

INSPECTION REPORT

PARKLANDS INFANT SCHOOL

Romford

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102300

Headteacher: Mrs M Bushell

Reporting inspector: Mr G D Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 9-12 July 2001

Inspection number: 194000

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Gilley
Date of previous inspection:	3-6 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Registered inspector and lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9619	Mr B Miller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Finance and efficiency
23453	Mrs C Cressey	Team inspector	Pupils under five Design and technology Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15011	Mrs M Wallace	Team inspector	Science History Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	
19774	Mrs M Docherty	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Geography	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Parklands Infant School serves a large catchment area to the north of Romford; up to 25 per cent of the pupils are from outside the area and this results in pupils' backgrounds being more mixed. The school roll is 355 with a further 30 full time equivalent children in the nursery; this is bigger than most infant schools nationally. There are four single age, mixed ability classes in each year group. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Slightly more pupils than is typical are from an ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly white European, black African, and Indian, with a small proportion, less than two per cent, with English as an additional language. There are 78 pupils, 22 per cent, identified as having special educational needs; this percentage is high. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs, less than one per cent, and this is below the national average. The amount of pupil mobility is quite high and the school is growing in popularity in the area. The proportion of pupils who enter the school with typical or better attainment for their age is slightly below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Below average standards on entry are raised to above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the age of seven. The teaching is good with a high proportion that is very good or excellent. The leadership and management are very good and are providing a strong educational direction for the work of the school. There is a shared commitment to the pupils and a very good capacity to improve still further. The pupils' attitudes to school are very positive and they are very well cared for, taking their individual needs into account. Taking all factors into account, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Current standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, design and technology and art and design are above those expected.
- The leadership and management are very good; very good management structures have been put in place and the governing body has a good strategic role in directing the work of the school.
- The quality of the teaching is good, and a higher proportion than is found nationally is very good and excellent; teaching of the basic skills is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good; their behaviour and personal development are good and the procedures for monitoring and improving these are very good.
- The parents have very high opinions of the school and they receive very clear information about their pupils' progress.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those who are higher attainers in mathematics, is very good.

What could be improved

- The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then the present headteacher has provided strong and effective leadership in bringing about a number of necessary improvements and innovations, and the overall management of the school is much stronger. The standards have risen in important areas, with good improvements in literacy and numeracy, art and design, and information and communication technology. Very good improvements have been made in design and technology. The quality of teaching has improved and the pupils' very good attitudes have also improved. The key issues from the last inspection have been largely addressed. Planning and assessment are now good. Higher attaining pupils are better provided for. The role of subject coordinators is effective and information and communication technology provision has improved. The European and British cultural issue from last time has been addressed but more remains to be done on multicultural aspects of British society.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	C	C	D	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	C	B	C	D	
Mathematics	D	C	D	D	

The overall results for the tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were broadly the same as most schools in writing but below average in reading and mathematics. When compared with schools with similar pupils, attainment in all three subjects was below average. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was better than is found nationally, not enough pupils reached the higher levels and this lowered overall standards to below average. However, this is something the school has worked hard on this year and the early indications are that in 2001 a much higher proportion of pupils will attain the higher levels. The trends over time indicate that standards in mathematics have risen from a low point in 1996, while in writing they have been maintained at a level similar to the national average. In reading, the standards have been maintained but the national improvement has been greater.

Standards attained by pupils at the end of reception are broadly in line with those expected in each of the areas of learning. A comparison of the pupils' attainment on entry to the school with the standards they attain by the age of seven shows that their long-term achievement is good in reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, and very good in design and technology. In other subjects achievement is satisfactory. Almost every pupil makes the expected or better progress between the ages of three and seven. The current standard of work among seven-year-old pupils is above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They look set to exceed the targets set for them. The targets for next year are challenging but appropriate for the present Year 1 pupils. In all three subjects more pupils are now reaching the higher levels. Standards in design and technology and art and design are good. In geography, history, music, and physical education, standards are in line with those expected. In religious education and information and communication technology, standards are broadly in line with those expected, though pupils need to increase their knowledge of major world religions other than Christianity and of the uses of computers and similar technology in everyday lives. There are no significant variations in standards between pupils of different backgrounds or gender.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils' enthusiasm for school and their interest and involvement in the activities provided are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Standards of behaviour are good in and out of classrooms. The school has worked hard to improve play facilities and lunchtime behaviour and this has been successful. Pupils are orderly and well behaved.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils accept responsibilities appropriate for their ages, and carry them out conscientiously.
Attendance	Broadly average. However, too high a proportion of pupils arrive at school late and miss important starts to literacy lessons.

The youngest pupils are happy and settled in the nursery and reception classes. Throughout the school they are well motivated and show pride in their work. There is little bullying and when it occurs parents and pupils are happy that it is well dealt with. The introduction of 'friendship' stops in the playground has helped improve relationships and make pupils more aware of the needs of others. All parents need to ensure their children get to school by the appropriate time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	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 the teaching is good overall; 99 per cent is satisfactory or better, including 73 per cent that is good or better and 29 per cent that is very good or excellent. This represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection where only 84 per cent was satisfactory and only 12 per cent very good or better. The teaching in the nursery is often very good and in the reception classes is good overall. In Years 1 and 2 it is good, with a significant proportion that is very good. The teaching in English, mathematics and science is good.

The lessons are very well planned and teachers provide and use resources very effectively. Lessons are well managed and the pupils' learning is good. They work at a good pace and with concentration and independence. In a few lessons teachers allow the noise level to get too high and the lesson planning does not always ensure that full use is made of computers and other technology. The good quality of the support staff throughout the school has a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

The teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy is very good and gives pupils a very good foundation for their future learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to make good progress. In addition the teaching of the pupils identified as higher attainers is very good, especially in mathematics where some small group work is provided outside the normal classroom provision. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is in line with that of the rest of the pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, as are the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. The school provides a lot of enrichment opportunities through visits out and visitors to school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils are well provided for both in classrooms and through appropriate withdrawal for small groups or individual work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils with English as an additional language are well provided for in lessons and the majority make similar progress to their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The provision for their social and moral development is good. Pupils are taught right from wrong. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work together, collaborating and sharing resources and activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The care and support provided for pupils is very good and has a positive impact on their learning. The assessment procedures are good and are providing information that is used effectively in planning pupils' work.

The partnership with parents is very good and has improved since the last inspection. It is now having a positive effect on pupils' learning at home and at school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has given the school a clear educational direction for its work and an appropriate focus on improving pupils' standards. The recently improved management structure is proving effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive of the school and committed to it. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. This has improved recently and the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning are good. The effective use of assessment and test data is developing rapidly.

The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school improvement plan is of very good quality and has an appropriate set of priorities. These are well linked to the available budget and the plans for further building developments are appropriate.
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The governing body and school staff work hard to ensure best value in all aspects of their work. The staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate; the accommodation has been improved successfully recently, as has the resources for outdoor play. The distance of the nursery from the school makes effective communication difficult.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The teaching is good. • Their children like school. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children make good progress and the school is helping them to become more mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection findings demonstrate that parents are right to be happy with the school. The inspection evidence supports their positive comments. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities through visits and inviting visitors into school although the range of extracurricular activities such as after school clubs is below that normally found in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of the national tests in 2000 showed that a broadly average proportion of the pupils reached the expected level in writing and mathematics, with a below average proportion doing so in reading. In all three subjects the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was below the national average. The major reason for these results, and the dip in attainment experienced after a good performance in 1999, is the high proportion of the cohort who had special educational needs. The early indications are that this year's results will improve substantially on last year's. The trends over time indicate that standards have risen in mathematics since 1996. In writing, standards have broadly matched the national improvement but, in reading, standards have fallen from a high point in 1997. This is not matched by the inspection findings for the present pupils, whose attainment is above average.
2. The overall standard of current work among seven-year-olds is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. The substantial majority attain levels appropriate for their ages, while a significantly improved number of pupils are on line to attain above the level expected. In reading and mathematics over 90 per cent of the pupils are likely to achieve the expected level with about one fifth reaching the higher level. In writing, a similar proportion will achieve the expected level, but fewer will reach the higher level. In science the current standards among seven-year-olds is above that expected nationally. This is also true of art and design and design and technology. In geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education, standards are broadly in line with those expected. In no subjects are standards lower than they should be.
3. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils with different gender or background, including pupils with English as an additional language. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English and there is no extra support required. However, where one pupil experienced difficulties with some language work, the school quickly recognised this and the teacher provided some appropriate extra support to enable the pupil to take a full part in the lesson. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make very good progress in their learning over time and during lessons. For example, one Year 1 pupil doubled his reading age in one year after receiving support. In a Year 1 English lesson, a pupil with special educational needs read a sentence in the big book successfully and as well as other pupils in the class. In the written task, pupils completed the verbs adding 'ing' and 'ed', well supported by word cards and completing the work alongside more able pupils. Pupils achieve well alongside their peers because the teachers provide work that is challenging but achievable. Individual education plans contain clear targets identifying areas for improvement. Pupils generally achieve their targets.
4. Although it is not a requirement for schools to set targets for performance at age seven, the school has devised some challenging targets that look set to be exceeded this year and achieved next year. The standards in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very good and provide the pupils with a very strong foundation for their work in the junior school.
5. The standard of attainment on entry to the school is below that expected for children of their age. The teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes provides a good foundation and the children make good progress. By the end of reception year, the majority of the children are likely to attain the expected early learning goals, showing that standards have risen since entry to satisfactory levels. This progress continues for the six- and seven-year-olds so that their achievement is good by the time they leave the school. Their learning is particularly strong in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design and design and technology. Although standards in information and communication technology are only in line with those expected, recent improvements to the resources, and the scheme and guidelines for teachers, have resulted in good progress being made and clear gains in pupils' learning in most areas of the programme of study.
6. In English, the school's implementation of the local "catch-up" initiative has helped the lower attaining pupils make better progress than expected. In speaking and listening, attainment is good and pupils speak confidently and listen to teachers and to each other with interest. In reading, standards are good. Pupils read accurately and with fluency, and by the time they are seven are able to read aloud, using the text's punctuation to improve reading expression. Writing standards are good and pupils are able to write independently with generally good spelling and phonetically likely efforts when attempting difficult words. They have developed very good spelling strategies and they punctuate their work well. In mathematics, higher attaining seven-year-old pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of multiplication tables in problem solving. They are able to identify the correct operation needed to solve problems and carry this through to a

successful conclusion. Middle attaining pupils show a sound understanding of the use of Venn diagrams. They work with numbers to 100 and are secure in their knowledge and understanding of odd and even numbers. Less able pupils have a sound level of basic number skills in addition and subtraction and are beginning to develop their multiplication skills. The pupils identified as gifted and talented in mathematics are provided with extra teaching on a weekly basis and this is helping them to attain well above average standards.

