

INSPECTION REPORT

**LITTLE WALTHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115175

Acting headteacher: Mrs P Carroll

Reporting inspector: Mr Godfrey Bancroft
OFSTED number: 3687

Dates of inspection: 3 – 5 December 2001

Inspection number: 193312

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Street Little Waltham Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM3 3NY
Telephone number:	01245 360246
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Rudge
Date of previous inspection:	14 – 17 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3687	Godfrey Bancroft	Registered inspector	English Music Physical education	Foundation stage What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19897	Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8552	Wallis Hart	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves the village community of Little Waltham to the north of Chelmsford in Essex. Pupils are mostly from the village. However, some are from outside the area served traditionally by the school. A number of pupils from the nearby Traveller community attend the school. The area is socially mixed with a variety of private and local authority housing. There are 137 pupils on roll. The number of pupils on roll has risen rapidly in recent years. Children are admitted in the term before their fifth birthday. Their attainment on entry is below that expected. All classes contain pupils from more than one year group. Almost a quarter of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is broadly similar to other schools. One pupil has a Statement of special educational need. There is also one pupil for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in which pupils attain standards in many subjects that are above average and exceed national expectations. Pupils achieve well, benefiting greatly from good teaching. The leadership and management provided by the governing body and the acting headteacher are very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, science, and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are above average. Standards in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education exceed expectations.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and behave well.
- The leadership and management of the governing body and the acting headteacher are very good.
- The curriculum provided and the effective inclusion of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are good.

What could be improved

- Standards attained by children in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Attendance.

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 April 1997. Improvement since then is satisfactory. Standards have risen significantly in many subjects. The quality of planning and the provision for schemes of work is improved. However, standards in the Foundation Stage and in mathematics by the end of Year 2 have not improved sufficiently.

STANDARDS

The number of pupils (ten) who sat the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the age of eleven was too small to make national comparisons realistic, so these data are not published.

The inspection judges standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science to be above average by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2 standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are average. Science is above average and mathematics below average.

By the end of Year 6 standards in art and design, design and technology, ICT, music and physical education exceed expectations. Standards in geography and history are close to those expected.

Progress during the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, by the end of the Foundation Stage standards remain below those expected. Results show the performance of pupils improves significantly between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, those from the Traveller community and higher attaining pupils make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes and lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well with each other and with the staff. Pupils are very good at taking initiatives and responsibilities.
Attendance	Poor. Well below average.

Pupils respond well, taking part in lessons and other activities with enthusiasm. The poor attendance is because of the frequent non-attendance of pupils from a small number of families. The school is doing everything it can to ensure pupils attend.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good and the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. There is some excellent teaching in literacy in Year 3.

Teachers are good at explaining to pupils what they expect them to learn. They also provide good opportunities for pupils to evaluate how well they have learned. This helps pupils to understand how well they are making progress and what they need to do to become even better. Teachers provide their pupils with an interesting range of activities. This helps to motivate pupils to learn. Teachers also manage their pupils well. The exception to this is during the Foundation Stage when children sometimes lose interest and concentration. This prevents them from attaining standards that are high enough.

Teachers and learning assistants support all pupils effectively, particularly the lower attaining and those with special educational needs. Teachers also challenge effectively the higher attaining pupils. They ensure successfully that pupils of differing abilities and those from minority groups, such as the Traveller pupils, are included appropriately in all aspects of the provision for their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The school is successful at including all pupils in all aspects of the provision it makes for their learning.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils receive very good support from the special educational needs co-ordinator and from learning support assistants.
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Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils are included effectively in all aspects of provision for their learning and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and social education is very good. Provision for their moral development is good and that for their cultural development is satisfactory. Not enough is done to make pupils aware of the culturally diverse nature of Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Procedures for ensuring good behaviour and for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good.

The school's links with parents are good. The information the school provides for parents about the life of the school and about the progress their children are making is good. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and the contribution they make to their children's learning are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The acting headteacher sets a clear educational direction. Subject co-ordinators work effectively to raise standards. The office manager and her colleagues make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. There is a high level of shared commitment to improvement across the school's staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The chairperson works very effectively with the acting headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school evaluates its performance effectively. There is a well-structured school development plan responding to the areas identified for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The effect of the resources generated to develop the accommodation on the quality of education is outstanding.

The resources allocated for the provision of additional learning support assistants contribute significantly to the standards achieved by pupils. The school's application of the principles of best value is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like the school. • Children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how well their children are getting on. • The amount of homework their children receive. • The provision of activities outside lessons. • The degree to which the school works closely with parents.

Inspectors endorse parents' positive views of the school and those features they are most pleased with. Reports to parents about how well their children are getting on are satisfactory. However, the governing body are aware that parents would like more information and are currently researching ways of providing this. The amount of homework pupils receive is appropriate. The provision of activities outside lessons is good, particularly for a school of this size. Inspectors feel that the school works very closely with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage, as shown by tests administered shortly after they begin school, is below that expected for their age. For some areas of their learning it is well below that expected. Overall, children make satisfactory progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. However, by the end of this stage their attainment remains below that expected in some important areas of their learning. This is mainly because the approaches teachers use to support children's personal, social and emotional development are not applied consistently. Pupils make good progress in most subjects during Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 their attainment in several subjects is above the national average and exceeds that expected for their age. Pupils make very good progress in Years 3 and 4. This is because they receive very good and sometimes excellent teaching. This provision and the progress pupils make is sustained during Years 5 and 6 and by the end of Year 6 standards in many subjects are above average and exceed expectations.
2. The low number of pupils in each year group affects the school's national test results. Sometimes the impact of this on the percentage scores can be considerable. The results of tests over the period from 1998 to 2000 shows attainment by the end of Year 2 to be below average in writing and mathematics. Attainment in reading was above average in 1998 and 1999. However, standards in reading fell in 2000 and were below average. Over the same period of time attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 was below and sometimes well below average. The most recent test results, 2001, show significant improvements. This is mainly attributable to the successful introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. By the end of Year 2 attainment in reading and writing is well above average. However, that for mathematics remains below average. This is because pupil's attainment in mathematics on entry to the school was lower than that for English. The 2001 results for the end of Year 6 show attainment in English and mathematics to be well above average and that for science average. When compared with results for similar schools standards are above average in everything with the exception of mathematics by the end of Year 2.
3. The school sets appropriate targets for attainment. These were met in 2001, with the exception of those set for attainment mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, this difference represents the attainment of one pupil because of the small number of pupils taking the test.
4. The table below shows attainment in the most recent national tests and the inspection judgements for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

	National tests 2001 compared with all schools	National tests 2001 compared with similar schools	Inspection judgements
Reading	Above average	Well above average	Close to the average
Writing	Well above average	Well above average	Close to the average
Mathematics	Close to the average	Below average	Below average

5. The table below shows attainment in the most recent national tests and the inspection judgements for English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

	National tests 2001 compared with all schools	National tests 2001 compared with similar schools	Inspection judgements
English	Well above average	Very high	Above average
Mathematics	Above average	Above average	Above average
Science	Close to the average	Above average	Above average

6. The inspection judges attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing to be close to that expected by the end of Year 2. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. However, they are making good progress and are achieving well for their abilities. This is because they receive good teaching and show good attitudes to their learning. They are supported well by their teachers and learning support assistants and benefit from the effective application of the principles of the National Literacy Strategy. By the end of Year 6 high standards are evident in all aspects of English. These pupils benefit from very good teaching. Many are eager readers and they respond well to the stimulus provided by poetry to inspire their own writing and the analysis of the writing of well known authors.
7. In mathematics attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. This is because pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive. By the end of Year 2 standards remain below average. However, improvement is evident with the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy contributing gradually to rising standards in oral and mental mathematics. In science attainment is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The good opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to undertake scientific investigations makes a significant contribution to these high standards.
8. Pupils with special educational needs, those from the Traveller community and higher attaining pupils all make good progress. This is because the work set for them is matched well to their needs and abilities. They are included effectively in all aspects of provision. Test results over recent years indicate that boys attain higher standards than girls in English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings show no significant difference between the standards currently attained by boys and girls. The one pupils with English as an additional language speaks English fluently.
9. The following table shows standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

	By the end of Year 2	By the end of Year 6
Art and design	Above the level expected	Above the expected level
Design and technology	Above the level expected	Above the expected level
Geography	At the level expected	At the expected level
History	At the level expected	At the expected level
Information and Communication technology	Above the expected level	Above the expected level
Music	Above the expected level	Above the expected level
Physical education	Above the expected level	Above the expected level

