

INSPECTION REPORT

MOULSHAM INFANT SCHOOL

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114803

Headteacher: Mrs A Smith

Reporting inspector: Jacqueline Ikin
3349

Dates of inspection: 2 - 5 July

Inspection number: 194297

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Princes Road Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM2 9DG
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Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Philip Firth
Date of previous inspection:	2 December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3349	J. Ikin	Registered inspector	English Physical Education Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The schools 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?
9724	B. Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
31029	P. Thrussell	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art Special educational needs	
18116	C. Taylor	Team inspector	Information Communication Technology Design Technology Geography History Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
8139	B. Johnstone	Team inspector	Music Religious Education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 244 pupils on roll, aged between four and seven, and they are taught in nine classes. The school's immediate catchment area has been reduced since the last inspection and as a result about one third of the pupils now come from the wider area of Chelmsford. Just over eight percent of pupils at the school are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry. Although a significant minority of pupils achieve above the average expected for their age, attainment on entry overall is below average. Twenty two percent of pupils at the school have special educational needs, which is broadly average, but higher than at the last inspection. Five percent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The number of pupils at the school who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some very good features. Pupils make good progress and the majority attain standards that are average or above by the time that they leave the school at the age of seven. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment as a result of the good teaching they receive and a shared commitment by the headteacher, staff and governors to high academic standards. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- As a result of the good teaching that they receive, pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in reading, art and design, design technology and music.
- The provision for special educational needs pupils is very good. The support and guidance that they receive ensures that they make good progress.
- The leadership and management of the school is very good. Staff and governors work as a united and effective team with a shared commitment to school improvement. All the resources available to the school are carefully targeted to raising standards.
- The provision for cultural education is very good and ensures that pupils have access to a wide range of art, music and literature.
- There is very good provision for the care and welfare of pupils. Very good assessment procedures and effective communication ensures pupils' academic progress is carefully planned and that parents are well informed.
- The school has very effective links with the community and its partner schools, which make a significant contribution to the curriculum and the quality of education that pupils receive.

What could be improved

- The range of opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills and to learn in a variety of different ways, so that they build on their basic skills and reach even higher standards, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Planned opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and develop the skills of independent learning.

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 good progress in addressing the weaknesses found in the last OFSTED inspection in 1996. The school has maintained its many strengths and improved the overall quality of the education it offers even though a number of significant changes have occurred since the last inspection. These include a change in the area from which the school takes its pupils, the appointment of a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and a new governing body. The leadership of subjects has greatly improved. Subject leaders are well trained, influence planning and have a good understanding of what is happening in the classroom. The school development plan is more clearly focussed on raising standards and enables the headteacher, staff and governors to judge whether their policies and spending decisions are improving teaching and learning. Admission procedures and policies for pupils who are under the age of five have been reviewed and are now fully in line with national developments.

STANDARDS

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

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

The table shows that the school's results are above the national average and the average for similar schools for reading and writing. Results are below the national average and the average for similar schools in mathematics because fewer pupils achieved above the levels expected for their age than in other schools. Both boys and girls achieve equally well. Results of national tests declined following the last inspection because of the change in catchment area and higher numbers of pupils entering the school with below average attainment. Since then results in reading and writing have shown a steady improvement as a result of the school's sustained efforts. Test results for 2001 have exceeded the predictions made on the basis of tests taken when pupils first started school in reading, writing and mathematics. They also show that the school is continuing to improve standards in these subjects. The results show good achievement by the majority of pupils in relation to their starting point at the beginning of Year 1.

Inspection findings broadly reflect the pattern of attainment found in national tests for reading. For writing and mathematics the majority of pupils attain the standards expected for seven year olds and a small minority attain above. Where there are weaknesses in writing and speaking, it is because pupils have a limited vocabulary and they find it difficult to sustain and develop their ideas in complex sentences. Pupils' ability to apply their basic skills and to use their powers of reasoning in a range of real and imaginary situations is also insufficiently developed. In art and design, music and design technology pupils' attainment is above average. In information technology, history, geography, physical education and religious education attainment is broadly average. Whilst standards of personal and social development are satisfactory overall there are weaknesses in pupils' skills of independent working and in their ability to work with each other. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their starting points. In the reception classes children make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and the majority attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age by the end of the reception year in literacy and numeracy. Although the average attainment on entry has declined since the last inspection, the standards that the school achieves in English are now at a similar level to those found in the last inspection. In mathematics standards are in line with those expected for pupils of similar ages rather than above.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good, both in lessons and at playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development overall is satisfactory.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

