

INSPECTION REPORT

**Eight Ash Green and Aldham CE (VC)
Primary School**

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115075

Headteacher: Mrs M Owens

Reporting inspector: Mr J Palk
23630

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th September 2001

Inspection number: 194219

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Fiddlers Folley
Fordham Heath
Colchester
Essex

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Rose

Date of previous inspection: 21st April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 23630 | Mr J Palk | Registered inspector | Foundation Stage Science Geography Physical education | What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 11096 | Ms M Davie | 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? |
| 14989 | Mr R Pyner | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Special educational needs | How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 27635 | Ms D Cinamon | Team inspector | English Art and design History Religious education Equality of opportunity | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Eight Ash Green and Aldham is a small village primary school with 132 pupils on roll. The number of pupils has fallen in the past three years and above average numbers of pupils move in or out of the school. There are no pupils with English as an additional language and few from minority ethnic groups. Twenty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. There are above average proportions of pupils on the register with special educational needs; and two pupils have statements, which is broadly average. There are three children in the foundation stage¹ who are taught in a mixed reception and year 1 class. Other pupils are taught in their year groups and class sizes are smaller than typically found. Children's attainment on entry is broadly average. During the past year there has been considerable change in the teaching staff and the school has been without a permanent head teacher or deputy head teacher since last September. Five of the eight teachers started teaching in the school eight days before this inspection. An advisory head teacher² has been leading the school since May 2001. A permanent head teacher has been appointed for January 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education and is improving quickly. Standards are rising and pupils are achieving well at the lower end of the school. Teaching is good across the school and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. The advisory head teacher has set out a very clear action plan to raise standards and this is being implemented swiftly and effectively. There is still much to be done for pupils to reach their full potential, but the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in reception and years 1, 2, 3 and 4 learn well and reach standards that are above those expected in some subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and the majority of teaching is good or better.
- The school is very well led and many of the strategies needed to improve the quality of education have been successfully implemented.
- Those pupils identified as having additional educational needs are supported well.

What could be improved

- Standards for the majority of pupils in years 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Provision for teaching information and communication technology (ICT) and geography.
- There is no opportunity for children in the foundation stage to develop their creative, physical and personal skills outside on a regular basis.
- The school has not done enough to maintain the excellent relationships with parents reported at the last inspection.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made unsatisfactory progress since its last inspection in May 1997. Over the past four years standards have been too low and many pupils have not achieved as well as they should by the age of eleven. Until very recently the curriculum lacked balance and ICT and geography are still not properly planned to ensure all pupils make appropriate progress. There has been insufficient development of the outdoor provision for children in the foundation stage. However the

¹ Foundation stage: there are three stages identified in the primary phase of education. The foundation stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception year, typically before the child's sixth birthday. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning.

² An experienced head teacher working with the local authority and governing body. She had led the school since the summer term. The post is temporary until the governors are able to appoint a permanent (substantive) head teacher.

improvements made to the classrooms and to the school grounds benefit pupils' learning. The governors and management team did not do enough to improve the quality of teaching and maintain the strengths reported in the last inspection. Teachers with the necessary experience have now been appointed and all staff are clear about what they have to do improve learning and show the necessary commitment. The local education authority is closely following the progress the school is now making and the ability of the school to improve is good.

STANDARDS

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

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

This table refers to the standards achieved by pupils who left the school in the year 2000.

Whilst the proportion of pupils achieving above average levels in tests is similar to that of other schools there is a greater proportion who do not reach the expected standards. The 2001 test results are at similar levels for English and mathematics. Science results improved substantially in 2001 but this has not been sustained. Lower attaining pupils generally made unsatisfactory progress as they moved through the school up until this year. Their underachievement has been identified, support is good and they are making good progress.

The performance of pupils in the tests for seven year olds have fluctuated and compared with schools nationally results have been falling in recent years. The results of tests taken in 2001 were better than the year 2000 with the most significant improvement in mathematics.

Inspection found that children are on course to exceed expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the reception year. Their knowledge and understanding of the world and speaking skills are below the levels usually expected but they will reach the expected standard in other areas of their learning. By seven, pupils are likely to exceed the expected standards in reading, writing, science and mathematics. This is due to the good teaching.

In Year 6 standards are below average overall in English, mathematics and science. While higher attaining pupils reach the standards expected of them there is a large number of pupils with significantly lower achievement than normally found in this age group. All pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in these subjects due to better teaching and improved support. The performance targets for 2002 have been raised for eleven year olds. They are demanding of the progress lower attaining pupils need to make and set high targets for the higher attainers.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and geography also are below those expected through the school. The inconsistent teaching of many aspects of these subjects and the lack of resources has had an impact on how well pupils achieve. Work seen in art, history, physical education and design and technology is in line with what is expected, whilst in music standards are good.

There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in tests and inspection findings. Before this term, pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils were not achieving as well as they should. With the very good action taken by the head teacher, teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator, expectations of what they can achieve have risen and their work is improving.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Satisfactory. Younger pupils are enthusiastic to learn but a significant number of pupils in years 5 and 6 lack good work habits. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Also satisfactory. There was one exclusion last year. Pupils behave well at playtimes and in most lessons. |
| Personal development and relationships | Satisfactory. Most pupils are polite and respond quickly to their teachers. Older pupils do not always show sufficient respect for each other. |
| Attendance | There is good attendance and pupils like coming to school. |

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development is improving. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given. Most co-operate well when working together in lessons. They take a responsible attitude towards finding ways to improve the school and behaviour in their classes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | good | 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.

Forty-three lessons were seen during the inspection and the majority of these were good or better. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers' plan well for all lessons and they are clear about what different groups of pupils should achieve. Teaching assistants³ are well organised to help pupils with additional needs during lessons and this is helping to improve the rate at which these pupils learn. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are using the information about what pupils can do to set challenging work. Marking of work is helpful and the involvement in lessons by the special educational needs teacher is very valuable.

The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are helping to raise standards in English and mathematics. The teachers follow the national guidance well, sharing the aims of the lesson with their classes. However many of these lessons go on too long and the last part of the lesson is not always planned with sufficient purpose. Some teaching of science, music, physical education and art is of very good quality. Pupils learnt very rapidly because they are fully involved in exploring and finding out.

Significant proportions of pupils in years 5 and 6 have poor work habits which are affecting the rate at which they learn. Other pupils in the school are learning well and consequently making good progress. Children in the reception class are making good progress. Their needs are very clearly understood by the teacher who is well organised to meet these.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. A broad curriculum is planned but has not been implemented fully in all classes in recent years. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Is good. The school has moved forward very rapidly to support these pupils in lessons and their progress is being carefully tracked. |

³ Teaching assistants: refers to those members of staff not qualified as teachers but who work with pupils individually or take charge of a small group. They work under the direction of the class teacher, head teacher or special educational needs teacher and receive appropriate training. They are sometimes called learning support assistants.

| | |
|---|--|
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Satisfactory overall. Moral and social development are well provided through opportunities to take responsibility. Good emphasis is placed on art and music. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Satisfactory. Ways of tracking how well pupils are improving in academic work and personal development are getting better quickly. |

The school is not providing an area for outdoor activity for the youngest pupils and is not delivering the National Curriculum in ICT or geography. The provision for music and clubs is good.

The parents are very supportive but have been unsettled by the recent lack of a head teacher and the problems with recruiting suitable teachers. This has had an adverse affect on relationships.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. Action plans to raise standards are working. Teachers and teaching assistants are clear about their responsibilities and work together purposefully. The special needs teacher plays an important role in raising the expectations of what pupils can achieve. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. They give good support to the staff and head teacher and are becoming more involved in helping to manage the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | This is good. The school checks on the quality of teaching and measures the standards reached by pupils. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good use is made of the school budget to provide the right training for all staff to improve the teaching and learning. |

There are good numbers of teachers and teaching assistants who provide a good balance of expertise and support. The accommodation is good and pupils benefit from their own swimming pool. The governors do not yet check budget spending to judge best value and they have not prepared a budget plan to deal with fluctuations in pupil numbers. There is insufficient equipment for teaching ICT, science and geography.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The start their children make at school • That their children like school • That they feel comfortable approaching the school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the behaviour of pupils • leadership • homework • help for those with special educational needs. |