10. With the exceptions of geography and history standards by the end of years 2 and 6 exceed those expected in all subjects. High standards in information and communication technology, music and physical education are achieved because of good teaching. This is enhanced by the very good use made of the additional specialist support the school buys in for these subjects. The very good use of the computer suite also contributes to high standards in information and communication technology, but not enough use is made of the available computers when lessons are not taught in the suite.
11. Teachers make effective use of opportunities to teach literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics. Consequently standards in these areas of learning are high by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The pupils enjoy coming to school and talk positively about it. In lessons, they are very eager to answer and to join in discussions. Most of them work hard and are keen to learn. Many pupils in Class 3 were sorry to see the end of a mathematics lesson. A pupil with special educational needs in the same class, who had problems with her work the day before, was very eager for the inspector to see the work she produced a day later. Another pupil was very eager to show a German newspaper, which her father had brought home, as this was relevant to work covered in lessons. Many older pupils are keen to participate in extra-curricular activities. There is, nevertheless, a small minority of pupils throughout the school who have limited concentration spans and whose listening skills could be better.
13. The pupils generally behave well, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection, and this has a positive effect on their learning. Parents believe that behaviour in the school, and on school visits, is good. The pupils are polite and courteous, answering lunch registers with 'please' and holding doors open for visitors. Behaviour in the playground is good and they treat the midday assistants with respect. Pupils line up to enter classrooms in an orderly manner. Behaviour in the dining room is generally good. There have been no exclusions from the school and there is no evidence of bullying, sexism or racism. Relationships between the pupils and between pupils and staff are very good, with a remarkable level of interactive humour. Some younger pupils, through over-eagerness, rather than naughtiness, do tend to shout answers out, rather than putting their hands up. Some are so keen to get on with their work that they tend to be rather slow to respond to teachers' requests for attention.
14. The oldest pupils carry out responsibilities effectively, even when some of the tasks, such as scraping lunch plates, are not entirely to the liking of all of them. They help with tidying books in the library, organising lunchtime games and delivering sandwich boxes. They organise the music for assemblies. They often help with the younger pupils. They think of people less fortunate than themselves by supporting many national charities. Many older pupils show good initiative. In a history lesson, for example, one Year 6 pupil brought some worksheets for the inspector to see, without being told. Others sought out resources themselves.
15. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Attendance rates last year were well below the national average and were, in fact, worse than the previous year. Unauthorised absence is above the national average. The school has sound procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, including close liaison with education welfare officers. However, whilst these are proving effective with most families, they are clearly ineffective with a small minority. The learning of most pupils is, therefore, not adversely affected by poor attendance. Most parents ensure that their children arrive punctually for morning school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of the teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. It is good overall. Since the time of the last inspection pupils' standards of attainment have risen considerably. The main reason for this is the good quality of the teaching and the effect this has on pupils learning. Weaknesses were identified in teachers' planning at the time of the last inspection. The quality of this is greatly improved and is good.
17. When the school was inspected in 1997 the quality of the teaching was judged to be satisfactory. It is now good in Years 1 and 2. Often in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 it is very good. Excellent teaching is found in Year 3. The teaching in English, mathematics and science was judged to be good and this position has been maintained. In addition the quality of the teaching overall has improved significantly and has many very good features. There have been good improvements in the teaching of design technology and information technology, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Good teaching is evident in all subjects.
18. The main strengths of the teaching are –
- Relationships between teachers and their pupils are very good. This motivates pupils and they are enthusiastic learners. Teachers are enthusiastic, consequently pupils respond enthusiastically.
 - Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and pupils respond well to these.
 - Teachers provide clear explanations of what they expect pupils to learn. Sometimes they ask the pupils to identify what they think they are likely to learn. This helps pupils to place their learning in context in terms of what they already know, building effectively on their previous knowledge.
 - Teachers use questions well to extend pupils' knowledge. They rarely give pupils answers. Usually they will follow pupils' responses with additional questions. This helps pupils to find answers for themselves.
 - When pupils work in groups their teachers ensure that the activities they provide are matched well to the abilities of all pupils. This is particularly evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported very well by their teachers and by teachers' assistants. Consequently these pupils make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are also challenged effectively. They also make good progress, achieving well for their abilities.
 - Teachers assess the attainment and progress of pupils accurately and thoroughly. They base what they will teach next on the assessments they make. This also contributes effectively to the good progress made by pupils.
 - Teachers and their assistants include all pupils effectively in the provision they make.
19. Within this positive picture there are some areas for development –
- Teachers use the final, plenary, part of lessons very well to assess the progress pupils have made. Often they will ask pupils to explain what they feel they have achieved in the lesson and what they might do better in the future. This helps pupils to understand how well they are doing. Occasionally teachers pack too much into lessons and do not leave enough time to review what pupils have learned.
20. The school is well aware of the challenge provided in the planning of work for mixed age classes and it already uses the support of additional adults effectively.
21. Rising standards, as shown by the improved results in the annual National Curriculum tests, indicate clearly the effect the good teaching is having. It is helping pupils to become better learners –
- They often show great enthusiasm.
 - They work well together in groups.
 - They show high self esteem and many are confident learners.
 - Their speaking and listening abilities are good.

22. Teachers throughout the school have adopted the recommended structures for their literacy and numeracy lessons and the planning for these is particularly effective. They are also effectively extending the principles of this planning model to other subjects, such as design technology.
23. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in many subjects. For example, pupils write informatively about making windmills in design technology and record details of their scientific investigations clearly. Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology are used well. This is particularly true when pupils are taught in the computer suite. There are also good examples of work produced in other lessons using the computers that are in each classroom. However, teachers do not make enough use of these computers.
24. The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is good. The principles of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are well established and used effectively by teachers. They are making a significant contribution to the rising standards evident in these subjects.
25. A particular strength of the teaching is the way that teachers and supporting adults work harmoniously together to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Other adults are welcomed and they too have a positive effect on the pupils' achievements. The good progress made by pupils under the guidance of a coach from the local hockey club, working with the class teacher, is a good example of this provision. The success of this joint venture gives a hint of the potential for inducting or training new teachers to the school or new entrants to the profession.

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

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the needs of all the pupils. It meets statutory requirements for all the subjects of the National Curriculum. There is a good range of worthwhile learning opportunities available for the pupils and the curriculum affords a good preparation for secondary school. All the pupils have specialist swimming instruction in the school's indoor pool during the summer and early autumn terms and there is some further specialist teaching of aspects of physical education. Total weekly teaching time meets national recommendations throughout the school. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. The school is implementing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy well and this is leading to rising standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills well across a range of subjects, but the use of information and communication technology in this way is rather more limited. The teachers set regular homework tasks in English and mathematics and this increases appropriately as the pupils move up through the school, in preparation for secondary school. Sometimes, there are homework tasks in other subjects, such as history and geography.
27. Key issues from the previous inspection included the need to improve curricular planning and to complete schemes of work for all subjects. The school has addressed these issues successfully. There are now clear policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Long term plans are soundly based on guidance provided by the National Literacy Strategy, the National Numeracy Strategy and by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. These are supplemented by the use of commercial schemes in some subjects. The needs of the mixed age classes are successfully met by teaching topics on a four year cycle in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and on a two year cycle in Years 1 and 2. The teachers plan carefully for the work that the pupils will do each term and each week and they are mindful of the wide range of academic ability that exists in each class.