7. In science, seven-year-old pupils have good standards of investigative and observational skills. They understand the needs of living things. Younger pupils have a good understanding of forces. In design and technology, pupils develop good skills in designing and making. They build up these skills over a range of tasks as six- and seven-year-olds until they take part in a very good project, designing and making teddy bears. The strengths in art and design are the pupils' observational drawing skills and the very imaginative work they produce as part of studying famous artists. In information and communication technology, pupils now use the Internet and are confident when using CD ROM and other software to back up skills taught in lessons. In particular, they are developing a good understanding of the use of databases for processing information. In other subjects, pupils' learning is broadly typical for their ages. In religious education, pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity but their knowledge of other major world religions is less well developed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Children under five have very good and sometimes excellent attitudes to their work. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. They listen attentively to the adults, respond enthusiastically and willingly to tasks, and work hard to do their best. They are eager to learn and often become totally absorbed in their work. Behaviour is good and children work very well together. They make decisions about their work, contribute to the school council meetings and take responsibility for keeping their classrooms tidy. This has a significant impact on their personal development and self-esteem. In turn this gives them confidence in their ability to learn and try out new things. They display a mature and sensible attitude towards their work of which they are justifiably proud.
9. In the infant classes, children's attitudes are very good and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. Behaviour continues to be good. Their attitudes to school and their behaviour have a positive effect on the educational standards achieved. Pupils settle well to their work and sustain their concentration and interest throughout the lesson, particularly where the teaching is good. When appropriate they are quiet and attentive while at other times they are enthusiastic and keen to answer questions. Pupils work hard and often display tenacity and determination when solving problems such as observed in English, mathematics and information and communication technology lessons. Most pupils are keen to succeed and take a real pride in the presentation of their work.
10. Pupils with special educational needs are happy and secure within their class groups and the smaller support groups. They relate very well to their classmates and adults. These very good relationships give pupils the confidence to join in with all school activities and explore new areas of their learning. This was observed in a Year 1 class when a pupil with special educational needs volunteered to sing a song in a show, share and tell session. The pupil's confidence was helped by the encouragement from the class teacher and the obvious appreciation of the whole class. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and they respond to this very well. Support staff and teachers are skilled in applying behaviour strategies and pupils receive clear guidelines and expectations for behaviour and attitudes to work.
11. Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school but opportunities to develop their capacity for personal study and research skills, is adversely affected by the limited access the pupils have to the library. They work well without direct supervision, for example, in groups during the literacy hour.
12. The good standards of behaviour identified in the previous report have been maintained. The pupils are polite and friendly and follow instructions carefully. Play times and lunch times are social occasions. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner showing respect for the school's property and buildings. The very few pupils who display challenging behaviour are managed well. There were no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.
13. Relationships are good. Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other and show respect to teachers and other adults. No bullying was evident during the inspection, and parents and pupils were happy that if it should occur it would be well dealt with. Pupils work productively in pairs or groups; they listen carefully to each other and share ideas and resources well. During discussions, pupils were happy and confident to put forward an argument and explain their viewpoint.

14. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take personal responsibility around the school are good. The older pupils show responsible and mature attitudes when looking after the younger ones. All members of the newly formed school council take part in sensible discussions and promote their ideas showing considerable respect for each other.
15. Attendance at around 94 per cent is satisfactory and in line with the national average. There is no unauthorised absence recorded but a small number of pupils are absent during term time for more than 10 days, on family holidays. Punctuality, whilst good for the vast majority of pupils, is unsatisfactory for a small number who arrive up to 20 minutes after registration. This results in them missing important introductions to lessons and disrupts the start of the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of the teaching is good overall; 99 per cent is satisfactory or better, including 73 per cent that is good or better and 29 per cent that is very good or excellent. This represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection where only 84 per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better and only 12 per cent was very good or excellent. The teaching in the nursery is often very good and in the reception classes is good overall. In Years 1 and 2 it is good, with a significant proportion that is very good. The teaching in English, mathematics and science is good.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. All teachers and members of the support staff provide a very good level of assistance that effectively contributes to pupils' achievement. The provision is flexible and is adjusted depending on individual needs. This makes a positive contribution to the good rate of progress. Pupils work towards their targets within the classroom or in smaller withdrawal groups, depending on the specific needs of individual pupils. A significant strength is the very good relationship pupils have with the coordinator for special educational needs and with the support staff, and this contributes towards their growing confidence and the standards achieved. Pupils have full access to the curriculum. Class teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils and they plan work that closely matches pupils' needs.
18. The teachers have worked hard to identify pupils in all classes who are higher attainers, and who would benefit from extra support. The majority of lessons are planned so that the activities and tasks provided are aimed appropriately at the abilities of the pupils. Teachers in all classes know the abilities of their pupils well and ensure that, for most lessons, especially in English and mathematics, there are enough extra activities to provide for the more able child and those who finish their work quickly. In addition, a group of higher attaining pupils in mathematics are provided with some extra support through a weekly group session. This gives them an excellent opportunity to improve and develop their skills and in the session observed they were working at a high level of attainment. The teaching of this group is excellent and is very effective in challenging and extending their knowledge and understanding of the subject.
19. Teachers have not yet specifically monitored ethnic minority achievements to ensure that all pupils are achieving high enough levels of attainment. Such monitoring is carried out to look at the performance of boys and girls and this is a good development. The school has a significant percentage of ethnic minority pupils. However, the English language competence of these pupils is high. During the inspection only one pupil, learning with English as an additional language, was thought to be underachieving because the linguistic demands of the next level work, specifically in sentence grammar, was beyond her language competence. The school was aware of this need and working to provide support.
20. The excellent and very good teaching is largely characterised by very good relationships between the teacher and the class, very well planned lessons which make exceptional use of the time available and a clear focus on the intended objectives of the lesson thus making it clear to pupils what they are learning and how it fits into their wider understanding in the subject. The best lessons also had a significant level of challenge for the pupils, which, mixed with the very good relationships, encouraged pupils to aim high and extend their achievements well. For example in Year 2, the use of mathematical games ensured that the higher attainers had sufficient activities to keep up the challenge provided by the teacher in the introduction to the lesson. Equally positive is the planning and use of appropriate resources. In one excellent science lesson, the teacher provided very good resources to illustrate how toys move in different ways and she provided a good range of opportunities for the pupils to explore these. In outstanding lessons in the nursery, activities are exciting, capturing children's imagination and making them very eager learners. Staff are well organised to provide very effective support as children work and play independently. Questions are challenging and carefully phrased to develop children's thinking and provide them with opportunities to choose and articulate their own decisions.

21. Where the teaching is good, lessons are well planned and prepared and based on pupils' prior attainment. The learning needs of the pupils are met and the teachers have good skills at managing the pupils. Questioning skills are good and used effectively to deepen and extend pupils' understanding, especially during the oral introduction to lessons. Where the teaching is less successful, and in the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching observed, teachers allow noise levels to rise too high and this makes it difficult for pupils to concentrate. There are occasions when the teachers' management skills are less good and the giving out of resources is badly managed, causing some disturbance to the flow of the lesson. However, very little of the teaching demonstrated these characteristics and the vast majority of the lessons were successful in assisting and enabling good and very good learning. The teachers' planning does not make enough reference to the use of information and communication technology.
22. In all classes, and particularly in the nursery, the support staff and learning assistants have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning. For example, they are usually aware of the learning objectives for the lesson and how their work fits in to these. This occurred in the nursery during a baking session. They have good relationships with the pupils who show respect towards them. Parents are also deployed effectively to improve pupils' learning, such as when they work with small groups researching historical information on the Internet in Year 2.
23. In the nursery and reception classes, all staff have a secure understanding of the nationally agreed early learning goals. Lesson plans and schemes provide a very good framework for learning. They are very clear and detailed with appropriate learning objectives linked to the early learning goals. Staff recognise the importance of play and first hand experiences and play plans provide daily opportunities for children to engage in independent play. This has a very positive effect on the good progress children make towards the early learning goals. Experiences are interesting and challenging and are focused very closely on what children need to learn in order to make the expected progress towards the early learning goals. Activities are well organised and appropriate to promote communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The reception class teachers carefully plan the day to ensure there is a good balance of teacher directed activities and child initiated ones. During the morning considerable emphasis is placed on developing children's basic skills and this has a very positive effect on the progress children make in Key Stage 1. However, staff in the reception classes do not always provide sufficient effective support for those activities children choose for themselves and as a result there are missed opportunities to extend learning and improve progress further. These activities sometimes lack sufficient challenge and quality to extend children's learning and ensure they gain the maximum benefit from the learning opportunities provided. All staff use praise and encouragement effectively to promote positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. Children are given very clear instructions about what it is they are expected to do.
24. All staff in the nursery and reception classes contribute to a useful assessment and record system which indicates children's progress towards the early learning goals. Use of assessment information in the rest of the school is good in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. Staff work very well together and this has a positive effect on the quality of the learning particularly in the more formal activities in the reception classes. Links between the nursery and reception are being developed to ensure children's knowledge and understanding is built upon as they move between classes. This should have a positive effect on the quality of the teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage.
25. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are having a very positive impact on standards and on the teaching of basic skills. They have also worked hard to plan a curriculum that covers all it should and has appropriate cross-curricular links between subjects. For example, good opportunities are provided in science and geography for the use of numeracy skills in areas such as data handling. In design and technology, Year 2 pupils used very good measuring skills when making felt teddy bears.
26. The pace of learning in most subjects is good and in most lessons meets the needs of all pupils. In literacy and numeracy the learning of the basic skills is good and provides a good foundation for when they move to the junior school. In science, learning has improved since the last inspection and, as in English and mathematics has resulted in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels improving. In art and design, learning is good. In information and communication technology, learning is good in those areas of the programme of study that are consistently taught in all classes; not enough is done to teach pupils about the use of this technology in the real world. In design and technology, learning is very good. There is no evidence that the pace of learning is different between boys and girls, or between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory and typical of most schools with pupils of this age.

