

INSPECTION REPORT

RAINHAM VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Romford, Essex

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102324

Headteacher: Sandra Carter

Reporting inspector: Anne Currie
25429

Dates of inspection: 17th – 21st September 2001

Inspection number: 193124

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Upminster Road South Rainham Essex
Postcode:	RM13 9AA
Telephone number:	01708 552482
Fax number:	01708 630025
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H Godwin
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25429	Anne Currie	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9075	Juliet Baxter	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	English Music	How well are pupils taught?
21171	Sally Handford	Team inspector	Science Art Design and technology English as an additional language	
22990	Chris Furniss	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
28071	Andrew Williams	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Geography History Physical education	
30266	Hilma Rask	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

The inspection contractor was:

WES World-wide Education Service
Canada House
272 Field End Road
Eastcote
Middlesex
HA4 9NA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12 - 16
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16 - 19
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	19 - 21
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	21 - 22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	23 - 24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	24 - 26
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26 - 27
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	28 - 31
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	32 - 52

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rainham Village Primary School has 305 full-time pupils and 85 children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. It is larger than most other primary schools, but it is under-subscribed. Its roll has fallen sharply over the last few years. Pupils, both boys and girls, aged between three and eleven years attend the school. They have a wide range of ability. The school caters for pupils from a broad social range. Most come from the local area, which has some owner-occupied houses but also houses owned by the local authority and housing associations, which include low-rise flats. Twenty-two per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is similar to the national average. Pupils are predominantly of white United Kingdom heritage, but about ten per cent are from other ethnic backgrounds. There are a few pupils from refugee families. Twenty pupils speak English as an additional language, with three of these only just beginning to speak English. Children enter the nursery after their third birthday with a wide range of experiences. They transfer to a reception class, either in this school or in a neighbouring school, at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. A few children join the school at this stage, having had no pre-school experience. The attainment of children starting in the reception class varies with each intake, but overall it is below that generally found. About a quarter of the pupils are identified by the school as having special educational needs; this proportion is above average and has risen in recent years. Nine children have a statement of special educational needs, which is above average for a school of this size. Pupils who receive regular additional support have a wide range of difficulties. The majority have specific learning difficulties, physical difficulties or emotional and behavioural problems. A high number of pupils, 57, left the school last year during term time.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that is recovering well from a period of uncertainty and disruption. It now gives a satisfactory standard of education, but still has a long way to go. The new headteacher provides very good leadership and staff are working together as a team. As they move through the school, pupils make steady progress as a result of sound teaching and the broad curriculum provided. Pupils are behaving appropriately and they have good attitudes to learning. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher gives very good leadership, which is clearly focused on what the school has to do to improve.
- The nursery gives children a good start to their education.
- A positive approach to behaviour management is improving behaviour, fostering self-esteem and successfully building on pupils' enthusiasm for school.
- The school is developing good links with parents by welcoming them into the school and giving them good information about the school's work.
- This is a caring school with good provision for promoting pupils' care and welfare and their moral, social and cultural development, as well as for improving attendance.
- Good links are developed with the community; they are enriching the curriculum.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics from reception to Year 6.
- Attainment in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Assessment procedures and their use to guide future planning are not well developed.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory, although it is improving.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then it has experienced an extended period of unsettled leadership and a deterioration in pupils' behaviour. These resulted in very little improvement, especially in the areas identified in the report as needing attention, and pupils' attainment fell. Since January 2001, when a new headteacher was appointed, the improvement has been marked and it is now satisfactory overall. The leadership has improved considerably. Areas for improvement have been clearly prioritised and steady progress is being made to address them. The school improvement plan focuses on raising standards and the actions necessary to improve the quality of education. Performance management arrangements have been implemented and they are having a positive effect on staff development. The quality of artwork in Years 1 and 2 has improved. There are very clear improvements in the school's arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are still below those expected, but progress in lessons is now satisfactory. Apart from in English and mathematics, there has been little monitoring of teaching and learning.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

**Similar schools selected on the basis of schools with between 20 and 35 per cent of its pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.*

Children start school with varied attainment, but overall it is below that generally found. Most children reach the standards expected in physical and creative development, personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the reception year. In communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, children make steady progress, but a significant minority does not reach the standards expected.

In 2000, in English, pupils aged eleven achieved results in national tests which were well below average for all schools and schools in similar socio-economic circumstances. In mathematics and science, results were average compared to all schools and well below average compared to those of similar schools. In all three subjects few pupils exceeded the standards expected for their age. Year 2 pupils achieved results in reading, writing and mathematics that were well below average for all schools and below average for similar schools. Until the year 2000, the results obtained by pupils had been steadily improving, although they were below the national average. The school failed to reach the standards

set by the local education authority in English and mathematics in 2001, when results remained low. Results improved in science.

Not enough art or music was seen during the inspection to form a judgement on attainment. Lesson observations indicate that most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are achieving standards similar to those expected in all other subjects, except ICT. Few pupils are exceeding them, however. Standards in English and mathematics are still not as high as they should be. In ICT throughout the school, standards are below those expected. Pupils reach the expectations of the local agreed syllabus for religious education.

As they move through the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are making steady gains in learning in relation to their prior attainment. Progress in lessons varies with the quality of teaching, but overall it is at least satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most have good attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour by most pupils in lessons, in the playground, and as they move around school is now satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are gaining self-esteem and confidence as they move through the school. Most share and take turns readily. Pupils' personal development is limited by the lack of opportunities for them to undertake independent learning.
Attendance	Although attendance is now improving, it is still unsatisfactory. Most pupils are punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Of the 69 lessons observed, 62 were judged to be at least satisfactory, with three excellent, ten very good and 20 good. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen across the school. There are strengths in teaching in the nursery, where all lessons were at least good, and half were very good. Teachers' planning for reception age children often lacks detail and fails to ensure that all children are appropriately challenged. Teaching of English is good and in mathematics it is sound. There are effective strategies to teach literacy and numeracy skills in most classes. The few pupils with English as an additional language receive appropriate support. The special needs teacher and support staff give well-targeted extra help to pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs.

In good lessons teachers manage pupils well. Lessons have clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils, so that they are aware of what they are expected to learn. Teachers share their enthusiasm for the subject with pupils and provide stimulating activities, which appropriately challenge all pupils. In the unsatisfactory lessons there are weaknesses in control, lessons are not well planned and the pace of learning is slow. There are shortcomings in teachers' subject knowledge in ICT and there is insufficient use of ICT across the whole curriculum.

All pupils are now making steady gains in learning in lessons and over time from their varied starting points. The work set does not always provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils and they do not make as much progress as they could. Learning is now satisfactory in ICT, but it will take time to reach the standards expected, because of weaknesses in the past.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and it is enriched significantly by links with the community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The special needs teacher and support assistants provide good additional help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of English language acquisition have been identified by the school, and they receive sound support within the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Staff are good at helping pupils learn right from wrong and developing their social skills. Pupils are helped to develop a good awareness of their own culture and that of others. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff make good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. There are secure procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development, including their behaviour. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory.

The school's partnership with parents has improved considerably in the last six months. Parents are kept well informed about the work of the school.

WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is building a supportive team around her, which is focused on raising attainment. Staff are working together well as a team.

key staff	
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors meet their statutory requirements. They provided clear support for the school during the leadership difficulties and gained a satisfactory insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The development plan shows clear priorities for improvement and it is based on an accurate evaluation of the school's current performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school has made good use of support from the local education authority. Its financial management is secure, and resources are clearly focused on providing a sound education for all pupils. Contracts with outside agencies are being reviewed to ensure that the school receives value for money.

The building is spacious, but parts are in an unsatisfactory state of repair with a leaking roof and damp walls. The school was fully staffed at the beginning of the term and there are sufficient support staff to give the additional help required. Resources are satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in those for reception age children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school is helping their child mature. • The school is now well led and managed, with closer links established with parents and they feel confident approaching the school with any concerns they may have. • Their children like school. • Behaviour has improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support for pupils with special educational needs. • The range of activities provided outside lessons. • The school's links with parents and the information provided about their children's progress. • Behaviour in school. • The amount of work their children are expected to do at home.

Only 14 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire, which was sent to all parents, and only 18 attended the pre-inspection meeting for parents, so the views shown above are not considered to represent the views of most parents. The inspection team agrees with most of the parent's comments. The school is now well led and managed and behaviour has improved. Links with parents have improved and pupils are keen to learn. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The school has taken firm, effective action to address the weaknesses recognised in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. There has been an increase in the number of activities provided after school and these are now satisfactory. The school accepts that its approach to the setting of homework varies from class to class and it is working on producing a clear policy, which it intends to implement consistently.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery with a very wide range of ability and experiences. Assessments carried out soon after children start at the school show that attainment varies considerably with each cohort, but overall it is below that normally found, especially in personal, social and emotional development, language, literacy and communication, and mathematical development. Children make good progress during their time in the nursery because of the good teaching provided. However, they only attend part-time and baseline assessment, undertaken within the first seven weeks of children entering the reception classes, shows attainment to be slightly below national expectations for children of this age, especially in the key areas of communication, language and literacy, and mathematics. Although many children entering the reception classes have had the benefit of the nursery class, about a third have had no nursery school experience, and this has an impact on the overall level of attainment. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to reach the standards expected in knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development, creative development and physical development. Although many children reach the standards expected in language, literacy and communication, and mathematical development, a significant minority does not.
2. From 1996 to 2000 the results obtained by pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics improved steadily, although they remained below the national averages. During the same period the results in English, mathematics and science for pupils at the end of Year 6 have generally also been below the national average, but the trend has matched the improvement found nationally. There was, however, a significant fall in the results in 2000 in all three subjects. The results obtained in 2001 showed a general decline for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, although there was a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils obtaining the standard expected in science for Year 6 pupils. The school failed to meet the targets set with the local education authority for attainment in English and mathematics. In 2000, the average points score for Year 2 pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics, were well below the national average for all schools. They were below the average for schools in similar socio-economic circumstances. The main reason for these unfavourable comparisons was the low percentage of pupils who achieved above the levels expected. The average points scores for Year 6 pupils were well below the national average when compared to the results of all schools and also of schools in similar settings, as a result of the lack of pupils attaining above the expected level and the higher than average percentage of pupils failing to reach the standards expected. Full details of the national comparative statistics have not yet been published for 2001.
3. The school has been through a very unsettled period since the last inspection in March 1997. Very little progress was made initially towards improving the areas identified as weaknesses in the last inspection. There was a lack of continuity in leadership until the start of 2001. In the middle of 2000 the school was identified by the local authority as a school causing concern. There was a significant amount of unsatisfactory behaviour and a considerable turnover of staff. The school roll fell sharply, with an eighth of pupils leaving during term time in the last complete school

year. The percentage of pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs rose by ten per cent. All these factors had a considerable impact on the standard of education provided and on the results obtained by pupils in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6.

4. There has been a steady improvement in the quality of education provided since the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2001. Attainment by pupils in Years 2 and 6 is now judged to be similar to that expected nationally for pupils of these ages at this early stage in the school year in most subjects except ICT, where the standards are below average. There was not enough evidence to give an overall judgement on standards in art or music. However, scrutiny of work indicated there has been an improvement in the standards achieved in art by the end of Year 2 since the last inspection. They are now similar to those found nationally. There is still a lack of a significant number of pupils attaining above the levels expected, especially in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and, as a result, they do not make as much progress as they could. Across the school, pupils are reaching the standards set out in the local agreed syllabus for religious education. No significant difference was noticed in the attainment of boys and girls or of different ethnic groups during the inspection. The school does not yet monitor attainment by gender or ethnicity.
5. Learning across the school is very closely linked to the quality of teaching and it is at least satisfactory overall. There are examples of good and very good learning. Pupils are generally making good progress in literacy, partly because of the effective use of the National Literacy Strategy. The National Numeracy Strategy is effectively used to support pupils' learning in mathematics. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the use of both strategies across the school. The school has begun to track pupils' progress from year to year and the findings illustrate the high level of turbulence there has been, especially in the upper part of the school, with its inevitable impact on pupils' learning. About a fifth of pupils have left the current Year 6 classes since the end of Year 2. The figures are very similar for the percentage of pupils who have left from Year 5. The majority of pupils who have joined the school are currently on the school's register of pupils identified as having special educational needs.
6. A key issue in the previous inspection was to raise attainment in English throughout the school, especially for older pupils. This has begun to be addressed with the monitoring of the teaching of the National Literacy Strategy and the improvements in teaching that are being made, although this initiative has been hampered by the high turnover of teachers. Standards in speaking and listening are similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 6. In writing, standards across the school are broadly at the level expected. The school has identified standards in factual writing as an area for improvement. The co-ordinator has devised assessment procedures to indicate pupils' level of attainment accurately and also to indicate what they have to do to improve. This is very new and is not yet in use throughout the school. Standards in writing are in line with national expectations. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils are reading fluently and accurately and they have good strategies to work out the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. Often they use very little expression in their reading. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects, such as history and science. Overall standards in English across the school, at this early point in the term, are in line with those expected but they are not as high as they should be.

