. The headteacher has been very focused this year on the weaker teachers. In such cases, substantial support is given. There is a clear recognition of the need to take action if a weak teacher does not improve as a result of the support provided.
64. Governors have a satisfactory awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although not all are sufficiently clear about how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. Governors are kept well informed of what is going on in the school through the headteacher's detailed and objective reports. They are more questioning of the headteacher and the work of the school than at the last inspection. They also have a number of appropriate independent strategies for gaining information. While governors recognise the importance of obtaining value for money in purchasing, sustained challenge of what the school is doing is the weaker area of their work. Governors tend to think of the improvements already made rather than focusing clearly on those that are now needed. Each governor is linked with a subject. A new initiative is the use of a proforma for recording their visits to the school, including those to lessons. Overall, the involvement of governors in checking the effectiveness of the school is satisfactory.
65. The identification of priorities for development is good. There is good overall involvement of the staff. Areas for development are appropriately discussed with the governing body. There is scope, however, for greater involvement of the governing body in determining development priorities. Governors are aware that they need training in order to become more proactive in relation to this.
66. The arrangements for financial planning and checking the school's finances are good. They ensure that the school's educational priorities are properly supported. There is very good liaison between governors, the headteacher and staff in formulating the budget. Governors take an active part and feel ownership of the budget and the strategies behind it. They make decisions with confidence because of the objective information provided to them by the headteacher. The school has planned to reduce its financial reserves during the present school year to a low level. Governors, objectively advised by the headteacher, have proper regard for the use of these accumulated reserves. They are aware of the implications of their decisions in this respect. Contingency planning is in place to ensure that, as far as possible, the school's finances will be sufficient to allow the continuation of its present strategies. These include the maintenance of present teaching staff levels even though the school roll is falling, and increased classroom assistant support and technical support for information and communication technology. The monies made available to the school for specific purposes outside its mainstream activities are well

targeted. They are used effectively to raise the attainment of those pupils for whom they are intended. Guided by the headteacher, governors give satisfactory consideration to how well the school uses its resources to provide the best value for parents and pupils.

67. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are good. Effective use is made of the information available from the school's computerised management system. There are effective financial and administrative procedures in place that allow the very committed administration staff to positively support the work of the school. The school's most recent financial audit found no matters of serious concern. Its few minor recommendations have been implemented effectively. The school makes satisfactory use of new technologies.
68. The school is appropriately staffed and there are at present sufficient qualified teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Overall, the number of qualified support staff is sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils in the school, especially those with special educational needs. All staff, whatever their role, fully involve themselves in the daily life of the school and make an effective contribution to its smooth running. Although the school is housed in an old building there has been considerable refurbishment of the accommodation in recent years that has lifted its quality to one that provides a pleasant, welcoming and often stimulating environment for learning. The adequacy of accommodation for the delivery of the curriculum is good. Provision has been made for disabled access. The building is well maintained and kept clean and tidy by the very committed school keeper who provides good support to the school community. The nursery provides a well resourced and stimulating environment for children starting their school life. While there is also good accommodation in the reception class, opportunities for outdoor activities are restricted by there being no covered area for these young children to work and play in. Specialist areas such as the school hall, library areas, resource areas, a computer room, medical room, and a mathematics centre, positively complement the teaching areas for pupils aged five to eleven and support pupils' learning.
69. At the last inspection, resources for learning were reported to be sufficient with rich provision for pupils with special educational needs. This situation has been maintained with satisfactory provision overall to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is now good provision for information and communication technology, religious education and physical education. For children in the nursery and reception classes there is generally satisfactory provision, although there are some weaknesses in the quality of the furniture.
70. The school provides a satisfactory education overall for its pupils. Standards are rising at the age of seven and focused action is being taken to bring about similar improvements at the age of eleven. Good standards are achieved in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. In order to rectify the weaknesses, while maintaining the strengths of the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- a) Raise standards in English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, geography, history and music by:
 - in English: giving attention to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills; improving skills in reading comprehension and the use of books for research; placing emphasis on basic writing skills, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing and handwriting; providing opportunities for pupils to develop skills in drafting and redrafting writing for

style and content, including in selecting language to describe and create atmosphere and using literacy effectively in other subjects;

- in science: developing pupils' understanding and use of the correct scientific vocabulary and focusing on areas of knowledge and understanding in which there are weaknesses;
- in information and communication technology: developing pupils' knowledge and skills across all aspects of this subject, including in the use of adventure and control programs; and increasing the opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects; and
- in art and design, geography, history and music: ensuring that the learning opportunities provided in Years 5 and 6 build effectively on pupils' earlier knowledge, understanding and skills and that all aspects of these subjects are covered in sufficient depth.

(Paragraphs: 5, 8-12, 30, 33, 87, 89-92, 107, 110-112, 117, 119-121, 126, 127, 129, 132-134, 136-140, 142, 145, 147, 149, 152)

- b) Raise teachers' expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of achieving between the ages of seven and eleven, and especially in Years 5 and 6. Make sure that there is sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

(Paragraphs: 13, 29, 31, 95, 96, 113, 130, 131, 138)

- c) Ensure that teachers consistently use the information from assessment available to them to plan work at the right level for pupils aged nine to eleven.

(Paragraphs: 51, 98, 108, 151)

- d) Give greater attention to pupils' spiritual development in assemblies and through the learning opportunities in subjects.

(Paragraph: 41)

- e) Improve attendance levels by working even more closely with parents to help them to recognise the importance of their children being in school during term-time.

(Paragraphs: 19, 47)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- There are no assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics and information and communication technology.

(Paragraphs: 52, 115, 121, 126, 133, 139, 152)

- There is insufficient overall co-ordination of the nursery and reception class provision to ensure a cohesive approach.

(Paragraph: 62)

- Although pupils' work is usually marked regularly, there are few comments to help pupils aged nine to eleven in particular to improve.

(Paragraphs 30, 106, 114, 131, 137)

- There is no covered external area for outdoor activities for children in the nursery and reception classes.

(Paragraphs 68, 83)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	36	49	10	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	291
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	83

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	87

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	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
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	20	15	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	28	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (66)	83 (61)	83 (68)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	25	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (61)	74 (61)	74 (58)
	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	21	22	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	20	21
	Girls	15	17	17
	Total	30	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (69)	86 (84)	88 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	17	16
	Girls	10	13	13
	Total	19	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	44 (71)	70 (78)	67 (82)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	171

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	705,094
Total expenditure	692,164
Expenditure per pupil	2,424
Balance brought forward from previous year	33,743
Balance carried forward to next year	46,673

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

27.1%

Number of questionnaires sent out

291

Number of questionnaires returned

79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	20	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	24	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	35	4	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	41	8	3	6
The teaching is good.	85	15	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	13	6	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	8	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	97	3	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	76	3	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	15	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	32	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	43	5	1	10

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents are concerned about the high amount of staff absence in classes for pupils aged seven to eleven and how this affects their children's learning.

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

72. Children enter the nursery in the September of the school year in which they will be four. They attend part-time for either morning or afternoon sessions. Many children have experienced some pre-school education prior to starting the nursery. On entry to the nursery, taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment is below that expected for their age in all areas of learning. It is particularly low in personal, social and emotional development and in speaking fluently. Children make good long-term progress in the nursery in personal, social, emotional, physical and creative development, and in speaking. In other aspects of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, their long-term progress is satisfactory. Approximately half of the nursery intake transfers to the reception class.
73. On entry to the reception year, children's attainment is still below average in all areas of learning, except physical and creative development. In the reception class, children continue to make good long-term progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They also make good long-term progress in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in using letter sounds for early reading and writing. In the other areas of learning they build satisfactorily on the gains made in the nursery. By the end of the reception year, standards are average in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy. Five children in the nursery and one child in the reception class are identified as have special educational needs. Children's rate of progress in the nursery is much the same as at the last inspection, and it has improved in the reception class.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. By the end of the reception year, most children meet the Early Learning Goals, which are the national targets for five year olds, in this area and just a few exceed them. Most concentrate well and show independence in learning, for example by collecting extra equipment they need or making the decision to use a 'number line' to check the formation of a number they are writing. Children have the independence expected at this age in changing for physical education and visiting the toilet. They show excitement at the visit of a fire engine and pride in being allowed to use the hose. They have good relationships with each other and the adults who help them. Most take turns with table equipment or when speaking in a group. The most fluent speakers negotiate for turns with outdoor equipment, for example, saying, "Can I push the buggy please?". In all activities they show an awareness of behaviour being right or wrong, such as in walking to the hall when other classes are working and in the way they show respect in assembly. They tidy away equipment well and follow instructions correctly in large and small groups.
75. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good in both the nursery and reception classes. Teachers and support staff manage children well. They promote good behaviour and consideration for others in all situations and are good role models themselves. This is seen, for example, when children are reminded to make space on the carpet for others, are asked to line up sensibly in the reception class, or make a group circle, or take turns in the 'baby clinic' role play area in the nursery. Teachers emphasise a good response with praise. This results in children growing in

self-esteem and following instructions well. Teachers have good knowledge of children's development and plan well towards promoting new learning for children. Clear instruction in the reception class ensures children understand and reflect on what they have to do. In the nursery, established routines help children feel secure. Support staff work well together with teachers in ensuring children develop an awareness of each other's needs and an understanding of sharing in both the indoor and outdoor environment.