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

27. At the time of the previous inspection the curriculum was broad and balanced although aspects of design technology, music and information technology had weaknesses. These issues have been addressed well. The school now meets all the needs of its pupils very effectively, apart from minor shortcomings in information and communication technology, helping them to flourish through the provision of a good range of high quality learning opportunities in Years 1 and 2 and the Foundation Stage.
28. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 meets the needs of pupils very well. In the nursery and reception classes the curriculum is based on the nationally agreed six areas of learning and emphasis is placed on pupil's personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The school is only just developing a cohesive scheme to cover the two years of the recently introduced Foundation Stage. When completed this should have a positive effect on improving the curriculum further and ensuring that the reception classes build even more effectively on what children know and can do as they enter the school.
29. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 has been reviewed to take account of the Curriculum 2000 and policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, though the policy for information and communication technology is not yet consistently implemented in all classes. A well-planned curriculum ensures that all aspects of all subjects are taught and that skills, knowledge and understanding are effectively developed across the school. Careful curriculum planning makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning by identifying clearly how the learning will be continuous and progressive in classes. Sufficient time is now allocated to all subjects and considerable thought has been given to the planning of the timetable to ensure the pupils' interests and levels of concentrations are well catered for.
30. All statutory requirements for the curriculum are met and the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented with enthusiasm and rigour. They have provided a good structure to lessons and are having a very good effect in raising standards. The requirements of the local agreed syllabus for religious education are fully met. The school has a very broad and balanced curriculum, which is stimulating and challenging. It places considerable emphasis on nurturing high quality personal and social skills and this has very positive effect on pupils' standards of achievements and their attitudes to learning. Arrangements for pupils' personal, health and sex education are good. There are agreed policies for health, sex and drugs education in place. Time is made available each week to develop these areas in ways which are appropriate for the age of the pupils. Although the policy for information and communication technology aims for the programme of study to be taught in full, practice is inconsistent. The use of computers in other subjects is underdeveloped but the coordinator is aware of this and is working to remedy these minor shortcomings.
31. The school has a very clear commitment to equality of opportunity. The organisation of classes and teaching groups has a good impact on equality of access and opportunity by ensuring that the National Curriculum is taught to all pupils. Teacher's planning takes good account of pupils' age, attainment, gender, ethnicity and special educational needs through the provision of appropriate teaching methods and resources. The school works hard to create equal opportunities through targeted intervention such as, for example, as has happened with boys' writing and special educational needs work. There is little opportunity for ethnic minority pupils to see their own experience reflected in the curriculum. A good example of this did occur, however, when the mother of a child of African heritage brought in her new baby and talked to pupils about traditional ceremonies surrounding its birth. The similarities and differences between the common experiences of celebrating a new life in different cultures helped pupils understand the multicultural world in which they live and the way different families conduct their lives.
32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and the good range of learning opportunities provided by the school. The provision within and outside the classroom is good. There is a detailed policy that identifies intervention through a 'catch up' programme. Pupils are targeted and those who need it receive regular support for reading. The school has identified a group of higher achieving pupils. These are identified in each class and work is planned to cater for their needs. These pupils receive a weekly mathematics lesson and they benefit from the excellent lesson and challenging pace. The school has plans to extend this provision to literacy next year.
33. Links with the community are good. Visits to farms, parks, churches and local shops and supermarkets extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of their immediate environment and give them a coherent view of life in their community. Links with the police, fire service, health authority, local clergy, and shops also enrich pupils' learning. Although visits out of school are limited, the school arranges a good range of visitors and events such as a zoologist, theatre and science workshops. The science workshop is particularly effective in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials, electricity and water. The provision for extra curricular activities is less well developed. Parents have expressed concern at the lack of extra curricular activities held in school. The governing body discusses this at regular intervals and have agreed that at the present time there is a lack of space and time to provide such activities.

34. The school is making good progress in providing personal, social and health education, and citizenship, and will fully implement the personal, social and health curriculum when a model scheme of work is published later this year. Through its own audit the school has identified practice that is already established, for example class discussion times and sex education, and is now working to provide a fully developed broad and balanced curriculum by September 2001. The staff are implementing a 'Healthy School Initiative' which will be launched in September, with children encouraged to make good choices in terms of healthy eating and personal safety. Pupils are developing a sense of responsibility and the confidence to express themselves well in class. For example, one class was introduced to a story called "The Tough Princess" and confidently judged the book to be an "alternative" princess story. Pupils express ideas on issues that will affect their lives, for example on the need for more apparatus and activities to achieve more interesting and safer playtimes. Such ideas are discussed in class, and class representatives argue a case on a classmates' behalf in the school council. In this way, pupils are beginning to understand how their views can be represented through an intermediary and how they can make things happen through due process. Pupils also discuss the importance of the "friendship stop" in the playground, which offers isolated pupils a practical stratagem to alert other pupils to their need for a friend to play with. It also allows pupils in the playground to respond positively when they see a pupil needing a friend. Currently, adults in the playground are helping pupils to make these links but there is also evidence of spontaneous interactions between pupils that will help them in other settings.
35. Before pupils transfer to the junior school information on their progress is exchanged and teachers from the juniors visit pupils in their classes. Pupils spend time at their new school familiarising themselves with routines, such as assemblies and lunchtimes, to secure a happy and secure transfer. Staff exchange expertise, for example, musical expertise from the juniors is helping to improve teacher confidence and this is having an impact on standards and the enjoyment of the subject.
36. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good, and for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The school's strength in this aspect of pupils' learning is the way it respects pupils' ideas and values, and encourages them to contribute throughout lessons. Teachers listen carefully and sensitively to pupils' contributions and expect pupils to do the same. This creates a classroom environment that has a clear impact on pupils' confidence and on learning.
37. The school provides some limited opportunity to reflect on experiences in ways that develop pupils' spiritual awareness, for example through quiet moments and prayers in assembly, discussions in religious education lessons, and through some curriculum activities. For example, in one class children were moved by the phenomenon of a moth emerging from a chrysalis, and in another when a pupil with learning difficulties produced beautiful music on the drums. However, teachers do not plan sufficiently to develop pupils' spiritual awareness or to foster a sense of a wider reality. For example, pupils walk into assembly accompanied by taped music but there is no reference to it before the main part of the assembly, nor time set aside to listen and reflect on it. Unplanned opportunities for spiritual development were observed when pupils talked about special moments in their lives, for example in a lesson planning a school visit to Southend, a child talked about the loss of her cat and was about ready to accept that it was gone for ever. She raised fundamental questions with her friends about where it would go if it was dead. In English books, there was little evidence of pupils writing and reflecting on their own experiences to help them understand the world they live in and to share common childhood dilemmas.
38. The school works well to help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, and children accept the need for rules and respond well in class and around the school, even when not directly supervised. Pupils generally respect the rights and needs of others to work in an orderly and calm classroom. They cooperate well, working in groups and pairs, allowing teachers and support staff to give appropriately targeted support to particular groups. They are aware of their own and other pupils' achievements and are realistic when talking about their own particular gifts and talents. During the "Achievement Assembly" they generously recognise other pupils' work with appropriate respect. The school encourages all pupils to take responsibility when required and to develop an understanding of the need for cooperation when working in the school community. They accept group rules and understand that, for example, running and calling out is acceptable in the playground but not inside the school building, particularly in classrooms. Strong relationships with staff and clear expectation help them develop good standards of behaviour and self-discipline. During "circle time" and discussions in lessons, particularly about the books they are reading, they demonstrate consideration of others' points of view. The adults in the school offer very good behaviour models, showing respect for pupils, high regard for their contributions in class and sensitivity when things go wrong. They use praise well, which helps pupils develop awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and develop good behaviour management strategies. Pupils are encouraged to put out and return resources before and after lessons, which they do willingly, and work in books demonstrates pride in their work. They also have the opportunity to take an active part in decision-making as members of the school council. This allows them to voice the thoughts of the class they represent, not just their own personal views.

39. The school has made a start in promoting the traditions of the culturally diverse British society. For example, in physical education pupils are introduced to English country dancing and also dances to celebrate Hindu and Sikh festivals. An assembly considered the cultural elements of Chinese New Year and in the reception year, where pupils read a story with an East African setting, learning was enriched by extending the work into the traditional fabric-painting of Kenya and the national colours in bead-making. The pupils are offered opportunities to look at picture books that present domestic life in Kenya, and this brings cohesion to their learning and acknowledgement of a culture outside Romford. Opportunities for such enrichment are not as evident in English, art and design, music or in religious education beyond a knowledge of world religions. The small percentage of ethnic minority pupils in the school do not have enough of their family and personal history reflected in the curriculum and all pupils remain unaware of the contributions made by ethnic minorities in a wide range of achievement. However, in a history lesson on Florence Nightingale, a passing reference was made to the Jamaican nurse, Mary Seacole.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The provision the school makes for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is very good and continues to be one of the school's strengths as it was at the last inspection. This has a positive effect on the quality of education provided.

41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good and a continuous improvement on the previous inspection. The school has done a lot of work to agree and implement strategies for behaviour management. These strategies include very good use of and training for teaching assistants and prominent displays of rules that have been discussed and agreed with the pupils. The "Golden Book" award system encourages positive behaviour and attitudes from the pupils and this is reinforced through assemblies, circle time and the school council meetings. The school is successful in its aim to "develop an awareness of self and sensitivity to others, habits of self discipline and acceptable behaviour". All adult members of staff are consistent in their approach and expectation of behaviour and are good role models for pupils.

42. There are very good systems for monitoring attendance and effective working relationships with the educational welfare service. Registration is carried out efficiently but the need for punctuality is not reinforced enough. Records of attendance fulfil statutory requirements.