7. In mathematics, pupils learn to explain how they have arrived at their answers. In Year 2, pupils develop their estimating and predicting skills and they learn to use symbols for unknown numbers. In Year 6, they are developing strategies for solving problems relating to doubling and halving, involving three or four digits. The scrutiny of work completed over the last two terms indicates that standards are improving. At this early point in the term pupils are working in line with national expectations, but standards are not as high as they should be. In 2001, standards attained in science by Year 6 pupils improved. They went against the trend in English and mathematics. Currently, pupils are attaining standards similar to those expected nationally. Pupils make good progress in developing their investigative skills as a result of the good opportunities they are given to carry out their own experiments and to ensure that tests are fair. Staff help pupils develop a lively interest in science through the stimulating activities they provide and this is a significant factor in pupils' gains in learning. Pupils make steady progress across the whole curriculum and often good progress in their understanding of physical processes.
8. Attainment in ICT was identified as an area of weakness in the last inspection. Since then there was very little action to improve standards in the subject until recently. Staff have not yet received their training funded through the New Opportunities Fund and several lack the necessary subject knowledge to teach the subject satisfactorily. There has been a recent improvement in the number of up-to-date computers in the school and a computer suite has been established to enable skills to be taught to a whole class. Despite the improvements, it will take some time for the standards to improve sufficiently to reach the required level, because of the lack of input in the past. There is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum, so pupils have only limited opportunities to practise their skills, to realise the use of ICT skills across a range of subjects and to use facilities such as CD-ROMs and the Internet to extend personal research and independent learning skills.
9. The majority of pupils with English as an additional language are fluent in English and are achieving at a similar level to their peers. The school has identified the few pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition and they receive support within the classroom. They are well integrated within the school. Most are confident learners and they are making satisfactory gains in learning.
10. The support for pupils identified as having special educational needs has recently been reorganised. They now receive well-targeted additional help and, as a result, they are making steady gains in learning from their various starting points. There have been improvements in the targets identified in their individual education plans and pupils are making clear progress towards achieving them. The school used to participate in the local authority's programme for pupils identified as gifted or talented, but this has lapsed in the last two years. Staff are now undertaking appropriate training so that this can begin again.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes towards school are good and similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Satisfactory values and personal development are promoted throughout the school. Children come to school eagerly from the nursery onwards and the vast majority are keen to take part in lessons, when these are interesting and well managed. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, the school has worked very hard to promote pupils' sense of self worth and to establish fair and

consistent rules for behaviour management, which are understood by all members of the school's staff. These are prominently displayed in the classrooms and throughout the school, and pupils have been involved in considering appropriate rewards and sanctions relating to behaviour. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and most respond appropriately. Behaviour throughout the school is satisfactory overall. Pupils move around the school building sensibly and behaviour in the playground and at lunchtimes is satisfactory. In a minority of unsatisfactory lessons, when teachers do not manage behaviour effectively, pupils are distracted and they do not work as hard as they can or should. There have been four fixed term exclusions during the past year, which are well documented, and governors have been kept fully informed. The behaviour support team has made a major contribution to the recent developments. For example, their skilled discussion with individuals and groups helps pupils to see the consequences of their own actions when their behaviour lapses. Any incidents of minor bullying are logged and dealt with swiftly and firmly, in line with the new school policy. The current satisfactory behaviour marks a significant improvement over the last year. Parents and governors in the meetings they had with inspectors, and staff from the support unit reported poor behaviour by a significant minority of pupils, which caused considerable disruption in many lessons in the year 2000.

12. The school's recent emphasis on positive behaviour management strategies used throughout the school supports the particular needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in an effective manner. Support and guidance from the behaviour support team have been particularly effective in bringing this about. Pupils with a range of other special educational needs show the same good attitude to school life as their peers, and they make satisfactory progress in their personal development through the sound relationships which are established between staff and pupils, both in the classroom and the playground.
13. Pupils are receiving a satisfactory grounding in citizenship. The headteacher has recently set up a school council, following on from the introduction of a school committee last year, involving representatives from Years 2 to 6. Pupils have been instrumental in changing the queue systems for lunchtimes and they have discussed the use of footballs and other equipment in the playground. A Year 6 pupil accompanied the headteacher to a citizenship conference recently and this has led to further pupil links with a local primary school and an invitation to attend the neighbouring school's council meeting. The school is involved in the national healthy schools' initiative. Many pupils enjoy the opportunity to purchase fruit and vegetable snacks at playtime and they are keen to explain why this type of food is beneficial.
14. Relationships within the school are satisfactory overall. When behaviour is well managed in lessons, boys and girls co-operate together well, share learning resources sensibly and enter into discussions with interest. Adults, who emphasise considering feelings and empathy with others, usually discuss occasional disputes between pupils in a fair and consistent way. Pupils with special educational needs establish sound relationships with other pupils and with the additional staff appointed to support their specific learning needs. In a minority of lessons, relationships between pupils are less secure, due to weaknesses in the application of the school's agreed behaviour management strategies on the part of the teacher, and this needs to be addressed. Circle time, in which pupils learn to value the opinions and respect the feelings of their peers, has recently been introduced into the school and is already having a positive impact on relationships. For example, in

a very good session in a mixed reception and Year 1 class, children learnt to take turns and to listen with quiet attention as they played a game of 'Catch the Pirate's Keys'.

15. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities for personal development and initiative. For example, Year 6 pupils take on their responsibilities as monitors sensibly when they escort younger pupils back to their classrooms and distribute milk around the school. Pupils of all ages take on the responsibility for taking class registers to the office. Whole school achievement assemblies celebrate the successes of individual pupils and charitable initiatives to which pupils have contributed. Pupils from Year 1 onwards use the library independently when they return and select new reading books. Occasionally, small groups of older pupils are beginning to use the new computer suite and library for research work when accompanied by classroom assistants. There are as yet insufficient opportunities for independent research by older pupils and the library is currently under-used.
16. Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated within the school and most are confident learners.
17. The school's attendance rate has dropped significantly since the last inspection, especially between 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. For the reporting year 2000/2001, at 91.3 per cent, it is well below the national average for primary schools and as such it is unsatisfactory. This low rate is mainly due to regular very poor attendance on the part of a small group of pupils. It is also due to a number of pupils taking holidays in excess of the ten days discretionary allowance and the fact that the figures were recorded inaccurately in the past.
18. One of the first tasks undertaken by the headteacher on her appointment in January 2001 was to improve the school's attendance rate. Analysis of the school's figures for this last reporting year was undertaken during the inspection. It shows very clearly that, within the overall rate of 91.3 per cent for that year, there was instant and significant improvement in the spring and summer terms of 2001. Scrutiny of the registers during the week of the inspection indicates that this improvement is not only being maintained, but that the rate of attendance is continuing to rise. Most pupils arrive punctually at school each morning eager to start the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory, with good or very good teaching observed in the nursery and in the mixed reception and Year 1 class. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed, where there was insufficient planning and preparation of activities for reception aged children. Teachers' planning takes account of the early learning goals identified for children of this age, but there needs to be more rigorous and detailed lesson planning to ensure that the needs of all reception children, including those with special educational needs, are met with appropriately challenging activities.
20. There are strengths in the teaching in the nursery. All teaching observed was at least good and half was very good. The nursery teacher and nursery nurses work effectively as a team, and the key worker approach provides a good level of security and nurture for the young children in their care. Staff know the children well and are responsive to their interests and enthusiasms. For example, the motivating activities, which are set up around the nursery for the start of the sessions,

encourage active exploration and foster independent learning, both indoors and outdoors. The atmosphere is both calm and encouraging and behaviour is well managed.

21. In a very good lesson in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, the teacher showed very good relationships with the children and made good use of questioning to develop the idea of a favourite book. She challenged the children to give clear reasons for their own choices. In the reception classes insufficient and unimaginative use is made of the role-play area, especially in light of the recognised need to extend children's speaking and language skills. Teachers also make insufficient planned use of the outdoor area for reception children to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum.
22. Overall, children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive a satisfactory level of support in the Foundation Stage and this enables them to have access to the same range of curriculum opportunities as their peers. Children from different ethnic backgrounds are effectively integrated into school life. Support staff establish friendly relationships with the children they work with.
23. The standard of teaching for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall. There were more excellent, very good and good lessons than in the last inspection, but there is still too much unsatisfactory teaching. In this inspection, 69 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Of these, 90 per cent were at least satisfactory. Twenty lessons were judged as good, ten were very good, and three excellent.
24. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of well-established knowledge of their subjects, and they engage pupils with their own enthusiasm for what is being taught. In a very good music lesson, the teacher shared her own love of a particular composition with the class, and in a history lesson she engaged pupils in the experience of war-time evacuation, using the school's log book for that time. As a result, pupils developed real listening skills in music and a genuine insight into the history of local people in the Second World War. Teachers' subject knowledge is not always secure, and this is particularly so with ICT where more training is clearly required. In consequence pupils do not always make as much progress in extending their skills as they should, as the use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are also some shortcomings in teachers' knowledge in religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well known and used by most teachers, but in some unsatisfactory lessons the organisation and structure suggested in the strategies are neither followed closely nor appropriately adapted, with the result that pupils do not learn as well or as fast as they should.
25. Many lessons are planned well, with learning objectives clearly defined and shared with pupils. Often – though not always – the progress of the class against these objectives is discussed at the end of the lesson, with the result that pupils' own knowledge of their learning is promoted, and learning is reinforced. A significant characteristic of the unsatisfactory lessons is the absence, or vagueness, of learning objectives, so that neither teacher nor class has a precise idea of the intended outcomes, and little progress is made. Another aspect of such lessons is that the planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment. A range of work that will challenge and promote the learning of all pupils, who have a wide variety of ability, is therefore not provided.

26. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, but they do not have uniformly high expectations of pupils' capabilities. The good teaching is designed to drive progress, and to stimulate pupils to do the best they can, but in some lessons the excessive use of worksheets and other such exercises, which are too easy, achieves little other than keeping pupils occupied. In an excellent English lesson, pupils responded very well to the teacher's high expectations, expressed in her engaging collaborative approach. In her questioning she included adult vocabulary and she refused to be content with simple answers.
27. Throughout the school, teachers employ a good range of teaching methods that capture pupils' imaginations and ensure that they do not get bored or lose interest in what they are doing. As well as the good questioning techniques, teachers set interesting tasks, as in an excellent lesson on magnets in which the teacher (with appropriate guidance) set the class to devise experiments to measure the magnets' comparative strengths. Pupils enjoyed doing this and they developed their ideas and extended their knowledge very well.
28. In general, teachers manage pupils well. Most use a shared code of conduct, so that expectations are perfectly clear. In lessons, which are good or better, the content is so interesting, the teachers' styles so engaging, and the pace is so good, that there is no danger of (or even time for) misbehaviour. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers spend too much time lecturing pupils, they are inconsistent in enforcing discipline, and they do not follow procedures already agreed and expected by the school. Where planning is weak, pupils misbehave, usually out of boredom.
29. Teachers usually make good use of time and resources. Most lessons are taken at a brisk but appropriate pace, and there is a good relationship between content and timing. In weaker teaching, pace is slower, but in spite of this there is a tendency to run out of time. The vital plenary session at the end of the lesson, which summarises and reinforces learning, is often squeezed or missed. Good use is made of the school's very willing learning support assistants. Usually they work closely with teachers, who conscientiously brief them in planning, although this is not always the case.
30. Good questioning helps teachers to establish how much pupils have learnt and to ascertain where reinforcement is required. Formal recording of day-to-day assessment is inconsistent, however, varying from teacher to teacher. The standards of marking are also inconsistent, and the school acknowledges that this is a weakness. While pupils' work is usually marked, this is usually with no more than ticks and bland praise. Really evaluative analysis is rare, as are suggestions for further improvement. No following through of any advice in subsequent pieces of work was seen. The school has made a start on target setting, but this is in a very early stage. In addition, targets tend to be set for groups rather than individuals and are often too general to be realistic.
31. The use of homework is inconsistent from year group to year group and from class to class. It is not often used to extend the learning of pupils through independent research. Nevertheless, pupils of all ages take books home to read, and homework is more frequently set as pupils move up the school.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all lessons, and withdrawal for special teaching is carefully controlled. Teaching of pupils with

special educational needs is satisfactory overall, with pupils' needs being well met when lessons take account of particular learning needs, and effective use is made of the considerable number of additional support staff. Most teachers provide appropriate work, though this is sometimes at an unnecessarily low level. Learning support assistants, particularly those allocated to specific pupils, are very aware of the needs of individuals, and they respond to them well. The behaviour support team provides particularly good support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and this enables them to focus on tasks. The specialist teacher also provides good, effective support within the classroom and during occasional small group teaching sessions, when pupils are withdrawn from the classroom for intensive support. In unsatisfactory lessons, insufficient attention is taken to ensure that the learning needs of all groups of pupils are addressed and support staff are not used efficiently. In the sets in the upper part of the school, satisfactory support is provided for pupils with special educational needs when teaching is well focused, learning objectives for pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenging and additional staff are involved to give support. The school's assessment systems are under-developed, however, and individual education plans do not yet sufficiently link with clearly identified curriculum targets or personal pupil targets.