Communication, language and literacy

76. Only a few higher attaining children meet the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the reception year. Whilst many are shy, they are gaining self-confidence to speak to others about what they are doing. Most children do not, however, speak clearly for any length of time. Children listen with the skill expected at this age and are learning to take turns in a conversation. When asked focused questions, they talk about the characters in books but only the most able can retell a simple story in sequence. All children handle books carefully and behave as readers. Most know a range of familiar words and, by using picture clues, use them in repetitive sentences. They recognise many letters of the alphabet and try to sound out some words using letter sounds. The few highest attaining children read simple sentences, use sounds to help them read words and have the understanding expected at this age of both story and information books. Most children write their first name and behave as writers in play situations. The highest attaining children can write a simple sentence. Most others write a few recognisable words or letters. All children hold pencils securely, which helps them to form letters correctly.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in this area, in both the nursery and reception classes. It is good in the nursery in promoting speaking and new vocabulary, and in the learning of sounds linked to reading and writing in the reception class. In the nursery, children make good long-term progress from a low start in speaking to each other and adults with increased vocabulary and fluency because adults talk to them during play activities. In the reception class, children make good long-term progress in learning sounds and groups of letters because of the focused teaching of letter sounds linked to their guided reading books and written work. Grouping of children by ability in the reception class ensures that tasks are matched to their needs. Questioning and instruction by adults help children concentrate on their work and achieve new learning. New vocabulary is effectively introduced in the nursery through interesting topics linked to children's experiences, such as the 'baby clinic' role-play area and birthdays. As a result, they talk about birthday cards and cake, 'write' invitations or take appointments and 'answer' the telephone at the 'clinic'. A wide range of opportunities is planned in both classes for children to speak, listen attentively, look at or read books and to write. Teachers regularly assess children's learning and use the information gained to plan further challenges. All children take books home to share with adults.

Mathematical development

78. Most children meet the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the reception year. They are familiar with numbers in everyday life such as on houses and doors, and confidently count to numbers above twenty. Almost all recognise numbers up to ten and many up to 20, demonstrating this with a number fan. Children competently solve very simple number problems in diagram form and when answering a verbal question about a number pattern. Most recognise addition and subtraction signs,

showing understanding of this in both practical and mental calculations with numbers to five or nine. They understand 'one more' or 'one less' than a number as adding to it or taking away. The lowest attaining children work with numbers to seven and do not have such a secure understanding of adding numbers. Most children match shapes, identify circles, triangles and squares and use them to make simple repeating patterns. Most have an understanding of the passage of time expected at this age. They sequence small, medium and large pictures from the 'Three Bears' story. They have a simple understanding of balance, 'heavier' and 'lighter', speed as 'faster' or 'slower' and vocabulary such as 'short', 'tall', 'thin' and 'fat'. The lowest attaining children struggle to form numbers correctly or record accurately their ideas of balance or sequence. All children have a simple knowledge of position such as 'before', 'between' or 'after', but are less certain about direction.

79. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. In the nursery, it is good in the specific aspect of counting because adults develop children's counting skills on a regular focused basis, such as after taking the register or when numbering a group. Nursery staff satisfactorily promote a range of activities through play to develop understanding of amounts in volume and capacity in sand and water, and the passage of time through their topic on birthdays. These engage children's interest and develop their mathematical vocabulary. Through the challenge to look at patterns for wrapping paper and then printing their own, children gain an understanding of simple shapes such as circles and squares and a feeling for space. Staff in the nursery do not always sufficiently challenge the most able children to solve a problem with number or shape. Reception staff promote counting, ordering and sorting, and matching activities well. They challenge the highest attaining children through work in ability groups. This results in children learning at a good pace because of the focused instruction. Good use of support staff makes the best use of time available and assists in the assessment of children's knowledge and skills for future lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. By the end of the reception year, most children meet the Early Learning Goals in this area. They ask questions about life from watching tadpoles mature and observing the changes in beans as they grow. Most children are confident in building with construction materials and sticking paper and materials together to make collages, buildings or vehicles. They decide how a construction can be changed to improve it, or make it fit for the purpose intended. Children eagerly use a programmable toy in small groups and are familiar with the mouse and letter keys to make things happen on a computer screen. They competently use the computer for drawing pictures and print them in the computer room. They are familiar with controls for domestic appliances in the home, such as video recorders and use headphones in school to listen to stories. Through looking at and discussing domestic equipment, such as a flat iron or stone hot water bottle, children have a satisfactory understanding that life was different in the past. They can find their way to the secretary's office on their own. They have the expected knowledge for their age of features in their environment, such as local shops or rubbish that may spoil the areas where they play. Through stories and celebrations, such as Diwali, pupils have a simple understanding of the cultures and beliefs of others. The visit of a fire engine during the inspection enhanced their knowledge of real 'people who help us'. Through learning about their bodies, they know about keeping clean, cleaning teeth and healthy food.

81. Teaching and learning in this area are satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. The nursery topic of birthdays has satisfactorily promoted children's thinking about time, place and the thoughts and feelings of others. Items on the science table, such as a magnifying glass, have raised children's awareness of living creatures such as tadpoles and a range of interesting natural objects. Parental help is used well to develop children's scientific knowledge, for example of dissolving when making jelly, and of what is needed for growth when observing new plants. In the good teaching in the reception class, adults promote children's learning effectively by becoming involved in role-play, for example to help them explore 'people who help us' re-enacting what may happen at the fire station. Through this and the visit of the fire engine, children develop new vocabulary, which they use when constructing models and talking about their environment. Through a story, 'The Trouble with Gran', and the use of associated domestic tools, staff promote well a sense of the past and changes over time. Well-focused questions, comments and instruction are used to develop knowledge, skills and understanding and promote independence in using the computer. Children are encouraged to evaluate what they have learned and to talk about it in a group, which reinforces new learning. In the nursery, a satisfactory range of resources and dolls from different ethnic backgrounds is used to develop children's understanding of different cultures and beliefs. In the reception class, however, there are too few resources for promoting cultural awareness through play.

Physical development

82. By the end of the reception year, children move freely in the outdoor and indoor environment. They have the expected skill in balancing, climbing and moving around and are aware of others around them when using wheeled toys safely. They pedal and push wheeled toys with the expected skill for their age. They show some control in the use of skipping ropes, quoits, and bats and balls. Many cannot yet skip or hit a ball consistently, although they are better at controlling a ball with their feet. They show the expected skill for their age in handling pencils and crayons, paintbrushes, glue sticks and shape cutters.
83. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Good planning in the nursery ensures children regularly practise skills with pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and manipulating different sized scooping and pouring equipment. This results in them making good long-term progress and showing independence. There is less emphasis on cutting skills, however, which are not so well developed. In the outdoor environment, regular opportunity is provided for children to acquire skills in using wheeled toys. Good instruction is provided in throwing, catching and hitting balls. Teachers promote a growing awareness of safety and sharing in all situations, such as taking turns when climbing up the slide. More formalised skills lessons outside, hall movement lessons and outdoor play with wheeled toys and climbing equipment all contribute satisfactorily to children's physical development in the reception class. Neither reception nor nursery classes have a covered area where outdoor toys can be put for easy access when not in use during the day. This restricts the time available for their use. Activities in the reception class are planned to satisfactorily develop the use of tools for writing, painting and gluing.