28. There is a clear equal opportunities policy, though it has not been reviewed for four years. In practice, all the pupils, regardless of academic ability, background or gender, are included in the full curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Withdrawal for extra, specialist support is planned carefully, so that the pupils concerned do not miss out on the general work of the class. Although boys have outperformed girls in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests over the past four years, inspection findings indicate no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. One pupil, for whom English is an additional language, and seven Traveller children are well integrated into school life. A clear, recently updated special educational needs (SEN) policy meets the requirements of the current Code of Practice. 24 per cent of the school's pupils are on the SEN register, which is broadly average for a school of this size. There is one statemented pupil, which is below the national average. Provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO), together with classroom teaching assistants, work hard to ensure that these pupils make good progress in relation to their previous attainment and towards their individual targets. The teachers identify any pupils who might need extra help as early as possible. If usual methods of matching work to individual needs within the class fail to bring about improvements, the SENCO, in consultation with the class teacher, draws up an individual education plan (IEP) for each pupil concerned. These IEPs are of good quality, with clear, step by step targets for the pupils to work towards. IEPs are reviewed termly and parents are fully involved in the process. As targets are met, new ones are set, often involving the pupils themselves in agreeing on them. There is very good support for a visually impaired pupil. There are adequate resources to support SEN work. Teachers also make good provision for the higher attaining pupils in their classes.
29. A number of parents feel that the school provides insufficient activities outside lessons, but inspection findings do not support this view. Whilst it is true that there are fewer such opportunities for the younger pupils, other than a board games club, this is not unusual in primary schools. In Key Stage 2, there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include football, netball, cricket, gymnastics, dance, pottery, choir, recorders and a revision club. Some pupils have participated in The Cathedral Fringe activities and country dancers have performed at a local festival. The choir has sung in area music festivals and, next term, is to participate in a big event at the Royal Albert Hall. Small-sided sports matches are played against local schools. Learning is further enriched by many school visits. These have included Earls Colne Railway Museum, Sandford Mill, Colchester Castle and zoo, Heddingham Castle, Kentwell Hall, House on the Hill Toy Museum and Southend Sea Life Centre. Visitors have included theatre groups, the Royal British Legion, the Salvation Army and residents from the village.
30. The school makes good use of the community to enrich the pupils' learning. Coaches from Colchester United Football Club and Chelmsford Hockey Club and members from the Essex County Cricket Club have all worked with the older pupils. There are very close links with St Martin's Church and the United Reformed Church. During the inspection two assemblies were led by local clergy and members of the Christian Growth Centre visited school for two days. Pupils sing carols in two local churches and around the village. They visit the village to enhance their learning in art, geography, history and science. Pupils contribute to floral art displays at the village garden club's spring show. The school nurse and community police officer contributes to the pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).
31. There are good links both with local playgroups and nurseries and with the secondary school to which most Year 6 pupils transfer. There are opportunities for the pupils to visit the secondary school prior to transfer. A male teacher from that school helps with boys' sex education. During the inspection, a student from the secondary school led hockey lessons for pupils in Key Stage 2. Pre-school children visit the school for a monthly story time, in order to ease their entry to Reception.
32. There is good provision for the pupils' PSHCE. A clear, updated policy underpins a programme of work, which includes issues such as responsibilities, a healthy lifestyle and the dangers of drugs misuse. The teachers answer questions about human growth and development openly and honestly as they arise, with due regard to pupils' age and maturity. There is formal sex education for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

33. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. There is very good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. There is a friendly, caring ethos, founded on Christian values and reflected in the school's mission statement and in its aims. The current 'thought for the week' is 'Not everyone can be a winner, but we can all achieve our personal best'. A 'pyramid of success' in the hall celebrates effort and achievement and this is reinforced in celebration assemblies. Acts of collective worship make a very good contribution to spiritual development, on themes such as the journey to Bethlehem, the true meaning of Christmas and finding time for Jesus at this festive time of year. Last year, some pupils recorded a superb compact disc of Christmas carols. Children from the Foundation Stage and Year 1 went on a local 'awe and wonder' walk and had a special time with visiting grandparents. Pupils in Year 3 write effective poems on feelings and pupils in years 5 and 6 write good thoughts and prayers for Remembrance Day and place a wreath at the village war memorial. The school has a pleasant sensory garden. Morning lessons end with grace before lunch.
34. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good. There is a clear behaviour policy and an effective system of rewards for positive behaviour. The teachers ensure that the pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong. Rules about behaviour in and out of the classrooms are prominently displayed. Some pupils on the SEN register have appropriate IEP targets for improving behaviour. The midday assistants encourage the pupils to play sensibly together and they quickly report any inappropriate behaviour to the teachers.
35. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' social development. Most parents believe that the school helps their children to mature and to become responsible. Pupils help with classroom tasks and Year 6 pupils carry out additional responsibilities as monitors. They look after younger pupils at lunchtimes. There is an innovative 'buddy stop' on the playground, where pupils who have no one to play with or who are unhappy can look for a friend. The pupils develop social skills on school visits, in school productions and in extra-curricular clubs. They deliver harvest boxes to local senior citizens and they have supported many charities, including NCH Action for Children, Operation Christmas Child and Barnardo's. At Christmas, the pupils entertain members of the village 'Good Companions' club to a concert and tea. In geography, the pupils learn about the need for environmental conservation.
36. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They learn about the work of famous artists and they participate in area music festivals. They have worked with visiting authors and poets. Some pupils made an effective sculpture, on display in the atrium, having used patterns seen in playthings as inspiration. In history, the pupils learn about the legacy of the Romans, Tudors and Victorians and they visit museums. There is less emphasis on developing the pupils' awareness that Britain and the wider world are culturally diverse. Nevertheless, the pupils do learn about some major religions other than Christianity and in music, they have sung some Jewish songs. There is a picture of the black Nativity in the hall and there are a few multicultural dolls in Reception. However, there is little evidence of attention to the work of non-European artists. There is a very limited range of story books from around the world in the school library.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Overall, the school has maintained the good levels of academic and personal support and guidance seen at the last inspection and a large majority of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that the school is helping their child to become mature and responsible.
38. The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The acting headteacher is the school's child protection officer and she attended a training course very recently to equip her for this role. In addition, there is a designated governor for child protection and all staff had some in-house training on child protection issues within the last two years. The school has adopted the relevant local authority guidelines.

39. Health and safety procedures are also very good with governors having an effective and active role in this through regular checks of the buildings. The school takes risk assessment very seriously and will assess all situations such as school visits or functions. The health and safety policy is good and there is an adequate number of staff trained in first aid.
40. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The office manager checks registers very regularly to spot patterns of absence or lateness. However, the school's attendance figures are adversely affected by a small number of pupils who attend irregularly. The school does follow up unauthorised absences with telephone calls and letters, as well as referrals to the education welfare officer, but does not yet have a system of telephoning home on the first day of absence.
41. There are good procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour and to eliminate oppressive behaviour. This is reflected in the fact that a very high proportion of parents are happy with the standards of behaviour in the school. Class teachers keep records of any incidents that occur and the headteacher is informed if they are serious or persistent. Support systems are put in where necessary, for example the school will use the advice and services of the behaviour unit. Parents are also involved at an early stage where behavioural problems occur so that all parties can work together. High levels of adult supervision, for example in the dining hall at lunchtime also promote good behaviour as do the rewards such as stickers and the use of the weekly celebration assembly. As a result the school has managed to reduce oppressive behaviour to a minimum.
42. Procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils and for monitoring their academic progress are good. Teachers make good use of national recommended guidance to assess pupils' attainment in most subjects. The assessments they make are accurate and the information they gain is used effectively to decide what to teach next and to set targets for the future attainment of pupils. Assessments are recorded clearly and passed on from teacher to teacher as pupils move through the school. This enables the progress pupils make to be tracked closely. Teachers often share assessment information with their pupils. This helps the pupils to know how well they are getting on and what they need to do to improve further.
43. The acting headteacher undertakes thorough scrutiny of the results of the annual national tests and other tests, such as those for reading, administered by teachers. The information gained from this process is used well to identify what the school should do to address any apparent weaknesses in attainment
44. In some parts of the school, particularly in Year 3, teachers provide opportunities and guidance for pupils to assess their own work. This helps the pupils to understand how well they are doing.
45. Very good procedures are in place to monitor and support pupils' personal development. In this relatively small school all staff, both teaching and non-teaching know the pupils very well and show a very caring attitude towards them. Any concerns are noted and effectively communicated. In addition, the pupils' annual progress report contains a section on attitudes that can be used to monitor personal development as the pupil moves through the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The evidence from the pre-inspection questionnaires and from the parents' meeting shows that parents have positive views of the school and are very supportive of its work. Although only a relatively small minority of parents completed the questionnaire, of those who did over 90 per cent feel that school is well led and managed, that behaviour in school is good, children are making good progress and that they like coming to school. The highest levels of disagreement concerned the range of activities outside of lessons, that they were kept well informed about progress and that the school works closely with parents. Inspection findings are that the range of activities for older pupils is very good, especially considering the size of the school. For example, there is an extra-curricular activity almost every afternoon and occasionally the Friends' Association run clubs in addition to these. However, only the board games club is available for younger pupils in

Year 2. In relation to how well parents are kept informed about progress, teachers are accessible to parents and there are two formal consultation evenings each year with a less formal show of work in the summer term. The annual written progress report, whilst not particularly detailed, covers all subjects and is satisfactory overall. However, the governors are aware that parents would like a means to tell the relative progress of their child and they are exploring ways in which this could be done. Inspection findings do not support the view that the school does not work closely with parents. It is a very welcoming school that encourages parental involvement in many aspects of school life and the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is judged to be good.