33. There is no specific additional support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers are fully aware of their problems and try to ensure that their learning is appropriately supported.
34. As a result of the overall satisfactory teaching, pupils generally make steady gains in learning. They are well motivated, and their efforts often promote good progress, though the pace at which they work could often be faster. They are interested in what they do and even the younger ones can often stay on task for quite long periods. The skills and attitudes of independent learning are under-developed: many would rather ask an adult than go straight to a dictionary, thesaurus or encyclopaedia. As a result of the inconsistencies in marking and of the under-development of target setting, pupils' own knowledge of their learning is limited. Nevertheless, many show by their responses to the opportunities provided that they are ready to move further in this direction.

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

35. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the local agreed syllabus for religious education. The provision is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. There are effective strategies in use in most classes for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, using the National Strategies. Literacy and numeracy are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. Appropriate time is allocated to both English and mathematics to bring about the necessary improvements in standards. There are examples of good links between subjects, for example geography and science, which make good use of the time available. There have been shortcomings in the provision for ICT in the last few years, with some areas of the curriculum not covered, but these are now being addressed with the use of national guidelines and a commercial scheme of work. There is still insufficient use of ICT skills in other subjects, for example data handling and information retrieval. Satisfactory provision is made for personal, social and health education. All pupils take part in circle time, where they are encouraged to think about and discuss issues such as problems and relationships. This is still fairly new and will take some time to become fully

effective. In Year 6, pupils also receive satisfactory health education where, as well as learning science-health related topics, such as sex education, they deal with important issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse, sadness and risk-taking. There is good provision for swimming with the younger pupils using the school's own small teaching pool and the older ones using the pool in a nearby secondary school.

36. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the same range of curricular opportunities as other groups of pupils in the school. The main approach is for classroom-based support from learning support staff and the specialist teacher and her support assistant. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive satisfactory further help from learning support assistants during lessons to enable them to access the curriculum. On occasions small groups of pupils are withdrawn from classes. The headteacher is carefully monitoring this to ensure that withdrawal is appropriate and well planned. No additional help is allocated to support pupils with English as an additional language, but class teachers are aware of their needs and give them the help they require to ensure that they are fully integrated into all activities.
37. Overall the quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the nursery and classes with reception children are satisfactory. Long- and medium-term planning takes account of the early learning goals set for children of this age and covers the recommended areas of learning. Curriculum planning is good in the nursery, but there is a lack of continuity as children move into the reception classes. Fuller use of the outdoor area could be made in the reception classes, especially to extend children's physical skills. More use needs to be made of assessment information to ensure a closer match between tasks planned and the wide range of learning needs in each class.
38. Due to staff changes and the number of new staff, there are some areas of the curriculum where there is currently no subject co-ordinator. This is restricting development in those areas and the headteacher is aware of the need to appoint co-ordinators as soon as staff have settled in the school. Many policies are out of date and do not give a true reflection of current practice within the school. Apart from English and mathematics, there has been little monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum to ensure appropriate coverage. The school is using a mixture of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's schemes of work and those devised by the local education authority. There is a need for the school to assess the effectiveness of this and to take steps to create cohesive schemes of work. This is especially important because of the mixed age classes in most of the school, for which planning needs to be careful, and the need to ensure that new work builds on what pupils already know and understand as they move through the school.
39. In the last report, provision for enrichment through extra-curricular activities was found to be limited and this was an area where some parents expressed concern in the parents' questionnaire, although an equal number expressed satisfaction. The local education authority and the school made this a priority last year and the situation is much improved. In addition to football and netball teams with the opportunity to play matches against other schools, there is a popular chess club, and last year the team was in the regional finals in an inter-schools competition. There is a computer/newspaper club and the headteacher has just re-started a drama club with a production of 'Oliver' planned for the end of term. A choir sang most effectively at the achievement assembly. An art club for younger pupils is about to begin and, to help with studies, the school is continuing and planning to

extend the 'booster' and 'springboard' clubs. All clubs are open to both boys and girls. Other initiatives are planned and several teachers, the site manager and learning support assistants are involved, showing the importance the whole school community places on these activities.

40. The school has developed good links with other educational establishments, including pre-school settings, other primary schools and the local secondary school and they have a positive impact on the education provided. Students undergoing teacher training gain experience in the school. Years 5 and 6 pupils make regular visits to Chafford High School, for a science lesson in one of their laboratories, and pupils also use their swimming pool. There is an effective support group made up of local headteachers. A local business supports the provision of story packs for the nursery children. Teachers make good use of local visits and visitors to the school, to extend the opportunities offered to pupils in several subjects, such as geography, history and religious education.
41. The school satisfies the requirements to provide opportunities for collective worship through upper and lower school and whole school assemblies. These are planned by the religious education co-ordinator who provides themes for the whole year. The school follows the local agreed syllabus for religious education. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities are provided for reflection in the assemblies, but these are sometimes fairly perfunctory in practice. Each week there is a whole school assembly where the school celebrates the achievements of pupils in the school. This was observed to be very effective during the inspection week. In some lessons teachers take good advantage of opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual development, but it is rarely included in teacher's plans. As well as the opportunities in assemblies, religious education lessons give pupils the opportunity to learn about the values and beliefs of Christianity and other main faiths.
42. Provision for moral and social development is good. All teachers place great emphasis upon attitudes and relationships. The positive attitudes and satisfactory behaviour seen around the school are a tribute to this approach. The new headteacher has successfully re-established the ethos in the school whereby adults value pupils and help to raise their self-esteem and confidence. Staff are good role models for pupils. In some lessons, such as ICT and physical education, pupils are required to work together with a partner and increasingly in lessons in the upper part of the school, pupils are encouraged to work together in groups. Circle times are used effectively to encourage pupils to think about the feelings of others, to learn to listen to what others have to say and to work with others. A good example of this was seen in the mixed reception Year 1 class when children successfully 'passed the smile' around the circle. They learned to take turns, to listen and co-operate with others as they tried to pass the teacher's keys around the circle without making a sound. In geography, pupils are given good opportunities to consider world issues, such as the need to conserve resources such as water and to care for the world around us. The new school council is giving some pupils the opportunity to voice their views and consider how the school community could improve. School rules, which pupils have helped to formulate, are on view in most classrooms and give a clear indication of what is expected.
43. Cultural development is good. As well as the cultural and multi-cultural emphases in religious education, there have been trips, for example to museums such as the Museum of London, linking to Victorian studies, and the Imperial War Museum, linking to studies in the Second World War. There are close community links, such

as those with the Rainham Association of Village Events, which the headteacher has re-forged. Pupils study a range of artwork from western artists and theatre groups visit the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school's last inspection report identified some deficiencies in its work relating to the care of pupils. No anti-bullying policy, no up-to-date health and safety policy and no procedures for child protection were in place. There has been considerable improvement in all these areas of pupils' welfare and safety since that inspection. There is now an anti-bullying policy that supports the inspection team's evidence of much improved behaviour and consideration for others throughout the school. Appropriate procedures for child protection are now securely in place, the headteacher is the named co-ordinator for child protection and all staff are clearly aware of these procedures. Further training on child protection for staff is envisaged in the not too distant future. Governors are well aware of the importance of strict health and safety procedures in the school and they have worked diligently to produce a high quality health and safety policy that is implemented with rigour and purpose. The site manager has an important role to play in ensuring pupils' health and safety on a day-to-day basis and keeping the school clean and tidy. Fire drills are held at least once a term and the school has a good number of staff trained in first aid with plans afoot for general first aid training for more key staff.
45. There are good procedures for introducing children to the nursery and reception classes. Entry is staggered to give children time to settle and gradually become familiar with school routines.
46. The overall unsatisfactory rate of attendance has already been reported together with the improved rate since January and the continuation of this improvement at the time of the current inspection. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance have been developed which are rigorous and which are clearly having a positive impact on the attitude of parents and pupils regarding the importance of regular school attendance to ensure pupils' progress and development. Weekly monitoring by the full-time member of the administrative staff is detailed and is supported by visits to the school every two weeks from the Education Welfare Officer. Pupils are encouraged to attend school with rewards in the form of certificates and praise for high rates of attendance. The school has done much to address this issue and it is expected that its hard work will result in further improved attendance figures.
47. Currently, the monitoring of pupils' academic progress is very patchy across the school and, as such, it is unsatisfactory. Some teachers keep careful records of what individual pupils know, understand and can do, but there is no whole school approach as to the records that are required and no close monitoring to ensure that they are completed. There are some examples of good practice, for instance in English and the nursery, but they are not consistently used. Assessment procedures need to be developed in far more depth across the whole curriculum to track pupils' academic development. Assessment information is needed to inform lesson planning to ensure that pupils receive appropriate work to build on what they already know and that they make steady gains in learning from their various starting points. This is especially important for higher attaining pupils, as the work set for them does not always offer them a suitable level of challenge. The school is just beginning to analyse test results and to track progress in relation to prior attainment

and baseline assessment. Assessments are made soon after children enter the nursery and repeated at the end of the year. This gives a clear picture of the progress made during the year by each child and highlights areas where more input is needed. Similar procedures are in place at the beginning and end of the reception year. There are some examples of target setting for individual pupils, but this technique is inconsistent across the school. Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of how well they are achieving and what is required for improvement. There is no monitoring of the achievements of pupils from minority ethnic groups or of boys and girls.

48. The school has effective links with a range of professional agencies that offer specialist advice and support for pupils with special educational needs. For example, the behaviour support team makes a valuable contribution in this area and a new initiative, set up through the standards funding, provides weekly speech and language therapy support in the nursery for identified pupils with special educational needs in this area. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is appropriately used, for example to provide additional classroom support. Support assistants are generally caring and positive in their dealings with the children they assist. Procedures have been put in place, through an action plan drawn up with the local education authority, to improve the quality of individual education plans and assessment and monitoring systems for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. Insufficient use is made of assessments and individual education plans to inform teacher's planning.
49. No additional support is currently available for pupils for whom English is an additional language. There is a steady growth in the small number of pupils arriving at the school, with little or no knowledge of English. Staff in the school effectively support these pupils, but the headteacher is seeking further assistance from the local education authority to provide expert training for staff and also assessment procedures to track pupils' progress.
50. Pupils' behaviour is monitored well through individual pupil tracking sheets and individual education plans in the case of pupils with special educational needs. New initiatives follow the school's invitation to the behaviour support unit of the local education authority to assist in devising strategies to improve behaviour throughout the school. These procedures are in their relatively early stages and need to be developed further to take account of the importance of monitoring, not only of pupils' behaviour but also their personal development.
51. The school is increasingly inclusive of all its pupils and is sensitive to individual pupils' needs. Children receive a relaxed and happy start in the nursery that supports them well at the start of their education. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those new to the country are fully and thoroughly integrated into the life of the school. Its improved standards of behaviour support, child protection and health and safety are strengths of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The response to the Ofsted questionnaire was disappointingly low. It was such a small sample that it was felt during the inspection that it did not give a clear picture to the inspection team of how many parents feel about the school. The reason for the low response is likely to be that the headteacher wanted to consult parents on a

variety of issues and she had distributed a similar questionnaire not long before the Ofsted form was sent to them. The team felt unanimously that it was appropriate and important to use the school's questionnaire as additional evidence.