Creative development

84. Most children meet the Early Learning Goals in this area by the end of the reception year. They understand how mixing two colours of paint creates another colour. They competently join together boxes when making junk models and make collages from a variety of materials. Children consider whether what they make meets the function for which it is intended. Having drawn and labelled a design for a simple puppet, for example, they evaluated their designs verbally. They ably sing songs from memory to reinforce their knowledge of numbers or when singing in assembly. They recognise patterns such as fast and slow in musical rhythm, as they follow the instructions on a taped programme, or use untuned percussion instruments. When playing freely outside children show imagination, for example, role-playing domestic situations. Indoors, they sustain pretend situations well in role-play related to the themes the class is exploring, such as life at the fire station. They confidently explore materials showing a developing vocabulary to describe how they look, feel or touch.
85. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. Nursery staff plan for a wide range of activities and give good focused teaching in skills to develop an awareness of colour, pattern and texture. They deepen children's knowledge and vocabulary of the world around them as they explore the tactile qualities of making play-dough, also discussing the source of the flour. Through well-planned play in the 'baby clinic', children make simple decisions about the merits of clothes, utensils and materials within a 'make believe' situation. Children are well managed to keep a good balance between free and focused pretend play in the outdoor environment. In the reception class, children make satisfactory progress as they explore creative activities related to themes the class is exploring, for example 'people who help us'. Planning and assessment ensure that children build on previous experience as they use materials, paint, construction and junk materials to make pictures and models in two or three-dimensions. Good use of support staff helps children in both classes to become confident through focused questioning and well-directed help.

ENGLISH

86. Pupils' results at the age of seven in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 were below the national average in reading and well below the national average in writing based on average point scores. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the picture is a little better. Reading standards in 2000 were average for similar schools and writing standards were below average rather than well below. While standards were low in comparison with the national picture, there was improvement within the school between 1999 and 2000 in the percentage reaching at least the level expected of seven-year-olds. Girls' performance has been significantly better than that of boys in the tests.
87. Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests at the age of eleven in 2000 was well below the national average, based on the average point score. It was also well below average when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The percentage of pupils reaching the level expected of eleven-year-olds was below the national average and the percentage reaching a higher level was well below. The results in 2000 were a little lower than in the previous year when the average point score had shown standards as below rather than well below average.
88. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows significant improvement in the standards of pupils now aged seven. Pupils in Year 2 are, at this

point, achieving average standards. Pupils presently in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress. The better standards at the age of seven reflect the effectiveness of the school's efforts to raise standards, especially the good teaching and well focused teamwork of staff in Years 1 and 2. There is no significant variation in the attainment of boys and girls at the age of seven in their school work.

89. The standards of those now aged eleven are still well below average. Nevertheless, these pupils have made satisfactory progress since the age of seven. Their results in the National Curriculum tests at the age of seven were low. In reading, they had been in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. While pupils' progress between the ages of seven and eleven is satisfactory overall, it is better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. Variations in pupils' rate of progress throughout the school are directly linked to differences in the quality of teaching and learning. They also reflect how effectively teachers use the time allocated to English. A particular factor is the expectations teachers have of the standards pupils are capable of attaining.
90. By the age of seven, standards in speaking and listening are similar to those expected nationally. Most pupils give clear answers to questions in one-to-one situations such as when discussing the books they are reading or their views of school. Higher attaining and many average attaining pupils speak well and give extended answers to questions. Pupils usually listen attentively to their teachers and to each other in class question and answer sessions. At the age of eleven, speaking and listening skills are well below those expected nationally. While a few higher attaining pupils are confident speakers in small group and one-to-one situations, many others are not. Few pupils speak clearly and audibly to the class. Many pupils do not listen with the care and attention normally found at this age.
91. Reading standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1. Many average and higher attaining pupils are confident, fluent and accurate readers of both fiction and non-fiction texts. Most pupils have effective strategies for working out what an unfamiliar word might be, for example by breaking it into smaller sections or using the sounds of letters. Many average and higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of what they read. Lower attaining pupils successfully answer simple questions about the stories in their reading books. Reading standards are below average at the age of eleven. Higher attaining pupils have favourite authors, such as Paul Jennings and J K Rowling, and express preferences for particular types of fiction. They read accurately and confidently but do not have the depth of understanding expected for their age. Many other pupils read accurately although some hesitate a great deal. Pupils have effective strategies for reading unfamiliar words. The greatest areas of weakness at the age of eleven are in reading comprehension and in the use of non-fiction books for reference.
92. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in writing is as expected nationally. At the age of eleven, it is well below the expected standards. Pupils aged seven write at good length and for a suitable range of purposes. They write their own versions of stories such as 'Cinderella' and 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', accounts of events such as the infant music festival or a trip to the swimming pool, and create some detailed story settings. Adjectives are used to good effect to describe. Although some simple words are spelt incorrectly, most pupils make good attempts to spell more complex words as they sound. Standards of punctuation are satisfactory overall, although there are some inconsistencies in the use of capital letters and full stops. Many pupils have neat and evenly formed handwriting and are starting to join

their handwriting, although a few have untidy writing. While many pupils at the age of eleven organise their writing into paragraphs, the use of basic punctuation is poor. Only higher attaining pupils use simple punctuation with reasonable consistency. In the main, pupils use only simple sentences and there are significant weaknesses in their spelling and grammar. While a few higher attaining pupils use language effectively to create atmosphere and inject tension, such as when writing ghost stories, many others do not. The range of purposes for which pupils write is satisfactory, although pupils do not have the expected skills in drafting and redrafting to achieve the required style and content. Few pupils join their writing.

93. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils aged five to seven. A very good lesson was seen in the lower Year 2 group during the inspection. While teaching and learning for pupils aged seven to eleven are satisfactory overall, there are some significant areas in which improvement is needed, especially in Years 5 and 6. During the inspection, two unsatisfactory lessons were seen in the Year 5 and 6 classes, one taken by a short-term temporary teacher. In the very good lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher had high expectations of the standards all pupils were capable of attaining. Teaching was very focused on clearly identified learning objectives with particularly effective teaching of basic skills. Pupils made very good gains in this lesson in splitting unfamiliar words into sections in order to read them. They successfully worked out words such as 'manuscript' and 'publisher'. The class were working on a suitably challenging text, which had been well chosen to gain the interest of boys as well as girls. Throughout the lesson, the teacher made efforts to boost pupils' confidence in speaking, constantly reassuring them, 'Don't be scared to speak'. This emphasis on speaking skills is particularly important for these pupils who entered the school with low attainment in this area. Pupils responded to the teaching by working with high levels of involvement at an intensive pace.
94. Good lessons were seen in the other Year 1 and 2 classes and in one of the three combined Year 3 and 4 classes. In all of these lessons, the teachers showed good subject knowledge. This supported them in providing activities that helped pupils to make good gains in their literacy skills. Pupils responded well in these lessons and made a good effort. In a lesson with the upper Year 2 group, the teacher pretended to be a character from the text they were studying so that pupils could ask the character questions. This deepened their understanding of the character and the layers of meaning within the story, effectively enhancing their skills in reading comprehension. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson, the teacher asked a wide variety of questions to broaden pupils' understanding of writing that is intended to persuade, such as used in advertising. In allowing pupils to shout out answers, however, she did not sufficiently support the development of speaking and listening skills.
95. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, lessons are suitably planned to National Literacy Strategy requirements. Questioning is used to check pupils' understanding, for example, of the big book the class are reading together. As the questions are often 'closed' and require only brief answers, there are missed opportunities to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills and there is too little challenge for pupils with potential for higher attainment. Furthermore, teachers do not build sufficiently on the answers provided during question and answer sessions to push pupils to deeper levels of thinking and in particular to help them in speaking. In a satisfactory Year 5 and 6 lesson for lower attaining pupils, the teacher gave support and encouragement but tightly directed the lesson so that there were few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning. This resulted in a lack

of challenge for the pupils and prevented them from making better progress and the more able within the group from performing more highly.