The inspection team agree with parents' positive views and their concerns. The views shared at the pre-inspection meeting and in the questionnaires came after a difficult year and parents were understandably concerned. Behaviour is improving. The advisory head teacher has shown very good leadership in tackling problems associated with recruitment and achievement. The pupils have settled quickly with their new teachers. Policies are in place for homework and this is being checked on. There is support for pupils with special needs in all the classes and this is very well managed by the new co-ordinator.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the age of eleven pupils have not attained the standards that they should. The 2000 National Curriculum test results for eleven year olds in English, mathematics and science were well below average in comparison with similar schools⁴. They were below the national average in mathematics and well below average in English and science. The 2000 results show below average proportions of pupils reaching higher levels with a higher proportion not reaching an average standard. This reflected the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The overall trend in the school's test results is below the national trend in all subjects. The school has not made enough progress in raising the achievements of lower attaining pupils since the last inspection.
2. The reading, writing and mathematics results for eleven year olds in 2001 test show very little improvement in the percentages reaching an average standard. The turnover of pupils in this Year 6 was high and between Year 3 and Year 6 well over a third had left. The majority of these were the higher attaining pupils. Notwithstanding this, test data indicates that lower attaining pupils did not make sufficient progress on their earlier attainment and their achievements were unsatisfactory over the four years. Inspection evidence shows that the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs were not sharp enough and not carried through into the daily lesson planning. This affected the quality of their learning. The school did not have a rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress and changes in teachers also affected learning amongst this group of pupils. Much was done in the summer term to improve lesson planning. A more rigorous approach to using assessment information went some way to improving the learning for lower attainers but many fell short of national expectations. Greater attention was given to raising standards in writing and the targets for higher attainers in English were met. The national numeracy strategy was effectively implemented and targets for pupils reaching higher levels were also met in the 2001 National Curriculum tests.
3. Test results in science for eleven year olds showed a substantial improvement last year. The pupils benefited from the expertise of a science advisory teacher. They learnt well, acquiring the necessary knowledge through a balance of investigative work and practise papers. The high expectations for pupils in this subject were supported well and ninety-three per cent attained average standards or better. The impact of this did not spread beyond this year group and the current Year 6 are working at below average levels.
4. Performances in National Curriculum reading, writing and mathematics tests for seven year olds have fallen below the national trend in four years to 2000, and boys have achieved less well than girls. A high proportion of pupils did not reach average levels despite baseline assessments indicating they should. The results in the 2000 tests were close to average in reading, but below average in writing and well below in mathematics. Compared to schools in similar contexts performance was well below average in reading and writing and very low in mathematics. The 2001 test results for seven year olds indicates some good improvement in reading and writing and a very

⁴ Similar school: the school's results are compared with those schools with similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals.

noticeable improvement in mathematics attainment. The advisory head teacher took appropriate action to tackle the underachievement. The standards fund was used to increase the classroom support and to train staff in the effective use of the National Literacy Strategy. A scrutiny of pupils' writing from last year clearly shows a greater emphasis on grammar, handwriting and punctuation. These pupils also benefited from being taught by a leading mathematics teacher during Year 2. There was good emphasis on investigating number as well as learning different ways to add, subtract and multiply. Higher attaining pupils did better than expected.

5. Inspection evidence found that children in the foundation stage achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development, literacy development and in their mathematical development. They enter with average attainment in these areas and are on course to exceed the expectations by the start of Year 1. Children's speaking skills and knowledge and understanding of the world are below expectations. However provision for learning in these areas is improving and is satisfactory.
6. Pupils in years 1 and 2 with different levels of attainment are also doing well in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is the result of good teaching. The class sizes at this stage of the year are small and the teachers are meeting their pupils' needs. Expectations of what pupils should achieve are high and lower attaining pupils are being supported well by the special educational needs teacher and by the teaching assistants. The improvements suggested by last year's test results will be sustained and by the age of seven pupils are likely to achieve above average standards in these subjects.
7. The standard of work seen in Year 6 is more variable. The work in pupils' books this term with a new teacher is much better in quality compared with that of last year. The work is matched to their attainment and reflects higher expectations. However, standards are still below average in English, mathematics and science. The progress pupils make in lessons is satisfactory but pupils lack the necessary concentration to work for longer periods of time without distraction and work habits fall short of expectations. Reasons for the underachievement of average and lower attaining pupils have been correctly identified and tackled. There is now sufficient adult support and resources to help make the best of literacy and numeracy lessons. Booster classes have already begun, allowing higher attaining pupils to move ahead rapidly whilst lower attaining pupils consolidate basic skills. The advisory head teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator and Year 6 teacher have drawn up an action plan to raise standards and identify targets for each pupil in the class. A rigorous analysis of previous test data has been used to set demanding but achievable targets in the next year's tests. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are already showing signs of greater personal confidence and enthusiasm for learning because of increased support. Pupils are rapidly making up lost ground but standards overall are still below average.
8. Although the inspection took place eight days into the new school year, and most of the teachers were new to the school, the pace of learning is good in years 3 and 4 lessons. Standards of reading, writing, mathematics and science were above expectations in Year 3 and close to expectations in Year 4. Learning is overall satisfactory in Year 5. The work habits of some pupils are taking time to turn around, and this is still affecting the progress pupils are making. The older higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to use their literacy and numeracy in other subjects at present. New policies reflect the intentions to plan for this but it is too early in the term to judge that intentions are put into practice.

9. Pupils with special educational needs are beginning to make good progress. The newly appointed co-ordinator has set individual targets for pupils that are specific to their needs. The emphasis on supporting these pupils in class has raised their expectations of what they might achieve. Pupils with emotional difficulties receive the necessary support in lessons and achieve a satisfactory standard in their work.
10. A lack of structure in the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) skills has led to standards that are well below expectations. Inconsistent and patchy coverage of geography means that most pupils do not reach expectations in mapping skills and also in geographical knowledge. History and religious education has a greater emphasis in the curriculum and standards in these subjects meet expectations. All pupils continue to learn well in music and art and there is a good programme of activities that helps pupils acquire the skills to achieve well. Pupils meet expected standards in games and gymnastics skills and exceed expectations in swimming. Standards in music are also above those normally found due to a continuation of good teaching in this subject.
11. Seven year olds attainment is now higher than the previous inspection found in English, mathematics and science and the declining trend has been checked. Compared with the previous inspection standards are lower for eleven year olds in these subjects and in geography and ICT, across the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Most pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory, however significant numbers in years 5 and 6 do not show an appropriate interest in their lessons and as a consequence do not achieve as well as they should. The unsettled staffing situation in the past two years has contributed to deterioration in attitudes by older pupils and they are not as good as reported in the previous inspection. However recent strategies are working well to improve pupils' attitudes to learning.
13. Pupils are keen to come to school, attendance levels are high and the vast majority of parents feel that their children like school. Only a few days into the start of the new school year, the youngest children are familiar with the expected routines, happy to leave their parents and settling to work quickly. During the inspection Year 6 pupils all arrived on time and well prepared to get on with morning activities. They settled quickly and worked hard for twenty minutes before the start of their first lesson, reinforcing basic skills through practising spellings and times tables. However their work habits are not well established and they have difficulty maintaining this level of concentration and motivation throughout the day.
14. Most children are interested in school life and this has a positive effect on their ability to learn. The youngest are particularly keen in lessons, always eager and interested in what their teacher is telling them. In the reception and year 1 class, for example, they are making good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills by responding positively in circle time (where pupils sit and take turns talking about issues like behaviour, friendship and feelings). The teacher quickly captures their interest, they listen carefully and pick up the skills needed to work successfully in a big group and are therefore learning at a high level. However a circle time in Year 5 was not successful. Many of the pupils, mostly boys, showed little respect; calling out and making rude remarks and did not take turns well. Their difficult and disrespectful

behaviour makes learning difficult for everyone and as a result these pupils are not learning as well as they should.

15. Many parents have justifiable concerns about behaviour, but report that there has been a significant improvement since the arrival of the advisory head teacher last Easter. Boundaries are now clear, rules are prominently displayed and pupils are well aware of what they can and cannot do. Most play happily during break times, little conflict is evident and is quickly dealt with by staff if it occurs. Pupils are quite exuberant and find it difficult to line up quietly to go back to their classes. In lessons the good behaviour of the younger children makes a definite contribution to how well they learn. There are however still too many times when the behaviour of some of the pupils in years 5 and 6 is disruptive. For example during a religious education lesson in Year 6, a boy reacted petulantly, kicking his chair when asked to move. This type of incident interrupts the teacher's flow, wasting too much time and consequently pupils are not as productive as they should be. There was one temporary exclusion last year for poor behaviour, a strategy used by the school as a last resort.
16. Many pupils benefit from being able to work well with others. In Year 2 pupils worked well as a team gathering information and setting up their own research about food preferences. In Year 4, while learning to recognise the differences between Viking settlers and invaders, the pace of learning was barely interrupted when one member of a group asked "how do you spell armour?" Two or three quickly responded and learning carried on. Too few of the older pupils have such constructive relationships with one another. Parents feel there has been an undercurrent of unkindness in the school and although this is presently not evident, many staff report that friction amongst children who have now gone on to secondary school was a cause for concern.
17. There are not enough opportunities for the older pupils to engage in investigations, devise experiments selecting resources and equipment for themselves and practise problem solving. As a consequence they are not developing a mature work ethic and setting a good example as they move toward the top of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning was good at the last inspection. A scrutiny of work and analysis of standards shows that little improvement had been made prior to the appointment of the advisory head teacher. The impact of additional training and the implementation of rigorous planning in addressing underachievement varied across the year groups. Recently the staff have almost completely changed. There is a clear policy that helps develop teaching and learning, sharper planning that states the targets to be reached in lessons and trained teaching assistants in all classes. In two out of every three lessons the teaching is at least good with one in every five that is very good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is now a strength of the school and is helping pupils achieve what they are capable of.
19. In most of the lessons where teaching is good pupils learn well. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons for the different needs in the class. Lessons are well organised and pupils are given plenty of support and encouragement by well informed teaching assistants. Lessons start with a clear explanation of what is to be learnt and after the initial teaching pupils are grouped according to levels of attainment. This arrangement benefits the pupils. Lower attaining pupils in a history lesson had plenty of chance to talk about the objects with the teaching assistant and

it was a lovely moment when it dawned on one pupil that the bed warmer was a hot water bottle. When older pupils work in groups on investigations or research they were well motivated and learn at a good pace.