53. From all the information gathered from parents, it is clear that many of them support the school. In particular, a large number comment on the improvements in the school since the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2001. Parents appreciate the open door policy now operated and feel they can approach the school at any time with worries or concerns. In the small response to the inspection questionnaire, however, a significant minority of parents considered that they were not given enough information about how their child was getting on or that the school worked closely with them.
54. A parent association, run by a small group of parents, works hard to organise fund-raising events to further the work of the school. Many parents support these events to provide enhanced benefits and facilities for pupils. Not many parents are in a position to give their time to help in classrooms, but those that can do so make a valuable contribution to the school's work. Parents are willing to help in practical ways, for example recently assisting in the re-decoration of some of the classrooms and corridors in their spare time.
55. Communication between the school and parents is good. There are good procedures for inducting children and their parents into the nursery and reception classes. Parents are well informed about the school's routines. Regular and detailed newsletters are sent out to keep parents well informed on many school matters and events. Class teachers inform parents what curriculum topics are going to be studied each term. There has been a revision of practice regarding consultation evenings and these have now been improved to consist of two evenings in the autumn and spring terms with a minimum of ten minutes per interview. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for parents of children with special educational needs to discuss their progress. They have longer interviews during which individual education plans are the focus of discussion. Arrangements for annual reviews meet legal requirements. Where necessary, parents who share the same community language give help to those families who do not speak English. This is particularly the case with families whose children are to enter the nursery, where help is given with home visits. In the summer term, parents are offered an appointment following receipt of pupils' annual reports, if they so wish, and attendance at a whole-school open day. These annual reports are satisfactory in quality and content. They help parents to understand what their children know, understand and can do. Although some targets are contained for English and mathematics in the reports, these could be more specific. The reports contain space for parents to comment and many choose to do so.
56. The response from parents on the subject of homework is mixed. A number of them would like to see more homework set for their children. The school admits that homework setting requires improvement and needs to be approached with more rigour and consistency. A homework policy has been through several drafts over a period of time and it will shortly be ready for implementation. Meanwhile the issue of appropriate homework for Years 5 and 6 pupils has been addressed to support their forthcoming transfer to secondary school.
57. Remarks made by parents on the school's own questionnaire indicate a clear understanding on the part of many of them of the school's difficulties encountered in

recent years and over the last year in particular. There is also a clear feeling that they appreciate what is being done to improve several aspects of school life and that the headteacher and staff have the support of most of them as they set about this task. The school's links and partnership with parents emerge as one of its strengths.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The current headteacher took over the running of the school in January 2001, following a very unsettled period of leadership. The previous headteacher retired due to ill health, after several periods of illness, and the school then had three periods of acting headships, two by the deputy head and one by a headteacher recruited from an external agency. During this time the school was identified by the local authority as being a school causing concern, mainly because of the poor behaviour by pupils. There has been a high turnover of staff. In the short time she has been involved with the school, the new headteacher has made considerable changes and she provides very good leadership and management. She now enjoys the support of parents, governors and staff who recognise the improvements that have been made. The headteacher has given the school a clear sense of direction and she is building up a confident, energetic team, of both teaching and non-teaching staff, to support her. There is a growing commitment to improving the quality of education provided and to raising attainment. The headteacher recognised the need for improvement in most areas of the school's work. With support from the local authority, she has effectively identified and prioritised for attention areas that have most impact on pupils' learning. The school's resources are focused on bringing about the necessary improvements. The headteacher has taken classes to cover for staff illness. She is a very good role model for teachers and leads by example. Very little progress was initially made towards improving the issues highlighted in the last inspection report, but, under the new leadership, at least satisfactory progress is now being made. The school has the potential to continue to improve, especially now that staff morale is rising.
59. The school's development plan clearly identified areas for improvement and it initially included the local education authority's action plan for the school. The most important area, that of improving pupils' behaviour, has been successfully tackled and there has been a great improvement over the last two terms. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have been involved in training and there is now a more consistent whole-school approach, which is effective. The previous headteacher did not delegate to staff with management responsibilities and, as a result, their roles within the school were under-developed. The present headteacher is slowly addressing this, but there is the need to provide appropriate training, for example in the role of the co-ordinator. As yet, apart from in English and mathematics, there has been no formal monitoring of teachers' planning or of teaching and learning. For example, the co-ordinator for the nursery and reception classes has not had the opportunity to ensure that the recommended curriculum for children of that age is being successfully implemented in the reception classes.
60. Almost half the teaching staff are new to the school this term. This means that at present some subjects do not have a co-ordinator, as the headteacher is giving staff time to settle in the school before they take on further responsibilities. The school does not yet have a staff handbook and this has meant that there have been shortcomings in their induction into the school. More needs to be done to ensure that staff returning to the profession after a break, and those new to the English

education system, have appropriate training and mentors to support them. The headteacher has introduced a second tier of management to give additional expertise to the senior management team and to provide management training for more staff. This is operating effectively. In addition, she has made good use of expertise available from advisers within the local education authority. This has resulted in initiatives, which are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning and they represent a good use of resources available to the school. For example, the adviser for mathematics has monitored numeracy with the headteacher. Shortcomings in the leadership and management of special educational needs have also been identified and an appropriate action plan has been drawn up by the headteacher, in consultation with the local education authority, to improve the overall quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs. The respective roles of the special educational needs co-ordinator, the special educational needs teacher and other staff in the school have been redefined in order to clarify roles and responsibilities. Tight targets for improvement have been set within a specified time scale and appropriate internal and external monitoring and evaluation procedures have been agreed. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is kept well informed and makes regular visits to the school.

61. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily. Its understanding of the strengths and weaknesses has grown in the last year, when it was made aware of behaviour problems in the school and shortcomings in the leadership. It has become more involved with the running of the school, with the current headteacher including them in the decision-making process. Instead of merely informing them of decisions, as was the case under the previous headship, they have been involved in the setting up of a school development plan. Governors have developed a clear committee system and a few are regular visitors to the school. They have been particularly influential in implementing improvements in the monitoring of health and safety issues and in investigating the value for money the school receives from contractors, for example from the firm responsible for maintaining the school grounds.
62. The school's financial resources are clearly targeted to support pupils' learning, for example through the employment of an additional special needs teacher and staff to support pupils in class. The school has also bought in expertise from the local authority's behaviour support unit. The staff involved are very skilled and they are having a significant impact on the behaviour of individual pupils. The school manages its finances effectively and efficiently and the few minor points for action, identified in the last auditor's report, have been rectified. The school has kept reserves in its budget for the repairs that are needed to the roof.
63. The school is beginning to evaluate its performance. The deputy head has received appropriate training and she has begun to compare results obtained by pupils at the end of last year, with those of the previous year. From these the school is identifying pupils who are under-performing and areas of the school's work that need improving. The setting of a whole-school target of improving factual writing is a positive new initiative.
64. Despite the considerable turnover of staff, the level of staffing is satisfactory, with the school fully staffed at the beginning of term and new staff bringing useful expertise. Two are on one-year contracts as future pupil numbers are unclear and the headteacher also wished to assess their impact on the work of the school.

Support staff are well deployed to help pupils in classes, especially during literacy and numeracy sessions. Pupils identified as having special educational needs receive well-targeted additional support, which has a positive impact on their learning. Mid-day supervisors now feel more involved in the work of the school. They have received training in behaviour management and they are given time to hold meetings to discuss matters of importance to them. Changes in leadership meant that the school was late in implementing the new national performance management measures, but they are now securely in place. The targets set for individual teachers, some of which are linked to raising pupils' attainment, are due for review in October. Updated written job descriptions are being prepared and staff are aware of their responsibilities. The training for teachers in ICT, through funds provided by the New Opportunities Fund, starts this term and will address the lack of subject knowledge and confidence of a considerable proportion of staff.

65. There is now a clear emphasis on promoting educational inclusion within the school and ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from different ethnic backgrounds, receive a good standard of education. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and they receive praise for their efforts. The school's aims are beginning to be reflected in the work of the school, with pupils' confidence and self-esteem increasing. There is growing respect between adults and pupils.
66. The accommodation provides plenty of space for the delivery of the curriculum, with separate rooms available, for example for music tuition, and a computer room and a library. There is also a small teaching swimming pool. There is, however, no secure outside area for children in the reception classes. Some of the buildings are in a poor state of repair. The roof in the lower school needs replacing as it leaks and it is also causing dampness in the walls. Parents joined with staff to redecorate the upper part of the school and this area is bright and attractive. The site manager undertakes minor repairs and ensures that this work is kept up to date. Resources are generally satisfactory, with good resources for science, religious education, English and physical education. Many of the resources for children in the reception classes are old and unattractive. There are no large wheeled toys for them to use. The new ICT suite is a positive initiative, although there are difficulties because of the lack of uniformity in the computers provided. There is also a lack of software to support the use of ICT across the curriculum and the computers available in classrooms are old and of limited usefulness.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. (1) Raise attainment in English and mathematics from reception to Year 6.
- (2) Raise attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
- a. ensuring that all staff receive the training they need to improve their subject knowledge and their confidence in their ability to teach the subject;
 - b. rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that the curriculum is appropriately covered;
 - c. implementing assessment procedures to track pupils' acquisition of skills and to guide future learning;
 - d. ensuring that ICT is used to support learning in other subjects.
- (3) Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

- a. improving lesson planning so that content, structure and the specific learning objectives are clearly identified;
 - b. ensuring that all pupils, but especially those capable of higher attainment, are appropriately challenged in lessons;
 - c. developing systematic, formal procedures for monitoring teaching and learning across the curriculum and taking action to address any weaknesses observed;
 - d. ensuring that there are subject leaders in place for all subjects and that they receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.
- (4) Improve the quality of assessment procedures by:
- a. ensuring that the good practices already in place, for example in English, are consistently implemented across the school;
 - b. developing systems to track pupils' learning in lessons and using the information obtained to ensure that future lessons meet the needs of all pupils;
 - c. involving pupils more in their own learning by making them more aware of what they have to do to improve, for example through target setting and marking.
- (5) Continue to implement the initiatives already in place to improve pupils' attendance further.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
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
Number	3	10	20	29	7	0	0
Percentage	4	15	29	42	10	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	43	305
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	81

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	57

Attendance 1999/2000

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16	21	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	32	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (77)	86 (83)	95 (77)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	16
	Girls	18	20	21
	Total	31	35	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (77)	95 (79)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	33	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	16
	Girls	21	20	21
	Total	32	31	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (74)	53 (79)	64 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (70)	n/a (75)	n/a (84)
	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	6
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	10
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	242
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	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	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)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.7
Average class size	24.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	215

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	43
Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	916,942
Total expenditure	908,503
Expenditure per pupil	2455
Balance brought forward from previous year	63,243
Balance carried forward to next year	71,682

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	407
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	34	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	48	7	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	52	11	4	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	55	22	9	4
The teaching is good.	41	48	7	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	45	28	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	29	5	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	50	5	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	57	17	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	48	5	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	50	3	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	25	31	7	24

Other issues raised by parents

Only 18 parents attended the parents' meeting. At this meeting, and in written comments on the questionnaires, some parents commented on improvements in behaviour and in links with parents since the appointment of the current headteacher.