96. Overall, teachers of pupils aged seven to eleven do not sufficiently encourage pupils to higher levels of performance. This is especially so in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are significantly lower in the seven to eleven age range than in the five to seven age range. In particular, there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Marking is good for pupils aged five to seven, with some very good practice in the upper Year 2 group. While it is satisfactorily carried out in the seven to eleven age range, it is not effective, especially for those aged nine to eleven. Basic punctuation errors, for example, are corrected but these are not well enough picked up as teaching points in lessons to ensure that pupils improve. Where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in lessons, especially in the middle Year 5 and 6 group, work was at too low a level and learning objectives were insufficiently clear. As a result, pupils did not learn enough during the lesson and there was no challenge for more capable pupils.
97. The high amount of time allocated to English is resulting in rising standards at the age of seven. This is because the time is used well throughout the five to seven age range. The time allocated is not used sufficiently well throughout the seven to eleven age range. Time for guided reading does not involve intensive group work focused on specific needs in all classes. In some classes, this time is used for silent reading or reading around the class which is less effective. The long session of sustained writing activities on one day each week is sometimes rather slow in pace. The grouping of pupils by ability is more effective in the five to seven age range than in the seven to nine age range. In part, this is because groups for those aged five to seven include only one year group. Those in the seven to eleven age range include two year groups and activities are not well enough matched to the wide range of pupils' needs within these groups.
98. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and experienced and is a leading literacy teacher for the local education authority. She has worked very effectively with teachers of pupils aged five to seven to develop a team approach. In part, this has been successful because she teaches in this age range herself. As part of the school's drive to raise standards she will be teaching in Years 5 and 6 next year. Even though she has not been teaching in the seven to eleven age range herself, she has been very active in working with teachers individually and as a group to bring about improvements. The deputy headteacher has also been strongly involved in this, having been a literacy co-ordinator in a previous post. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' learning. In classes where teachers are meticulous in using them, they support pupils' learning by helping in the matching of work to pupils' differing needs. Not all teachers use them well enough, and this is particularly so in Years 5 and 6.

MATHEMATICS

99. In the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in 2000, pupils' results were well below the national average. They were below average when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards were low because the percentage of pupils reaching at least the level expected of seven-year-olds was well below the national average. The percentage reaching a higher level was below the national average. While standards in 1999 were also well below

the national average there was improvement within the school in 2000 in the percentage of pupils reaching at least the expected level.

100. Pupils' results at the age of eleven in the National Curriculum Tests in 2000 were well above the national average. They were also well above average when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Standards were high because the percentage of pupils reaching the level expected of eleven-year-olds was well above the national average, and the percentage reaching a higher level was above average. These standards are similar to those achieved in 1999, the school year of the last inspection. Boys did significantly better than girls in the tests in 2000. This is not the usual pattern, however, as girls did better than boys in the previous year.
101. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards in Years 2 and 6 are average. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in their school work. The much improved standards for pupils at the age of seven are due to good teaching that engenders very positive attitudes and gives pupils a high level of challenge in all aspects of the subject. In particular, the emphasis on mental arithmetic and discussion, using correct mathematical language, is leading to higher standards. Pupils in the present Year 2, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress through Years 1 and 2. The lower standards shown in the 2000 tests at the age of eleven are in part due to variations in year groups of pupils. There has also been a greater than expected number of staff absences, disrupting the teaching of these pupils this school year. Nevertheless, these pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress in relation to their attainment at the age of seven which was low.
102. By the age of seven, most pupils count confidently to 100 in steps of two, five and ten and have a secure understanding of place value to 100. They complete grids accurately with missing numbers to 100. Higher attaining pupils understand place value to 1000. Lower attaining pupils are confident in identifying and working with numbers to 50. Most pupils are familiar with mathematical operations and use the mathematical vocabulary associated with them confidently. Most know, for example, that multiplication is 'repeated addition' and division means 'sharing'. In applying this to solving complex problems, however, few work out the answer correctly in their heads. Most find it easier to record the process on paper. Most pupils have good mental arithmetic skills because of the many opportunities provided by teachers and are confident in recognising odd and even numbers. They know the names of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, and recognise and use coins to £1 in shopping activities.
103. By the age of eleven, most pupils have good skills in mental arithmetic and work confidently with very large numbers. They have a good grasp of place value and of the four number operations. They confidently undertake written calculations involving multiplication of three digit numbers by one and two digits. They clearly understand the link between equivalent fractions, percentages and decimals and the higher attaining pupils calculate fractional parts. They reflect basic shapes along a line and find perimeters and areas of regular shapes. Most accurately measure angles using a protractor. They successfully use co-ordinates to find positions and higher attaining pupils identify the symmetry of most two-dimensional shapes. Pupils are not so confident, however, in their handling of data or in drawing and interpreting line and block charts, because they have not done enough work on this.

104. The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils aged five to seven. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall for those aged seven to eleven. They are better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. This variation in teaching quality was also found at the last inspection. This school year, teaching and learning for pupils aged seven to eleven has been adversely affected by a high amount of staff absence, including in all three of the combined Year 5 and 6 groups. During the inspection, a very good lesson was seen in a lower ability Year 3 and 4 group. An unsatisfactory lesson was seen in the middle Year 3 and 4 group, which was being taught by a temporary teacher.
105. In the very good lesson seen, and in other good lessons throughout the school, teaching was lively and enthusiastic and engaged the pupils well in suitable activities. Tasks were all related to a common theme, leading to a lively final session where all pupils shared their findings and looked for similar patterns in their results. The activities followed a brisk mental mathematics session and there were shared high expectations that the tasks would be completed by the end of the lesson, requiring the pupils to put in maximum effort. In these lessons, pupils with special educational needs were given tasks at the right level and were supported well so that they made good progress. Most pupils worked hard and enjoyed the lessons. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen, the temporary teacher had insufficient knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. The slow pace and low expectations meant that not enough was learned.
106. Most teachers throughout the school share lesson aims with pupils clearly so that pupils know what they are learning and this promotes interest and motivation. A weakness in provision is the lack of opportunity for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in everyday practical situations. This was a weakness identified at the last inspection and it has not been fully rectified. Most teachers use the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to promote learning. Some teachers are better than others, however, at maintaining a brisk pace and involving and enthusing pupils of all capabilities by skilful questioning and a varied content. Work within the ability groups in which pupils are taught is usually organised at different levels and this is generally successful. The vast majority of pupils maintain interest and their learning is usually effective. Teachers mark books regularly and neat working and correct answers are praised. There are few examples of comments that help pupils to improve their mathematical skills, however, especially in Years 5 and 6. Suitable homework is set regularly. Learning support assistants are timetabled to give effective support to pupils with special educational needs.
107. Information and communication technology is underused in mathematics throughout the school. The only time that computers were used in mathematics lessons during the inspection was in the very good lesson in the lower ability Year 3 and 4 group. Pupils worked enthusiastically in the computer room consolidating their understanding of odd and even numbers and coin recognition. There is insufficient use of computers, for example, to create a range of graphs, generate number patterns or to programme a screen turtle to create shapes on the screen. There is some satisfactory use of numeracy to support work in other subjects. Opportunities for the use of numeracy in other subjects include pupils drawing graphs and charts in science, using co-ordinates in geography and working with timelines in history.

108. Mathematics is satisfactorily managed, with the headteacher taking responsibility during the co-ordinator's absence. The headteacher, deputy and co-ordinator have observed teaching in all classes. Their comments on lessons observed have been perceptive and effectively aimed at improving teaching and learning. This has contributed much to raising standards, especially in Years 1 to 4. Most permanent teachers have been well trained in the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and implement it effectively in Years 1 to 4. Scrutinies of pupils' work help the co-ordinator and headteacher to check the content and presentation of written work. The use of non-statutory annual tests at the end of Years 3 to 5 allows pupils' progress through the National Curriculum levels to be closely checked and targets set. The use of this information and other assessment procedures need to be developed further to ensure work planned meets the needs of the various groups of pupils, especially those in Years 5 and 6. The results of National Curriculum tests at ages seven and eleven have been thoroughly analysed to see where teaching can be improved. Mathematics resources are good and teachers use these well to support and extend pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

109. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were close to the national average. They were also average when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The percentage of pupils reaching the level expected of eleven-year-olds, and the percentage reaching a higher level, were both close to the national average. Teachers assessed pupils' performance at the age of seven as well below average.
110. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that, at this point, standards in Years 2 and 6 are below average. Current standards do not reflect an overall lowering of standards at the age of eleven. They show the normal variation found in different groups of pupils and, in particular, reflect the constant disruption pupils in Year 6 have had in their education largely caused through staff absence. Standards are better now at the age of seven because the school carefully analysed pupils' performance in the tests last year to identify weaknesses. Through careful planning, a number of these have been successfully dealt with. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. No lessons were seen involving pupils aged five to seven. Evidence was gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils and an analysis of teachers' planning.
111. By the age of seven, pupils successfully undertake experiments on a number of aspects of their work, for example, on electrical circuits and materials and their properties. A significant minority of pupils, however, have problems finding the appropriate scientific vocabulary to explain their work and findings. Many successfully name the main external features of both the human body and a flowering plant, and explain the items needed to sustain life. Most pupils recognise and name common materials, such as metal, plastic and wood, and they successfully describe some of their uses. For instance, pupils readily name materials that are waterproof. They lack confidence, however, in identifying natural and man-made materials. Pupils successfully describe the properties of materials, and know that twisting or bending can change the shape of some materials. They understand that pushes and pulls are examples of forces. Most pupils explain the role of batteries, wires and bulbs in an electric circuit and know that a circuit will not work if it

has a break in it. Pupils are confident in explaining that light and sound come from a variety of sources and they know that sound becomes quieter the further away it is.