43. The school keeps detailed records and documentation on all pupils with special educational needs. This ensures they are knowledgeable about individual difficulties pupils might encounter and ensures they receive the appropriate support and guidance. All members of staff are totally committed to pupils in their care. They all possess information about pupils' learning difficulties. All pupils receive excellent attention to pastoral care and this is an important element in the provision. Pupils are encouraged by all members of staff to become independent in their learning and social skills. Both within the classroom and in the smaller groups, staff are effective in establishing a supportive environment where pupils feel secure and can develop their self-esteem and confidence. From an early stage assessments are used effectively to identify attainment, progress and targets for further development. Provision changes as their needs change. Informative records of each pupil with special educational needs enable progress to be tracked over time. These records enable teachers to identify any problems and plan future targets effectively.

44. The assessment and recording systems in place are good, and provide a detailed method of tracking pupils' attainment. The recording of mathematics and English test results has been improved and coordinators are beginning to analyse the data in more detail to enable teachers to plan work intended to address any weaknesses. Regular assessments of reading ages and progress in other subjects, helps create a complete picture of pupils' progress during a year. The recently introduced pupil profiles enable a clear record of progress to be kept and these will be passed on to the junior school. These records are used effectively to create end of year reports and to inform the teachers' meetings with parents.

45. Very good child protection procedures are in place. There is a policy and staff have undertaken on-going training to ensure they are aware of the issues. There is effective liaison with the school nurse who is a regular visitor. There are very good systems for monitoring health and safety by the headteacher, site manager and governing body. The school is kept clean and well maintained by the site manager and his staff. The luncheon period is well supervised by an appropriate number of mid-day assistants. There is always a member of staff present to help pupils in need and a separate welfare room where first aid can be administered.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents view Parklands Infants as a very good school. Overall, the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good and an improvement on the previous inspection in 1997. However, the findings of the inspection agree with parents that the school does not provide a sufficient range of activities for pupils outside lessons, although they are looking to provide more in the future.
47. Parental involvement in pupils' learning is good. Parents are strongly encouraged to be involved in the work of the school and the formation of a parent link group is one such initiative. This group has been instrumental in developing a home-school agreement as well as a homework policy. Parents help in the classroom, assist with visits and help organise fund raising events. Most parents find it easy to approach the school with questions or concerns and those who have pupils with special educational needs are closely involved with their child's work.
48. In the nursery and reception classes, parents are involved in their children's learning through sharing storybooks at home or, whenever they can, working alongside their children in the nursery or reception classes. An interesting and informative notice board and newsletters keep parents informed of their children's learning and encourages them to build on the activities the school provides to enhance children's learning.
49. There are very good partnership links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. All parents are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children and they are closely involved in target setting and supporting their children. The individual education plans clearly identify how parents can contribute to the provision.
50. The quality of information provided for parents is very good and an improvement on the previous inspection. Newsletters keep parents very well informed about day-to-day matters as well as curriculum areas that are being covered in the ensuing period. The prospectus is informative and both this and the annual governors report to parents, fulfil statutory requirements. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress through meetings with staff and good, detailed end of year academic reports.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management are very good. The school has improved a great deal under the present headteacher, and together with the key staff and governing body, she is providing the school with a very clear educational focus and direction. The major impetus behind recent changes has been to improve standards and to raise the level of attainment of the pupils. It is evident from the inspection findings that this is being successful. Strong and effective teamwork is evident in all year groups and among the senior staff. All adults are motivated by the desire to do the best possible for the children, and the majority of the parents agree with this. Since the last inspection the quality of the teaching has improved, standards have risen, the pupils' very good attitudes and good behaviour have been maintained and the premises have been added to and improved.
52. The school has a very good set of aims and objectives. A particularly positive aspect of them is the emphasis the headteacher has put on her personal responsibility for the provision. The aims encompass the desire to create an effective learning community and lead to a mission statement based on the importance of children for all of our futures. The curricular aims are appropriately focused on pupils' academic achievements and provide a practical background to the school's strategic decision making. The aims are shared by all adults in the school and are very well reflected in the work of the school.
53. The senior staff and subject coordinators make a very good contribution to the management of the school. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly understood. The recent formation of a leadership team of senior staff and a management team made up of other staff with extra responsibilities is already providing improved communication throughout the school and there is a clear structure for delegation of responsibilities. The policy and provision for performance management is appropriate. The provision for newly qualified teachers is good. They have visited a range of other schools and attended a good variety of training courses, as well as observing practice within the school. Coordinators in the core subjects have had the bulk of the available time for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. The coordinators for other subjects now need to be given similar opportunities to spread the existing good practice.
54. The headteacher, with appropriate support from the school's linked adviser, has undertaken a range of monitoring in different year groups and subjects. She maintains records of her observations, and those of the coordinators, and shares her findings with the teacher concerned. The teachers work well in year teams, planning and sharing ideas and suggestions for improvements to their practice. This has led, for example, to changes to the assessment arrangements in mathematics. The monitoring arrangements include checking teachers' planning and looking at pupils' work. The systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are also more deeply defined for the core subjects but good systems are developing in most other areas as well.
55. The management by the coordinator, headteacher and governing body of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The governor for special educational needs is fully appreciative and supportive of the work of the school. She visits the school regularly and meets with the coordinator. Funds for special educational needs are well used and pupils' interests are foremost when planning the budget and funding allocation. The coordinator supports pupils and teachers very well throughout the school. She is committed to providing the best possible support for all pupils with special educational needs and is very well supported by the very good team of learning support staff. Together they form a very effective partnership that is the foundation of the very good provision. Resources for special educational needs are good and the coordinator has appropriate plans to extend the provision for information and communication technology in classes.
56. The work of the governing body is good. All statutory duties are fulfilled and the business of the governing body is appropriately conducted. There is a good range of committees who take on part of the governing body's work with clear terms of reference. The governors are kept appropriately informed about the work of the school through the headteacher's report and through an analysis of test results that is growing in detail each year. They are very supportive of the school and committed to it, while remaining aware of its strengths and weaknesses, and what needs to be done to improve. The literacy, numeracy and special needs governors have visited the school on a number of occasions. They spend time in lessons and report back to the full governing body on their experiences. This helps inform the governors' decision-making process.
57. The school improvement plan is of very good quality and provides a very clear educational direction to the work of the staff. The plans are appropriate and focused on raising attainment. They have clear and detailed action plans. Teachers and the governing body are appropriately involved in the production of the plan and it is monitored regularly through senior management meetings and governing body meetings. The school has appropriate targets for the next two years to raise attainment in English and mathematics and is taking appropriate action to achieve these. The plan is written by the headteacher after appropriate consultations and evaluations of the progress made in the previous year's plan.

58. Financial planning is very good and supports educational developments very well. Audits are carried out at regular intervals by the local authority and the school responds to these appropriately. The governing body has recently appointed a finance officer to assist with the growing workload. The governors have a good understanding of the school's financial situation as spending is kept within the budget. The school applies the principles of best value very effectively to all their spending decisions. Whilst there is a large carry forward figure, it is clearly planned for and linked with the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Governors ensure funds received for the education of children with special educational needs, and all other grants received by the school, are spent very effectively.
59. The accommodation is appropriate for the number of pupils and well maintained by the caretaking staff, but the school does not have many free areas where small group teaching or special educational needs teaching can take place. The good plans for the moving and extension of the administration area will also have the benefit of freeing the old office area for this work. The grounds are satisfactory, and have been greatly improved recently through the addition of more markings and activities for pupils to use during outdoor play and at lunchtimes. The nursery is very distant from the rest of the school and this means that the pupils and the staff are more isolated than would normally be the case, although the staff work hard to overcome this. However, the room has been turned into a pleasant learning environment and the outdoor space is sufficient as are the play and learning resources.
60. The resources are appropriate in all areas. The library is good but is not fully used as a resource due to its heavy timetabling as a group classroom. The staffing ratio is appropriate and there is a satisfactory number of classroom support assistants.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection. In order that these continue, the very good school improvement plan should be put into practice. In addition, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- improve the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development by:
 - planning more opportunities for reflection and cultural awareness across the curriculum;
 - making better use of the opportunities provided by assemblies;
 - ensuring enough emphasis is put on multicultural learning, especially in art, music and writing;
 - improving the monitoring of the achievement of pupils from ethnic minorities to ensure they make sufficient progress.*
(Paragraphs 36, 37, 39, 105, 130 and 138)

62. In addition, the governing body should consider including the following minor weaknesses in their action plan:

- provide more opportunities for guided reading (Paragraph 84);*
- seek to improve the punctuality of pupils (Paragraphs 15 and 42);
- improve the effectiveness with which other major world religions are taught (Paragraphs 7 and 135-139);*
- improve the quality of independent learning activities for children in the reception classes (Paragraphs 23 and 63-76);
- increase the frequency and regularity with which computers are used in other subjects (Paragraphs 121-125).*

NB Items marked with (*) are already identified for action by the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	14	32	18	1	0	0
Percent	10	19	44	25	1	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. The percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	355
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	40

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	78

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	55
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.8	School data	0
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	54	52	106

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	43	48
	Girls	49	50	49
	Total	84	93	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (94)	88 (99)	92 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	46	47
	Girls	50	48	48
	Total	89	94	95
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (95)	89 (95)	90 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	229
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	217

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	776 438
Total expenditure	743 208
Expenditure per pupil	1 940
Balance brought forward from previous year	72 737
Balance carried forward to next year	105 967

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	385
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	37	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	44	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	46	6	1	5
The teaching is good.	65	34	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	48	13	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	27	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	39	5	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	43	45	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	60	33	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	26	25	11	14

Other issues raised by parents

All issues raised by parents are in the summary report.