47. The quality of information provided for parents is good overall with some very good elements. For example there is a weekly newsletter and the governors' annual report to parents is a very well produced and informative document although the governors need to ensure that future editions contain a report of the progress made in implementing the action plan following an inspection. The prospectus is also good and has only one minor omission - that is to inform parents of their right to withdraw their child from religious education as well as collective worship. In addition to this information, parents receive a Year Book that gives curriculum information as well as practical information for the school. The Homework Diaries provide a very good means of communicating between home and school and indicating the progress that pupils are making.
48. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school are very good. Many parents regularly hear their children read at home and help with other homework projects and this has a positive impact on standards. Parents (and grandparents) also offer practical help such as with reading and swimming and share their expertise; for example by, running a football club and recording and producing a compact disc of Christmas carols sung by the school choir. The Friends' Association makes a significant contribution towards the upkeep of the swimming pool. Parent governors were also involved in the management of the project to extend the accommodation. All this activity has had a very positive impact on the work of the school and the feeling of community within it.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management provided by the governing body and the acting headteacher are very good. The governing body fulfils very effectively its responsibilities and those duties required of it by law.
50. The previous headteacher was promoted and left the school at the start of the current term. A new headteacher is appointed to begin at the start of the spring term 2002. At the time of the inspection the school was led by an acting headteacher appointed from within the school. Her leadership in continuing the good work of the previous headteacher and in maintaining the momentum for improvement during this period is very good. Working in close partnership with her colleagues and the governing body she ensures the clear educational direction of the school is maintained effectively and its aims and values are reflected in its work. This includes the successful inclusion of all groups of pupils in all aspects of provision.
51. This is a relatively small school in which all staff work closely and effectively together to maintain and improve provision. Arrangements to ensure all pupils are included appropriately in the activities offered by the school are effective. Subject co-ordinators undertake their delegated duties well. They have a clear grasp of standards in the subjects they lead and provide good plans to ensure future improvements.
52. Members of the governing body have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They play a central role, shaping its educational direction and benefiting greatly from the strong and effective leadership of their chairperson. Many members of the governing body visit the school regularly. They watch teaching taking place and observe other activities. They undertake discussions with subject co-ordinators about the quality of provision and how it might be improved. They receive detailed reports from the acting headteacher about the progress made

towards identified targets linked to those aspects of provision they feel need to be improved. Because of this they are well placed to identify and guide the school through subsequent areas for development. The processes by which the areas for development are identified and addressed are clear and well established. They are contained in the school's development plan. Governors and staff work closely to ensure the plans come to fruition and that targets for improvement are met. Their shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed are very good.

53. Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and secure further improvement are good. Members of the governing body and the acting headteacher play a leading role in this activity. There is a carefully planned programme for subject co-ordinators to evaluate the quality of provision in the subjects they are responsible for and to discuss areas for improvement with colleagues. These are working particularly well in literacy and numeracy and are contributing to rising standards. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers' performance and the performance management of the headteacher are good. They fully meet the requirements demanded by law. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are good.
54. The processes by which the identified educational priorities are supported by financial planning are very good. The planning procedures adopted by the governing body ensure the links between spending on resources and the educational priorities of the school are strong. Specific grants are used very effectively for their intended purposes. Good examples of this are the use of grants to support pupils with special educational needs and for the development of information and communication technology.
55. The office manager does an excellent job in monitoring the progress of all items of expenditure. She provides very detailed reports for the governing body and these make a significant contribution to their understanding of how the school budget is used and their ability to monitor spending closely. The use of new technology to support these processes is good and the school's investment in a computer suite is contributing to standards that exceed those expected for pupils' ages. However, not enough use is made of computers during lessons when pupils do not have access to the computer suite.
56. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The school has invested wisely in additional learning support assistants. They work very well and have a positive effect on the standards achieved by the pupils they support. The quality of accommodation is very good. The work of the governing body in obtaining funding to pay for the extension, containing additional classrooms and the atrium housing the computer suite, is excellent. Resources for learning are satisfactory for all subjects. The school library contains some old books and its current site means that they cannot be displayed in ways that capture pupils' interest.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve provision the governors, headteacher and staff should -
 - (1) Raise standards and develop more effective learning in the Foundation Stage by –
 - linking planning more closely to the 'stepping stones' in each area of learning.
 - ensuring greater consistency in approaches to developing the personal, social and emotional area of learning.
 - providing more opportunities for children to improve their abilities as speakers and listeners. (Paragraphs 1, 58, 59, 60, 62 – 71)
 - (2) Raise standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 by –
 - providing more opportunities for lower attaining pupils to improve their oral and mental mathematics.
 - During lessons give more attention to helping pupils to recognise numbers, recall number facts and develop their ability to subtract. (Paragraphs 2, 4, 7, 94, 96)

(3) Improve attendance by –

- continuing to target the available support towards those pupils who are frequently absent.
- introducing procedures to make immediate contact in the event of non-attendance.
- reminding parents of their legal duty to ensure their children attend school.
(Paragraphs 15, 40)

Other less significant areas for development –

- Develop the library to include a better range of books and display them in ways that appeal to pupils' interests.
(Paragraphs 56, 93)
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning by using information and communication technology in lessons when they do not have access to the computer suite.
(Paragraphs 26, 92, 107, 118, 126, 133, 138)
- Raise standards in geography and history to match those found in other subjects.
(Paragraphs 9, 10, 122 – 126, 127 – 131)
- Raise pupils' awareness of other cultures in Britain and the wider world.
(Paragraph 36)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	11	4	1	0	0
Percentage	8%	28%	44%	16%	4%	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents 4 percentage points.

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)	N/a	137
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	31

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001		13	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	20	20	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(67)	100 (81)	90 (76)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	7
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	20	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (76)	95 (76)	100 (81)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Data not published where the number of pupils is ten or fewer

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	111.95

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	na
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	na
Total number of education support staff	na
Total aggregate hours worked per week	na
Number of pupils per FTE adult	na

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	368,974
Total expenditure	368,845
Expenditure per pupil	2,544
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,690
Balance carried forward to next year	16,819

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	137
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	41	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	41	50	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	59	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	59	13	7	4
The teaching is good.	52	37	4	4	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	28	24	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	30	7	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	39	4	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	35	17	7	2
The school is well led and managed.	39	57	0	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	37	9	4	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	33	22	13	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58. Children join the school at the beginning of the term when they become five. Many have attended various pre-school settings. Over recent years assessments undertaken by the school shortly after children start indicate their attainment to be below average and in some cases well below average. This is particularly true of their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy skills and their mathematical development. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is satisfactory and the quality of teaching is better than at that time.
59. During their time in the Foundation Stage many children make satisfactory overall progress and are supported by satisfactory teaching. Systems for tracking the progress children make through the identified 'stepping stones' towards the early learning goals are effective. However, teachers' planning does not link the activities that pupils will do closely enough to the identified 'stepping stones'.
60. By the time they are ready to leave the Foundation Stage to begin work on the National Curriculum children's attainment in several of the six identified areas of their learning remains below that expected. Many do not attain the early learning goals expected of them for their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy and their mathematical development. They are on course to attain the early learning goals for their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development. In their physical development they are likely to exceed the early learning goals expected of them.
61. Teachers work hard to ensure that children's transition from the pre-school settings they attend to the school is smooth. They visit the most local of these settings and often provide help and advice for their colleagues. Many children visit the school regularly before they start and take part in lessons. This helps them to settle in when they officially begin and they are prepared well for this experience.
62. Links with parents are developed well. Many accompany their children to school and spend time in the classroom at the start of the day, gaining insights into the way their children work and about the progress they are making. Most parents are good at helping their children to succeed with work that is set for them to do at home and in providing materials for the activities their children do at school. However, clearly some do not spend enough time helping their children to develop essential skills. This restricts the progress some children are able to make. For example, some need to have more time speaking with and listening to adults to develop their communication skills and sharing and talking about books to help their language and literacy development.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Following their entry to school with attainment that is well below that expected in this area of their learning children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the Foundation Stage of their education. Their progress in this area of their learning and the quality of teaching they receive is unsatisfactory. At the start of each day many children respond clearly and promptly when their teacher calls their name for the register. Some do not do this consistently and are easily distracted when this is taking place. Pairs of pupils take their turn to take the register to the school office and they relish this responsibility.
64. Some children have great difficulty maintaining their attention for sufficient periods of time. Some crawl away under tables and into corners, sometimes making noises that distract others, when