112. By the age of 11, pupils successfully carry out a range of experiments, using suitable equipment, making observations and recording their findings. Whilst many pupils successfully explain their work, understanding and using the correct scientific language, a significant minority continue to find this aspect of the work difficult. They also have difficulties at times, in clearly answering questions that are asked. Many pupils, however, successfully explain the meaning of 'fair testing'. They are confident in explaining many of the life processes of humans as well as discussing, for example, the importance of the skeleton, the eye and the ear. Whilst most pupils name the various parts of a flower, a significant number are uncertain in distinguishing, for instance, between the stigma and the stamen. Many pupils explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They know that materials can be made into mixtures, and readily describe how materials can be separated through processes such as sieving and filtration. They are less confident, however, in explaining the processes of dissolving and evaporation. Most pupils know that a complete circuit is needed to make electrical devices work, and competently explain the role of insulators and conductors. Pupils know that objects have weight because of the gravitational pull of the Earth, and most explain that friction and air resistance are forces that slow moving objects. Pupils know that sound is caused by an object vibrating, and that the vibrations travel through air and various materials to reach our ears. Pupils understand that light travels in straight lines but many are unable to explain how a shadow is formed.
113. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the five to eleven age range is satisfactory overall. A good lesson was seen in one Year 3 and 4 class. In this good lesson, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge. Questions were well directed and the pace of the lesson was brisk. As a result, pupils made good progress. Throughout the school, teachers make suitable use of practical activities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use the correct scientific terminology. While this is targeting an area in need of development, it is not emphasised sufficiently to rectify the weakness. Although lessons are well planned, appropriate allowance is not always made for the needs of different pupils, especially those who are higher attaining. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. They provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken.
114. Teachers are enthusiastic and, through the provision of a range of practical activities in particular, most pupils are enthusiastic also. They show good attitudes and interest in the subject, behave well and make a good effort. Occasionally, in Years 5 and 6, a small number of pupils fail to give their full attention to the work being tackled when activities do not sufficiently capture their interest. Teachers provide help and well-directed support throughout lessons. They mark pupils' work regularly and, although they sometimes add useful comments of support and advice to help the pupils develop their work further, this does not happen in every class. Marking is least effective in Years 5 and 6.
115. The school has a satisfactory scheme of work. Further planning ensures that all aspects of work, including practical activities, are covered. The co-ordinator is keen and knowledgeable, and is fully aware of the areas of work that still need to be developed. She is newly qualified, however, and is only just taking over responsibility for the subject. At present she has no opportunity to study samples of work or to

observe the work being undertaken in the classrooms. There are no procedures for assessing pupils' work, with little evidence being kept to identify either pupils' current attainment, the progress they have made or their future needs. This is a significant factor in the present failure to provide work to suit pupils' particular needs, especially those of the higher attaining pupils. The written work undertaken by the pupils, particularly that relating to reporting on practical activities, provides some limited support to the school's initiative in literacy. Counting and measuring activities, in various aspects of the subject, support the school's work in numeracy. Information and communication technology is also used effectively on occasions to enhance the work in science. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, use computer programs to find information on the human body and food chains.

ART AND DESIGN

116. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 because art and design alternates with design and technology on a half-termly basis. At the time of the inspection, design and technology was the focus. Evidence was gained from scrutinising pupils' sketchbooks and samples of their work, discussions with pupils and teachers and an analysis of planning. No specific mention of art and design was made in the last inspection report so it is not possible to make comparisons with provision at that time.
117. Pupils' art and design work is of the standard expected nationally at the age of seven, but at the age of eleven it is below this level. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. Those now aged eleven have moved from a low base to their present level of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when there is additional support in lessons. At other times their progress is satisfactory, in line with that of other pupils in the same classes.
118. By the age of seven, pupils competently use a range of materials such as paint, pastels, chalk and crayons. They observe carefully and record what they see using a good range of starting points for their art and design work including themselves, stories, and the local area around the school. They use a variety of coloured papers imaginatively to create abstract pictures. They learn about famous artists, such as Vincent Van Gogh, and successfully recreate pictures in their style. In their portrait painting, pupils place facial features correctly. They mix colours to achieve a fair representation of different tones. Some immaturity is seen in pupils' conceptions of the human figure in small-scale drawings, even taking into account their young age.
119. At the age of eleven, standards are below those expected nationally. Using a variety of materials such as pastels, paint, charcoal and pencils, pupils draw objects such as shells, rocks and shoes. They draw a sequence of actions of a person moving. They also successfully draw a person using circular and spiral marks. Some of these drawings are detailed and of a good standard, although many others are of a lower standard than is normally found at this age. Pupils' project at the time of the inspection was to produce a patchwork hanging based on the story of 'The Paper Bag Prince' and a few pupils have produced some quality designs. Overall, however, their results in relation both to their preliminary drawings and final prints, are below expected levels for this age. Standards are better in Years 3 and 4. In one Year 3 and 4 class, for example, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of perspective. They achieve standards appropriate for their age in creating a colour wash and collage picture of the view from the classroom window.

120. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for pupils throughout the five to eleven age range. For those aged seven to eleven, teaching and learning are better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. A good lesson was seen in one Year 3 and 4 class. In this lesson, the teacher engaged pupils fully in recalling previous learning and shared his own water colour paintings with them to illustrate the use of tone. Pupils were kept on task by purposeful checking of their progress around the classroom. More generally, teachers plan lessons carefully using national guidance to ensure that classes of similar age pupils have equal experiences. Pupils respond to the activities provided with enjoyment and make a good effort with their work. Most teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the art and design curriculum. They demonstrate techniques skilfully and use appropriate subject vocabulary. They plan activities well, making good links with other subjects where practicable. There are good links to history with some detailed Celtic drawings. There is little use of computers to support pupils' learning in art and design.
121. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory management of art and design and has identified the need to ensure that the curriculum offered to pupils relates to the National Curriculum requirements. This is a feature of the current school development plan. While pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, the various elements of the art and design curriculum are not covered in sufficient depth. This restricts the progress pupils make in their learning and the standards they are able to achieve. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning regularly and makes sure it covers the agreed areas, and has undertaken some scrutiny of samples of pupils' work. There has been a little checking of teaching and learning through lesson observations but this is not enough to give the school a full picture of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Present arrangements for checking teaching and the curriculum and their contribution to pupils' learning are insufficiently rigorous. There are no whole-school assessment procedures for checking pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. This limits the extent to which teachers can ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. Resources are sufficient for practical work and are well used. There are a limited number of books, for example, about famous artists, but the school is set to review library provision.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards of work in design and technology are in line with those expected nationally at the ages of seven and eleven. There is a particular strength in pupils' skills in evaluating and refining their work. By the age of seven, almost all pupils competently draw designs for products, refining their drawings with detailed labels to show how the product will develop. This is seen, for example, in their plans for a sun hat for a 'teddy bears' picnic'. Pupils show good knowledge of the purpose the sun hat should serve. The labelling details what should be used and gives some idea of how it will be attached to a papier mache shell, for example, by glue, tape or stitches. Pupils show good knowledge of the merits of sellotape or masking tape and know which one can be painted over. They are independent in collecting tools and materials to use for decoration, some of which have been brought from home. When using scissors or needles, they follow the guidance given by the teacher for safety. When painting the base of their hats many do not take as much care as they put into their designs. They are able, however, to evaluate the mistakes they make and try to correct them. Pupils cut with the expected accuracy for their age and evaluate the best materials for the task from a range of papers, card, fabrics, buttons and feathers. They satisfactorily evaluate the final product verbally and suggest how it

might be improved. Pupils with special educational needs are supported to achieve satisfactorily and at the same rate as other pupils, but those with potential for higher attainment are not challenged to achieve more.