20. The teachers manage their lessons well, using praise and sanctions appropriately. In two lessons in years 5 and 6 where despite the satisfactory teaching, learning was unsatisfactory. This was due to the poor work habits of some pupils and the behaviour of some boys. During a Year 5 science lesson the pupils were asked to give examples of where they had heard sounds travelling through different materials. The teacher had to stop the flow of interesting observations to regain everyone's attention and the questioning to develop scientific thinking was stalled. During a religious education lesson, excited by the chance to look through the Old Testament for references to animals, some pupils called out persistently, not listening to other pupils who were helping develop the idea of allegory.
21. The teaching of children in the foundation stage was consistently good and often very good. Routines are well established, children are encouraged to listen to the teacher and they are regularly questioned to establish what they are learning. The challenge to learn is good. Basic skills are taught very well and there are plenty of opportunities to develop independent and group work skills. Consequently the rate of learning in most areas is good.
22. Throughout the school literacy is taught well and the rate of learning in reading and writing has improved. The teachers' questions at the start of the lessons gravitate the pupils thinking to what is to be learnt. The literacy objectives for pupils on the register of special educational needs are very clear and teaching assistants regularly review progress being made in the lesson. Mathematics and numeracy teaching is satisfactory and good for pupils in years 1 and 2. Lessons are well organised but some are too long and the pace slows. Some of the concluding parts of the lessons do not have clear objectives and do not move pupils' thinking forward.
23. Teachers set out the objectives for each group of pupils based on assessment information. This is constantly being improved following evaluations of the lessons. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, for example one group was introduced to new words and the actions by the teaching assistant, who went on to make notes about how well each pupil had learnt. This helped the teacher make alterations to the targets for two of the pupils. The expectations teachers have of pupils are clearly understood and pupils are learning well. Guidance on what is to be achieved is shared with the support staff. Those with special needs and poor attitudes to learning thrive on their small successes. In a Year 5 lesson a pupil gained a real boost from being shown by the assistant how number facts to ten can be used to add together multiples of ten or a hundred. Teachers talk to pupils about their work which helps them reflect on what they learn and consider how they should improve. There is now a culture that values effort. The achievements of all pupils are praised and this is helping develop a feeling of success amongst pupils. This is being particularly valuable to those with disaffected attitudes to learning. Marking is much improved since last year. The teachers make helpful comments and update their records on a pupil's progress towards their targets.
24. Practical and group work is well thought out, particularly in science and art, and resources for the lessons are well prepared. Pupils in Year 2 made very good progress in using techniques to show line and colour because of the well prepared 'palette' of leaves which acted as a colour library. There are times, however, when

teachers do not move quickly enough into the practical part of the lesson and this encourages lively and potentially boisterous pupils to seek ways to disrupt the lesson.

25. There have also been improvements in the way homework is set. Parents support this with some good examples in year 2 and 3 where they helped their children collect information on favourite foods. This provided good source of data to be analysed during lessons. There is still more teachers could do to help parents understand how the school teaches the basic skills so that parents feel more comfortable supporting the homework.
26. The use made of computers to help pupils learn is satisfactory, given the limited number of computers. In Year 2, for example, pupils produced graphs to show the results of a food survey. The speed with which these became available meant that the teacher could share the findings of each group within the time set aside. In a Year 3 numeracy lesson the computer improved pupils' response time to calculating differences by producing a random set of numbers which invited them to use the strategy of rounding up or down. In the main, teachers find it difficult to provide regular opportunities to research information because of the limitations in software and there are insufficient resources for teachers to regularly plan for ICT as part of the group work.
27. The support for pupils with special educational needs is very well planned. The special needs co-ordinator uses her time to provide good quality teaching in the class lessons. The good individual education plans set out precisely the targets to be achieved and how the pupils are to be supported in lessons. She communicates well with the teachers and teaching assistants as to the lesson objectives and makes reference to these when working with pupils. This inclusive support is an improvement on pupils' earlier experiences and they are responding well and learning at a much better rate.

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

28. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum is satisfactory and similar to the findings of the previous inspection. The curriculum does not meet the statutory requirements in its provision for ICT and geography. The quality of the curriculum for children in the foundation stage has many strengths but it does not provide adequately for them to learn outdoors. These weaknesses were apparent at the last inspection and the school has not made satisfactory progress.
29. There is satisfactory provision for personal health and social education and a clear method of applying appropriate time allocations to aspects of the curriculum that are important to the school, such as bullying, personal safety, self-esteem and feelings and drug education. Overall there is a considerable commitment to personal, health and social education as a way to encourage positive attitudes to learning and promoting an orderly and caring school.
30. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented. The school follows the national guidelines on planning and this ensures the topics and themes are appropriate to year groups to ensure progression and continuity. However the gaps in earlier provision have affected standards adversely.

31. Pupils benefit from a good range of visits. These effectively bring learning to life and are appreciated and anticipated by pupils. The many regular visitors to the school provide the pupils with a good understanding of people within their community and those representing religious denominations successfully reinforce the school's church status. A good range of extra-curricular activities develop games and gymnastics skills, art and music for many pupils and raise the expectations of what pupils might achieve.
32. Pupils are encouraged to join in all activities and have access to opportunities within the curriculum throughout the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has undertaken a thorough audit of resources and procedures and as a result has produced a concise and considered action plan for the 2001/2002 year. This quality document outlines the actions to develop the provision for special educational needs over the year and will be evaluated in the autumn 2002. Already many of the action plan priorities such as the need to further develop learning support assistants' role through training, to minimise the withdrawal of pupils from lessons and to develop parents' role in the process of providing appropriate support for pupils are being acted on. Teaching assistants have been trained in the use of the Additional Literacy Strategy but the timing of this session during the literacy hour means that it is not used to supplement the regular content of the literacy programme. Observations of the co-ordinator working with groups during literacy lessons indicate that her work is already having a positive impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
33. Overall the provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. This aspect of provision has slipped since the last inspection as no leadership was given to maintain the strengths reported. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The ethos of the school encourages appropriate behaviour and promotes pupils' personal development. Assemblies are led by the local vicar and lay preachers regularly and these sessions explore values and feelings. The festivals of other faiths are explored, for example the Jewish New Year, with artefacts and explanations displayed.
34. The school promotes pupils' moral development well. There are now clear rules for behaviour and by and large these are met, certainly by younger pupils. The school has a 'buddy' system for lunchtime whereby pupils are assigned to look after younger children. Circle time is used to reinforce appropriate behaviour. During the inspection, a particularly effective circle time session with the Year 2 class explored sharing.
35. Provision for social development is good. The school has made strenuous efforts to develop this aspect, for example a school council has been established to enable pupils from all year groups to understand how to get their views heard and how to seek the views of others. The school held an anti bullying day during the summer term to explore themes of working and playing together. There is a 'friendship postbox' in which children can 'post' notes about other pupils who have been friendly and helpful. The box is opened each week and particularly supportive pupils are identified and their behaviour celebrated. There is also a 'table of the week' for pupils nominated by lunchtime assistants; these pupils have a tablecloth on their lunch table and nameplates to recognise their helpfulness.
36. Cultural development for pupils is satisfactory. This was judged very good at the last inspection. Music is emphasised well in assemblies and during lessons. There are a good variety of visits that promote awareness of the richness of different cultures, but there is no planned programme to make sure all pupils gain from these.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school is beginning to improve its procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress. The advisory head teacher has brought together previous assessment information based on non-statutory tests to create a reliable bank of information to track pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. The samples of work to guide teachers' judgements on pupils' attainment are too limited. The assessment co-ordinator, who has just been appointed, has a clear plan to improve these and to include staff training for assessing against National Curriculum levels and target setting for individuals. Assessment procedures for children in the foundation stage are good, and ensure that higher attainers have opportunities to progress and that lower attainers have every chance to improve their skills.
38. Across the school teachers are beginning to make effective use of assessment data. Teachers enter their assessments of pupils following most lessons onto the new planning form and this is now used to guide planning for future lessons. The very close working between teachers and teaching assistants is a major factor in the quality of assessments that ensure that pupils are presented with work carefully matched to their needs.
39. Good procedures are in place to identify and assess pupils with special educational needs. The improved lesson planning has helped teachers spot sooner where pupils are having difficulties learning basic skills. This has led to better use of the teaching assistants and also better grouping. Steps have been taken to train teaching assistants in early literacy strategies for those pupils in Year 1.
40. Pupils are well cared for and their safety is given high priority. New teachers are working hard to get to know the children's academic and personal needs. Those who have been with the school longer, along with support and administrative staff, are making every effort to provide a degree of stability and greet both pupils and their parents with a known, friendly face.
41. The arrangements for dealing with sickness and accidents are well established. There are several qualified first aiders. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and pupils are well supervised at work and play. Good links with community professionals such as the educational psychologist and school nurse ensure that children get any extra help they need. Child Protection procedures are in place and the new members of staff are soon to receive training.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. These encourage high expectations with an emphasis on positive behaviour management. A clearly understood system of rewards including praise, awards and certificates and sensible sanctions, such as warnings and detention, have now been put in place and are beginning to promote a common approach to behaviour in all aspects of school life. Lunchtime awards are also having a positive effect on behaviour. There are occasional inconsistencies in applying the agreed procedures and this is particularly unhelpful to some of the older pupils who are still struggling to behave appropriately in lessons. Bullying and harassment are treated seriously. Assemblies encourage pupils to think about social inclusion and tolerance of others. The Basildon Youth theatre group visits regularly to work with children on issues about bullying.