they are supposed to be listening to their teacher as part of a group. They also find it hard to develop relationships with other children, often finding it difficult to share the equipment they are using. Sometimes they cry and shout loudly when others are using the equipment and toys they want to use. Teachers and their assistants work hard to help the children to overcome these difficulties. However, their approaches are inconsistent and some children are unclear about what is expected of them. During one lesson it proved impossible to gain the attention of some children who were distracted by movements on a computer screen in the background. Sometimes teachers require children to be very active in the hope of retaining their interest, but this only serves to increase the noise and consequent disruption.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the Foundation Stage of their education. Their progress in this area of their learning and the quality of teaching they receive is satisfactory.
66. The highest attaining children are confident speakers. They enjoy talking with adults and explaining about their interests and the work they are doing. Some lower attaining children do not speak clearly, lacking confidence and finding it hard to be understood. Sometimes opportunities to encourage children to speak are missed. When this happens teachers provide children with information about the work they are doing but do not give the children chance to offer their opinions and explain what they know. Sometimes questions are not used effectively to draw out from children what they are thinking about and what they know. Some children are too eager to share their views and shout out, interrupting the flow of the lessons, because they do not understand the protocols to use when asking questions. This means their opportunities to express their views are restricted.
67. Many children like books. Higher attaining children enjoy talking about stories and explaining what they see in the illustrations. Some read fluently to a level that exceeds that expected for their age. Several can read simple words and many identify the first letters of words and the sound the letters make. This is because teachers work effectively to help children understand the sound that letters and combinations of letters make. Consequently children are making good progress in this aspect of their learning. For example, when looking at the 'i' sound, one pupil immediately identified that letter and the sound it makes is part of his name. A higher attaining pupil used the sound correctly by writing the sentence 'I dig my garden'.
68. The highest attaining children frequently write short sentences correctly and use capital letters and full stops in the right places. However, other children find it difficult to explain what they have written about and their handwriting is not sufficiently well formed for adults to identify what is recorded. Several children are beginning to write consistently and neatly. Most need lines on the paper to guide their writing and help them to make it the right size. When they practise they often use wipe clean boards. When they rub out their writing the lines are also rubbed out as well and their drawing skills are not developed sufficiently well to replace the lines. This restricts the pace at which the quality of their handwriting is improving.
69. Sometimes the challenges set for the children are too hard for them, such as writing a joke to put in a Christmas cracker. However, information about the various ways of starting a story is helping the higher attaining children to make their early attempts at writing more interesting.

Mathematical development

70. Children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the Foundation Stage of their education. Their progress in this area of their learning and the quality of teaching they receive is satisfactory.
71. Higher attaining children count to ten and beyond, some recognising numbers up to 50. These children have good understanding of time and are able to place the days of the week in the correct

order. They also identify coins and basic shapes correctly, such as rectangles and squares. Mathematical terms, such as 'less than' and 'more than', are understood and used accurately. For example, they throw a dice and record the numbers shown, relating these to numbers thrown previously.

72. Lower attaining children do not recognise single digit numbers beyond five. They are unable to undertake the addition of single-digit numbers as they cannot make simple mathematical statements, such as seven is one more than six. These children are also very slow to respond during oral and mental mathematical activities. They need considerable support from their teachers and learning support assistants and their mathematical understanding is not sufficiently secure.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Children are on course to achieve the early learning goals for this area of their learning by the time they are ready to leave the Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory progress and the quality of teaching they receive is satisfactory.
74. Children benefit from the good opportunities, provided by their teacher, to help them to understand what living things need to grow and to thrive. This is illustrated by children's responses when ducklings are brought into the school and by the care and attention they lavish on the plants they grow from seeds. This aspect of their development was extended by a visit to a local garden centre when children recorded what they saw by drawing and in short pieces of writing.
75. Insufficient use is made of the computers in the Foundation Stage classroom. However, children's knowledge and skills with computers is developing well. This is because they have access to the schools computer suite and benefit from skilful and knowledgeable teaching. For example, during the inspection children used computers to design and print Christmas cards. As part of this activity they moved phrases, such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star', from a bank of words on the computer into their Christmas card design. Their explanations of how to do this shows knowledge that far exceeds that expected for their age.
76. Visits and visitors make a valuable contribution to this area of the children's development. Grandparents visit school and share in the work their grandchildren are doing. This does much to help the children's confidence in relating to adults and provides good opportunities for them to explain what they are doing. The visit to Earls Colne Railway Museum to ride on Thomas the Tank Engine and Daisy is typical of the stimulating experiences that are provided for children.

Physical development

77. This aspect of provision is a strength of the Foundation Stage. Children are on course to exceed the early learning goals expected of them. Their progress in this area of their learning and the quality of teaching they receive are good. Children clearly like this are of their development. They work particularly well when they visit the hall to work on the gymnastics apparatus. A few are reluctant to take part, but with sensitive persuasion from their learning support assistant they quickly overcome their reservations. Their teacher makes it very clear to children what they are expected to do. Children respond well to this, moving safely and showing good control. Some of the balances they make on the apparatus are excellent.
78. The newly opened outdoor play area is already making a helpful contribution to children's progress in this area of their development.

Creative development

79. Children are on course to achieve the early learning goals and their attainment is likely to be close to that expected. Their progress in this area of their learning and the quality of teaching they receive is satisfactory.
80. Children enjoy singing. They do it well, benefiting from good teaching. During the inspection children were preparing for the annual Christmas production. They sang 'Rocking Around the Christmas Tree' and 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer' with perfect timing and volume. They also identified which parts of the songs were repeated and at which point they appeared.

81. Many of the children's drawings and paintings clearly reflect their intended outcome, for example, their illustrations of snowmen and the symmetrical paintings of butterflies. They use paint and other sources of colour well and various types of card and paper to make effective collages.
82. Children enjoy dressing up and taking part in activities, such as when they become office and hospital workers or manage the baker's shop. This and similar activities are making a much needed contribution towards children's social development and helps them to use their imaginations.

ENGLISH

83. By the end of Year 2 standards are average. By the end of Year 6 they are above average. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good. Consequently pupils, including those with special educational needs and Travellers, make good progress. Excellent teaching is evident in Year 3. When this occurs pupils make excellent progress. All pupils are included effectively in all aspects of provision for the subject. There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs and Travellers. A feature of many lessons is the appropriate challenges provided for higher attaining pupils. In recent years boys have attained higher standards than girls. Inspection findings indicate there is currently little difference in the standards attained by the different gender groups. The rise in standards indicated by the most recent national tests and affirmed by the inspection findings mean improvement since the time of the last inspection is good.
84. The principles of the National Literacy Strategy are applied effectively by teachers and are one of the reasons why standards have risen. Teachers are good at ensuring that pupils understand what it is they are supposed to be learning. This is achieved by offering clear explanations at the start of lessons that help pupils to draw on their previous learning. Teachers also use the final, plenary, section of lessons to review what their pupils have learned and to assess the progress they have made. This is done very effectively in Year 3 where the teacher asks pupils to comment on how well they feel they are doing. Because pupils do this frequently they are very good at judging how well they are doing and at making suggestions about how they might improve further. Pupils in this class sometimes mark each other's work and give each other suggestions for improvement. This experience adds considerably to their knowledge of the subject.
85. Throughout the school in many subjects, as well as in English, teachers pose questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking, rarely accepting the first answer they give. This helps pupils to become increasingly competent speakers and listeners. It works particularly well with older pupils, ensuring they present their thoughts in a logical and well thought out way. Pupils also apply these skills when they work in groups and discuss their work with others.
86. Standards in reading are good. This is because reading is taught well. The shared reading part of lessons, advocated as part of the National Literacy Strategy, is used effectively by teachers. Many pupils read regularly at school and at home and take great pleasure in the experience. Throughout the school pupils attain above average standards in reading. By the end of Year 2 many pupils read fluently and accurately. They rarely make mistakes and when they do they quickly self correct. They understand and can explain the differences between fiction and non-fiction. They also understand the roles filled by authors and illustrators. The lowest attaining pupils and many of those with special educational needs in this age group attain standards that are close to those expected. By the end of Year 6 higher attaining pupils are enthusiastic readers and many enjoy reading challenging books, such as 'The Lord of the Rings'. They talk with great interest about the books they read and about their favourite authors. They express thoughtfully their opinions about the quality of the books they read, responding to events in the stories and predicting what might happen next.