123. By the age of eleven, pupils draw designs with very detailed labelling that go through a number of stages of refinement. They identify suitable materials and say why these should be used, as well as the techniques and tools needed for the task. They effectively identify changes needed in the design to improve it for the purpose intended. This is seen, for example, when pupils design a torch and use their knowledge of electricity to work out how batteries should be used. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, have fewer labels to their designs. In verbally evaluating their designs, however, they show the same level of understanding of the design process as other pupils in the same class. In their preparations to make propelled toys and machines that can be moved with cogs, pupils in Years 3 and 4 confidently use the correct terminology to describe cams, cogs, axles, gears, pulleys and pneumatic force. This is seen, for example, in their egg box monsters, fun-fairs and machines. They know how joints can be strengthened and use this knowledge well when making Viking boats or designing a board game using a simple circuit and pressure pad switches.
124. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the five to eleven age range. Teachers' planning satisfactorily includes projects to cover a half term's work. This allows pupils to finish a product. Teachers demonstrate adequate subject knowledge. Lessons move at a satisfactory pace for pupils to use their skills. Teachers make good use of examples of pupils' work to demonstrate skills. In a good lesson observed in a Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher made good reference to pupils' previous work, and reinforced correct terminology and safety procedures. She helped pupils to develop independence and make choices by requiring them to select the materials they needed by collecting them from a central point. By using well-focused questions, the teacher helped pupils to identify quickly skills and techniques for joining decorations to their sun hats for the teddy bears' picnic.
125. Where classroom assistants are available, they are well used to reinforce learning and ensure safety, such as in the drilling of holes in a Year 3 and 4 class. Pupils are managed effectively to ensure that they have sufficient space to work in and to use tools safely. Teachers have clear objectives for lessons. They help pupils to evaluate their work by asking questions related to the objective for the activity. Year 5 and 6 pupils have been provided with a good range of experiences this school year so that they have experience of hygiene, the design and merits of food outlets as part of their work in food technology, and suitable knowledge of textiles.
126. The co-ordination of design and technology is satisfactory. The co-ordinator offers informal advice and help to other teachers. She has a satisfactory awareness of what is taking place throughout the school. While she undertakes some scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, there is no checking of teaching and learning through lesson observation. There are no school assessment procedures for checking pupils' progress and ensuring that work is fully matched to pupils' differing needs. Resources are satisfactory, but there is insufficient use of computers to support pupils' learning in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Standards in geography are similar to those expected nationally at the age of seven. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through Years 1 and 2. At the age of eleven, standards are below the expected level. Nevertheless, pupils aged seven to eleven make satisfactory progress overall. Those now aged eleven have moved forward from a low base. As there is no specific mention of geography in the last inspection report, it is not possible to compare standards and provision now with the situation at that time.
128. By the age of seven, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of where many countries are on a map of the world as they follow the holiday travels of an imaginary bear. They make decisions about how he will get to a particular destination, where he will stay, what he will wear and what he will visit and do. They illustrate their decisions with drawings and pictures cut from magazines and travel brochures. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of their own locality and successfully draw plans and maps to represent it. They identify well-known landmarks in the vicinity and the kind of houses lived in. Through stories, they have an understanding of what it means to live in an island home and the kind of restrictions this brings as well as the lifestyle of the people living there. Pupils have competently drawn an imaginary island and entered geographical features such as trees, hills, shops, houses and the landing place for a boat.
129. At the age of eleven, pupils' understanding and use of geographical terms, and awareness of how to interpret a wide range of keys to identify places and features on maps, is less well developed than is normally found at this age. Pupils have little understanding of river development or topical geographical issues. Their knowledge of the local area, the British Isles, Europe and the world is below that expected for their age. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' knowledge and understanding is much better. Here pupils have a good understanding of the differences between Romford and a village in India. They know that the local area is important in determining what building materials are used.
130. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils aged five to seven. For those aged seven to eleven it is satisfactory overall but it is better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. A good lesson was seen in one Year 3 and 4 class, but an unsatisfactory lesson was seen in a Year 5 and 6 class. In the unsatisfactory lesson, there was a lack of pace, the teacher's expectations of the standards pupils were capable of attaining were too low, and the teacher did not have sufficient subject knowledge. As a result, pupils did not learn enough. Most teachers, however, have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of geography.
131. In good lessons, teachers clearly share lesson aims with pupils so they know what they are learning. Questioning is used effectively to assess what pupils know and can do and to develop their understanding. Work is covered at a good pace, which keeps pupils interested, and opportunities are included for pupils to do research from books. There is little evidence, however, of higher attaining pupils having more challenge as they do much the same work as other pupils. The only difference is that they are expected to do more writing, pictures and diagrams. Although marking is undertaken regularly, it does not give enough guidance for future work or to encourage pupils to higher achievement. This is particularly so in Years 5 and 6. In Years 5 and 6, teachers do not use resources sufficiently well to support and extend pupils' learning. A strong feature in Years 1 and 2 is the way in which teachers develop pupils' questioning skills and encourage them to work effectively together in groups, which promotes social development.

132. While teaching and learning are satisfactory overall for pupils aged seven to eleven, there are weaknesses to be rectified. Topics are not covered in sufficient depth to ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are consistently developed. The standards at the age of eleven have been adversely affected by the high amount of absence of teachers this school year. There has also been some inconsistency in what pupils in the three Year 5 and 6 classes have been taught. While the subject has a suitable time allocation on class timetables and plans, it is under-represented in pupils' written work. There is insufficient focus on developing pupils' geographical skills, for example in using and interpreting maps, and in developing a geographical awareness of current environmental issues.
133. The co-ordination of geography is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has undertaken some checking of teaching and pupils' work. He has identified the need to ensure all pupils receive an appropriate curriculum for geography and this is a feature of the current school development plan. The checking of provision is insufficiently rigorous, however, to ensure the planned curriculum is delivered in sufficient depth and standards raised as a result. The policy has been identified as needing rewriting to match recent decisions. There are no whole-school assessment procedures for tracking pupils' knowledge and skills. This means that teachers cannot ensure that work is matched to pupils' individual needs. Satisfactory links are established with English, mathematics and art and design. There is too little use of computer programs, however, to develop pupils' research skills.

HISTORY

134. No lessons were observed during the inspection as history was not on the timetable to be taught. It alternates on a half-termly basis with geography, which was the focus during the inspection week. Evidence was gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of teachers' planning. Standards at the age of seven are as expected nationally. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. At the age of eleven, standards are below those normally expected. Nevertheless, the overall progress of pupils aged seven to eleven, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory although it is better in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. Those now aged eleven have moved forward from a low base. No specific mention of history was made in the last inspection report so it is not possible to make a judgement on how things have improved since then.
135. By the age of seven, most pupils have the understanding of chronology expected at this age. They know that life in the past was different from today, for example, how home life has changed. They understand that house designs and what can be found in them are different now, and family life was different for their parents and even more so for their grandparents as children. They have a satisfactory awareness of famous people from the past such as Queen Victoria and Grace Darling. They have competently gathered information about them by writing questions they would like answered and then finding answers using books and pictures effectively. From these activities, they have successfully built up an understanding of historical enquiry. They use the information gathered to make attractive and informative class displays and simple timelines to identify important events that took place. Pupils enjoy their history lessons.