43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Circle time is being used in all classes to explore issues such as good behaviour. Target setting has been used well to help encourage pupils' overall academic development and some new teachers are using targets particularly well to help their personal development. In Year 4 this week's target "go to your table and eyes front" was constantly reinforced throughout a lesson "your eyes should be on me" and encouraged engagement with the teacher and therefore a high level of concentration.
44. Good attendance is monitored and promoted well. Parents know what to do if their child is ill and a system of first day contact for pupils who are absent has encouraged parents to notify the school when their children will be away. Unauthorised absences are about the same as the national average, and, although notes are followed up rigorously, a small number of parents do not respond to letters or telephone calls.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Not enough has been done to maintain the excellent links with parents found at the time of the last inspection. Many parents considered that they had been kept at arms length during the past few years. Many parents do not know who the governors are or who are teachers or teaching assistants. However parents' views of the school are rapidly improving because of the positive changes being made by the advisory head teacher. A new homework policy has been drafted and parents report that this is now well in place. Teachers are ensuring that children take home reading books, spellings, times tables and other work according to their age. The governors are aware that bridges need to be rebuilt with parents but do not yet have a clear action plan to restore their satisfaction.
46. Parents are kept well informed by weekly newsletters that also contain information from the parent teacher association whenever they have news to share. While the prospectus contains all required information, it is an unappealing source of information for new parents. There is nothing about the foundation stage curriculum or helpful annexes on how parents could help at home. The typesetting and reproduction of test results are poor and information about pupils with special needs is unhelpful. The information contained in the governors' annual report to parents does not fully comply with requirements, as it does not report pupils' attainment targets at the end of Year 6. Inspectors confirm parents' views that the annual reports about pupils' progress are well written and give good information about their children's achievements. The special needs co-ordinator has a clear plan of action to ensure that parents become involved in the review of their child's progress.
47. Parents are happy with the start their children make in school and the easy availability of the adults to share any problems they have. They hear their children read regularly and use the reading record books very well as a tool to help the teacher get additional information on how their child is progressing. However nothing has yet been done to extend this involvement by developing links with the pre-school group. There is insufficient guidance in the prospectus to help parents prepare their children for school or explain how the curriculum is taught.
48. Many parents show a good deal of interest and are supportive of the school and their children's learning. Most are happy to help with work at home and keen for the school to share its expectations about homework with them. Home/school agreements are in place, but their impact is low and a number of parents do not know of their existence.

A few parents and grandparents help regularly in lessons and accompany children on visits. The parent teacher association is enthusiastic and eager to support all aspects of school life by organising social functions such as the recent very popular ice skating event. The association recently purchased demountable gazebos to provide shelter on the playing field during hot summer weather. Parents have justifiably been unsettled by the uncertainties caused by the many staff changes and the effect this has had on their children but are confident that recent changes will help to restore former relationships with the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The advisory head teacher provides the school with a very clear educational direction that has raised morale. She has evaluated accurately the weaknesses of the school, shared these openly with governors and put into place an action plan that deals with them systematically. A strong lead has been given to all staff for example in tackling unacceptable behaviour and raising the confidence of pupils. Difficulties with staffing have been resolved well. She has given good guidance to the governors at all stages of selection of staff and has looked to bring in the necessary expertise to quickly turn around weaker teaching and subject leadership. All the new appointments are experienced teachers and have co-ordinated subjects in their previous schools. This has given the school a firm base on which to improve the quality of learning.
50. There is a recognisable improvement in pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm and this term the school has been able to raise the literacy and numeracy targets for this academic year's test. The co-ordinators have already shown themselves capable of responding to the systems put in place by the head teacher for reviewing their subjects and preparing action plans. These are of good quality particularly in identifying how pupils are to improve. Targets in writing, reading and mathematics are demanding and reflect high expectations of all involved.
51. The management of the provision for special educational needs is very effective. The teaching assistants, under the direction of the special educational needs co-ordinator, are clear about the learning targets for the pupils they are helping in lessons. The assistants are trained to support literacy, numeracy and help manage behaviour. This has been money well spent. The pupils respond well to the help they are getting and this is improving attitudes to learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with the advisory head teacher and the acting deputy head teacher in reviewing pupils' targets, shaping individual education programmes and evaluating the impact of teaching across the school. This team work further strengthens the sense of purpose that pervades the school.
52. The budget has been used well to improve teaching of literacy and numeracy and strategies for managing behaviour. Earmarked funding for the appointment of teaching assistants has meant that all classes have at least one assistant for numeracy and literacy lessons. There is adequate additional support for pupils with special educational needs and sufficient time for the special educational needs co-ordinator to teach in all the classes. The governors chose to retain a large surplus last financial year in order to maintain a favourable ratio of teachers to pupils this academic year. The small class sizes and good teaching is having an impact on the rate of progress, particularly in years 2 and 3. The local education authority has provided extra support for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This had a noticeable affect on the results of seven year olds in reading and mathematics and also in the improved performance of eleven year olds in reading.

53. The last inspection identified a weakness in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and providing the necessary strategies to improve this. The scrutiny of last year's work, parents' views and the evaluation of performance data indicate that not enough was done to tackle this and the teaching was of inconsistent quality. The advisory head teacher monitored all teaching last term and targets were agreed with the teachers for raising standards and improving learning. Training supported these but the impact on raising teachers' expectations of pupils last year varied.
54. The governors' role in fulfilling its responsibilities is satisfactory. They are in a better position to ask critical questions of the school, but many still lack training in how to use information they receive to develop their role in action planning. Through their involvement in the first stages of performance management they are tracking improvements to teaching, learning and standards. The curriculum committee is particularly strong and is well organised. The governors have a programme of visits, meetings with subject co-ordinators and review dates which helps them check on curriculum development.
55. Governors have not shown the leadership necessary to maintain an effective partnership with parents during the period of unsettled staffing. The governors' report lacks vitality or enthusiasm for reporting on the work of the school and they have not reported changes to the curriculum or the outcomes of the school's action plan on a regular basis. The school makes use of assessment data and the outcomes of monitoring of teaching and learning to judge the impact of its spending decisions. However, many governors are unclear over the working of the budget to make an informed judgement about whether it is getting best value. The school runs efficiently but management information systems are outdated and this is not making the best use of administrative time.
56. The accommodation is good. The school site is attractive with a large field, a playground marked out with interesting activities, a wildlife area, a swimming pool and all but one class is in permanent, purpose built accommodation. Space is available for booster classes to work at tables in comfort and groups for art can use appropriate space with adult helpers. There are not enough resources to help teach pupils the full range of ICT skills. There are also shortages in resources for DT, geography and science for groups to set up and conduct their own research or experiments. This has a detrimental effect on standards and pupils' ability to work independently. The lack of a secure outdoor play area along with large and small play equipment, which was a key issue in the last inspection report, impedes both physical and social development of the youngest children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to build on the successes achieved in recent months the governors along with the new head teacher and staff should;
- (1) Raise standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science attained by pupils in years 5 and 6 and;
 - a) implement the school's action plans for literacy and numeracy;
paragraphs 7, 50 & 98
 - b) improve opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and research skills;
paragraph 8, 17, 84, 87 & 92
 - c) make better use of the taught time; *paragraphs 22, 90, 92, 96 & 103*

- d) improve the work habits of pupils through greater involvement in their learning particularly in investigative work; *paragraph 17, 24 & 56*
- (2) Ensure that all elements of the National Curriculum are taught by;
 - a) providing adequate resources and training for all aspects ICT; *paragraphs 10, 26, 127 & 130*
 - b) improving and updating resources for geography and ensuring that the rolling programme is rigorously monitored, and that skills are taught consistently across the school. *paragraph 10, 118 & 119*
- (3) Provide an activity area for children in the foundation stage that is suitably equipped to provide for their creative, personal and social and physical development. *paragraphs 28, 73 & 76*
- (4) Improve the quality of the school's links with parents by;
 - a) providing better quality information in the school prospectus; *paragraph 48*
 - b) updating information on staff and members of the governing body and their work in the school; *paragraph 46*
 - c) formalising parents' role in the review process of those with special educational needs; *paragraph 46*
 - d) informing parents about the home/school agreement. *paragraph 48*

58. The school should consider the following minor issues.

- i.* Provide training for governors in further evaluating the work of the school. *paragraph 55*
- ii.* Provide clear objectives for the plenary sessions in literacy and numeracy lessons. *paragraph 22 & 99*
- iii.* Develop links with the play group. *paragraph 47*
- iv.* Provide sufficient resources in science and DT to improve the quality of learning. *paragraphs 103, 105 & 114.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 43 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 41 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 8 | 18 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 19 | 42 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y6 |
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 132 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 21 |
| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 49 |
| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |
| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 10 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 23 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.5 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 15 | 18 | 33 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| | Girls | 17 | 18 | 13 |
| | Total | 23 | 24 | 19 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 70 (59) | 73 (68) | 58 (68) |
| | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| | Girls | 18 | 17 | 17 |
| | Total | 24 | 24 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 73 (65) | 73 (76) | 73 (59) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86) | 88 (87) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 16 | 16 | 32 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 8 | 11 | 11 |
| | Girls | 11 | 8 | 10 |
| | Total | 19 | 19 | 21 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 59 (70) | 59 (61) | 66 (82) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 8 | 11 | 12 |
| | Girls | 14 | 9 | 9 |
| | Total | 22 | 20 | 21 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 71 (52) | 63 (52) | 66 (61) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 79 (75) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 132 |
| 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 | 1 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 17.4 |
| Average class size | 22 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 8 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 111 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000/2001 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 424,264 |
| Total expenditure | 434,337 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,681 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 56,541 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 46,468 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 7 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 7 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 132 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 57 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 56 | 37 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 40 | 39 | 14 | 7 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 19 | 46 | 23 | 9 | 4 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 21 | 30 | 23 | 23 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 30 | 49 | 18 | 4 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 25 | 44 | 19 | 12 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 51 | 37 | 4 | 7 | 2 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 39 | 40 | 16 | 4 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 19 | 47 | 25 | 5 | 4 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 16 | 26 | 25 | 23 | 11 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 32 | 47 | 11 | 9 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 26 | 37 | 28 | 9 | 0 |