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

68. The nursery serves both Rainham Village and Brady schools and there are 85 part-time places available for children from the age of three, including six places for children with identified special educational needs. There are currently eight nursery children on the school's register of special educational need, including one with a statement. Children are admitted to the main school full-time in the autumn term following their fourth birthday. There is a staggered intake into a reception class with children initially attending part-time. Baseline assessment, which is undertaken within the first seven weeks of attending school, shows attainment on entry to be slightly below national expectations for children of this age, especially in the key areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Many children who enter reception classes have had the benefit of nursery education, although around 30 per cent of the children who start school, have had no nursery experience.
69. The nursery accommodation is good. It is a separate building, specially converted for young children, and includes a cloakroom area, kitchen and staff room as well as a secure outdoor play area that is partially covered with a safety surface. There is one reception class and one mixed reception and Year 1 class, which are housed in adjacent rooms in the main building. Although there is access to a very roughly surfaced outdoor area, there is no separate enclosed play area for reception children. This was identified as a concern in the last inspection and there has been no improvement. As a result, opportunities for extending children's physical skills are limited.
70. The nursery is well staffed by one nursery teacher and four qualified nursery nurses, two of whom job share. In addition, there are two classroom assistants and additional classroom support for a child with a statement of special educational needs. Teachers in the reception and mixed reception and Year 1 class have the assistance of a full-time classroom assistant each; they offer friendly support to children during activities.
71. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of young children and she works in effective partnership with the nursery staff team. She has led appropriate in-service training sessions for staff, linked to the establishment of the new Foundation Stage, which incorporates the nursery and the classes for reception children. There is insufficient time available for her to monitor and develop the nationally recommended curriculum for reception aged children. This results in a lack of continuity between the nursery and reception stages. A more rigorous use of assessment needs to be made in teachers' planning, in order to develop a closer match between tasks and the full range of learning needs in the reception classes. Children with special educational needs are well supported and they make steady progress, building on what they already know. Appropriate provision is made available for children at an early stage of English language acquisition. The good standard of education provided in the nursery has been maintained since the last inspection. More children are now entering the school with special educational needs and below average attainment in communication, language and literacy, and mathematics. This has resulted in an increase in the number of children who do not

reach the standards expected in these two areas of learning by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Teaching in this area of learning is good overall, with very good teaching in the nursery and the mixed age range reception class, where staff work hard to foster positive relationships and co-operative play, through calm and effective management strategies. The very good relationships established with parents and carers in the nursery bring about a smooth transition to school life and new children settle quickly into the secure but exciting routines of the day. Cultural experiences are extended well, for example when two parents present beautifully embroidered Asian clothing, which they have made for the children. The children delight in handling the different textured fabrics as they swirl and turn in their new dressing-up clothes.
73. In the classes with reception children a positive focus on right and wrong behaviour is displayed on large collages which link to children's feelings, and this is emphasised in class work. For example, one child suggested that she would make sure to be friendly with another child at playtime to keep him happy. Very good approaches to circle time in the mixed age class enable children to learn how to take turns and to listen attentively to one another. Teachers encourage self-help in dressing and changing for hall-time activities. Sometimes too much is expected of children to set up their own activities whilst the teacher is working with a particular group, especially at this early point in the term. As a result, children are not always involved in appropriate activities to extend their learning. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to reach the early learning goals in this area.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching in the nursery and the mixed age reception class. In a new initiative, speech therapists assess and provide weekly support for 14 children in the nursery to improve and develop language and communication skills. This is an indication of the level of need when children first enter the nursery. Nursery staff make a strong emphasis on promoting children's spoken language through good quality interactions with children during their activities. For example, children are encouraged to express their preference for milk or juice in a full sentence, as they sit in small social groups with an adult, at snack time. Staff talk constantly with children using outdoor equipment to extend their vocabulary. Books are taken home on a regular basis by nursery children through a well-organised library loan system.
75. Reception aged children develop their knowledge of letter sounds and symbols using actions through the use of commercially produced materials. In a good lesson in a mixed age class, the teacher used a shy puppet, which needed to be quietly coaxed out of his box by reception children, to introduce items beginning with the letter s. Good links are made to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world when they look at a story about hedgehogs and the things they do. New words, relating to the factual content of the story, are carefully explained. The teacher also models the writing process effectively for the children using a large flip chart. Children in the reception class have satisfactory opportunities to develop their early writing and reading skills through appropriate hand control tasks, exploration of a range of written texts and familiar stories by a range of authors. The quality of provision for role-play for reception age children is insufficiently developed, although in one class a garden centre shop provides a satisfactory focus

for independent play. There is only limited adult interaction with children during role-play, to extend language, and teachers' planning for communication, language and literacy is insufficiently detailed in the reception class to ensure sufficient focus on what children need to learn. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning by borrowing books to share with them at home.

76. By the end of the reception year, a significant minority of children are likely to still be working towards the early learning goals, although many will achieve these.

Mathematical development

77. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the nursery, where children have well-planned opportunities to investigate a range of first-hand practical activities in small groups, such as sand and water play, construction toys and turn-taking games. Nursery staff are quick to introduce appropriate mathematical language to children as they play alongside them and this extends their learning. Songs and rhymes are used well, in addition to early counting games, although more use of tapes would further enhance the quality of singing. Nursery staff make effective use of observation to assess children's learning needs and progress, although this could be drawn upon more fully in short-term planning to guide future activities.
78. Reception age children have satisfactory opportunities to record numerals and to sort objects by number, shape and size. They enjoy exploring capacity using sand and water activities and they show concentration using puzzles and forming numerals in play dough. They also enjoy using a feely bag to guess the shape of its contents. Children count the number of potato prints they have made in each colour. Classroom assistants are used well to support activities and to reinforce and extend children's learning. Planning is often insufficiently detailed to identify precise learning intentions for each activity provided and, although assessment records are maintained, insufficient use is made of these to inform daily planning for the full range of learning needs. For example, children in the reception class are not challenged to use their growing knowledge of numbers when they are restricted to forming sets of three objects in teacher-led group activities and this limits their learning. By the end of the reception year, a significant minority of children are likely to be working towards the early learning goals set for this age, although many children will be likely to achieve these.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Children in the nursery make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world through the interesting practical activities provided. Children enjoy acting out family life using good quality toys, such as a highly popular carpet cleaner, and the good range of multi-ethnic dolls, and dressing-up clothes and shoes. Nursery staff take every opportunity to talk alongside children as they explore new materials such as the dry sand, the small world animal park and dressing the teddy bear on the computer. This enhances children's learning.
80. In the mixed reception and Year 1 class, the reception aged children take an active part in the discussion of a hedgehog's habitat. They are eager to look closely at cross-sections of fruit, which the teacher passes around the circle, and are fascinated by the seeds inside. The garden centre shop in the role-play area is appropriately resourced and this encourages shopping activities. There is also sound provision for small-world play. In the reception class children find out about different items of clothing for boys and girls and they make a washing line and wall display of these. They learn how to use a mouse with increasing accuracy when

using the computer, although, on occasion the selected program is too difficult for children to undertake independently, as it requires more advanced reading skills. Opportunities to extend and develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world through the role-play area are not yet sufficiently well developed in the reception class.

81. Teaching in this area is sound overall. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the expected early learning goals, with a few still working towards these. However, planning needs to be more rigorous in order to extend children's learning still further.

Physical development

82. Teaching is good in the nursery and the safe enclosed outdoor area is used well when the weather is fine. There is, however, no covered outdoor area and this restricts the range of opportunities available during wet weather. Children enjoy balancing on, and jumping from side to side across, a colourful winding snake construction. Girls and boys co-operate well when sharing the good range of wheeled prams, bikes, carts and buses, and children with special educational needs are well included in outdoor games.
83. Reception age children have regular weekly sessions in the hall where they use a range of apparatus to develop their physical skills. Only a very short lesson was seen during the week of the inspection. The new children took time to change into their gym clothes for the first time, so no overall judgement of teaching is made. However, these children enjoyed playing circle games with their teacher in the hall and showed enthusiasm for jumping, hopping and skipping. The school has recognised the need to develop both provision and resources for children of this age, as a part of the overall school development plan. There is no enclosed outdoor area for them and the playground requires resurfacing. There are insufficient opportunities to engage in outdoor play to develop gross motor skills, by using outdoor wheeled toys, for example. When weather permits, teachers make satisfactory use of the area just outside the classrooms for activities such as construction toys, sand, and water play. Teachers' planning needs to be more rigorous to ensure that children have opportunities across the full recommended curriculum, in order to reach the required early learning goals.

Creative development

84. Teaching is satisfactory overall and it is good in the nursery. Children in the nursery enjoy handling a wide range of paint, collage and modelling materials, and they are suitably encouraged to experiment and explore new textures. Through sensitive support from the nursery teacher, a child new to English took great delight in acting out the different sounds of animals as he tried out a range of animal hand puppets with his teacher. He then jumped inside the huge cardboard box where these had been stored, to continue his play. Children have good opportunities to experiment with a range of different percussion instruments and to enjoy small group singing sessions when they learn nursery rhymes and action songs.
85. Classroom assistants work hard to support reception age children in their creative activities. Children enjoy potato printing on large sheets of paper in one class and are fascinated by the sequins and glittery materials they are able to select for their collage numerals in the class. Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals when staff encourage them to self-select from a range of provided fabrics, to experiment with different ways of printing, and to express their

ideas individually when painting, drawing or handling modelling materials. Working with the specialist music teacher, reception aged children enjoy the challenge of copying the pattern of the beat of a drum and they sing familiar songs, such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star', with enthusiasm. By the end of the reception year, children are likely to reach the early learning goals in this area.

ENGLISH

86. The last inspection reported that attainment was broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, though a significant number of pupils were then attaining below national expectations in writing. Attainment at the end of Year 6 was below national expectations. The standards of the work seen across the school in the current inspection are in line with what might be expected for pupils' ages at this stage in the school year, although a significant number perform below or well below this level.
87. In the 2000 national tests for seven year olds, 86 per cent of pupils attained Level 2 in both reading and writing – close to the national average, although the percentage of pupils reaching higher levels was well below. In tests for eleven year olds, 55 per cent of pupils attained Level 4, well below the national average. The test results for 2001, for which no national comparisons have been published at the time of writing, show that 78 per cent of Year 2 pupils attained Level 2 in reading, and 70 per cent in writing. Fifty-eight per cent of pupils at the end of Year 6 attained Level 4. The trend over the last few years is generally upward, in line with the national trend. The lower levels of attainment in the last two years are attributable to several factors: the lack of management and direction over this period, lapses in behaviour by a significant number of pupils, the degree of turbulence in the school's population and the growing number of pupils in the school on the register of special educational needs. There are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls.
88. In speaking and listening, pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 is under-developed. They are hesitant, and are handicapped by low levels of linguistic skill. In classes where they respond well to their teachers, they are thoughtful and careful in their answers to questions. All are eager to reply, but many tend to say the first thing that comes into their minds, which may not be relevant or even correct. The situation improves in Years 3 to 6, where pupils are usually well motivated and thoughtful as they listen to their teachers. While the responses of some are not well prepared and considered, towards the end of their time in the school about half the pupils can and do consider and structure their speaking. When teachers' questions are probing and interesting, pupils in Years 5 and 6 try to find the right words and engage in good discussions, as for example in a religious education lesson in which the New York atrocity was being considered. During the inspection, no drama was seen, nor any examples of formal speaking, such as debates, individual presentations, mock trials or other such opportunities to develop speaking.
89. In reading, attainment at the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 2 read to inspectors with obvious enjoyment. Higher attainers read with accuracy and fluency, even if their expression is not good. Middle attainers read appropriate texts accurately, and have a sound reserve of words which they recognise on sight. They use good strategies to decode unfamiliar words. Lower attainers tend to read words one by one, without much sense of overall meaning. Many, but not all, parents listen to their children read at home regularly.
90. The standards of reading at the end of Year 6 are also in line with national expectations. The best readers are fluent and accurate in reading quite difficult texts. They have good strategies by which they can pronounce unknown words and make a reasonable guess at what they mean. Expression is still not strong, however, and reading is often so fast that the meaning is not clear. No examples

were seen of pupils' reading aloud to standards above those expected nationally. Middle attainers show good understanding and can explain, predict and summarise satisfactorily. While their performance is below average, lower attainers are often accurate in reading appropriate texts, but the result is sometimes flat, without much attention to meaning or pauses – a kind of audible text. Many pupils keep a book 'on the go' all the time, and they speak of their reading and their favourite stories or episodes with enthusiasm and confidence.

91. In writing, attainment is broadly at the same level as national expectations across the school. In the work seen from higher attainers in Years 1 and 2, handwriting was sometimes joined up, spelling at least justifiable and mostly accurate, and full stops were correctly used. Narratives were well sequenced and – for the age of these pupils – sometimes quite prolonged. The handwriting of pupils of average attainment is inconsistent. For some it is joined, and well formed and positioned; for others it is not joined and poorly shaped, sized and placed. Stories are in a logical sequence, and there are good attempts at using interesting vocabulary. It was pleasing to note that pupils were ready to use interesting words even if they were unsure of how to spell them. The lower attainers can communicate meaning. They show a pleasure in writing, which results in some copious work, even if it is uncontrolled and spills out without stops or indeed much attention to units of meaning. Handwriting is often poorly formed and never joined.
92. Among the higher attainers at the end of Year 6, there is well-formed and joined handwriting, and words are chosen adventurously and for effect. There is some variety of sentence structure. Spelling is almost always accurate. Middle attainers produce some lively writing, showing a sense of purpose and audience. Word choice is a little simplistic and obvious – almost as pupils speak – and narratives tend to be briefer than those produced by many pupils of this age. While there is some careful work from lower attainers, some is clumsy in presentation, and full stops and capital letters may often be omitted. Spelling is usually accurate, but there is confusion about double letters. Words are chosen for effect, but from a limited reserve.
93. The quality of pupils' learning is mostly good across the school as a result of good teaching and the effective use of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils are stimulated by their own motivation, and by teachers' expectations, which place them under pressure to develop and consolidate progress. Where teaching is not so effective, pupils' will to succeed is reduced. Where the National Literacy Strategy, with its emphasis on individual and group learning and participation in evaluation, is not fully applied, the possibilities of effective learning are not fully realised. Pupils enjoy English, and respond very readily to the demands teachers make of them – particularly when they are expressed clearly, engagingly and collaboratively. They stay on task for what are often quite prolonged periods of time, especially for the younger ones. They have still fully to develop habits of independent learning and group co-operation, however, and examples of self-evaluation are rare. Behaviour is usually good, and few examples of unsatisfactory behaviour were seen. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress in line with their peers, and their progress is often good when additional support is provided for them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make at least satisfactory progress if their language development is at a stage where their speech and understanding are at least functional. As no additional support is yet provided, the progress of the very small number of pupils who are not at this stage is less secure.