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

63. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is in the sixty-place nursery and four reception classes. Provision is consistently strong in the nursery, mixed in the reception classes, and good overall. When children enter the reception classes they are usually organised into three classes, containing in equal numbers children who have benefited from nursery education and other, mainly older, reception age pupils. A fourth reception class contains younger children who have had little or no pre-school experiences. This enables the school more accurately to meet the needs of all the children and provide suitable learning taking into account children's prior knowledge and understanding. As at the last inspection, teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes continues to be good overall with significant strengths in the nursery. The curriculum is based on the nationally agreed six areas of learning and provides the children with broad and balanced experiences. The nursery is particularly effective in providing a wide range of challenging and focused experiences to promote early learning in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. In the reception classes, structured activities promote skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematics but independent learning opportunities are not always as effective as they should be.
64. The overall attainment levels of most children entering the nursery are below those expected nationally. A significant number of children have very poorly developed speaking and listening skills. Teaching in the nursery is very good and this has a very positive effect on children's learning. As a result, most children achieve well and by the time they move into the reception classes they have made significant gains in their learning. This is confirmed by baseline assessment. The reception classes build satisfactorily on this very good start, particularly through shared teaching and direct teaching to groups. By the end of the reception year, over 75 per cent of the children are meeting the early learning goals in all six areas of learning, which is about average when compared to other schools and shows good achievement when compared to attainment on entry to the nursery. The majority of children who do not meet the expected standard are those who have not benefited from the school's nursery, are younger children, or have special educational needs. These children make good and sometimes very good progress and achieve well in relation to what they know and can do on entry to the school.
65. Teaching in the early years is good overall. Over seventy-five per-cent of teaching is good or better and in the nursery 80 per cent is very good or excellent. Teachers and classroom support assistants are enthusiastic and have high expectations of the children.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and progress is good. By the end of the reception year, the proportion of children with typical or better attainment for their age is the same as most schools. Children very obviously enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers, immediately becoming involved in the range of activities available to them. They are eager to learn new skills and put effort and concentration into their tasks. Emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong and children respond well to the rules and routines of nursery and school life. Staff explain to children the consequences of their actions sensitively, encouraging them to consider the feelings of other children and to say sorry. Children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as number and sound games, computer games, role-play and outdoor play. Older children work independently for sustained periods of time, even when occasionally activities are not as challenging as they might be. Children respond positively to challenging tasks, such as writing their own sentences or improving their number formation. Relationships are positive and children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences.
67. Teaching of personal, social and emotional development is good and the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. In the nursery there are well-planned opportunities for children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of their own uniqueness and the wonder of the world around them. Religious education lessons and circle times build effectively on this in the reception classes as they consider their own place in the family and the importance of friendship and being kind to each other.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Teaching is good. The majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and standards overall are satisfactory. In both year groups, communication, language and literacy are

given a very high priority. On entry to school, children's language for thinking and communicating is often restricted. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. In the nursery, emphasis is placed on listening carefully to the adults and following instructions. Children follow instructions to make gingerbread men and listen carefully to taped stories and music played by their teachers. By the time children move into the reception classes they are becoming attentive listeners. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. In the nursery class, children are encouraged to share conversations with adults and challenging questions and comments are used to promote children's thinking. Structured play situations, such as the 'fire station', encourage children to use imaginative vocabulary as they create their own dramatic situations. They use language effectively to express feelings or persuade each other to take on a particular role or 'not to tell' if a misdemeanour has occurred. In the reception classes, children are becoming confident speakers who enjoy initiating conversations with adults. For example, in one class children excitedly planned a zoo and confidently expressed their knowledge and understanding as to why they needed a fence around the lions and a safe place for the children to play. Very clearly labelled displays, alphabet and sound friezes and individual name cards in both nursery and reception help children develop early reading and writing skills.

69. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper as they draw pictures of snails collected on an exciting 'snail hunt'. More formal structured activities in the reception class develop children's early reading and writing skills well. By the end of reception a significant majority of children draw detailed pictures and write their own simple sentences using familiar letters, sounds and words. Children are learning to recognise their own printed names and older children write their own names, joining their letters and using capital and small letters with increasing accuracy. Considerable emphasis is placed on the learning of sounds and children use this knowledge effectively when reading independently. In the nursery a very comfortable book corner and a library area promote a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. Children are often seen choosing a book to 'read' to themselves or to share with an adult sitting on a large comfy chair or cushion. Book corners in the reception classes are not always used as effectively as in the nursery and children have fewer opportunities to curl up with a book or to access books for information. All children take games or books home on a regular basis to share with family members and this has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read.

Mathematical development

70. Teaching is good and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year; overall, standards are satisfactory. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. In the nursery, children learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real situations, such as when they weigh out the ingredients to make gingerbread or make imaginary telephone calls to the fire brigade. Staff use number rhymes such as 'five little speckled frogs' to develop children's ideas of early addition and subtraction. Problem solving is developed as children decide how many are allowed to play at each activity. In all classes children have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Through well-planned topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement.
71. In the reception classes, very good use is made of routines, such as registration, to encourage counting and simple addition and subtraction. By the end of the reception year, higher attaining children count, match and order numbers to twenty and can do simple formal addition problems. Children respond positively to challenging tasks involving 'big' numbers and take great pride in being able to count in tens to a hundred. They enjoy mental problems and are developing very useful strategies such as 'holding a number in their heads' and then counting on. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with two and three-dimensional shapes, small world toys or emptying and filling containers in the sand play area. However, in the reception classes a lack of planned adult intervention and support in some activities, occasionally results in missed opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of mathematics even further.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Teaching is good and standards are satisfactory. The majority of children are developing an interest and awareness of the world around them and will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children's natural curiosity is developed well across all classes. In the nursery children excitedly go on a 'snail hunt' and use bug boxes and magnifying glasses to examine the markings and antennae on their finds before carefully returning the creatures to their natural habitat. Older children in reception learn about the different features of animals and can identify animals from different countries such as Africa. Children in the reception class observe the changes that occur as pasta is cooked. In the nursery and in reception the celebration of festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year help children to develop an understanding of their own culture and that of other children. As children move into the reception classes, teachers develop children's understanding of European culture well and children confidently answer their

names in Italian. However, there is less evidence of knowledge and understanding of some of the other cultures represented in the school and surrounding neighbourhoods being developed. Children learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. The recent past is brought alive for reception children as they examine how their grandparents dressed their babies. Designing and making are particularly well developed in the nursery. Children work independently to cut, fold and join a range of materials. In the reception classes, activities are less frequent and children have fewer opportunities to work independently and make their own choices about the suitability of materials. The computer is a popular choice and many children are confident and competent in using the mouse and using different programs to support their learning in mathematics and language and literacy. Construction toys are used well in the nursery to encourage children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work. The reception classes do not always extend this learning sufficiently well and activities sometimes lack challenge and purpose.

Physical development

73. Teaching is good, standards satisfactory, and most children will attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Considerable emphasis is placed on the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise to develop healthy minds and bodies. Children's natural exuberance and energy is catered for very well in the nursery. A very good range of challenging large equipment is available on a daily basis to help nursery children develop their climbing and balancing skills. Confidence and skill are exhibited as children balance, climb and swing on the very good equipment available. There is a wide range of wheeled toys which children manoeuvre well avoiding other children and planned obstacles. They incorporate these into their dramatic play situations as they learn how to cross the road safely.
74. In the reception classes, children have structured physical education lessons to promote their development. In these lessons children are developing good spatial awareness and control. They are learning to run, hop, skip, jump and balance with increasing coordination and confidence. Children are encouraged to follow instructions and observe other children's techniques to improve their skills. In addition, children use a range of large outdoor equipment to extend their skills. However opportunities to use this exciting equipment are limited to once a week and there are some missed opportunities for children to have regular well planned outdoor play to enhance their physical and imaginative development. Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials and at the end of the reception classes most children competently handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care.

Creative development

75. Teaching to promote creative development is good, standards average, and the majority of children will meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Overall, children enjoy a good range of experiences in art and design, music, story and imaginative play. The nursery provides children with a very good range of opportunities to use their imagination. For example, they take on the roles of the fire officers and victims using a range of interesting and stimulating resources, such as real uniforms complete with helmets and waterproof trousers. In the reception classes opportunities for imaginative play are less well developed and there are missed opportunities to enhance children's imagination and extend their language and creativity in this area. Structured music lessons for older children and a good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes throughout the foundation stage, helps to develop children's understanding of sound and rhythm and pattern.
76. In the nursery children's observational skills are developed well as they create snails from clay and carefully paint patterns based on close observation of real snails. These skills are built on well in the reception classes as artists, such as Van Gogh, are used effectively to develop children's understanding of different techniques and colour. Skills are evident as children produce careful observational paintings and collages of sunflowers. In the nursery there are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Baking is available on a regular basis and children explore different tastes and smells of foods. Staff provide materials with interesting textures from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. Although these activities continue to be available for older children there are not enough opportunities for children to choose their own materials and develop further their independent creative skills. Malleable materials such as dough, sand and water are available for children to explore on a daily basis.

ENGLISH

77. The National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that reading standards were below average when compared with other schools nationally, and also low when compared with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In writing, standards are average when compared with schools nationally, though again below average

when compared with similar schools. Over the last four years the trend of improvement has been steady except for 2000, when results dipped, largely due to a high number of pupils with special educational needs. Early indications are that for the most recent tests, standards are above average in reading and writing and show a marked improvement, although the school may not meet its target for the number of pupils reaching the higher levels. The evidence is that the school will reduce the number of its pupils not achieving national expectations.

78. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are good overall, which represents good achievement from a low baseline and an improvement from the last inspection, particularly in writing. The school's implementation of the national "catch-up" initiative has helped lower attaining pupils make better progress than expected, and parents acknowledge that this has supported pupils' learning. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress when supported by the specialist teaching and also through extra support in classrooms. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress that is in line with their peers.
79. In speaking and listening, attainment is good. Seven-year-olds listen carefully to their teachers in whole-class and group activities. They are confident and alert, offering answers to some very challenging questions. They summarise and speculate on story development, drawing on their growing awareness of narrative type, for example recognising a story called "The Tough Princess" as very untypical. In another class, pupils prepared questions about the story "The Very Hungry Giant" which they hoped their reading would answer. Some were factual, for example: "What did the giant eat in the story?" while others were more speculative and remained unresolved: "What was the giant called?" Since reading the text failed to elicit the giant's name the children decided that the other characters in the story would be too afraid to ask him. In another story, entitled "Grandma's Bill", they speculated again about who "Bill" might be. Most assumed from the illustration on the cover that it was her grandson, but came to realise that Grandma's Bill was her husband, killed in World War II, and a very full discussion on Bill's genealogy followed.
80. In reading, standards are good. Pupils read accurately and with fluency, and by the time they are seven are able to read aloud, using the text's punctuation to improve reading expression. For example, they use appropriate differentiation for direct speech and linking narrative. They notice and respond to authors' techniques to bring drama to the text, using bold letters and exclamation marks for effect. They are able to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words from the sentence contexts and also make good attempts to read unfamiliar words, for example "synthetic" and "astonishment", drawing on their good phonemic knowledge to do so. Pupils scan texts carefully to retrieve information. For example, when reading a tourist publication about Southend they were able to answer specific questions, such as "Can you get something to eat on Southend Pier?" When pupils look at text on holiday postcards they recognise a particular style of writing that eliminates all redundant features and pares down the text to such basic information as comments about the weather.
81. Pupils are able to write independently with generally good spelling and phonetically likely efforts when attempting difficult words. They often, though not always, use the key words available to help them write accurately. They have developed very good spelling strategies and they punctuate their work well. Higher attaining pupils indicate speech punctuation, commas within complex sentences, apostrophes of possession and contractions of pronouns and verbs, for example "I have" to "I've". Some pupils are using appropriate connectives to improve their writing, for example in writing about a journey to the moon.
82. By the time they are seven, pupils engage in writing activities that allow them to bring the skills and knowledge from their English language study work into practice. These weekly sessions offer pupils opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences. In one excellent lesson, pupils were spellbound by the array of artefacts used to inspire creative writing about hidden treasure. The work they produced was very good; showing real inspiration from the teacher's introduction but also was successfully completed to meet a specific writing target. There is little evidence of pupils editing and rewriting this work to improve the overall impact and this is a lost opportunity, particularly as teachers conscientiously mark work in terms of the literacy targets, often giving advice on how to improve it. Little opportunity is provided in writing tasks for children to draw on their own cultural and community experience, which would not only enhance learning but would allow the school to achieve its curricular aim of helping children understand the world that they live in.
83. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They listen well and are very responsive to teachers' questioning, indicating a high level of commitment to the work and progressive understanding of tasks. Behaviour is good and pupils are very cooperative, working in groups or in pairs when required, thus allowing teachers to concentrate on specific groups. Pupils listen to each other's ideas and build on them and have literacy targets to give direction to their own learning.
84. The teaching of English is generally good across the school. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy Framework for reading and writing is supplemented by good opportunities for speaking and listening and extended writing activities. The teaching of guided reading is not yet fully integrated into lessons and the school has recognised that this needs improvement. This is an unfortunate omission as teachers are working with large classes of developing readers who would benefit from this work. Teachers do not provide enough opportunity for

pupils to discuss topical issues, to argue a case for or against a subject or to challenge a widely held view. This limits their skills in speaking and listening and forming a well-reasoned argument. Teaching of key literacy skills is strong, particularly spelling strategies, phonic awareness, handwriting and punctuation. This is having a good impact on the writing standards achieved and these skills are extended through written work in other subjects such as history and religious education. Teacher assessment in English is extensive and good records are kept of pupils' progress. Pupils are given targets to raise their overall standards from assessments of ongoing work. These include monitoring pupils' work in books, and this identifies key areas for development at a class and individual level.

85. Teaching is supported with a good range of resources, including a good range of texts, multiple copies for shared and guided reading, and whiteboards and easels which teachers use well to help pupils achieve learning objectives. Classrooms are well organised, with an appropriate focus on literacy. Displays around the room serve as additional resources for learning, with families of words, ideas for remembering irregularly spelt words, common spelling patterns and key words for topics. Most children use these displays to support writing, though some need more practice and encouragement with this learning resource. Pupils have little opportunity to develop their capacity for independent work, except through homework projects. The library is heavily timetabled for teaching, which prevents pupils using it as a resource for learning. The school's planned building improvements should relieve pressure on the library so that pupils will come to use it more independently and spontaneously. The coordinator provides good leadership. Teachers have been well supported with the implementation of the "catch-up" initiative to provide support for lower achieving children. She has also monitored pupils' work and this has provided a written record of pupils' strengths and areas for development.

MATHEMATICS

86. The proportion of pupils who attained or exceeded the expected level in the 2000 national tests was broadly in line with that found in most schools nationally; 92 per cent of the pupils achieved the expected standard for their age. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was below that found in most schools nationally, and this resulted in an overall picture of below average standards.
87. The trend over the last five years is one of inconsistent progress but overall standards have risen since 1996. However, in 2000 they did not keep pace with the improvements made nationally and fell to below average. The seven-year-old pupils' current work shows that most of them are working at a level above that expected for their ages, and the early indications are that standards this year (2001) have improved and should be better than the national average found in 2000. The reasons for the improvement include the continued implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the use of small group teaching for the less able and the higher attaining pupils.
88. The majority of the pupils make better than expected progress and achieve at a level higher than that expected. A comparison of the national test results when compared with their attainment on entry shows that almost all had made the expected or better progress. The targets set by the school for attainment at the age of seven are appropriately challenging and look to have been exceeded by the present seven-year-olds. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls, or by pupils from ethnic minorities. Those with special educational needs are well supported and make equally good progress as their peers. The higher attaining pupils make very good progress when they receive extra help in small group sessions; this is provided on a weekly basis.
89. The school gives a high priority to number work and the teaching of basic skills is good. An appropriate amount of time is also provided for work in the other aspects of the curriculum such as shape, space and measure. A significant amount of time is used to teach data handling, and this enables pupils to put their number skills to the test in more practical situations. For example, a number of classes collect data and use it to create graphs and charts. The good use of computers is also made in transferring data onto a database and to teach pupils how to use the software to create pie charts and bar graphs.
90. The seven-year-old pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of symmetry and this is used effectively in art and design, where, for example, they create effective butterfly pictures. The higher attaining pupils are clearly working at a high level for their ages. They demonstrate a good knowledge of multiplication tables in problem solving. They are able to identify the correct operation needed to solve problems and carry this through to a successful conclusion. Their estimation skills are also good as, for example, when they estimate and then work out the answer with 5 millilitre spoons and 30 millilitre cups. Middle attaining pupils show a sound understanding of the use of Venn diagrams. They work with numbers to 100 and are secure in their knowledge and understanding of odd and even numbers. Less able pupils have a sound level of basic number skills in addition and subtraction and are beginning to develop their multiplication skills. In mental sessions they are able to take a full part, and are familiar with doubling and even and odd numbers.

91. The six-year-old pupils are also working at a level above that expected for their age. They count in twos, threes and fives and are able to record information in tally charts. They use data collected to make bar graphs for their favourite foods and for a range of other information taken from a seaside picture. The less able are able to take a full part in the lesson through the extra support they received.
92. Over the year, pupils' progress has been good. For example, in Year 1, pupils were tracing numbers to 10 in September. Now the same child is able to work out problems such as 'what is ten more than...?' and can divide two-dimensional shapes into halves. The higher attainers have progressed even further to understand reflective symmetry and a good knowledge of both two- and three-dimensional shapes. In Year 2, pupils have also made good progress over the year. In September they could sequence numbers to 10 and had a sound knowledge of division by 2. By June they are able to create a good bar chart from given data. They have a good knowledge of number facts to 20 and can work out some algebraic problems. Number skills are used effectively in solving problems using pentominoes.
93. The pupils' attitudes towards the subject are at least good and, particularly when the teaching is purposeful and pacy, they demonstrate genuine enthusiasm. They are largely well behaved in lessons, although in some classes the noise level is excessive. They are interested in new work and good examples were seen of pupils working collaboratively to complete a task.
94. The quality of teaching is good overall. A small proportion of the teaching, especially of the higher attaining pupils, is excellent and a significant proportion (25 per cent) is very good. None of the teaching is unsatisfactory. In all classes, numeracy has a high profile in displays, of both pupils' work, and of commercial learning aids. Learning objectives are usually written up for pupils to see, but not always fully shared with them. Where this does happen pupils have a very clear idea of what they are learning and what is expected of them. The use of time in the lessons is good, and the teachers keep up a good pace, which leads to the full involvement of all pupils. Teachers also leave an appropriate amount of time for the lesson plenary and this is well used to recap on the learning objectives. The best lessons provided pupils with work well matched to the abilities of the different groups in the class. For example, in a lesson teaching Venn diagrams to Year 2 pupils the different groups used multiples of 5 and even numbers to sort; the middle group used numbers above 20 and even numbers and the less able used shapes and colours. The good classroom support enabled the less able pupils to take a full part in the lesson and to make good progress.
95. The subject coordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has led the subject well since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the improvements in resources, scheme and guidelines for teachers have enabled staff to teach in a more purposeful and focused manner. The systems for assessing pupils' progress have improved and are now providing better data for staff. The analysis of test results and the use of assessment information are improving and are now having a positive impact on the lesson planning. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is improving but there are still missed opportunities for using computers for the extension and consolidation of pupils' learning during lessons.

SCIENCE

96. In the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, attainment was in line with the national average at the expected level. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was well below the national average. Pupils achieve higher standards in their studies of life and living things, and in experimental and investigative science than other aspects of the subject. When results are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds attainment in science was below average and well below average for the higher levels.
97. The inspection evidence finds that standards demonstrated by the present seven-year-olds are above average overall and progress in learning is good throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make very good progress. There is no significant difference between attainment of boys and girls. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved and is more consistent, this has contributed to the improved standards achieved. Standards have improved from in line with national expectation to above what is normally expected for pupils of this age. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 3 and lower achieving pupils are very well supported and are achieving well.
98. Among the seven-year-olds standards of investigation and observation are well developed. Teachers promote observation and the development of scientific enquiry through a range of interesting tasks such as observing the lifecycle of the butterfly. In their work on living things, pupils understand and can explain the life cycle of the butterfly in detail. They give sensible reasons why the caterpillars died, such as the room was too hot and the food was incorrectly balanced. Pupils have a good understanding of living things and

what they need to remain healthy. For example, younger Year 1 pupils can identify correctly what plants need to grow and survive. They know and understand the significance of a fair test and can explain how to conduct a fair test comparing the height of different individuals. The teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use the computer to record their observations and presentation of results. Pupils' knowledge of electrical circuits is good; in Year 2 they explain clearly what is needed in a circuit to light up a bulb. Progress in learning is good throughout the infants. Pupils in Year 1 have a good understanding of forces. They explain the actions of pulling and pushing very well and identify objects around the classroom that need pushing and pulling actions to function. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop research skills locating information in books.