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

59. The strengths identified in the last inspection report have been maintained. The teacher of the mixed reception and year 1 class took up her post eight days before the inspection. In that time there have already been improvements to the planning and organisation of the curriculum that are helping children learn well. The planning sheets for each activity show the relevant stepping stones for the children. They also serve as record of what the children do and this has made tracking of how well each child is learning much more reliable.
60. Inspection judgements are based on the work of children who have just started in Year 1 and the response and attainments of the three children who have just started school.
61. Teaching is good. The teacher is well organised and consistent in her expectations of all the children. She knows the children well and support needed for particular children is provided. She is knowledgeable about the curriculum and gives clear guidance to the other adult working in the classroom. The classroom is well set out. Children find it easy to get what they need. The clear labelling and colour coded trays and storage lockers make for an attractive and inviting place to want to learn in.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Children start school with skills in personal and social development that are below those normally expected. By the time they leave the reception class they are achieving the early learning goals in this area. This shows good achievement and reflects the importance placed on developing personal.
63. The activities set out on tables first thing in the morning successfully encourage children to make choices about what they would like to do before the directed activities begin. The discussions staff have with the children helps them develop their thoughts and successfully encourages them to share their views. Children are encouraged to work together; the assistant made a particular point of supporting those children already identified as being of concern in this area of their development by joining the group.
64. Children behave very well. The presence of older pupils familiar with routines helps children's confidence and the new teacher is careful to introduce changes slowly. The children quickly get back to the task in hand after the registers are taken and need very little prompting to follow routines such as lining up to go outside or into the hall. All children take a full part in all the activities in the class and the level of co-operation between them is high. They listen attentively to instructions and this helps their learning in all areas.
65. The children benefited enormously from a circle time session. The value the teacher gives to everybody's response to questions means that they actively listened to everything everyone had to say. The youngest children took part successfully in passing a sound around the circle and an echo back to the teacher.

Communication, language and literacy

66. The children show a broadly typical range of abilities in this area on entry to school. By the time they enter Year 1 reading and writing skills reach the expected standard but speaking skills fall short of expectations.
67. Those pupils who have just started Year 1 listened passively as the teacher read the 'blurb' on the back of a book during a literacy activity with little reaction to what the book has in store. Only a few were willing to answer questions such as, "*What does this tell us about the type of book it is?*" There is general reluctance to develop answers and become involved in discussion during the daily activities. The teacher is aware of weakness in children's communication skills and she sets a very good example in the language she uses at all opportunities. Questions are chosen well to challenge children to develop their answers. Regular singing, rhymes and choral reading help them gain confidence. Circle time is of great benefit to the children and the showing and sharing sessions at the end of activities is also quickly helping raise the expectations that what they say is important. The children are responding well to the praise and encouragement to share their thoughts and are now making good progress in this area.
68. Teaching of early literacy is good and children learn effectively. A daily literacy activity is organised well so those children that learn at different rates have just the right level of challenge and time to complete their tasks. The majority of children who have just left the reception class know their letter sounds and recognise commonly used words. Those children who did not reach the expected standard are getting help from the special needs teacher and benefit from a daily sounds lesson with the teaching assistant. The youngest children talk about the books they are reading and after only one sharing of the book remember the main points and the ending. Two of the children already write their names in a legible style. Year 1 children write whole words and make appropriate marks to indicate sentences. All copied carefully words written by their teacher.

Mathematical development

69. Children are exceeding expectations by the time they start in Year 1. Lower attaining children sort dominoes to show which have values that are more or less than eight and understand the idea of one more and one less. They recognise and count numbers reliably to twenty. Higher attainers show how numbers greater than ten can be set out as tens and units. They estimate accurately how many cubes they think they might have in a random collection and know early number facts. Their knowledge of how to make a pattern with two or three colours is good.
70. Children are make good progress as a result of good teaching. Mathematics lessons are organised well as a mixture of class, group and individual tasks and the good quality equipment is used well to develop early numeracy skills. The special needs teacher gives good support to the lower attaining children; for example by counting out loud with them, encouraging them to guess the hidden number and stressing the right mathematical language.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Progress is too slow in this area of learning and children's knowledge and understanding is below expected standards. For example most are still uncertain about the names of different animals and how we could classify them; neither do they have wide enough knowledge of forms of transport. During a discussion about the machine they had built they showed limited response to questions such as *"Tell me more about?"* or *"Why do you think?"*
72. The teaching of senses was effective because the children were correctly grouped in a lesson. They had plenty of time to discuss a collection of objects and listen to sounds. The adults emphasised the words feel, look and smell and very quickly the children used these criteria to talk about the characteristics of the objects. They accurately match the sound of farm animals to the correct picture.
73. Children are gaining a typical understanding of activities in the wider world such as railway workers through the role-play area. However there is nothing in the classroom to promote more general enquiry and investigation. There are not enough toys to help them construct large or small models and there is limited access to the sand and water area and no outside area. There is only one computer which limits the opportunities for children to develop their understanding of ICT.

Physical development

74. Children are on line to reach the early learning goals for small and large movement by the end of their reception year. The staff provide a typical range of activities each day which develop small movements adequately. For example learning action songs, filling containers with sand, threading laces and playing with small construction toys.
75. The children made good progress during movement activity in the hall. As the children balanced the beanbags on different parts of their body they were encouraged to try and move a few steps. They did this well with caution, but evident surprise at their own success. The teaching was particularly effective, introducing an awareness of how exercise affects the body. During a taped lesson the teacher used clear gestures so helping one child interpret the instructions from the taped voice. They confidently move around the hall, running, jumping and skipping in time to the teacher's claps or the taped music. They show an awareness of space typical of other five year olds and will move safely in counter directions to the rest of the class. When asked about what they noticed happened to their bodies during exercise they knew that their 'heart beat faster' and that 'they began to sweat'.
76. The quantity of good quality props that would encourage movement and the range of toys are barely sufficient. Whilst there are regular activities in the hall, the lack of an outdoor space means that daily running and jumping and physical challenges associated with exploration are severely limited. Children can not therefore make the best possible progress in this area of learning.

Creative development

77. Children's creative development is satisfactory and they are on course to reach expectations in this area of learning. A range of activities is planned each day to help children develop skills through play and practical activity. Children use their imagination in the role-play area as expected. Older children play with younger, creating roles for themselves and even inviting visitors into the 'train compartment'. Clear objectives helped the teaching assistant to support the children in the art area

in activities that developed from their mathematical work. The youngest children chose colours carefully from a selection to develop rainbow patterns in an imaginative scene of large and small coloured clouds. Children sing simple songs from memory and make sound patterns using various parts of their bodies.

78. Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher is managing this area of learning to the best of her abilities, given limited resources. However the role-play area does not have a central prominence and there is a lack of dressing up clothes or appropriate furniture to help develop the play after the initial ideas have been explored by the children. Whilst the activities set out in the morning give the children chance to build on basic skills with good quality resources, imaginative activities such as drawing, colouring or modelling have to rely on much less inviting equipment. This is an area for development.

ENGLISH

79. Tests show that standards in English are well below those typical for eleven year olds nationally and not as high as reported in the previous inspection. Inspection findings broadly reflect these results, although there is some recent improvement. Significant numbers of the current Year 6 pupils are attaining below average standards but the proportion of pupils who achieve above average levels is in line with expectations. Standards achieved by Year 2 pupils last year showed good improvement in reading. The current Year 2 are expected to attain above average standards by the end of the year which is an improvement on the previous inspection.
80. Speaking and listening skills of pupils are broadly average. Pupils answer questions and give straightforward answers. Teachers probe sufficiently to get pupils to explain more fully and to develop their thinking.
81. When pupils enter Year 1 many pupils have speaking skills below those expected and at this early stage in the school year are not yet confident with the question and answer procedures of the classroom. Good progress is made so that, at the beginning of Year 2, all but a few are well able to explain what they are doing and a good proportion is very articulate in small group discussion. Pupils listen well to their teachers and increasingly to each other.
82. Although there are some very articulate pupils, the speaking and listening skills of some older pupils are generally less well established. Pupils are keen to answer questions and ask relevant questions. When talking about books, very articulate pupils give an effective synopsis of a story and make valid comparisons between authors and styles of writing. Most pupils listen well to their teachers but a small minority has not learnt to pay proper attention to whole class teaching and only want to listen to specific instructions or comments directed at them.
83. The standard in reading of the present Year 2 is likely to exceed that of the previous year as pupils are receiving high quality teaching and the majority already read at above expected standards. Pupils are taught to pay good attention to phonic structure, meaning and prediction, which enables most to read fluently and with increasing expression.
84. Year 3 and 4 pupils read at acceptable levels but at the top of the school standards in reading are much lower than they should be. This is mostly due to a significant number of low attaining pupils whose needs have not been met in the past. Better

attainment of the younger pupils points to the effectiveness of the literacy strategy at an earlier stage in their learning. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils read very well showing good understanding of events and character. They express opinions and give reasons for their choice of books and preferences for authors. Lower attaining pupils read hesitantly, using knowledge of phonics to decipher unfamiliar words but with little expression or enthusiasm. Library skills are inconsistent with some of the younger pupils being more competent than older ones. Most pupils know how to find books on the shelves but the ability to locate information using content and indexes is not well developed in Year 6 pupils and neither are higher order reading skills such as skimming and scanning.