94. The teaching of English is good across the school. Of the eleven lessons observed throughout the school, one was excellent, one was very good and six were good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Although some minor technical errors (particularly in spelling and the use of the apostrophe on two occasions each) were seen, teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. The National Literacy Strategy is applied satisfactorily, and in some cases extremely well. In one excellent lesson the different elements of the strategy promoted learning of a high quality, particularly in the way in which objectives were shared at the beginning, and then success was measured against these objectives at the end. In the less successful lessons, teachers did not share objectives or check success, and did not pace and time the lessons appropriately. Sometimes they ran out of time at the end, while time was wasted in the middle. Planning is usually good, though learning objectives are often not made clear. In the best lessons, planning includes appropriate work for the range of abilities in the class, but its quality is variable. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high, and most of them apply the school's agreed strategies for control. In the best lessons, the pace is so good and the content so interesting that disciplinary interventions are unnecessary. In the excellent lesson already mentioned, the quality of the teacher's questioning was so good that at every moment the pupils were driven to think, to decide, and to make progress. Marking is regular, and teachers usually make comments in pupils' books. Too much use is made of ticks and bland praise, however. Comments are not often analytical, and they rarely make helpful developmental suggestions. Such a comment as 'A good effort. Remember the punctuation' is unlikely to prove good guidance for improvement.
95. English is very well managed by a well-qualified and enthusiastic co-ordinator who provides examples of very good practice to her colleagues. She is well aware of the needs of the school and continuously seeks ways to meet its problems. She acknowledges the need to update the subject policy and to introduce new schemes of work, which take into account developments since it was produced in 1997. This should incorporate a programme to promote speaking and listening, which is not part of the National Literacy Strategy. Assessment is a developing area, and the school has identified the need to involve pupils more in measuring their own progress. Target setting for both reading and writing has been introduced to raise attainment further. The targets are more for groups than for individuals. It is too early in the school year to comment on the arrangements for setting pupils by ability in Years 3 and 4 and in Years 5 and 6.
96. Resources are good, with a useful range of big books and posters for the Literacy Hour, and sets of readers at appropriate levels. The school library contains a well-ordered collection of fiction and non-fiction. It has recently been reorganised and much out-of-date material has been removed – with the consequence that in number and variety the collection is somewhat limited. Plans are in hand to buy more books.
97. Literacy is satisfactorily promoted throughout the school. Reading and writing are extended through a variety of subjects, and teachers pay attention to subject-specific vocabulary, for example, in geography and science. Pupils are encouraged to speak about their performance in physical education. There are good opportunities for class and group discussions, though formal presentations by individuals are rare. In marking, the approach to the correction of technical errors is inconsistent between classes, subjects and teachers, and sometimes does not take place at all.

98. English makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development, particularly where the collaboration necessary for the Literacy Hour is thoroughly exploited, and deeply felt issues are discussed. Its contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also good, through their own writing and through contacts with great literature.

MATHEMATICS

99. Attainment at the end of Year 2, as measured by the national tests, has been rising since the last inspection. In 2000, the number of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was similar to the national average. When compared with similar schools, however, the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 3, was well below average. No comparisons are available yet for 2001, but the picture remains similar. There has been a steady improvement in the results obtained by Year 6 pupils until the dip in the year 2000 when the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above, was well below average. The results were similar in 2001. The fall in results can be explained by the turbulent times the school experienced which had an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning. There is evidence from the scrutiny of work of improvement in standards in the last two terms. It will take time for this to be reflected in the results achieved by pupils in national tests and standards are still not as high as they should be.
100. The standard of work seen during the inspection, in an analysis of pupils' work and observations of lessons, shows that pupils are working in line with national expectations and are covering all elements of the National Curriculum. Activities for pupils in Year 1 have an appropriate practical element to reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils throw dice and total the numbers obtained with two throws. One group of boys and girls are able to calculate the answers in their heads and go on to total three throws. The teacher gives slow, clear instructions and ensures that all pupils understand what is expected. She talks through the work with individual pupils to help them clarify their thinking. The plenary session is used effectively to reinforce learning, with the teacher using good questioning skills, which show her understanding of the varying levels of attainment of the pupils. Year 2 pupils estimate and predict the answers and know how symbols can be used for unknown numbers. They are using number lines and number squares to help them check their answers. One group of Years 3 and 4 pupils are beginning to use decimal notation for pounds and pence and learning how to use a calculator to enter sequences. Another group of Years 3 and 4 pupils work on money problems. They have a target amount of £10 and concentrate on strategies in calculation. Strategies are also being developed in the Years 5 and 6 groups, where pupils are asked to work out strategies for doubling and halving numbers, which involve three or four digits. Pupils in the higher attaining set work well in pairs to solve related word problems, although two or three groups are ready for more challenging work. Pupils are generally able to explain the processes by which they have arrived at their results and are happy and confident enough to do so.
101. Pupils make sound and consistent progress in learning throughout the school. Presentation is generally satisfactory and often good. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work and they usually settle down and keep on task, although a few find it difficult. Their behaviour sometimes distracts others, but, where teachers have a good range of behaviour management skills and they consistently apply the strategies agreed by the school, problems do not usually occur. There are examples of pupils supporting one another, as in a Year 1 class where one boy was

observed giving very clear instructions to another to help him. The noise level often tends to be rather high and this sometimes, though not always, distracts the class. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language learn and progress at the same rate as others from their varied starting points. The more able pupils are not always challenged as much as they might be. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

102. Teaching was at least satisfactory in the majority of lessons and sometimes good or even very good. The arrangements for setting by ability are working satisfactorily in Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6, but it is too soon to judge their overall impact on pupils' learning. Appropriate additional staff are available in the lower attaining sets to give the necessary further explanations and reinforcement to ensure that all pupils make at least steady progress. Planning is generally sound, though sometimes lesson objectives are not as clear as they should be and some inadequate explanations lead to pupils being uncertain as to what is expected of them. Work is always marked, but there is a lack of consistency in how work is assessed and the subsequent use of that assessment to help plan future lessons and target work to match the needs of pupils of varying abilities. The more effective lessons involved skilful question and answer sessions, which enabled teachers to probe and extend pupils' thinking by targeting questions. These build on what they have done and lead them to the next step. Sometimes more effective use could be made of support assistants to enhance the learning of individuals and groups of pupils.
103. The National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented and teachers are using it effectively. Further training sessions are planned, which will give good support to teachers who are new to the school. The mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of lessons are usually well organised and the pace is good. Little use is made of ICT to support learning, there is only limited software and teachers are generally unaware of what is available and how to use it. Teachers and pupils usually use appropriate mathematical language throughout the school and opportunities are taken in other subjects, for example science, to extend pupils' use of their mathematical knowledge.
104. The headteacher is a specialist in the subject and is acting in the role of co-ordinator. She has very good knowledge of the subject's needs and gives clear leadership. Already, in association with the local education authority, analysis of national test results has begun and extra help has been targeted to those pupils in need. Clear priorities have been set to improve standards and to raise the achievement of more able pupils. Target setting has begun for individual pupils so that they have clear goals towards which to work. These initiatives need further development and a more consistent application by all teachers to ensure that all pupils make as much progress as they can.
105. Resources are satisfactory and are improving. Following discussions with staff a new commercial scheme is being introduced to run alongside one already in use. This is so far only available at the top end of the school and it is too soon to evaluate its impact. It should be available throughout the school by the end of this term. Satisfactory use is made of the resources.
106. Given the difficulties and changes it has faced during the past few years, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

107. Pupils' results in science tests for eleven year olds in 2001 were an improvement over those in 2000. A greater percentage of pupils achieved at the level expected for most eleven year olds, Level 4, and there was a good improvement in the number of pupils achieving at the higher level, Level 5. This would indicate that the school has recovered from the dip in 2000, when the results were well below the national average and well below those of similar schools. In teachers' assessment of the performance of seven year olds in 2001, the number of pupils achieving at the expected level, Level 2, was similar to that of 2000. A smaller percentage of pupils achieved at the higher level, Level 3. This would suggest that results were not as good as in 2000, when attainment was very high and all pupils reached the expected level, with the percentage achieving the higher level close to the national average. It could also reflect more accurate teachers' assessments.
108. The improved results for 2001 at the end of Year 6 is a reflection of the good quality of the work seen in pupils' books for the period 2000-2001, and the broad and balanced curriculum which is offered. Staff managed to maintain good learning and a lively interest in the subject despite the difficulties within the school. There is evidence of good support for those pupils of lower ability, pupils in the early stages of acquiring English and those with special educational needs, so that no pupil achieved below Level 3. There are similarly good standards of work seen in the books for pupils in Years 1 and 2, with a number of pupils achieving at a high level. Boys performed significantly less well than girls, although this was not a feature of the lessons seen.
109. Across the school, teachers plan for a good balance between all aspects of the curriculum, to ensure that pupils gain a sound knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. Most teachers develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills well through well-planned tasks and investigations. By the age of eleven, most pupils clearly understand the principles of fair testing. In discussion, Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic in talking about the experiments they had carried out, especially when they had tested materials for fire resistance using a 'sand tin'. They gave a good description of how they had carried out the test. Evidence in the work of younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 shows that they have experimented to find out, for example, how different surfaces affect the movement of vehicles. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were seen conducting experiments to discover the strength of different magnets. They enjoyed investigating how many paper clips or split pins could be attracted to the magnets, and were amazed at the cluster of golden split pins attached to the strongest one. Pupils in this lesson, and its follow up, showed good scientific knowledge, using correct terminology such as 'attract' and 'repel'. They planned their own experiments, and could successfully predict, measure and demonstrate their investigations. Evidence in books shows that, across the school, pupils know how to present information and to set out experiments correctly, predicting results and drawing conclusions. Computers are under-used to record experiments, to process and record data and to carry out research.
110. From an early age, pupils gain a sound knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about themselves and their senses, and they draw and label the parts of plants and flowers. In one lesson, they share what they know about how fruit grows. They taste and describe the different fruits, and learn about how the apple pip grows into a tree. In Year 2,

they explore the outside environment to discover animal habitats, and know, for example, that hedgehogs live in the grass because “there is lots of grass and leaves to make a home.” Evidence from work in health education books shows that pupils in the upper part of the school learn about their bodies and have studied the human skeleton.