99. The quality of teaching in science is good overall with instances of excellent teaching. In the better lessons, resources are used very effectively to stimulate interest and develop learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 investigated the power of water, sand and wind using a variety of toys. They can explain reasons for changes in the speed that the boat travels; for example, the faster the harder you blow the air the quicker the boat will travel. The teacher maintained an excellent pace and ensured all pupils took part in the different activities. In the best lessons, pupils' recording of their work effectively helps them reflect and consolidate their learning and understanding. However, recording procedures are not as effective in all classes. Some activities involve too much drawing, for example, and this detracts from the time spent on learning about science. Links with literacy and mathematics are good. Pupils independently write a book and this shows a good attention to detail. For example, one pupil records there are 20,000 species of bees in the world. Bar graphs are used appropriately to show favourite foods. Homework is well used to extend knowledge and develop independence. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of every unit of work and these results are used alongside national test results, to plan future work. All teachers keep records and comment on any pupil doing exceptionally well or under-achieving. The good teaching results in pupils enjoying science; they cooperate well and share resources sensibly. They work well in pairs or small groups.
100. The coordinator is enthusiastic and conscientious, and has made a significant impact on developing more consistency throughout the school by ensuring the whole school planning guides teaching and learning. Plans are monitored regularly and assessment is thorough and informs planning. Resources are easily accessible and support learning well.

ART AND DESIGN

101. It was not possible to observe any lessons, or, therefore, to assess the quality of teaching. This was due to the way the school plans the subject; it is taught in blocks and none was taking place during the inspection. However, from discussions with teachers and pupils and a scrutiny of displays and other pupils' work it is clear that standards overall are good and above those expected for pupils by the age of seven. Standards have improved from the satisfactory level found at the last inspection.
102. This improvement has come about due to the more effective long term planning and the appropriate adoption of national guidance for the subject. A particular strength is the way imaginative use has been made of the work of artists to give inspiration to the pupils' work. For example, in Years 1 and 2 works by well-known artists have been used as starting points for the pupils to create their own imaginative and colourful versions. Over 80 per cent of the seven-year-olds attain standards that are better than those expected for their ages. All pupils are learning at a good pace and clear improvements in their work are evident. There are no significant variations in attainment or progress between pupils of different background or gender.
103. In Year 1, good links are made with other subjects. For example, pupils use their good observational drawings skills to help record work in science and history. They draw very careful pictures of toys that move using different forces. Drawings of Victorian artefacts are equally well done. The higher attaining pupils take particular care in drawing accurately and in detail. In mathematics, art skills have been used to create some accurate symmetrical patterns on butterflies. They demonstrate a good sense of colour, through mixing crayons to make autumnal colours for leaves. The study of modern artists has led to some very good paintings in the style of Kandinsky using prepared paper and a variety of media.
104. In Year 2, further work based on a well-known artist has resulted in some very good versions of the swimming pool paintings of David Hockney. The pupils know something about the artist and they have used paint, collage and the computer to produce some very good pieces. In another very imaginative topic, pupils have created abstract patterns based on tree bark, using cotton and other materials on a textile base. This has led from observational drawings and tree rubbings.
105. Good assessments are made of pupils' progress. For example, a portfolio of examples of their work is kept and the work is given a level to illustrate the stage in the National Curriculum reached. The school has

a good policy and scheme, based on national guidance, and this provides effective support for teachers' planning. The use of computer software for producing pictures and patterns, often based on the work of artists such as Hockney and Kandinsky, is good throughout the school. Not enough three-dimensional work is evident and there is little use of art from other cultures or times, and these are aspects of the subject that the school needs to improve.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Due to the timing of the inspection, and the way the subject is planned, it was not possible to observe any lessons. Judgments have been made from a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. Standards have improved a great deal since the last inspection and by the age of seven are now above those expected for the pupils' ages. All pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of the subject.
107. The coordinators have worked with considerable rigour and enthusiasm to tackle the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They have successfully worked with staff to raise their confidence and skills in teaching the subject. This has a very positive effect on improving individual standards and, as a result, pupils are very enthusiastic about designing and making, and produce work of a high standard.
108. Staff provide pupils with a good level of challenge, and then support them effectively to enable the challenge to be met. Teachers have a very strong belief in pupils' abilities to produce exciting designs and finished products. This belief in pupils enables them to respond to the challenge set with enthusiasm and no fear of failure, knowing that with teachers there to support, advise and provide quality resources, they will achieve well. Planning and evaluation is a particular strength of the teaching and learning. Staff have been so successful in developing pupils' evaluation skills that the children now automatically examine their work to consider how their work can be improved.
109. In Year 1, pupils learn to use split pins to join things together to make clocks. They experience how cogs and gears fit together through working with construction kits. Teachers place emphasis on using appropriate technical vocabulary and skills. As a result, pupils are becoming confident as they follow instructions carefully using a range of skills including cutting, grating, slicing and mixing.
110. In Year 2, teachers build very effectively on pupils' skills in designing and making tasks. For example, pupils create three-dimensional pictures based on a fairy tale, which incorporate a winding mechanism. Pupils produce imaginative pictures that involve Rapunzel's legendary hair being wound up the tower wall or the wolf being lowered down the pigs' chimney. Such innovative tasks prepare pupils very well for the challenge they all particularly look forward to. The highlight of their design and technology lessons involves pupils in designing, making and evaluating their own 'beach bears'. Pupils look forward to this task for a whole year and as a result their energy and creative ability is very apparent in their very high quality bears. A wide range of skills and knowledge go into these wonderful and exciting toys. Pupils use interesting materials, ranging from sequins and feathers to empty film cases. Templates, paper patterns, cutting and sewing skills are all used very effectively to produce 'James Bond' and 'Dracula' bears. Dracula came complete with blood red eyes, realistic fangs, a wide cloak and folding parachute! Pupils delight in their work as they explained with pride how they had planned and made their creations.
111. The school has successfully adapted National Curriculum guidelines to ensure that pupils' experiences are sufficiently broad and that their skills, knowledge and understanding are built on as they progress through the school. In effectively evaluating the quality of the teaching and learning in the subject, the coordinators have highlighted the need to develop assessment procedures and to enhance the provision for food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

112. At age seven, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally and their achievement is generally good. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Younger pupils are encouraged to look at the immediate environment and identify key features of local amenities, buildings and street furniture. Good use is made of photography to allow pupils the opportunity to recall details from an environmental walk and to provide key vocabulary when they write an account of it. Pupils are becoming familiar with the purposes of different kinds of maps and are able to recognise how similar geographical features can be identified in different ways, for example on a scale map and on an aerial view map. They are beginning to recognise map symbols and specific features of the environment, for example roads, rivers and the sea and, in built-up areas, hospitals, schools and parks. They are also able to make good sketches of the environment from their field-study work or from maps of an area. The current work

in books of seven-year-old pupils shows that they are developing a sound knowledge, skills and understanding broadly in line with expectations, though standards in the lessons observed are higher and point to good progress being made.

113. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to displays of work about places they have visited; for example in the dining hall there is a display of holiday destinations. Good use is made of photographs to enable pupils to compare and contrast geographical features of seaside localities in different parts of the world, for example Clacton and the more tropical Lanzarote. Pupils are given the opportunity to develop their understanding and skills through the study of Zambia, however, particularly different aspects of schoolchildren's lives. This work is brought to life by the resources and first-hand knowledge of a member of staff who taught in Zambia and is still in contact with schools there. Pupils are also given the opportunity to learn the language of Zambia and to see artefacts that the teacher brought back, for example traditional masks and fabrics.
114. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are interested in the study of different places in the United Kingdom and show great enthusiasm in studying the map to see similarities and differences in Romford and the seaside town of Southend. In one lesson, pupils used maps to identify geographical features which had remained constant over 100 years, for example the sea and the pier, and the things which had changed, such as the shoreline and the growth of transport systems.
115. Teaching is good overall, with some very good lessons. The planning is based on an appropriate scheme of work and the programmes of study have been adapted to include field-study work of the local environment and school trips. In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that the geographical element is sufficiently substantial and well defined. For example, in considering changes in the environment over time in the seaside town of Southend, there was too strong a focus on chronology and historical artefacts. While pupils made satisfactory progress in these lessons, particularly where parents and carers had sent in photographs of their own seaside holidays, the work was not sufficiently focused on geographical skills and on geographical features of the environment to meet the requirements of the programme of study.
116. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped, though the scheme of work ensures continuity and progress. Individual pupils' achievement is not recorded in a systematic way. The school plans to build up a portfolio of levelled work to help teachers make secure assessments of pupils' work. The quantity and quality of resources is satisfactory, though the range of maps is good. Children are given the opportunity to build up their knowledge of the world by a regular focus over a two-week period of a different country. During this fortnight they locate the country on the map of the world, identify its capital, its flag and some important geographical aspects. They also answer the register in the language of the country and are encouraged to bring in artefacts from this part of the world. This is a good development, particularly where maps are low enough for pupils to search for specific places and features, and a good improvement since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

117. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age. Pupils make good progress over time in developing a sense of chronology and in the depth of their historical knowledge and understanding. Only one lesson could be observed during the inspection. Judgements are, therefore, based on scrutiny of pupils' work, evidence of teachers' planning, and interviews with pupils and the subject coordinator. Standards in history have been maintained since the last inspection. Planning has been developed and clearly identifies what pupils will learn in each lesson.
118. By the age of seven pupils show an understanding and sound factual knowledge of some major events and people. They know facts about life in Victorian times and can compare them to conditions today. For example, they know that in Victorian times the cookers needed coal, and water for the bath was warmed up on the fire. Pupils explain how people used metal baths and often wore the same clothes each day. They draw and write about washing by hand, using mangles, and beating mats. They compare it to using vacuum cleaners and washing machines today. The curriculum is enriched through events such as a Victorian day and a visit to a 'ragged school' museum. Activities experienced on these days help pupils learn about life in Victorian times. Pupils remember how the teacher used a cane frequently to discipline pupils and they can explain strict regimes where children sat with upright postures and hands on knees. Understanding is developing well as pupils' talk about the slate and chalk used in the schools, the hard wooden benches, the use of pen and ink, and stone floors. They compare life in school then to the carpeted floors, individual seats and computers used today.
119. Pupils' knowledge of famous people and events is satisfactory. They write about the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They remember facts about the Great Fire of London and that it happened in 1666. They explain how the fire helped rid London of disease and that it lasted for four nights and five days. There are good links with literacy when pupils write and make books about the fire. Progress is consistent

throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1 have an appropriate understanding of times long ago and of present. High attaining pupils know some features of life in the past have changed such as bathing machines and steam trains.