85. Record keeping is quite thorough and pupils are tested at regular intervals. Staff keep records when they listen to pupils read but this information is only rarely transferred to pupils' reading diaries so pupils and parents do not sufficiently benefit from pointers for improvement when reading at home.
86. Standards of written work by Year 2 pupils last year was satisfactory for the majority and well above average for higher attaining pupils who, for example, effectively extracted information from books. Most could retell a story that included appropriate detail, punctuate appropriately and present their work neatly. Lower attaining pupils made sound progress in writing simple sentences. The current Year 2 pupils are building successfully on the good standards attained in Year 1. The writing of above average pupils shows imagination and some exceptionally well-chosen vocabulary, while the majority write competently using full stops and capital letters with mostly accurate spelling. Word-processing on the computer makes a positive contribution to pupils' literacy.
87. Written work from Year 6 pupils last year was well below expectations. They wrote in a suitable range of styles but the amount of work produced was insufficient for all but the higher attainers to improve their performance. These pupils wrote with increasing control of more formal styles and awareness of the needs of the reader. Vocabulary was carefully chosen and punctuation was good but there were some wrong tenses and careless errors. The spelling, punctuation and grammar of the average pupils was much less secure. Lower attainers spelled many words as they sound but inaccurately, not sure about very simple conventions such as the effect of an 'e' on a vowel sound. In general, pupils had insufficient opportunity to develop ideas in extended pieces of writing. There was little evidence of drafting for pupils to improve their work and targets in the books were far too general for the needs of lower attaining pupils who require small, measurable steps to improve their performance.
88. The present Year 6 pupils have made a good start and there are improvements in the purpose and organisation of their writing. However standards are below average and too many pupils' writing is poor. Presentation of work is generally unsatisfactory, handwriting is cramped and lacks flow. Pupils are not sure how best to handle errors so there is a lot of crossing out. Few pupils know how to add detail and interest to an account of their holiday and they appear unused to writing at length. They make better progress as a result of well-focused teaching on one aspect of writing, creating dialogue for example that includes vocabulary such as 'snapped' and 'whimpered'. Attainment in Year 3 is broadly as it should be but there is a significant minority of pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 whose attainment is below expectations and therefore writing is a priority for improvement for these classes.

89. Teaching this term is often good. Lessons are well planned at an appropriate level. Introductions make learning intentions clear to pupils. Teachers approach texts in a lively manner and this motivates pupils. Care is taken to provide activities that are matched to the needs of pupils so all are suitably challenged. Learning tasks are made manageable so pupils have a clear idea about what they have to do. For example, in one lesson the teacher demonstrated how to change a passage from the first to the third person, making good use of questions and pupils' ideas. As a result, pupils made good progress in their own writing. In some lessons, teachers have to work hard to establish better work habits. A minority do not concentrate well during whole class teaching while others do not get down to independent work, wasting time. A few call out instead of putting up their hands. Sometimes the pace of the lesson set by the teacher is too slow and it runs over time. As a result, pupils do not develop a sense of urgency in getting tasks completed. Teachers often make good use of the end of a lesson to celebrate pupils' work, reinforce what has been learned and pull ideas together, but overall sufficient thought is not given to this part of the lesson.
90. The timetable is not sufficiently well thought out and pupils in years 3, 5 and 6 move from English lessons into literacy lessons. Many of the skills are being duplicated in these lessons and time would be better spent in involving pupils in research or investigations that would ensure greater use of their literacy skills.
91. Although the provision for special needs has only been in place this term teaching is already having a good impact on lower attaining pupils who have become more integrated into the work of the class. This is not only raising their achievement but also their self esteem. In one lesson work was adapted to the needs of these pupils, they were well supported by the special needs teacher and teaching assistants and were keen to contribute to the feedback at the end of the lesson. As a result of good team work, the pupils were included in all aspects of the learning objectives for the class.
92. Management is well aware of the need to raise standards and writing has been set as a priority. The new co-ordinator has made a promising start to improve the consistency of teaching of handwriting. Booster classes have been introduced so teaching can be more focused on specific needs and this is expected to help in raising standards. Additional literacy support is offered to some pupils and while this is well taught, pupils sometimes miss class group work so are unable to build on what they learned in the first part of the lesson. Literacy is developed in different subjects of the curriculum but there is room for improvement, such as skills in using information books.

MATHEMATICS

93. Standards had declined since the last inspection and pupils' performances in the national test from 1998 to 2000 were below average. However, the results for 2001 show substantial improvement for pupils aged seven, with higher attainers performing significantly better than in previous years. Eleven year olds results for 2001 are very similar to previous years remaining below average. Inspection results found standards to be above average for seven year olds and average for eleven year olds, with less pupils attaining below average than previous years. The disparity between the national test results and the standard of work seen during inspection can to some extent be explained by the tighter planning focus adopted after the advisory head teacher was appointed in the summer term. Present eleven year olds are on track to achieve satisfactory standards because of this improved teaching. The

implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has led to a more structured approach to mathematics with appropriate support for teachers in their planning. This is beginning to have an impact on attainment, particularly for younger pupils.

94. Pupils in Year 2 are on line to achieve good standards at the end of the year. Pupils are able to count, read, write and order whole numbers to 100. They use good mental calculations with the teacher using 'Sid the spider' to climb up and down the number facts to 100. This puppet greatly aids motivation and concentration. Some pupils explain that when adding ten the tens column changes and the units column stays the same. Pupils competently count forwards and backwards in tens on a 100 square. Younger pupils in Year 1 also make good progress. They count up to and down from 20 and join in and count together from any point between 0 – 20. For example counting together from 7 to 20 or from 14 to 0. Most are able to explain that 20 is two tens. Lower attaining pupils are well supported by a teaching assistant and pupils are also making use of suitable computer programs to help them learn. The scrutiny of work from 2000/2001 showed above expected standards in shape, space and measures.
95. Pupils in Year 6 are attaining satisfactory standards. Most add, subtract, multiply and divide reasonably accurately and can explain the relationships between these operations. Pupils multiply and divide decimal numbers by 10, 100 and 1000. Higher attaining pupils use mental strategies to support these calculations by doubling two and three-digit numbers. The inspection took place early in the school year with rules for setting out work not fully established and so pupils were somewhat unclear about where to note their calculations – in books, on paper or on whiteboards. This affected the quality of the presentation and pupils chance to work back through their mistakes. The teacher is aware of this.
96. The quality of teaching this term is satisfactory overall with good teaching in the classes for the younger pupils. The best teaching involves a brisk introduction, which quickly gains pupils' interest. Lessons are well planned and basic skills effectively taught based on the national numeracy strategy. The last part of the lessons is still a weaker element in that it does not draw sufficiently on pupils own techniques and solutions to problems.
97. Work is well matched to the needs of all pupils. Exciting warm up activities help get everybody's attention and pupils respond well to these. For example Year 4 pupils developed brisk mental calculation strategies for adding 10 or 100 so they could keep up during a 'tennis' game with the calculations moving from teacher to pupil. Teaching assistants are well briefed and support pupils' special needs well. The questions to pupils are well matched to their abilities. The behaviour of some of the older pupils can distract the flow of lessons. The teachers are aware of this and are developing appropriate strategies as they get to know pupils better over the term. Marking is now satisfactory with positive, helpful comments that show pupils how to improve their work. This has not always been the case and work from too many classes last year was not marked at all or just in a cursory way. This has had an impact on the attitudes of some pupils towards mathematics that the newly appointed teachers are now dealing with.
98. The school has begun to analyse test results and use the information to provide appropriate challenge and support for year groups, classes and individual pupils. The target set for the current Year 6 for 70 per cent to gain average levels or better in the national tests is achievable with resources targeted at lower attaining pupils. A useful

start in this process is the Year 6 action plan for raising attainment for the year group. The co-ordinator, who has just been appointed, has carried out a useful analysis of the 2001 Year 6 National Curriculum test performance in order to consider strengths and weaknesses and these will provide a blueprint for development. She is an experienced mathematics co-ordinator who is beginning to work on the priorities needed to develop the subject and raise standards.