111. Throughout the school pupils make sound progress in understanding materials and their properties. Younger children learn about how materials can be changed by heating. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 talked about experiments they had conducted involving dissolving and filtering. During the inspection, Years 5 and 6 pupils visited the local secondary school to participate in an experiment to predict the heat of a candle placed in different conditions. Evidence in books shows that pupils have looked at the properties of different materials, the effects of evaporation and how materials can be changed by heating and cooling. In a design and technology lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils, pupils study bread. They know what it is made of and how yeast is used to make bread rise.
112. Across the school, pupils make good progress in understanding physical processes. From work seen in books, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about domestic appliances that use electricity. They make simple circuits. They learn how different surfaces can affect movement, and they know “the sun makes you warm”. In Year 1, pupils identify different sounds and their sources: “I have done a lion and a lion does make a noise!” Older pupils develop their understanding of electrical circuits satisfactorily, although the lack of labelling in their books makes it difficult to understand how these circuits function. Years 3 and 4 pupils use source books to plan their own effective experiments to test the strength of different magnets. For example, one group decides to see how far different magnets can pull a pin along the side of a ruler. In Years 5 and 6, pupils learn about the movement of the Earth and Moon, and the relationship between the Earth, Moon and Sun. Most understand well the period of time taken for the orbits.
113. Pupils enjoy science and most are keen learners, and they approach experimenting with interest and enthusiasm. In some lessons pupils become noisy and fail to listen to the teacher or to each other. Where this is not managed well, the behaviour of some pupils impedes the progress of others. The subject is used well to develop pupils’ literacy skills and throughout the school the quality of written work is satisfactory and often good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Usually work is well presented and well organised, with experiments recorded through appropriate diagrams, graphs and charts.
114. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Planning across the mixed age year groups is satisfactory, so that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Where there are shortcomings, the lesson plans tend to focus on the activity, rather than the skills and knowledge to be acquired, so that, where teachers are less secure in the subject, the focus of the lesson is not always clear. Teachers generally introduce the subject well, enabling pupils to share their knowledge by framing their questions so that pupils are encouraged to participate. Most teachers give clear instructions and explanations. They have prepared resources so that pupils can work well independently on their experiments. Learning support assistants give sound aid to pupils of lower ability, to those with special educational needs and to the few pupils in the early stages of acquiring English. Where they are not present to give support, these pupils are less successful in completing written tasks. In the one excellent lesson, pupils made

very good progress because the lesson was very well structured to build up pupils' knowledge and understanding. There was an appropriate emphasis on correct scientific terminology. The teacher used excellent questions that probed pupils to be clear about what they wanted to find out in the experiment with magnets, and to ensure what they planned was a fair test. In the two unsatisfactory lessons, an inconsistent approach to addressing the level of noise in the classes, or the poor behaviour of some pupils, meant that pupils did not achieve as much as they could. In one lesson the teacher failed to ensure that pupils fully understood the work they were to do, or to stop them to re-focus them on the task. In the other, the teacher failed to maintain interest because the pace of the lesson was too slow, and so the interest of pupils, especially those of higher ability was not sustained and they did not learn as well as they might. There were missed opportunities to develop pupils' independent writing because they were encouraged to copy from the board.

115. Currently, there is no co-ordinator. The previous co-ordinator, who left in July, was experienced and had successfully managed the transition to a scheme of work based on national guidance. She ensured that resources were appropriate for the different topics. Monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and standards across the school is not yet in place to ensure that all teachers are knowledgeable and confident in teaching the subject. Procedures for assessment are based on a test at the completion of a unit of work; the information obtained is not being used well enough to guide planning, especially to ensure that the more able pupils are given sufficient challenge. Good use is made of opportunities to extend pupils' learning through activities outside school. Years 3 and 4 pupils have visited the Science Museum in London and Years 5 and 6 pupils make regular visits to the local secondary school for science lessons in the laboratory.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Only one lesson of art was observed. The organisation of the curriculum means that most classes were focusing on lessons in design and technology. For this reason, and at this early stage of the school year, no overall judgement can be made on standards in art. From a scrutiny of work and displays around the school, it would appear that standards in art at the start of Year 6 and Year 2 are as expected nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 was judged to be below national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
117. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experience of a variety of media and styles. They use paints to make bright, colourful illustrations to the stories they have heard. They make illustrations for their own stories using a painting program on the computer. There are good examples of patterns made using different material for printing. Pupils in Year 1 use wax and chalk crayons to design puppets. There are examples of effective close observational drawings of flowers and plants in sketchbooks, as well as careful observations of the old school building showing the patterns of windows, doors and brickwork. Pupils produce artefacts using clay and other malleable materials.
118. The skills acquired in the lower part of the school are satisfactorily built on throughout Years 3 to 6. In the one lesson seen, pupils were stimulated by examples of the work of different artists, such as Paula Rega, to make figurative

drawings showing movement. The results showed that pupils had thought carefully about how to show movement, for example, a footballer kicking a ball, a girl diving, and a speed cyclist. Use of a variety of media is successful in giving the idea of movement, and pupils have smudged and blurred the images to show speed and direction of movement. In displays around the school, there are successful sketches of village houses, showing a satisfactory attention to perspective. The school landscape provides the stimulus for some bold confident drawings using chalk and wax crayons. Sketchbooks are used well for close observation drawings of a variety of objects as well as for practising the shading skills. There are satisfactory examples of the work of major artists used to stimulate drawings and paintings, such as the reproduction of a part of the landscape from paintings by Van Gogh and Monet.

119. In the one lesson seen, pupils enjoyed their art lesson and the majority tried hard to achieve work of satisfactory quality. They co-operated satisfactorily and appreciated each other's work.
120. Teachers ensure that pupils are provided with a broad experience of art and design. Displays and work in the art portfolio show that teachers provide opportunities for imaginative and creative work, ensuring that skills are taught, refined and developed. Sketchbooks have been successfully introduced and are used well, particularly in the lower part of the school.
121. Currently the post of co-ordinator is vacant. The scheme of work is based on national guidance. Resources are satisfactory for pupils to experience a full range of media. From time to time parents contribute to art lessons and, in recent years, the school has contributed artwork to a village festival. The work of western artists is adequately represented. Paintings and artefacts that represent non-western cultures are under-represented. There have been no recent visits to art galleries, or opportunities to explore the work of local artists and crafts-people.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain in line with age related expectations for pupils at age eleven. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2. From a scrutiny of pupils' work it would appear that standards at the start of Year 2 are broadly as expected nationally.
123. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress throughout the school. This is because teachers have secure subject knowledge and they plan challenging work that enables pupils to develop skills well. Teachers plan for a good balance between design and making skills. Pupils enjoy their lessons. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 talked enthusiastically about making slippers and how they had to measure their feet so that the slippers fitted. In addition, pupils had to search for ways to ensure the slippers would not slide on smooth surfaces. Pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of acquiring English are given appropriate support.
124. From an early age pupils learn design skills well and new learning builds on what pupils already know. Pupils in the lower part of the school make moving vehicles from recycled material, making simple plans of the construction. They cut and join successfully to make realistic models. They plan their designs for puppets. Pupils

extend their design skills successfully as they progress through the school. Years 3 and 4 pupils plan how they will make a 'mummy in a coffin' and how to make a toy that moves with a pump. These skills are developed further so that older pupils make plans for making a moving toy, recording the materials and measurements needed and the process of making the toy. There is evidence that pupils prepare plans at home, such as the process for making a shelter suitable for the bottom of the playground. In the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6, pupils were designing food for a Fast Food Outlet. The work produced shows some imaginative and creative ideas, such as The Twisterwrap meal, in a twisted foil wrapping. Pupils consider the implications of cost and quality. There is good evidence that pupils evaluate the finished products and ensure that they are suitable for the purpose they are designed for.

125. Pupils have sufficient opportunities to work with a range of materials, including food. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are working on a topic in which they will visit a bakery and later make bread. In the lessons observed they tasted different kinds of bread and classified it according to country of origin, smell, taste, and appearance. They enjoyed the experience and, for example, recorded that "The Naan bread tastes peppery"; "The multi-seeded bread smells like fruit". In a later session, in which pupils fed back on the experience, the teacher successfully elicited from pupils the stages of preparation for making bread, which showed that pupils understood the need for hygiene, and also knew the basic ingredients of bread. Evidence in their technology books shows that pupils have made moving toys using doweling rods to make a cam shaft and, in discussion, pupils told how they made a battery-operated vehicle which could go forward and backward.
126. Pupils in discussion said that they enjoyed design and technology because "It's fun." They enjoy making things and concentrate well and work hard at their tasks. On occasions, in their enthusiasm, the noise level grows but most of the talk is relevant to the task and there is generally good quality discussion between pupils.
127. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. Teachers demonstrate an enthusiasm for the subject. They have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to develop key designing and making skills. They are careful to promote health requirements when handling food. Resources are well organised and used effectively to support learning. Questioning is good and is used skilfully to develop pupils' thinking and to generate ideas. Often work is linked in a meaningful way to other areas of the curriculum, especially science, so that, for example, pupils designing fast food demonstrate that they understand how to ensure the menu is balanced and healthy. Demonstration is used well to guide pupils in making the products and teachers provide pupils with good instructions. Where there are shortcomings, pupils are not prepared well enough to work independently. Learning support assistants are used successfully to help pupils who may have difficulties in making products or in recording their work.
128. Currently the post of co-ordinator is vacant. The previous co-ordinator successfully managed the transition to the new scheme of work based on national guidance. There are currently no formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in the subject. Resources are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

129. Standards of attainment are at the levels expected nationally and this has not changed from the last inspection.
130. The scrutiny of work indicates that all pupils, including those with special educational need and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils in Year 1 make satisfactory gains in geographic knowledge and skills. They also make steady progress in their spiritual development and good progress in their moral development when they show their concerns for the environment, and by knowing it is they who must protect it. They illustrate this by drawing posters with titles such as, "We must look after our school and look after the world". Pupils in Year 2 know how seasons affect the weather and, as a result, when people go on holiday. This makes good links with their history topic of comparing seaside holidays now with those of a hundred years ago. They show satisfactory progress in learning when they compare the lives of local residents of seaside resorts to those of holidaymakers. They use maps with simple keys and grids and begin to use appropriate geographical language.
131. Years 3 and 4 pupils show satisfactory progress in developing their mapping skills and they find a route from Rainham and the place they compare it with, the Derbyshire village of Stanton-in-Peak. They use Ordnance Survey maps successfully. Good use is made of visits to the local area to support pupils' learning about social issues and of geographical issues. In Year 5 they know that roads, parks, housing and new shopping centres, such as Lakeside, have to be planned for, and that they can have positive and negative impact on the environment. They make good links with science when they study water, the water cycle and sources of water. They know that water must be conserved and estimate the amount of water a family would use. Year 6 pupils learn about the source of the local River Ingrebourne and its route to the River Thames.
132. Pupils show satisfactory knowledge of areas beyond the UK, and make good progress in their cultural and social development when they compare Rainham with the Caribbean island of St. Lucia and the Indian village of Chembakoli. A range of visits within the local community and beyond further aids pupils' cultural and social development and geographical understanding.
133. Pupils show a good level of interest in the work they do. Teaching standards are satisfactory overall with examples of good and unsatisfactory lessons observed. In the good lesson, the teacher set clear learning objectives to extend pupils' knowledge of a contrasting area, which successfully built on a previous lesson that had used a video. Support staff were used well to help different ability groups within the class. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory the pace of the lesson was slow, learning aims were vague and pupils poorly managed and insufficiently challenged. Resources for geography are satisfactory, although levels of information, ICT resources, and the use of them to aid pupils' learning, are unsatisfactory.
134. The co-ordination of geography has declined since the last inspection and it is now unsatisfactory. There is no current policy and the use of the recently introduced Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work from which teachers plan their lessons is not monitored. Assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent and it does not give a clear indication of what pupils know and understand and what they have to learn next.

HISTORY

135. Only one lesson was seen and judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' past work and discussions with pupils and teachers. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards at the end of Years 2 and 6, and standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
136. History makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development, for example by studying the Ancient Greeks. One pupil expresses a moral standpoint when he writes, "I think slavery is wrong because all people are equal and why should some be treated differently?" They study Greek words and know some of the English words that incorporate Greek.
137. In Years 1 and 2, work is carefully planned to help pupils develop an understanding of chronology and of famous people and events in the past. In Year 1, pupils learn about old and new, and a study of toys helps them understand some of the differences that have occurred over time. Year 2 pupils know about famous people such as Florence Nightingale. One pupil, writing about what makes people famous wrote, "I think David Ginola is famous because he plays football and scores most of the goals for Tottenham Hotspur. He might play for Aston Villa." Pupils satisfactorily reinforce their sense of chronology when they place the events of the Fire of London in sequence on a time line. They make good links with geography when studying holidays today and comparing them to those in 1900.
138. Years 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate satisfactory gains in learning when they study Britain since 1930. They have a clear insight into what it was like during the Blitz and how Havering was affected, what it was like to be an evacuee and how families had to cope with food rationing. One teacher satisfactorily extended pupils' use of language by explaining words like 'evacuation' and 'impending'. Pupils were able to tell which countries fought on the side of the Allies and those of the Axis. One pupil showed good understanding when he explained that Rainham might have been a target for bombing because of the presence of a munitions factory, and that the River Thames made an easy route for enemy bombers to follow.
139. Good use is made of visits and visitors to the school to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respond well to opportunities for them to learn through practical experiences. Pupils' empathy with the hardships experienced was clearly reinforced by a visit to the Imperial War Museum and by visitors to the school who talked about life during World War Two. Pupils also visit Colchester Castle to study the Romans and to the Museum of Childhood to study toys. Theatre groups allow pupils to learn about the Fire of London and the Victorians.
140. The one lesson seen was very good. The work scrutiny indicates that pupils show enthusiasm and interest in the subject and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar steady progress to their peers. Teachers do not always plan for the full range of abilities within the class, and some of the worksheets used during lessons do not sufficiently challenge pupils. The use of ICT to develop pupils' research and study skills is under-developed.