87. When pupils in Years 3 and 4 read poems, such as 'Midnight Visitors' by Irene Rawnsley they do so superbly, recreating the atmosphere and excitement of the poem. They also recall with great clarity the adjectives and verbs used in the poem that had the greatest impact on them and why they like the poem.
88. Pupils in Year 2 show appropriate understanding of the principles of writing poetry. They recognise the repeating patterns that make some poems rhyme. When they read poems together they point out to their teacher where full stops and capital letters should be. These principles are then applied appropriately to their own writing. Pupils of this age are also spelling an increasing range of words correctly. This is because teachers are good at introducing pupils to the sounds letters and combinations of letters make. Pupils then use this knowledge well to help them to spell correctly. In addition to sounding out each syllable of words they cannot spell pupils are rapidly learning to use dictionaries well. They practise spelling regularly for homework.
89. The use of poetry by teachers to inspire pupils' writing is extended very effectively in Years 3 and 6. Poetry is also used well to raise pupils' awareness of the rules of writing and the correct use of grammar. Spelling is improved by building on the use of dictionaries, established during earlier learning. Pupils in Year 3 sort common words into alphabetical order. They also sort words with same first letter by correctly identifying the alphabetical order of the second letter. When they do this they are carried along by the enthusiasm of their teacher, making rapid progress and becoming confident learners. When their teacher challenges them to correct the faults in a paragraph they tackle the task with relish. Many are able to spot the mistakes and make appropriate corrections. In addition to suggesting where capital letters and full stops should be they offer suggestions for adding speech marks and exclamation marks correctly.
90. In Year 6 pupils show very good attitudes to their learning when their teacher uses a video featuring the work of the poet Michael Rosen. Her excellent use of questions challenges pupils to identify the features of the poems that have the most impact and to explain what the poet is trying to say. They do this well, showing considerable understanding. Pupils are challenged further when their teacher asks them to consider 'My Mother Saw A Dancing Bear' by Charles Causley and 'The Thought Fox' by Ted Hughes. They respond by clearly expressing the emotions they feel when reading and discussing the two poems. Pupils write their thoughts about the poems, using the writing as a basis to report back to the whole class. Some choose to read what they have written and other paraphrase their writing skilfully. They all show considerable understanding of what the poets are trying to express. This example of writing far exceeds the standard expected for this age group.
91. Pupils' handwriting is developing well. High standards are evident in Year 3 and these are maintained as pupils pass through the school. In Year 3 pupils evaluate their own handwriting against the model provided by their teacher. They then decide what they need to do to improve, effectively setting targets for their own learning.
92. Pupils use information and communication technology well to support their learning in English. However, opportunities to do this tend to be when they have access to the computer suite and not enough use is made of the computers in the classrooms during lessons.
93. Strong and effective subject leadership also contributes towards the rising standards evident in the subject. Teachers have undertaken substantial training for teaching the subject. Good arrangements are in place to assess pupils' attainment and the progress they make. Following the careful analysis of assessments teachers decide what action needs to be taken to raise standards further. Resources for the subject are generally good. However, some of the books in the library are dated and not displayed in ways that capture pupils' interest.

MATHEMATICS

94. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are below average. A significant proportion of this year group is on the

special educational needs (SEN) register. Their mathematical development on entry to the school was below average and lower than that for English. In the previous inspection, standards were well below average. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for the end of Year 2, standards were close to the average compared with all schools nationally and below average compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was above that found in most schools and standards have risen steadily since the previous inspection, showing an improvement on attainment in the 2000 national tests. This is a result of the current good teaching and the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Most pupils, including those with SEN, are therefore achieving satisfactorily. Boys and girls attain equally.

95. By the end of Year 6, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are above average. In the previous inspection, they were average. This improvement is due to teaching which is consistently good and often very good, whereas some teaching was judged unsatisfactory in the previous inspection. More effective assessment and target setting have also helped, as have 'booster' sessions in the spring term. Attainment in the 2001 end of Key Stage 2 national tests was above average. In fact, at the higher Level 5, attainment was well above the national average. Standards have risen significantly over the past four years, with boys outperforming girls. Currently, there is no significant difference in attainment by gender. The school has set a very challenging target of 90 per cent of pupils to reach the expected Level 4 or above by the end of Year 6 next year. Most pupils are clearly achieving very well and are likely to do this. Pupils with SEN and Travellers receive very good support and are making good progress in relation to their previous attainment and in meeting their individual targets. All pupils are included effectively in provision for the subject. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to make good progress.
96. In Year 2, many pupils find it very difficult to make quick mental recall of number facts. Some even have problems with number recognition. They recognise simple number patterns, but there is little evidence that they understand odd and even numbers. Whilst some pupils confidently add numbers to 20 and add coins, subtraction is much more difficult for many of them. They use practical apparatus to find half of numbers up to 20. They know the names of common two-dimensional shapes, but are less confident with three-dimensional ones.
97. In Year 6, the pupils use their knowledge of doubling and halving to solve quite complex number problems. They have a good understanding of long multiplication. Whilst some find the concept of fractions quite difficult, many are able to reduce a fraction to its simplest form and they have a good understanding of the equivalence of fractions. They know the rough metric equivalents of imperial units. The pupils calculate the perimeter of regular and irregular shapes and they know how to use coordinates in all four quadrants. They are able to represent data graphically.
98. The pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects. In science, pupils in Year 2 have represented different materials by means of accurate Venn diagrams and in history, they measured 3 metres, in order to appreciate the thickness of the walls of Hedingham Castle. In history and geography, pupils in Year 6 interpreted bar charts of Egypt's climate and they have used a probability line in understanding farming in ancient Egypt. In science, pupils in Year 3 have used a Newton meter to measure accurately the effects of friction. There is some evidence of pupils using their information and communication technology skills to enhance learning in mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 have used computer-generated pie charts and bar charts to record a science investigation into differences between margarine and butter, whilst, in one lesson observed, pupils in Years 4 and 5 generated effective symmetrical pictures of animals.
99. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. The teachers have adapted well to the three-part daily mathematics lesson, with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' mental calculations. Inclusion of all pupils, no matter what their individual problems, is a strength. The teachers set regular mathematics homework. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher made good use of some 'squashy boxes' to help the pupils use mental recall of numbers to 20. She made good use of a number line, which reinforced the pupils' ability to add on in jumps. She emphasised key vocabulary, such as 'length', 'shortest' and 'compare', and this impacted well on the pupils' ability to use non-standard units in measuring various classroom objects. Work was

soundly matched to two broad ability groups, with two teaching assistants being deployed effectively.

100. In a lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, the teacher made learning fun and moved the lesson along very briskly. This ensured a positive response from the pupils, as they recorded dice throws by means of tally charts. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher shared the learning objectives with the pupils, so that they were well aware of what was expected of them. A very clear explanation of the difference between analogue and digital watches and the use of a game in which the pupils quickly showed answer cards to the teacher's oral questions helped the pupils to record analogue times on clock faces. The teacher had excellent relationships with the pupils and this helped to develop their confidence: " We're all on our bikes; some of us will have to use our stabilisers, as we'll be a bit wobbly; by the end of the week, you'll be able to tell the time! "
- " The teacher used the plenary session well. Here, some pupils participated in a 'Mastermind' game, where they were 'experts' in their field. In a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher used a very brisk mental and oral session well to develop the pupils' understanding of factors, the properties of quadrilaterals and problems of time intervals. She covered a lot of ground in a short time, managing some quite challenging pupils very well and keeping them motivated. They particularly enjoyed the teacher giving them the properties of shapes, which they had to name as quickly as possible. The teacher emphasised the need for initial estimation of answers, even if many of the pupils were not keen on this, and this helped them gain confidence in using informal and formal written methods of adding three four-digit numbers. She gave a clear explanation of the relevant strategies, which consolidated understanding. Selected pupils had the opportunity to use a computer program to enhance learning.
101. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. A clear, updated policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is soundly based on the National Numeracy Strategy and on a commercial scheme. The co-ordinator monitors planning and teaching, gaining a clear overview of the school's performance in the subject, and there are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The information gained from these assessments is used well to plan for future improvements. The co-ordinator has developed a clear action plan to improve standards further. This includes the need to involve information and communication technology more in mathematics lessons. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning. In encouraging the pupils to work collaboratively whenever appropriate, the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' social development.