SCIENCE

99. Standards have declined since the previous inspection and pupils' performance in tests has generally been below that of eleven year olds nationally. Last year the performance in tests rose substantially on the results of 2000. The work of Year 6 pupils last year was in line with expectations with the lower attaining pupils achieving well to reach a satisfactory standard in their investigation skills and scientific knowledge. The teacher had successfully revisited all aspects of the science curriculum, and had planned thoroughly a series of practical investigations to teach scientific principles. These successes were not reflected elsewhere in the school.
100. Attainment of the present Year 2 in investigative work and scientific knowledge exceeds expectations. The scrutiny of their work from last year shows that average and higher attaining pupils know how to classify animals found in the school grounds and set out their results in simple charts. Lower attaining pupils label diagrams showing for example the number of legs or where the animals were found. They draw diagrams to show what happens to their cress seeds when placed in different parts of the classroom and include a simple statement to show what they have noticed. Pupils of all levels of attainment identify a range of materials that are hard or soft, shiny or dull. During one lesson Year 2 pupils looked carefully at their results of a food survey and suggested who may want the information. They arrived at a good range of people who could use the information and also justified their answers. All pupils made good progress. The higher attaining pupils successfully collected data about favourite vegetables, entered this into a database and produced graphs that they went on to evaluate. Lower attaining and pupils of average attainment learnt how to organise the collection of information and what conclusion they could draw when results had been graphed.
101. The standard of work seen in Year 3 also indicates that pupils are achieving above expectations and learning well. They carry out experiments in a methodical way and record their findings clearly. Pupils identify factors that affect results when testing toy cars, such as the angle of the slope or the force of the push. In a lesson on shadows Year 3 pupils explained where shadows might fall, and lower attaining pupils found out through discussion that the size of the shadow is also altered by moving the 'screen' backwards and forwards. This exciting discovery was eagerly shared with other pupils who went on to try it out for themselves, and in doing so discovered that shadows can be superimposed on to each other to create optical illusions.
102. The standards in Year 4 are below expectations. Most of the pupils identified that breaks in a circuit will cause the light to go out but few are methodical in their way of working to find where this might have occurred. The small work sample from last year showed that this class had carried out very little science. Despite having tackled electrical circuits before their knowledge of how a circuit could be used to test materials is shallow. Year 5 pupils are also achieving below expectations. Their work from last year shows that higher attaining pupils are unsure how to set up experiments to explore friction and whilst the presentation of their work was neat it was descriptive rather than giving explanations for what they had discovered. The

lower attaining pupils completed diagrams and drawings, for example of a liquid cooling but with no explanations of their findings. Most of the work was copied and there was little evidence that pupils with different levels of attainment were being appropriately challenged. In the lessons on sound higher attaining ten year olds were aware that you could change a number of aspects of a test to show sound passes through different materials at different rates. However, all found it hard to give the teacher any useful example of what might constitute a fair test or how they might set one up.

103. The present Year 6 pupils have made good start but have a lot of ground to make up. Pupils were methodical in carrying out an experiment on friction using force meters sensibly. They used a growing bank of information to choose the best meter to use and set out results in table form. A shortage of force meters meant pupils had to wait before they could carry on with their investigation and as a consequence there was not enough time to discuss the results at the end of the lesson. Their scientific vocabulary, however, is well below that expected and many average and lower attaining pupils were unsure of how you might set about finding out if the gradient or slope made any difference. There was no science work available from last year and in discussion with a sample group of these pupils it was clear that they had done very little during the year. Pupils of average attainment could not explain how you might find out if a packed lunch bag acted as an insulator and the higher attaining had no understanding of how you might separate out solids from liquids. Although they had drawn the rain cycle in a geography lesson the terms such as evaporation or condensation had little meaning for them. This indicates that the standards attained by Year 6 will not be maintained and current Year 6 pupils are working at below average levels.
104. Teaching this term is often good. The lessons are well planned and all the teachers place emphasis on practical investigations which is helping pupils learn at a good rate. Their knowledge of the science curriculum is at least good and they are establishing different expectations for pupils of different levels of attainment. All the lessons gave pupils the chance to contribute their ideas. This was most successful in years 2 and 4 where the teachers had been very careful to identify the language they were expecting the pupils to use; it was clearly displayed and consequently pupils made use of it. In years 5 and 6 the pupils are unused to such an approach in science teaching and their responses are limited by the correct vocabulary.
105. The co-ordinator is new to the post and to this school. There has not been a proper audit of resources at present that would support the scheme. Resources are barely satisfactory and affect pupils' opportunities to carry out their own investigations. Whilst there is clear evidence of some very good teaching last year in Year 6 this has not affected teaching elsewhere in the school. There has not been regular monitoring of what is working well in the school in order that the pupils learn as well as they might and reach an expected standard.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Art has a high profile in the school and the standards reached are as expected for pupils by the time they leave the school. In Year 2 standards are much higher than is usual. Lessons observed and displays indicate that in general art is taught well and pupils have experience of a range of techniques and a variety of media. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

107. As a result of very good teaching Year 2 pupils have good drawing and observation skills. In a lesson to observe natural objects they first made 'palettes' by sticking on leaves and petals which drew their attention to shape and colour. Then they looked closely at scallop shells, carefully drawing the outline and ridges, adding just a little colour to highlight the shape. One pupil suggested looking from a different angle and the teacher took advantage of this to alert others to the idea. Good progress was made in the lesson, so that when pupils drew branches of tiny crab apples they were able to produce drawings that they coloured skilfully using water-soluble pencils, carefully blending colours to create a delightful effect. The discussion at the end of the lesson was well organised so pupils could explain what they had done and which techniques worked best and why.
108. Year 3 pupils had a good experience of using pencil, charcoal, pastel and paint in a lesson to reinterpret photographs to produce compositions of their own. The task was quite challenging but they showed good concentration and perseverance in trying to get a particular effect. Sketching techniques are good and pupils know how to hold a pencil lightly for this purpose. Some pupils produced bold and interesting compositions but others need more guidance in this respect.
109. Art is used effectively to teach different aspects of the curriculum. Last year, for example, Year 6 pupils learned about the clothing, art and architecture of Ancient Greece by making a three dimensional collage of Gods and Goddesses. Careful use of colour in paintings of the journey of a river show good quality learning about rivers expressed in a visual way. Progression of skills was evident in the clay work where throughout the school pupils made Millennium Plaques that were redecorated, glazed and fired in the school's kiln. Art from a variety of cultures was drawn upon; pupils made Rangoli patterns as part of their study of Hinduism and masks inspired by those in Africa.
110. Pupils learn about the work of artists by painting pictures in the style of Constable after visiting Flatford Mill, the view depicted in the Hay Wain. The paintings show good use of colour and attention to background but tended to be copies rather than an attempt to use his technique in a different setting, perhaps in a study of a view from the school for example. There is room for more emphasis on observational drawing and painting by older pupils. Sketchbooks have been introduced and help pupils consider initial ideas and make visual notes.
111. Responsibility for the subject has very recently been undertaken by the co-ordinator. Nonetheless, she has clear ideas about the direction the subject should take, such as introducing computer generated art, and implementing arrangements for monitoring development and pupils' progress. The school has a tradition of holding an Arts Week in association with other schools in the area. This has a considerable impact on the subject and enables pupils to work at a different scale and broaden their experience. Visits to art galleries also enhance their knowledge and understanding.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

112. Only one lesson was observed with Year 6 pupils. Evidence from this lesson, discussion with the co-ordinator and older pupils, and scrutiny of work from the previous year confirm that overall pupils meet national expectations as they move through the school. This maintains the judgement on standards found in the last inspection.

113. Year 6 pupils considered the requirements necessary for a strong structure to make a bridge using rolled paper. The quality of teaching in the lesson was good. The teacher managed a lively group of pupils well, explaining the task carefully and enabling pupils to experiment with structures and discuss findings before drawing the group together to consider the most appropriate designs. Pupils discussed ideas and tried out solutions modifying their designs as a result. They learned new techniques to join paper tubes using tape and pipe cleaners to make a strong structure and can follow the instructions given to support this learning.
114. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed. The school follows national guidance for planning design and technology. Resources for the subject are at a very basic level and restrict what pupils can achieve. In order to raise the profile of the subject these resources need to be improved and made accessible as appropriate to pupils and staff.

GEOGRAPHY

115. No lessons were seen and only a small sample of work was available for scrutiny. This, together with discussions with pupils in years 5 and 6 shows that pupils have not had the opportunity to study all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of studies. Standards are low and the provision for geography has not improved since the last inspection report.
116. Year 2 begin making some elementary maps. These maps are not of the standard usually expected, lacking symbols to show the different places on an island. Other coverage is thin indicating that there has been inadequate development of skills. Pupils could list some of the differences between their village and that of Walton on the Naze, but there were low expectations of the recording or map work to support this visit.
117. Older pupils carry out a number of study visits in the immediate area and further afield. Whilst these have a historical emphasis they also provide pupils with some geographical awareness of places beyond their immediate knowledge. However these visits are not utilised to develop pupils' mapping skills. There is little mapping work undertaken in years 3 to 6. A sample of work from last year's year 6 pupils indicate that pupils use reference books sufficiently to identify where the volcanoes of the world are located as well as the main rivers and mountains. This is generally undemanding work and no account is taken of different levels of attainment.
118. Each year group studies other countries but only at a rudimentary level and there are no resources in school to encourage a more general awareness of other countries. The older pupils have only a token understanding of life in contemporary Egypt following their study of this country as part of a history topic. The contribution geography could make to an understanding of other cultures falls well short of expectations.
119. A new co-ordinator for the subject is firstly ensuring that the rolling programme of themes and skills teaching is implemented across the school before tackling the necessary audit of resources and evaluating teaching. Resources are inadequate to develop pupils' mapping and enquiry skills. The potential of geography teaching to develop pupils' literacy skills has been overlooked in the past and this has been identified in the co-ordinators action plan.