136. At the age of eleven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the Victorian era. They know that life in Victorian Britain was harsh, especially for children, and that there were great differences between the rich and the poor. They do not, however, have the breadth of historical knowledge and understanding of different periods expected at this age. Skills of historical enquiry are weak. This is because pupils have had insufficient opportunity to develop them during the year. In Years 3 and 4, however, pupils' knowledge and understanding is considerably better. Pupils in these year groups talk confidently about the Romans, Celts and Vikings as part of their topic on Invaders and Settlers and make a tape recording of their thoughts about Boudicca. They make good use of historical evidence, for example when investigating the structure of the Roman army.
137. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils aged five to seven. While there is also evidence of good teaching in Years 3 and 4, the overall quality of teaching and learning for pupils aged seven to eleven is satisfactory. This is because of weaknesses in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' planning is clear and provides effective guidance for lessons. A strength is the thorough manner in which all parts of the history curriculum are covered as pupils move up through the school except in Years 5 and 6. In these two years there is a lack of rigour and there are inconsistencies in the teaching of planned activities. Most teachers make good use of resources to support and extend pupils' learning. Although teachers mark pupils' books regularly, and neat working and correct answers are praised, there are few examples of comments that help pupils to improve their skills. This weakness is particularly evident in Years 5 and 6.
138. There are weaknesses to be rectified in Years 5 and 6. There are the same weaknesses in geography in these two year groups. The curriculum is not covered in sufficient depth. There is some inconsistency in what pupils in the different Year 5 and 6 classes have been taught and there are low expectations of what pupils can do. While the subject has a suitable time allocation on class timetables and plans, it is under-represented in pupils' written work. The quality of this written work is below that expected for pupils of this age and it is often brief. The progress of pupils in these classes has also been adversely affected this school year by a high amount of staff absence.
139. The co-ordinator satisfactorily manages the school's work in history. She checks teachers' planning and has been involved in looking at pupils' books. The policy has been identified as in need of rewriting to match recent decisions. Planning is based on national guidance and is currently being developed in draft form with plans for a full review at the end of next school year. In the main, teachers use this guidance well to plan lessons together to ensure pupils in comparable aged classes receive similar provision. There is a need, however, for more rigorous checking to ensure that this is delivered in sufficient depth and consistently in all classes. There are no common assessment procedures for tracking pupils' knowledge and skills. This makes it difficult for teachers to ensure that work is always matched to the range of pupils' needs in the mixed age and ability classes. There are good links with other subjects such as mathematics through the use of timelines, and art and design and design and technology in displays and model making. There are too few computer programs, however, for independent research.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. Standards in information and communication technology are as expected nationally at the age of seven. At the age of eleven, standards are below those expected nationally. This is because previous teaching, learning and resources did not keep pace with developments in the subject. This has now been rectified with an up-to-date computer room, a link to the Internet and a new scheme of work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making satisfactory progress as they move up through the school.
141. By the age of seven, pupils use the computer confidently and know how to use both the mouse and keyboard. They describe what they do to 'log-on' to the system when using a control program. They know how to give instructions to make a screen turtle change direction and move backwards or forwards. At the end of the activity, they confidently close down the program. Small groups of pupils work together enthusiastically to control a programmable robot toy. They quickly gain confidence when exploring the sequence and actions for giving orders and achieving movement from the device. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use the computer competently for combining text and illustrations to enhance a story, and store and retrieve their work. They successfully change the size and colour of a text when making posters and, with adult support, they include a digital camera image. They satisfactorily use a range of drawing programs to make pictures of fireworks and the highest attaining pupils design Christmas cards with text. Pupils effectively use a sorting program to make choices about a teddy bear's clothes. They record in graph form statistics from their problem solving in mathematics. All pupils know about the control of domestic appliances and those that are used in school, such as televisions, videos and audio tape players.
142. At the age of eleven, most pupils have a secure knowledge of word processing techniques, but they are not consistently given the opportunity to correct their work for spelling or punctuation. Through their work with spreadsheets, they have an adequate understanding of the importance of using and questioning information and the use of a formula in a cell. They have simple skills in researching information through a CD-Rom, such as on food chains, and in presenting simple data in a variety of graphs and pie charts. They add and amend information confidently and produce newspaper type headings, for example with pictures of footballers. Pupils ably import pictures into text when making posters designed for saving Manor Park from the planners. A mathematics program helps pupils solve problems and present their data. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also competently explore the Vikings through a simulation program, experiment with sounds through a musical box, make maps with a key for geography and consider the use of materials on a science program. Current Year 5 and 6 pupils, however, have not built up a suitable skills and knowledge base over time in these areas, or in using adventure or control programs. They have not had sufficient opportunities to discuss control in the environment. Whilst they have been introduced to e-mail and the Internet at the correct level, they have not yet had time to consolidate their learning, or to use computers for finding information in a range of subjects. The result is that they are working at a lower level than expected for their age. Standards at the age of eleven are similar to those found at the last inspection.
143. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the five to eleven age range. Planning for information and communication technology is very specific. This helps the non-specialist teachers in providing class instruction, and demonstrating skills and activities. Planning includes specific information on what pupils are expected to learn. This information is communicated clearly to pupils and

this helps them to approach their work confidently. Teachers efficiently teach the correct terminology, such as 'cell' and 'formula' when teaching about spreadsheets in Years 5 and 6 and in directorial changes for control programs in Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils use correct terminology when discussing the work that they are doing. Year 5 and 6 pupils work well in pairs, discussing options to use from their resource 'catalogue' sheets. One boy was able to explain the process in great detail to another pupil who lacked confidence.

144. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, skills and knowledge were communicated and developed well during class teaching. Although the computer broke down, at the end of the direct teaching, all pupils were secure enough in the learning to work in pairs and carry out their investigations in controlling a screen turtle. They co-operated very well in pairs following the teacher's directions for entering instructions onto the computer. Good support and technical help was provided for pupils with special educational needs, and those who are lower attaining, to ensure that they could do the work. Pupils are managed effectively in mixed age classes, often with younger and older pupils working in pairs to help each other. Year 1 and 2 pupils gained much self-esteem when praised for having achieved a new skill and being told that this would be developed in a future lesson.
145. There is insufficient use of computers to support learning in other subjects. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 make better use of the programs available, such as in history and geography, than do those in other years. Teachers demonstrate adequate subject knowledge and organise pupils effectively for lessons. Pupils respond by behaving well, respecting how computers should be treated and working industriously together. Teachers build on previous work in a series of lessons, but also adapt planned activities according to the learning in the previous session.
146. The management of information and communication technology is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has taken over the subject since the last inspection and has introduced a new scheme of work based on government guidelines. He recognises that the school needs to build on its limited resources for simulation and control teaching, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Other resources are good. Other new technologies are already in use, such as digital cameras, the Internet and e-mail. An assessment sheet has recently been introduced and is being tried out, but it has not yet had time to influence the subject. Teachers are receiving training under a government scheme.

MUSIC

147. Standards in music are as expected nationally at the age of seven but they are below this level at the age of eleven. This represents an improvement since the last inspection at the age of seven. Pupils aged five to seven, including those with special educational needs, now make satisfactory progress. Standards have not improved at the age of eleven, and pupils continue to make unsatisfactory progress overall between the ages of seven and eleven.
148. By the age of seven, pupils confidently sing a variety of songs, with suitable control over rhythm and pitch. They put much expression into their singing, and use accompanying gesture to emphasise the words. Pupils successfully explore, and make sounds using an appropriate range of untuned percussion instruments, which they play with enthusiasm, either alone or when working with others in small groups. Pupils attempt, for example, to imitate the sounds made by the diplodocus in the

story 'Meg's Eggs'. Pupils describe the sounds they make, paying particular attention to changes in dynamics. They successfully compose their own short sequence of music, which they practise and repeat. Pupils listen carefully to a variety of pre-recorded music, including items they have recorded themselves. Most are confident in discussing the particular features of what they hear.

149. At the age of eleven, pupils sing a suitable range of songs, sometimes in two parts, showing satisfactory control over both breathing and diction. Pupils attempt to produce a musical sequence, but few are able to produce anything beyond the most simple of scores. Pupils do not have knowledge of appropriate musical terminology to allow them to discuss their work with any confidence. When provided with the opportunity to listen to music, a significant number do not do so carefully, and most are unable to discuss the quality of the pieces they have heard. Standards are better in Years 3 and 4 where pupils successfully clap and play different rhythms, and many identify and discuss various musical instruments.
150. The overall quality of teaching and learning for pupils aged five to seven, is satisfactory, and in one lesson seen they were good. For pupils aged seven to eleven, they are unsatisfactory, overall. Lessons for Year 1 and 2 pupils are well planned, and a suitable range of resources is used. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory, and the instruction and demonstration provided supports all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in making satisfactory gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers use a variety of strategies to develop the pupils' interest, and to involve them as much as possible in the playing of instruments. Most pupils join in all activities with interest and commitment, and are well behaved. Most pupils enjoy their music, especially the singing, and they play instruments with gusto when presented with the opportunity. Pupils generally listen carefully to a variety of music and they are keen, for example, to identify the instruments being played.
151. For pupils aged seven to eleven, lessons are adequately planned but not all teachers have adequate subject knowledge and the pace of lessons is slow. Teaching methods do not capture pupils' interest and expectations of the standards pupils are capable of achieving are too low. In such circumstances, pupils make unsatisfactory progress. In one lesson seen in Years 5 and 6, the lack of focus in the teaching and the low expectations led in turn to unsatisfactory attitudes. Pupils paid little attention and showed little interest in the activities being attempted.
152. The school has a satisfactory scheme of work, and all relevant aspects of work are covered, although the work provided is not sufficiently demanding in Years 5 and 6. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and she has clearly made a significant contribution to raising standards for pupils aged five to seven. She studies plans of the work to be undertaken with older pupils, but she has no opportunity to observe the work taking place in lessons, or to support her colleagues. As a result, she has been unable to help improve the provision there. There are currently no formal assessment procedures, with few records being kept about the work that has taken place, and little detail kept about the standards achieved by individual pupils. This lack of assessment has meant that weaknesses in pupils' skills and knowledge have not been noted. The co-ordinator has identified the need to improve assessment, and she has prepared procedures for future use. Listening to music from different countries gives some support to pupils' cultural development. Little use is made of information and communication technology, for example to help develop