120. Insufficient teaching was observed to make an overall judgement about teaching. In the one lesson observed, the introduction and end of the lesson was well used to consolidate the main learning objective and to ensure good learning. All pupils have developed a good awareness of the passing of time. At times there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate artefacts and they have to rely on stories and a video extract for information. Teachers use open-ended questions well and this encourages pupils to talk about their own opinions and points of view.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Although very little direct teaching was observed, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them it is clear that standards have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly in line with those expected by the age of seven. The recent progress made by pupils has been rapid and is due to the improvements in resources and the enthusiasm and expertise of the subject coordinator.
122. A particular strength in the subject is the use of graphics software in art. Examples seen show that pupils use the mouse and the screen icons and toolbars very effectively to create some very imaginative and carefully produced pictures and patterns, often based on the work of famous artists.
123. In Year 1, pupils design gardens using appropriate software for their ages. They click and drag on pictures using the mouse with confidence. In art and design they create patterns using circles and colours in the style of Kandinsky. This teaches pupils the skills of changing colours and tools. In Year 2, this work is extended and improved and the use of the art software is developed through pictures in the style of Hockney that teaches pupils more about the effects it is possible to achieve through different ways of filling spaces with colour. The seven-year-olds are beginning to understand the possibilities of data handling software. Many of them understand that information put into the computer can be organised into a range of graphs and charts.
124. The teachers' skills vary, as do their experience and expertise. Overall, the quality of the teaching is satisfactory. The school is at present in the middle of training staff as part of a national initiative. The benefits of this are already evident in improved skills but the training is intended to help raise standards still further. A few teachers are now introducing new software to pupils through effective whole class demonstrations but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Very good use is made of parents and classroom assistants to support pupils' learning by working with small groups. Safety is also at the forefront of the planning. For example, all pupils using the Internet do so in small groups with another adult. During the inspection, one group of Year 2 pupils was researching a history topic on the Internet, with the support of a knowledgeable parent. The planning does not provided evidence that enough is done to teach pupils about the use of information and communication technology in the real world. However, in one very good example, pupils in literacy lessons learned about the bar code on the back of the books, and when making their own books they drew a bar code on to make it more realistic.
125. The coordinator manages the subject very well. Her leadership and example has been, together with the improved resources, very significant in providing a fresh impetus in the raising of standards. She has produced very clear and appropriate strategy for improving the subject and teaching the full programme of study, which is based on the continued development of the teaching, resourcing and training needs. She has provided a very good level of support, both technical and educational for colleagues. However, the strategy is still in its early days and although usage has improved, opportunities are still missed to use computers in other subjects and on too many occasions the machines are under employed. The teaching of the subject is not clearly timetabled. This makes it easy for teachers to omit the use of computers when they plan other subjects. The coordinator does not get enough time at present to monitor in full the teaching and learning in other classes, and this makes her less effective at spreading good practice and will hinder her ability to put her very good plans for the subject into action. Resources have been improved appropriately, within the limitations of the budget, and the plans for future improvements are sensible.

MUSIC

126. Due to the schools timetabling arrangements, judgements are made on the observations of only a limited number of lessons, as well as assemblies and discussions with staff and pupils. By the age of seven standards in music are similar to those expected nationally. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

127. Year 1 pupils develop a good understanding of musical ideas as they use their voices and untuned percussion instruments to accompany familiar songs. In one outstanding lesson, imaginative teaching, clear instructions, and excellent use of resources helped pupils develop a good sense of rhythm and an understanding of simple musical notation. High expectations encouraged pupils to work hard to improve their skills in keeping a steady beat and by the end of the lesson they were developing confidence in identify and playing long and short sounds.
128. Pupils in Year 2 build successfully upon this good start. They sing complex songs confidently and with increasing control of pitch and diction. Well structured lessons, clear instructions and secure subject knowledge are very effective in helping pupils to learn how to use their voices and play a range of percussion instruments to create different moods and effects.
129. In the limited number of lessons seen the teaching was good and occasionally excellent. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good. Music lessons are well structured and tasks are challenging. Pupils are expected to produce work of a high standard and tasks are well chosen to stretch pupils' musical skills. Pupils are given very clear strategies to improve their skills. They are encouraged to think as 'musicians' and to use correct musical terms. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and work with considerable effort and concentration. End of year concerts provide pupils with further opportunities to develop their musical skills.
130. Music does not make a sufficient contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development. There are missed opportunities to play an appropriate piece of music in order to create a more reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship as pupils arrive for assemblies. Pupils have opportunities to develop their singing skills as they learn appropriate hymns and songs. However, little reference is made as to how pupils can improve their singing through improved expression, controlled phrasing or articulation as they rehearse liturgical music to enhance worship, although they later sing the hymns with enthusiasm. Insufficient attention is given to the development of listening skills and in the identification of pitch, rhythm, dynamics and musical notation. The school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about music in other cultures. There is an effective coordinator who is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. A commercial scheme provides a good framework to ensure a progression in skills knowledge and understanding. Effective links with the junior school are being used to provide expertise in the subject and increase teacher confidence. These strategies are having a positive effect on the standard of teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school and attain standards that are typical for their age by the time they are seven. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Planning has improved and clearly identifies what pupils will learn in each lesson and this contributes to the good progress made.
132. By the age of seven, pupils have a good awareness of the effect of exercise on the body. They know that blood travels to the muscles faster and the heart beats quicker during activity. This knowledge is reinforced and consolidated because the teacher draws attention to this aspect. Spatial awareness is well developed and pupils run around the playground changing direction moving alongside others sensibly. Higher achieving pupils run with well-developed coordination and control. The average and lower achieving pupils demonstrate less secure coordination. Seven-year-olds throw and catch confidently in small groups showing evidence of good learning. They dribble a ball with their feet and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, know which part of the foot to use when manoeuvring the ball. They show sensitivity and developing control as they dribble around cones. Aiming skills are less well developed because activities selected to develop this skill are insufficiently challenging, for example all pupils throw towards the same bucket and opportunities to extend higher achieving pupils are missed. Hand-eye coordination is well developed as pupils use bats and balls to hit upwards and strike a ball towards the wall. High achieving pupils naturally transfer their body weight well as they hit the ball. Discussion with pupils indicates they have good knowledge of how to lift, carry and position gymnastic apparatus. Although no gymnastic and dance lessons were observed during the inspection, discussion with pupils and scrutiny of planning indicates that pupils experience opportunities to develop a range of gymnastic and dance movements and link actions together.
133. Teaching is good overall with instances of very good and satisfactory teaching. Pupils listen well because the teacher gives very clear demonstrations and instructions showing good subject knowledge, for example how to hold the uni-hoc stick. When teaching is very good pupils demonstrate confidence and growing control, throwing and catching, using feet to control a ball and striking a ball with a bat. Good organisation ensures pupils are active for a good proportion of the time available. Time is also used well, for

example, during changing when the teacher plays music to the pupils who respond by changing more swiftly and then develop their rhythmic response responding to the simple rhythmic actions led initially by the teacher and eventually by the pupils themselves. The very good lessons have a balance of new skills and practising and consolidating old skills. Learning is good because the teacher is well organised, maintains a good pace of learning and gives appropriate teaching points after careful observation. Where methods and organisation are less effective pupils spend a lot of time in queues waiting for a turn at an activity and their overall activity time during the lesson is reduced. There are insufficient opportunities to observe and evaluate their own and others' performance and suggest improvements.

134. The coordinator has taken positive action to improve planning within the school. Resources are generally satisfactory but some balls do not bounce well and need replacing. During lunchtime resources are well used on the playground and contribute to pupils' growing ball skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Since the last inspection, teaching and learning have improved, especially in relation to Christianity, and by the age of seven, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment.

136. Pupils in Year 1 are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of significant events in the Christian tradition. They visit local churches and are aware of the importance of rituals, such as Christenings. Children are helped to understand the relationship between God and human beings as they listen to an appropriate story. Sensitive questions and comments extend children's thinking about their special responsibilities to look after the environment on behalf of a supreme being. The importance of being a family member and what it means to be a member of a community are developed well. Children learn about prominent people in the community who help them.

137. Pupils' awareness of their own uniqueness and how a belief in a God can impact on people's lives are developed well in Year 2. Pupils explore what is special about their friends and create an exciting display as they write imaginatively about each other's unique qualities. Major Bible stories are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of moral issues. For example, imaginative teaching used the events in the creation story and David and Goliath to develop their ideas of right and wrong. The roles of Adam and Eve were discussed as pupils were helped to examine their own feelings of guilt and being sorry when they had committed some misdemeanour.

138. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their work and the discussions and reflections on religious issues makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching is good and shortcomings identified at the last inspection have been eliminated. A scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that there is now a systematic approach in the teaching, which ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian tradition is developed well across the school. Pupils are challenged to consider the effect that religion might have on their own or people's lives. However, the school is less effective in developing pupils knowledge and understanding of other religions. The school is aware of this deficiency and has plans to address the issue and ensure that pupils understanding of other religions is effectively covered. Whole school and class assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' religious education. However, assemblies often lack a focus for worship and opportunities for reflection and special times are limited.

139. The coordinator is very much committed to raising the profile of the subject. Her enthusiasm and secure knowledge has had a positive effect on raising standards, making the subject one that staff enjoy teaching and pupils enjoy learning. She is aware of shortcomings and is waiting further local authority guidance, which should ensure that all aspects of the agreed syllabus are fully implemented.