HISTORY

120. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work from last year shows that, standards are broadly as expected by the age of seven and eleven, although there are some weaknesses. The current Year 6 are expected to achieve at similar levels but Year 2 should reach a higher level. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
121. Pupils gain much of their understanding through visits to historic places, drama and links with art. The younger pupils recall historical events as a result of watching videos, but there is little evidence of them learning to record what they know. In general, the information that pupils' gain is mostly factual and the work of Year 6 pupils does not show as much understanding of reasons for change as might be expected. Neither do they demonstrate the ability to select and present information from different sources. The Internet is underused throughout as a source of information and exploration. The school makes good use of local education authority lending facilities to ensure that pupils can explore artefacts from the past.
122. Year 2 pupils have good recall of the videos they watched last year. A group of high attaining pupils remembered that Guy Fawkes was caught as he tried to blow up a 'building' and the King with gunpowder. They recalled a visit to Hedingham Castle, the armour seen and a demonstration of the use of a bow and arrow. One described accurately how a ring of houses had to be pulled down to stop the Fire of London spreading. They have quite a good sense of chronology, making a fair stab at dates, including suggesting that the Second World War was about forty years ago.
123. Last year, Year 6 pupils studied World War 2, learning about evacuation and rationing. As part of their work on Ancient Greece they made some nicely presented folders with the title written in the Greek alphabet. They began to understand that there is more than one interpretation of history by writing letters from the point of view of a Greek woman. Not a great deal of work was produced however. As a result of this and limited use of different sources of information, pupils' knowledge and understanding was rather sketchy.
124. In the lessons seen teaching was good. In one lesson the teacher made good use of resources such as chairs from different periods to help pupils focus on change and arranged for two elderly women from the community to come to the class. The pupils enjoyed asking questions about the women's childhood experiences, finding out about school life, transport, home-life and the effect of defences such as barbed wire on the beaches. Higher attaining pupils made effective notes to record what they found out. One group looked at Victorian artefacts, making comparisons and links with then and now. In another class the teacher's introduction made clear to pupils what they needed to learn and good pace enabled pupils to make effective use of reference materials as they found the difference between settlers and invading Vikings.
125. The management of the subject is strong on arrangements for visits, for example to Kentwell Hall, the Colchester Museum and the Hollytrees Museum as part of studies of Romans and Victorians. The visits have a good impact on pupils' understanding about how people lived in the past but are not extended to develop historical enquiry skills in the school. There has been no monitoring of teaching or planning, but new procedures have been put in place to enable the co-ordinator to fulfil this role and provide the opportunity to develop this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

126. Standards throughout the school are not high enough and do not consistently meet national expectations. The school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Pupils are not given appropriately planned opportunities to develop the elements of the subject and this affects how well they develop and use their skills. Many pupils use computers at home to find information, manipulate sounds, pictures and data, create designs and to play games, but opportunities for experience with ICT in the school are inconsistent and haphazard. This is partly due to hardware and software not being available as well as weaknesses in planning.
127. The last inspection report noted that older pupils were not sufficiently competent in using information and communication technology for control and modelling and editing data. Although pupils have some awareness of text editing this is largely still the case. In terms of resources for control technology there has been no evidence of any real progress since the last inspection.
128. With so few computers available in each class, there are limited opportunities for class teaching and 'hands on' practice of skills already taught. Computers are in operation for most of the day and all pupils get some limited use of them as part of the lessons. Individual pupils describe how they connect to the Internet to find information about football and how to use a spreadsheet. There were a few isolated examples of pupils manipulating data, designing graphics and pictures, finding information and using the Internet during the inspection. No use of ICT for capturing or changing sounds or making music was observed. There was no control or modelling technology in use.
129. Pupils clearly enjoy ICT activities, and are eager to apply their developing skills. Whilst observations of direct teaching were limited by timetable and hardware constraints, teaching in the one lesson observed with a class of young children was very good. Explanations to the pupils were very effective and clear. Praise was used very well to motivate and encourage pupils as well as manage the pupils around one computer so they all had a chance to learn new skills.
130. Provision is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator, who has just been appointed, is aware of the deficiencies and has a clear plan for taking the subject forward. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for the development of all types of resources together with the training of teaching and teaching assistants to raise standards in the subject.

MUSIC

131. Evidence from the two lessons observed, together with the musical elements of daily assemblies confirms that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Standards in lessons are good; this is the same judgement as in the last inspection report.
132. In assemblies pupils of all ages sing with enthusiasm, clear diction and good timing. They begin on the correct beat, remember words well, and sing with clarity and good melody. They know the importance of listening to beat and rhythm. Pupils understand how the tempo and loudness of singing frequently reflect the words of the song being sung. During the inspection pupils were learning about the guitar and the composer Francisco Tarrega whose composition 'Lagrima' was featured in assembly. Pupils are encouraged to share their musical talents as part of recognising achievements. For

example two pupils played their clarinets in a performance for the whole school acting as a boost to others who are interested in starting music lessons.

133. The quality of teaching in the lessons was good. Young pupils in the reception and year 1 class learned well to recognise pitch, tempo, timbre and texture by passing 'ripples' of sound around a circle. They practised using the sounds that can be made with their own bodies. Pupils were taught appropriate vocabulary and could share their ideas of how to make sounds. Pupils in the Year 5 class taught by the music co-ordinator, shared rhythms, pulse and beats and learned about these by focusing on specific pieces of music using clapping and percussion instruments. This led to a good performance to accompany 'The Entertainer' by Scott Joplin.
134. Pupils' attitudes to music are generally positive. Most respond well to lessons, can listen attentively and are eager to participate. When using instruments, they handle them with care.
135. The subject is well managed. A clear and helpful policy is in place and the school follows national guidance for planning. Resources are good. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and has a clear agenda to develop the subject. She does not have a class commitment and is able to teach each class for half term units alongside the class teacher. This has the potential to raise the subject knowledge of both teachers and teaching assistants.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Evidence from four lessons observed in years 1, 2, 3 and 4 found standards in games and gymnastics met expectations. This is similar to those reported at the last inspection. No swimming lessons were seen but the co-ordinator reported that all pupils reach the standard expected and most go on to exceed this in their stamina and confidence in the water. All pupils swim once a week during the summer in the school's own pool and benefit from the small group teaching given by an experienced instructor and parent volunteers.
137. Teaching is good and pupils learn effectively. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the lessons. The teacher helps pupils learn quickly from each other by sharing their talents. For example, in a Year 2 lesson a pupil showed how to get behind the ball, crouch low and use two hands. Other pupils then went on to improve their technique for stopping the ball. The teachers' constant surprise and recognition of success meant that learning was as good as it could be. Expectations were clear for each ability group in each lesson helping teachers and pupils to focus on successful techniques and skills during the lessons. For example, Year 4 pupils suggested to each other when they could put a turn into the sequence and whether it should be low or high. This showed that they had learnt from the careful evaluations given by the teacher after another group had shared their performance. The teaching assistant in Year 1 made a good contribution to the assessment of physical development by noting what pupils could and couldn't do. This increased the effectiveness of teaching.
138. The co-ordinator is only recently in post, but has implemented the scheme of work to ensure that skills are developed systematically. Resources are adequate. There are no procedures for dealing with pupils who come without the proper change of clothes for the lesson and no record kept of pupils who miss physical education lessons regularly. Boys and girls continue to gain from after school clubs and a variety of local

sporting competitions, which adds to their skills in game activities and gymnastics. Sporting links with other schools in the community continue as a priority since the last inspection and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Although the co-ordinator is new to the post she has gained the commitment of other staff to provide a good range of clubs after school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. Pupils reach broadly average attainment in and meet the expectations of the local authority agreed syllabus. They gain understanding of the world faiths covered by this syllabus. Standards are similar to those of the previous inspection.
140. The current Year 2 pupils have become interested in the Jewish religion through looking at artefacts and making Challah bread to celebrate the Jewish New Year. They have begun to find out about different beliefs and practices. By the time pupils reach the top of the school they know about the different books which make up the Bible, who wrote the Gospels, the difference between the Old and New Testaments, that there are prophets and that messages are given through parables. They gain experience of different religions including encouragement to empathise with people of different faiths. There is less emphasis on the values and beliefs of the religions studied.
141. Assemblies make a good contribution to religious education and pupils celebrate major festivals. For example, they are introduced to the artefacts and customs of Judaism to coincide with Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year. Year 2 pupils shared with the school what they have learned about the Jewish religion, the bread they made and the traditional greeting for the New Year. As part of a moment of reflection pupils were asked to think about the Jews in the Second World War and the Jewish people who might have died in the World Trade Centre in New York, thereby linking past and present.
142. Previous work and observations of lessons indicates that teaching is broadly satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, but do not sufficiently link themes to values and belief systems of different religions. They demonstrate a positive attitude to different faiths. One teacher showed sensitivity in his approach to recent events by introducing a personal reminiscence about the kind and peaceful nature of a Muslim friend.
143. Lessons are planned using the locally agreed syllabus and an appropriate collection of resources are available for pupils to experience as much first hand as possible. To increase the effectiveness of teaching the co-ordinator has made good attempts to ensure that staff have the opportunity to experience different religions. For example, he arranged a visit to the Hindu Temple in Neasden, for a talk and exhibition. People representing the religions studied have also been invited to talk to pupils including ministers from various Christian's denominations and a Jewish head teacher.