younger pupils' ability to write a musical score. Overall provision for music is enhanced well by extra-curricular sessions involving recorder groups and the choir.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. Standards in physical education at the ages of seven and eleven are as expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection.
154. By the age of seven, pupils move confidently around the hall, running, skipping and hopping, and showing suitable awareness of space and other pupils. Pupils competently develop their games skills of throwing, hitting and catching a ball. They show satisfactory accuracy when throwing and catching, and control when using a bat. Working in groups, pupils readily develop simple games of their own, involving a range of activities, and they successfully explain their games to others. Pupils understand the need to warm up for, and recover from, exercise.
155. By the age of eleven, pupils further develop their skills in throwing a ball, and they improve these skills by measuring their performance and trying to improve. Pupils successfully develop their running abilities, both alone and when working with others in relay races, and they concentrate in particular on passing the baton with accuracy. They confidently time their races and, in comparing the times, they attempt to increase their speed. Pupils understand the importance of being active, and they can explain some of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend swimming lessons during the year. All become suitably confident in the water. By the end of the year, approximately 90 per cent of Year 6 pupils are able to swim twenty-five metres unaided. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also develop their outdoor and adventure skills during an annual residential visit to Wales.
156. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the five to eleven age range. In one lesson observed, in Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning were good. Teachers undertake satisfactory planning. They make suitable use of an appropriate range of resources, to help pupils develop their skills. Clear instruction and demonstration is provided and this allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory gains in their skills. Members of staff change appropriately for lessons, and they all join in with the pupils. They have satisfactory subject knowledge, and make suitable demands of pupils' performance.
157. Pupils generally join in appropriately in lessons, enjoying themselves and making a satisfactory, and sometimes good, physical effort. Teachers usually show good control and management skills. Occasionally, in one Year 1 and 2 class for instance, a small minority of pupils do not give their full attention to their teacher, preferring instead to continue with their activities. Teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good performances, but the chance is not always taken to discuss the quality of the work seen, which helps pupils identify the areas where they might improve themselves. Teachers provide help and support to pupils, in all aspects of their work and, in particular, they emphasise the need for safety. In turn, pupils usually show good attitudes, behave well overall, work well alone and with a partner or group, and carry equipment carefully and safely. In the good lesson in one of the Year 1 and 2 classes, particularly clear advice was provided. Pupils were given opportunities to appraise their work, which helped them to make good progress.

158. The school has a relevant scheme of work, and all aspects of work are suitably covered. An appropriate outline of the work that should be covered by each class every term has also been produced. Some evaluations are made of pupils' work, but no formal assessment procedures are used to assess different aspects of their work, or to provide information to help develop pupils' skills further. The co-ordinator has identified ways in which the subject should develop, and he also supports his colleagues well when requested. At present, however, he has no opportunity to observe lessons taking place, which would help him identify the progress the pupils are making. Activities involving timing and measuring, especially in athletics, give support to the school's initiative in numeracy. The school makes good arrangements for the provision of extra-curricular activities for pupils aged between seven and eleven.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

159. The standard of pupils' work in religious education at the ages of seven and eleven meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school.
160. By the age of seven, pupils have a secure understanding of celebrations of the Christian religion, such as Easter and Christmas. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the main aspects of these events. They are appropriately aware of celebrations in the Hindu religion, through the enjoyment of exploring how Diwali is celebrated. They know that there are special books linked to religions and that the Bible is the book for Christians. Through retelling stories such as the healing story of 'ten men and only one said thank you', pupils successfully reflect on feelings and discuss right and wrong. Pupils understand that some stories portray how God chose leaders such as David and his response to faith. Through exploring places where people meet, pupils come to a good understanding of special places and different kinds of churches. From a visit to a church, pupils have gained a useful insight into the use of key features in the church, such as the altar, organ and font, and how they help worship. They reflect on the quietness experienced in a church 'as if no one else is there'. Through a talk on vestments and demonstration of baptism with a doll, pupils have acquired new vocabulary at a satisfactory pace, and understanding of one of the rites of passage of the Christian faith. They do not yet raise questions about mysteries of life other than what they see and experience.
161. By the age of eleven, pupils have the expected understanding for their age of the key beliefs and teachings of three religions, Christianity, Sikhism and Judaism. They are also able to successfully identify similarities and differences with other religions, such as Hinduism or Islam. They have a satisfactory knowledge of a range of religious symbols and their uses and significance. Through a news media style presentation, they competently demonstrate knowledge of how Jesus turned over the tables in the temple because it had been abused as a place of prayer and worship. Through sequential pictures and writing, they show a satisfactory understanding of events leading to key points in the Christian calendar, such as Palm Sunday, The Last Supper, Good Friday, Easter and Ascension Day. Pupils are able to reflect successfully on what they have learned from religion and write prayers of hope for a better world, or prayers of healing. They demonstrate secure knowledge of how Christians meet together to read the Bible and hear sermons and take communion, to learn more about their faith and give monetary offerings to support the church. The most able reflect well on the feeling Zacchaeus may have had before and after Jesus went to his house.
162. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the five to eleven age range. During the inspection, a very good lesson was seen in one Year 3 and 4 class and an unsatisfactory lesson was seen in a Year 5 and 6 class. A temporary teacher took the unsatisfactory lesson. In Years 1 and 2, teachers approach topics from situations that pupils understand and effectively build on this knowledge. They move, for example, from places people meet to special places they know and then on to places of worship. They cover a range of topics at a pace that keeps pupils motivated and interested. Through good use of interesting resources and activities, such as dressing up and eating special food, pupils gained a secure understanding of Diwali. Through a visit to a church and demonstration of a baptism, they gained firsthand knowledge of rites of passage, church artefacts and feelings of awe in a quiet place.

163. Teachers stimulate pupils in the seven to eleven age range by posing challenging questions that help them reflect on religious belief and issues related to how we live our lives. In the unsatisfactory lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher was unfamiliar with the area of the locally agreed syllabus being covered. There were also weaknesses in the management of the class. Pupils did not make enough progress in this lesson. The evidence of the work in pupils' books shows that this is not typical of the work usually undertaken in this class, where all pupils demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge and understanding. Pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class made very good progress in their understanding of the Sikh religion because of the very effective teaching that was particularly well focused. The lesson moved at a very good pace, but included time for pupils to recall previous learning, discuss aspects of challenging questions in groups, receive information and examine exciting resources to illustrate the five K's of Sikhism. As a result, pupils built very well on previous learning and through a reverential reading followed by food at a celebration gained an understanding of worship.
164. The co-ordination of religious education is satisfactory. A scheme of work has been drawn up in line with the new locally agreed syllabus. New and interesting resources have been acquired to support its delivery. There are sufficient artefacts to help in the teaching of all religions. These are used effectively to teach pupils to respect the objects and symbols of religions. A regular visitor from a local mission makes a good contribution to the teaching given. The co-ordinators draw up planning, see pupils' work and act as advisers to staff, but do not have the opportunity to observe lessons. There are no assessment procedures for this subject to check pupils' progress and the standards they are achieving. The planning for the two-year cycles in Years 3 to 6 result in most of the teaching on other religions taking place in Years 3 and 4. This leaves Years 5 and 6 with most of the work on Christianity and only a little work on comparing religions. This creates an imbalance in the learning opportunities provided for the different age ranges.