SCIENCE

102. The most recent teacher assessments show attainment in science is above average by the end of Year 2. In 2001 National Curriculum tests for the end of Year 6 indicate that standards in science are close to the average in comparison with all schools and above average when compared with those found in similar schools. Inspection findings show standards throughout the school are currently above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from minority groups, make good progress. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Standards have risen above those found at the time of the last inspection and improvement since that time has been good. All pupils are included effectively in the provision made for the subject.
103. Teachers' plans are good and indicate clearly what pupils are expected to learn. The activities they will do are matched well to their abilities, often capturing their interest and enthusiasm. This makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by many pupils. For example, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were being taught in small groups about electrical short circuits, one group made rapid progress and provided very clear explanations of processes they had followed and the results of their investigation for their classmates.
104. Pupils in Year 1 have good knowledge of life processes and living things. They know what is required for animals and plants to thrive. This is based on good opportunities for the learning

- provided by their teachers. For example, they monitor the growth of plants in their classrooms and have visited a local garden centre to observe plant growth on a larger scale.
105. By the end of Year 2 pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are good for their age. They use terms like 'transparent' correctly when describing materials and their properties. High attaining pupils in Year 2 present their findings about materials clearly to the rest of the class, using tables of data they produce with the aid of a computer. Opportunities like this are used well by teachers to enable pupils to share what they have learned and to check the progress they have made.
 106. By the end of Year 6 the work pupils do on forces and motion leads to well established understanding of scientific terms, such as friction and drag. Pupils receive good guidance from their teacher. This results in rapid progress. They closely follow their teacher's instructions. This enables them to gain the information they need from the investigations to test their initial predictions. For example, they write accurately and clearly about the links between the tension in an elastic band and the distance travelled by the projectile. However, the planning for their investigations is usually provided by their teacher, rather than based on their own knowledge.
 107. Overall pupils' achievement in science is good. Progress is very good sometimes. By the end of Year 2 higher attaining pupils use computers to illustrate their work on grouping materials according to their properties. They do this well. Additionally, pupils with special educational needs learn well by listening carefully and working co-operatively with supporting adults. One pupil in Year 6 was able to demonstrate effectively to her classmates, a magnified image of the tiny filament inside a lamp. In so doing she displayed good understanding of the work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are gaining confidence in the use of computers, but they do not use them enough to record and display the results of their investigations.
 108. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A helpful scheme of work is in place and a good range of resources is available to support pupils learning. These features contribute to the increasing confidence with which teachers approach their work in science. Teachers use end of term assessments effectively to keep track of the progress pupils make and to plan what they will teach next. Informal assessment in lessons is good. Educational visits to local interactive museums and places of scientific interest make an effective contribution to pupils' learning in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

109. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment exceeds that expected for their ages. Throughout the school all pupils make good progress and achieve well for their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and all pupils, including those from minority groups, are included well in the provision for the subject. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good. Planning for the subject is effective and standards have risen.
110. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection week but discussions show that pupils learn well from teachers and visiting artists. They are inspired to sketch in the style of Lowry and they have good mastery of pencil sketching techniques. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to compare their own work with that of others.
111. By the end of Year 6 pupils work with textiles, paint and fabric to produce attractive displays. For example large posters on canvas entitled 'Journey into Space', three-dimensional models, such as robots, and wall displays on themes such as playgrounds and skaters' dresses. They incorporate into their work ideas from various sources, often from their classmates, using a good range of techniques such as batik, tie dye, string printings and chain stitching. The canvas paintings on display in the hall effectively portray the four seasons and stories from the Bible.
112. The high quality of pupils work makes a significant contribution to the good displays in classrooms and around the school. Pupils also use art effectively to enhance their work in other subjects. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to experience art from other

cultures. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to access computer-generated art. For example, pupils have little experience of working with photographs and prints taken from the internet.

113. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator. Overall provision is good because art and design now incorporates the three key components of painting, three-dimensional work and textiles. There are good cross-curricular links with the development of skills in design and technology. Pupils have benefited from opportunities to work with a local artist who visits the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment exceeds that expected for their ages. Throughout the school all pupils make good progress and achieve well for their abilities. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and all pupils, including those from minority groups, are included well in the provision for the subject. At the time of the last inspection the provision for design technology was judged to be unsatisfactory, with below average attainment in both key stages. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
115. Pupils in Year 2 use carefully sawn pieces of wood in their project on house structures. The models they make are realistic and of very good quality, showing a good range of design ideas. Pupils have also produced booklets explaining the procedure they followed when designing and making their models. These reveal that pupils have good understanding of designing and making processes.
116. When pupils in Year 3 make trifles and those in Year 1 make 'gingerbread people' they research and write their own plans. They then use the information in their plans to guide their making of the products. The recipients enjoy the results. This provides a sound basis for pupils to evaluate the success of their work. The plans pupils compile show clearly that they understand the design process. Sometimes these plans are not sufficiently detailed and some pupils rely too heavily on the guidance their teachers provide, rather than having sufficient confidence to include their own ideas.
117. Photographic evidence shows the good links that exist between design technology and other subjects. For example, electrical circuits are used in model lighthouses, providing effective links with science. Other pupils made a moving buggy to be used in a dramatic production, showing good links with art and drama. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and derive considerable pleasure from having their photographs taken with the models they have made.
118. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning in the subject. Pupils do use computers to organise and display the results of consumer surveys they undertake as part of their work in design and technology. However, they are not yet able to use the computers to control simple stationary mechanical models.
119. The good teaching often has a very good effect on the pupils' progress and achievement. Teachers prepare their lessons well, ensuring sufficient good resources are ready for pupils to use. Teachers sometimes use models made earlier, in the style of "Blue Peter", to make the task clear. This appeals to pupils, giving them a clear view of what they are expected to do. Teachers and their assistants work effectively to support pupils during lessons, helping them to make good progress. They also involve pupils well in the plenary part of lessons when they discuss and evaluate the quality of their work and products and consider how they might be improved further.
120. Subject leadership is good and is contributing effectively to the rising standards. A helpful scheme of work is in place. Teachers' marking is good, providing advice to help to improve pupils' work further. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils learning in the subject. However, following a recent training course plans are in place to extend the use of information technology and increase the range of resources for the subject.

121. There is evidence to suggest that there is further potential to increase pupils' designing and making skills in exciting contexts.

GEOGRAPHY

122. It was not possible to observe any geography lessons during the inspection, but an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicates that attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with that expected. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Most pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs and Travellers, are making satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge of places and their mapping skills. Some above average pupils are achieving well. Boys and girls attain equally. All pupils are included effectively in the provision for the subject.
123. An analysis of planning and of pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is satisfactory. It is clear that there is an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to use and interpret maps. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, though the quality of marking tends to be variable. Only occasionally is specific guidance given to the pupils on how they might improve. Some use is made of information and communication technology to enhance learning, as in work in Key Stage 1 linked to a 'Monster Friends' project and some work on designing a town, but this is not a widespread feature of teaching.
124. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand that a map is a view from above. They have walked around the village and observed the different kinds of buildings there. They use terms such as 'flat', 'maisonette' and 'semi-detached' to describe types of housing. They follow the travels of Barnaby Bear on his holidays. They have employed their mathematical skills soundly by using simple coordinates to locate features on maps.
125. Pupils in Year 6 use atlases, globes, newspapers, travel brochures and reference books to find out about the physical and human geography of different places. They can locate places, which they have visited or which are in the news, on maps of the United Kingdom or the world. They have a sound understanding of how man affects the environment, often for the worse. They understand clearly how world climates affect human geography, such as the tourism industry. In work linked to history, the pupils know some basic geographical facts about Egypt, such as its climate and the importance of the River Nile for irrigation and electricity. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have a sound understanding of why settlements develop in particular localities, such as gap towns or ports. They compare services in a village such as Little Waltham with those in a large city such as Leeds and they make good use of their literacy skills to describe the pros and cons of living in villages or towns.
126. A clear, updated policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning and procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are soundly based on advice from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, but information from assessment is not really used widely to plan subsequent work. The subject co-ordinator monitors planning, displays and the work in pupil's books. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning in the subject. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' social development. For example, they are made aware of pollution issues and the need for conservation and recycling.

HISTORY

127. Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is close to that expected, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. This judgement is based on an analysis of pupils' work and on discussions with some pupils and on observation of one lesson in Year 6. All pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs and Travellers receive good support and make good progress in relation to their previous attainment. All pupils are included effectively in all aspects of provision for the subject. Boys and girls attain equally.

128. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge of some of the main features of a medieval castle, such as the keep, moat and drawbridge, and what their purpose was. They have used their literacy skills to write sound accounts of their visit to Hedingham Castle and they have used their numeracy skills soundly in measuring 3 metres, in order to appreciate the thickness of the castle walls. They have used their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well to generate Egyptian wall paintings. The pupils are beginning to gain a sound understanding of how things, such as clothing, change over time. They have talked about how Christmases have changed over the years.
129. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of aspects of life in ancient Egypt. They use their literacy skills well to write in the role of Howard Carter, as he discovered Tutankamun's tomb. They have also written effectively about the Pharaohs' journeys to heaven. The pupils understand that information about the past can be gained from various sources, such as the internet, reference books and artefacts. For example, they have used prints of wall paintings to learn about farming in ancient Egypt. They have used their ICT skills well to write imaginative newspaper style reports about aspects of life under the Pharaohs. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have produced some good topic books on invaders and settlers, focussing, in particular, on life in Saxon England. They have a sound understanding of local history, such as how Little Waltham has changed over the years, with the closure of the Post Office and the enlargement of the school.
130. An analysis of planning and of pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in the one lesson observed, for pupils in Years 5 and 6, was good. Here, the teacher used an initial question and answer session effectively to consolidate what the pupils had already learnt about Pharaohs and scribes in ancient Egypt: "Where did scribes come in the social pyramid? Why?" She had prepared lots of resources, including reference books and artefacts, and these helped pupils to develop their research skills. The teacher ensured that the pupils made effective use of their literacy skills as they used note taking and bullet points, prior to producing their finished reports. Selected pupils accessed the internet for information. The teacher encouraged the historical skill of empathy: the pupils had to produce a report as if they were one of the scribes. A specialist from the Learning Services team offered good support for a visually impaired pupil and the teacher and her assistant worked well together as a team in monitoring the pupil's progress and in offering help and advice as necessary. Some of these pupils are very mature and quite challenging in their manners, but the teacher managed them well and succeeded in motivating them to learn. She moved the lesson along very briskly, often setting time limits for activities.
131. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning and procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are soundly based on national guidance, but information from assessment is insufficiently used to plan subsequent work. There is no systematic monitoring of the subject's performance. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning, with a good range of history reference books in the school library. Resources are supplemented by loans of topic books and artefacts from the schools' library service. The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning is satisfactory. The teachers enrich the pupils' learning by organising worthwhile visits to many places, including Hedingham Castle, Kentwell Hall, Braintree Victorian Museum, West Stowe Saxon Village and Colchester Castle. Former pupils at the school long ago have spoken to the pupils about what it was like then. In making the pupils aware of past cultures and of the significance of museums, the subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

132. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment exceeds that expected for their ages. Throughout the school all pupils make good progress and achieve well for their abilities. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good

progress and all pupils, including those from minority groups, are included well in the provision for the subject. At the time of the last inspection standards in this subject were identified as a key issue for development. Improvement since this time inspection has been good.

133. Pupils make very good progress when they are taught in the computer suite. The suite was created as part of a major project to develop the quality of accommodation and was built from funds raised by the endeavours of the governing body. It is one of the main reasons for the rising standards in this subject. Not enough use is made of the computers in classrooms to enhance pupils learning during lessons that are not taught in the computer suite. There is evidence of good work and high standards in pupils' use of information and communication technology in all subjects. However, the amount of work is insufficient overall.
134. Pupils in Year 2 print out tables showing material types and their properties, as part of their work in science. They retrieve single words and lines of words from the electronic memory to compose nursery rhymes for the Christmas cards they are making. They also design monsters, illustrate invitation cards and give instructions for the programmable toy to find its way to the party they are planning.
135. Pupils in Year 6 access the World Wide Web confidently when they wish obtain information to supplement their research for a range of topics: for example, when they find out about the Pharaohs for their work in history. They compare the ease of accessing information from books with that stored electronically, showing considerable understanding when they do this. Their use of computers for word processing is good - for example they edit, improve and present their writing in English to a high standard. Skills of recording, storing and presenting data on charts and graphs are developed less well. Even so standards exceed those expected: for example, in design and technology pupils use computers to make charts that show which customers can identify real butter. In science pupils allocate animals of different kinds into their most suitable habitats in an electronically assembled picture
136. Pupils show good attitudes to their learning in this subject. Most welcome the new technologies and there is no shortage of volunteers to operate the audio-visual equipment in the main hall of the school for assemblies and other school events. Pupils do this well.
137. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress because their teachers use familiar routines to remind them of what they already know about computers. Pupils are required to draw on their previous knowledge and understanding and continue to improve because they learn to do things efficiently and correctly. Older pupils also make good progress because the adults who teach and support them provide good challenges and monitor the progress made by individuals. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and achieve well for their abilities. The ability of pupils to work independently and to experiment confidently is a feature of their learning in this subject.
138. Arrangements to assess the attainment and progress made by pupils in the subject are satisfactory. Teachers use the criteria for attainment identified in their scheme of work and in the National Curriculum requirements for the subject well. However, not enough is done to monitor pupils' access to and use of computers during lessons that are not taught in the computer suite.
139. The quality of subject leadership is good. The work of the co-ordinator in providing a good scheme of work and guidance for her colleagues is a significant contributory factor in the rising standards. Teachers are enthusiastic about this subject and are good at sharing their ideas and helping each other. The school has used additional funding, allocated for the development of the subject, effectively. Part of this funding is used to purchase the services of an additional teacher to support the development of the subject. Her contribution is also a significant factor contributing to the improving standards. Because funding is spent wisely resources for learning are good. However, the school does not have any toys of its own that can be programmed to operate in response to pupils' instructions. These are borrowed from another school. Sometimes the amount of time needed to repair equipment when faults develop is excessive. The school is aware of this and intends to set up another contract for this purpose.

MUSIC

140. By the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Standards in singing are very high. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good. Consequently pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. All pupils are included effectively in all aspects of provision for the subject. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good.
141. An illustration of the high standards attained in singing is evident by listening to the compact disc of pupils singing Christmas songs. This was produced at a studio owned by a parent with the support of professional singers. It is excellent.
142. During the inspection pupils in Year 1 rehearsed 'Rocking Around The Christmas Tree' and 'Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer' for the schools Christmas production. They sang in tune and observed the need to change pace and volume appropriately, holding notes for the correct length of time. Their progress was good because of the good quality of teaching and very good piano accompaniment provided by the visiting teacher. Teachers provide their pupils with good advice that helps them to improve. They also celebrate the good quality of pupils' singing, increasing the confidence with which pupils perform.
143. Pupils in Year 6 maintain the high standards in singing. They sing 'Hark The Herald Angels' and 'Once in Royal David's City' well, responding to the prompts of their teacher to sing with greater expression. This leads to significant improvements during the lesson and builds effectively on pupils' existing good singing. The encouragement of their teacher for them to sing with greater expression is successful when they sing 'Starry Night'. They sing this gentle song superbly.
144. Music and singing in assemblies makes a positive contribution to the high standards attained and pupils benefit from the good piano accompaniment of a learning support assistant. The school also provides for a specialist music teacher who visits schools and teaches all the classes each week. This provision also makes a significant contribution to the high standards attained by pupils.
145. There was no opportunity to hear pupils play instruments or compose music during the inspection. However, teachers' planning and the school's scheme of work clearly show that these important features of the subject take place and that requirements for the subject are met fully.
146. Other activities that make a positive contribution to the quality of provision include - a visit by a selected group of pupils to participate in the Barnardo's fund raising concert at the Royal Albert Hall; a visit to school by brass band musicians, led a by a school governor, to demonstrate their instruments; and demonstration visits by examination musicians from the local high school.
147. Information and communication technology is used well in the subject. For example, pupils manage the production of music for assemblies and other school events. They also use tape recorders and have made their commercially produced compact disc as part of their visit to a recording studio.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. By the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good. Consequently pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. All pupils are included effectively in all aspects of provision for the subject. Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been good.
149. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress based on the good teaching they receive, when their teacher clearly identifies the key features they need to consider to improve their performance.

Because of this their attainment in gymnastics exceeds that expected for their age. They move safely around the hall and on large apparatus. Many of the balances they do show good control with limbs fully extended, resulting in good shapes. They are also capable of jumping from considerable heights and landing safely, showing good control.

150. High standards are maintained in Year 2. Once again this is the result of very good teaching. In dance these pupils interpret the actions of workmen building a house in a sequence of dance movements. Pupils demonstrate movement at different speeds and at different levels. Their teacher selects good demonstrations for the pupils to watch. This enables them to comment on the quality of what they see and to make suggestions for how it might be improved, enhancing their understanding considerably.
151. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 all demonstrate skills in hockey that exceed those expected for their ages. Their teachers are supported well by a student from the local high school who is qualifying as a hockey coach. Together they work very effectively to enhance the skills, knowledge and understanding of their pupils. They provide very good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills and to apply them in small-sided games that are matched well to pupils' abilities. This enables pupils to make very good progress.
152. Provision for the subject is enhanced by effective subject leadership, by strong links with the community and by a very good programme of extra-curricular activities. This includes visits from a coach for Association Football, a coach from the County Cricket Club, and a coach from Chelmsford Hockey Club. The school has a very good swimming pool and employs a specialist swimming teacher for part of each year. This enables pupils to attain high standards in this aspect of the subject. The swimming pool upkeep is paid for by the Friends of the School. They raise a considerable amount of money each year for this purpose.