141. The co-ordination is unsatisfactory. The outdated policy has not been revised and there is no monitoring of the implementation of the new scheme of work, which needs customising to both the school and the locality. Assessment procedures are not well developed. Resources are currently satisfactory and include a small collection of artefacts. They are stored securely but not all teachers are aware of the range available. The level of resources will need monitoring to ensure that they meet the needs of the recently adopted scheme of work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

142. The last inspection report stated that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was in line with expectations and below expectations at the end of Year 6. Current inspection findings are that pupils throughout the school are not reaching the standards expected. National expectations in the use and application of ICT have risen significantly over the last few years, but at the same time the subject received very little attention within the school. The school is now taking clear steps to address the deficiencies. It will take some time to bring about the necessary improvement in standards, especially in the upper part of the school. Pupils are now making steady progress in lessons, which are regularly timetabled for each class in the new ICT suite.
143. Several factors have contributed to the unsatisfactory standards achieved:
- staff have not yet undergone the New Opportunities Funded training and, overall, their level of expertise is not adequate for them to teach the required skills confidently or for them to use ICT across the curriculum;
 - until recently there were few new computers in the school, which made it difficult to meet the demands of the curriculum;
 - the mixture of computers in the new ICT suite and also across the school, makes it more difficult for staff and pupils to become familiar with the resources available;
 - there is an adequate amount of basic software, for example for word processing, drawing and data handling to support the ICT curriculum, but there is a lack of programs for use in other subjects;
 - until this term, insufficient time has been allocated to allow pupils to gain and consolidate the necessary skills;
 - access to the Internet is limited to the ICT suite, it is currently underused and pupils are not carrying out enough independent research;
 - teachers' planning contains very little reference to the use of ICT;
 - there was insufficient curriculum guidance for teachers and this has now been addressed with the purchase of a commercial scheme;
 - there has been a lack of monitoring of teaching and learning, or even of planning, to assess standards or highlight areas for improvement.
144. In the nursery and reception classes, children gain confidence in using ICT. They interact with simple software such as 'My World', they become familiar with the keyboard and keys, such as the space bar and delete, and they operate programs successfully using the mouse. In Years 1 and 2, this is extended through the use of word-processing and drawing programs. Pupils write their own stories or record their 'news' and add pictures to illustrate what they have written. They use appropriate keys to generate capital letters and full stops and they deploy the space bar correctly. They have satisfactory keyboard skills for their age and are gaining some familiarity with relevant vocabulary such as 'font', 'delete', 'space bar' and 'text'. There is no evidence, however, of pupils using ICT for entering data in order to make graphs or of searching a simple database, such as on a CD-ROM, to access information in connection with other curriculum areas.
145. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend their knowledge of a drawing program and learn how to change the width of the brush stroke. They then experiment with the technique to make a picture of their own after looking at examples of paintings by Monet. The results are variable and illustrate very clearly the more advanced skills of pupils who have computers at home compared to those who do not. In Years 5 and 6, pupils

use the shapes available in the drawing program to make a picture of their own in the style of Ben Nicolson. Again there are very clear differences between the levels of confidence and attainment of pupils who have used similar programs at home and those who have not. With support from the teacher and support staff, all pupils learn to colour, resize and rotate their selected shapes and most complete the task satisfactorily. Pupils have just been given their own disks and, at the end of the session, they save their work onto the disks and print out a copy. In the work sample, which was saved to illustrate the work completed last year, there were very few examples of work that had been completed with the aid of computers. The work was limited to word-processed text, with some added illustrations, and the skills illustrated in the layout of the text were very limited. There were no examples of the use of ICT to find out information, to handle data or to control devices.

146. Pupils are keen to use the computers and to show the work they have produced. They treat the equipment with respect. Pupils willingly share their knowledge and help each other. Most readily share and take turns when working with a partner. Ten Year 6 pupils, both boys and girls, have joined the after-school computer club and they are eagerly planning a school newspaper.
147. In the four lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, with most pupils making steady gains in learning. Teachers often have to start at a level below that expected of pupils of a similar age and the pace of pupils' learning needs to be increased to raise standards to the levels required. There was evidence of a lack of teacher's subject knowledge, for example of how programs operate and the use of subject-specific vocabulary. Support staff are used well to help individual pupils and small groups of pupils who need additional explanations or repeated reminders of the behaviour expected. Given the standards within the school, and considering the generally slow progress of pupils over time, the overall quality of provision for pupils' learning is judged to be unsatisfactory, with some signs of improvement. Teachers are being trained through the New Opportunities Funded training from September 2001 and this should help to raise their knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinators have been active in giving support to teachers and in the setting up of the new ICT suite. All teachers are now taking their classes into the suite and they are following a scheme of work to ensure that skills are steadily introduced. There is no formal monitoring of teaching or planning.
148. Resources in the school have improved recently. The variety of computers in use within the school places additional demands on teachers' expertise from the point of view of familiarity and knowledge of relevant software. The computers in the classrooms are old and this limits opportunities for teachers to use them for activities across the curriculum other than for simple word processing. There is insufficient software to support the use of ICT fully in other subjects and teachers' planning does not include reference to the use of ICT, for example, for research.
149. This term the school has started to use a commercial scheme to support teachers' planning and to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately covered. However, teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of the activities to enable them to adapt and extend the lessons when necessary to take account of the resources available, pupils' skills, and the opportunity to link the activities with other subjects. For example, two of the lessons seen provided good opportunities for links with artwork, but this was not included in teachers' planning. The school does not yet have well-established assessment procedures to record pupils' skills and understanding. This is an important omission as staff need to know the level of pupils' skills to enable

them to target new learning appropriately. With mixed age classes there is a need to ensure that activities are not repeated unless it is necessary.

MUSIC

150. In the last inspection, standards in music were judged as satisfactory and teaching as sound. Only two lessons were seen in this inspection and one of them was not typical for the school. As a result, no overall judgements are made of attainment or teaching.
151. The general picture regarding music is of a subject in need of strategies to revitalise it. Some of these are in place and more are intended. There is no co-ordinator in post due to staff turnover, although the deputy headteacher has oversight. Currently, the programme of teaching followed in Years 3 to 6 is that provided by the local education authority, and the need for the school to produce its own scheme of work and policy is acknowledged.
152. Good use is being made of a well-qualified music teacher in the lower part of the school, provided by the local education authority's music services for one half day a week. His brief is to focus mainly upon the improvement of singing, and he does not follow the established scheme of work.
153. In the lessons and assemblies observed, pupils showed an enjoyment of music. They sang pieces that they knew tunefully and with confidence. They were more hesitant with unfamiliar pieces. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have some difficulty in repeating simple rhythmic patterns. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed good understanding of the relationship between music and mood, but they found listening to extracts longer than a few minutes very demanding.
154. The teaching observed was good, with the music specialist making very good use of his expertise, and the class teacher communicating her enthusiasm in a very lively and contagious way.
155. Music resources are satisfactory, though limited mainly to percussion and one-note tuned instruments: there is a need for more xylophones and/or glockenspiels. There is a plan for a musical dramatic production at Christmas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. The full breadth of the physical education programme was not observed during the inspection but the range seen confirmed that the satisfactory standards attained at the time of the last inspection have been maintained
157. Pupils in a Years 1 and 2 class know how to warm up in a very controlled way before exercise. They learn to roll a ball and catch it whilst it is still moving and co-operate well with each other when carrying out the activities. The teacher extends the use of pupils' language very well with full explanations of words such as 'opposite' and 'adjacent'. Pupils are clear as to what they have to do, they respond well to the teacher's instructions and she allows them the chance to comment on the good progress they have made during the lesson.
158. In a good gymnastics lesson, Years 5 and 6 pupils showed that they knew why they warm up before exercise and why they need to cool down afterwards. During the

lesson pupils practised and developed a sequence of jumps with clear body flight and turning in the air. Pupils responded well to the good use the teacher made of praise. The appropriate support she gave during the lesson helped pupils to improve their performance and to make good progress. The standard of teaching seen ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Where it was unsatisfactory, pupils took too long to change and some became restless whilst waiting for their classmates to get ready. Insufficient time was then available for the lesson as planned and, as a result, progress was unsatisfactory. Where teaching was good, pupils did their best and worked with enthusiasm. The teacher maintained a brisk pace to the lesson and pupils had a clear focus on what skills they must improve. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress to their peers because of appropriate teaching and suitable support from other pupils.

159. The school makes very good provision for swimming. It has its own recently refurbished learner pool and children in the reception class and all pupils in Years 1 to 4 have regular swimming lessons in it throughout the year. These are arranged for groups of about eight pupils. Lessons are taught well by the swimming instructor, together with appropriate adult help. Some parents help pupils with changing before and after lessons. Hygiene and safety are both impressed upon all pupils. A group of Years 3 and 4 pupils used the pool confidently and with obvious enthusiasm. They worked hard during the session and they made good progress in improving their swimming techniques. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 walk to the local secondary school for their swimming lessons. Their achievements are recognised in assembly with awards of swimming certificates. By careful timetabling arrangements, the school ensures that pupils who are withdrawn for swimming do not miss out on the work of the rest of the class.
160. Teachers, the site manager, other support staff and parents provide a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities to widen pupils' opportunities to participate in physical activities. Football and netball matches are played against other schools and both boys and girls are encouraged to take part in the teams. These activities make a good contribution to pupils' social development because they are able to meet pupils from other classes.
161. Due to staff changes, there is currently no co-ordinator. However, a new member of staff is keen to take over the role. She has plans to revise the outdated policy and, following consultations with colleagues, to adopt a scheme of work to match the needs of all the pupils and to develop a systematic method of assessing pupils' learning and progress.
162. Resources are good and the school makes satisfactory use of its accommodation and staff. In addition to the swimming pool there are two halls, a hard play area with various pitches marked out and a large separate games field currently marked out with football pitches. Entrance to the field is across a small bridge and the site is totally secure. Groups from the community make good use of the field at weekends. The range of small equipment for physical education is good; it is well stored and easily accessible to teachers and pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

163. The school follows the Havering Agreed Syllabus and pupils' levels of attainment, at ages seven and eleven, are generally in line with those expected. Pupils have positive attitudes to religious education and show a genuine desire to learn. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are good. Lessons observed, and a scrutiny of samples of pupils' work throughout the school, show steady learning, with pupils making satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
164. Teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to excellent and was satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator prepares the main planning and the better lessons use these plans and adapt them to the needs of individual classes. There was evidence of lack of subject knowledge by some teachers and some lesson plans lacked detail. Both limited pupils' learning within lessons and prevented it being more than satisfactory.
165. Teachers make good use of resources to add interest to lessons and focus pupils' attention. Year 2 pupils were seen looking at special books. The class teacher showed some books from her own childhood that she considered 'precious' and some children had brought in their own special books. Pupils were encouraged to think carefully about what they and others felt important and there was some quite sophisticated reflection on, "How would you feel if...?" Small groups were looking at and talking very sensibly, very quietly but quite excitedly about the different books, and pupils were explaining why they were special. This was one of a series of lessons leading to a study of special 'religious' books. A mixed Year 3 and 4 class was observed looking at Judaism. The pupils were very excited by the artefacts the teacher was showing and there were some interesting discussions as to what made the Torah important and what the Tallith or prayer shawl was for. One group was fascinated to learn that the scrolls were often written on goatskin or sheepskin and reported that back to the class. Year 5 and 6 pupils were looking at Christianity and considering what different people think about Jesus. A pre-prepared tape and a letter brought in by the teacher were listened to with interest as through them two people answered the question, "Who Jesus is for me". They gave a good opportunity to extend pupils' speaking skills by stimulating some perceptive discussion on how various people can believe different things but still all be Christians.
166. Interesting displays around the school show the quality of some of the work and that pupils' work is valued. A colourful display on Sikhism included costumes provided by parents, illustrating good use of the wider school community. Good use is made of visits to local places of worship, including trips to a Sikh Gurdwara, a Jewish synagogue and a Muslim mosque, to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths.
167. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She is knowledgeable and has a clear grasp of the subject and its needs, with a clear vision of what she wants to do. No time is available for her to monitor planning and teaching effectively. Resources are good. They are stored well and catalogued, with everything clearly labelled and easily accessible to all staff.
168. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. It helps them learn about different religions and celebrations from around the world and to respect the feelings and beliefs of others.