During the inspection twenty two percent of very good or excellent teaching was noted. Three quarters of teaching in the reception classes and eighty percent of teaching in Year 1 and 2 was good or better. No teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The improvement in the quality of teaching is having a significant impact on the standards that are being achieved and the progress that pupils make. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. During the inspection there were examples of very good teaching in mathematics, science, information technology, history and physical education. Where teaching is best, teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a range of lively teaching strategies. This helps pupils make greater progress in lessons because they find their work interesting and enjoyable. Classroom organisation is good, but more needs to be done to help pupils develop the skills of independent learning. Classroom assistants are well deployed and give very good support to pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are taught well, both in lessons and in small withdrawal groups. Appropriately challenging work is set for pupils who are more able, particularly in numeracy and writing workshops. There is scope to extend opportunities for pupils to learn in practical ways, to articulate their ideas and to extend their powers of reasoning, particularly in mathematics and English, in order to attain the higher levels.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well planned, meets the statutory requirements and helps pupils to make progress. Although the school's curriculum for personal, social and health education covers the recommended requirements, guidance on independent and co-operative learning needs to be more detailed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Careful analysis of their work, ongoing assessment and classroom observations are used well to ensure that their needs are identified and appropriate programmes of work are planned.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language as a result of good links with local authority support services and the school's own investment in resources.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good and ensures that pupils have access to a wide range of cultural traditions in art, music and literature. Provision for moral and spiritual development is good. Provision for social development is satisfactory overall. There is good support to the majority of pupils but there is insufficient guidance to help a significant minority develop the skills they need to work together in the course of lessons.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care that the school provides for pupils is very good. There is a safe and secure environment for learning and all adults in the school are well informed about pupils' individual needs.

The school's partnership with parents is good. The information that the school provides is thorough and particularly well presented. Reports are of very good quality.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Her strong and committed approach gives a clear sense of purpose and direction to the school's work. A particular strength is her ability to recognise and develop the strengths of others and this has had a significant impact on school improvements. The deputy headteacher and senior management team give very good support. All co-ordinators lead their subjects well. The school has 'Investors in People' status which has had a positive impact on procedures for staff development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body are highly committed to the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and give good support to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating its own performance are very good. The information that they give is used well to address weaknesses and plan for improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is very good. The quality of financial planning is very good and supports educational priorities well. Very good use is made of all the resources available to the school.

There are sufficient teachers and they have, collectively, the expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a wide range of very good quality resources, which enrich the curriculum and support learning well. The school makes very good use of its spacious accommodation and grounds to support learning. The recent addition of a computer suite is already having a positive impact on the progress that pupils make and the standards that they achieve in information communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school • The standards that the school achieves and the progress children make • Standards of behaviour • The high expectations that the school has of its pupils • The way the school is led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • The amount of work that children are expected to do at home • The information that the school gives about how children are getting on • The extent to which the school works with parents

Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views of the school. The evidence of the inspection is that the school generally works well with parents and does all within its power to address their needs and concerns. It provides a reasonable range of activities outside lessons, which are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the pupils. Inspectors judge the reports that the school gives to parents to be of very good quality and that there are good opportunities for parents to visit the school on both an informal and formal basis to find out how their children are getting on. Inspection findings agree in part with parents' views on homework because there are inconsistencies between classes in the way it is set.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the school. Although a significant minority of pupils achieve above the average expected for their age, attainment overall on entry is below average, particularly in their language and communication skills, and in their mathematical development. Pupils make good progress in the reception classes, and are given a secure foundation in literacy and numeracy. The majority of pupils meet the standards expected by the end of the reception year. More able pupils exceed the standards expected.
2. When overall results of statutory tests, taken at the end of Year 2 in 2000, are compared to national figures and those for similar schools, they show that the number of pupils reaching the expected levels for seven year olds, is above the national average for reading and writing and below the national average in mathematics. The number of pupils reaching above the expected levels is well above the national average for both reading and writing but below the national average for mathematics. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. The results of national tests declined following the last inspection. This can be explained by a change in catchment area and higher numbers of pupils entering the school with below average attainment. Since this initial decline, results in reading and writing have shown a steady improvement as a result of the school's sustained school improvement efforts. The 2000 results for mathematics were an improvement on the previous two years. In science, the results of statutory teacher assessment show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard was above the national average.
3. The results for 2001 have exceeded the predicted targets for reading, writing and mathematics based on assessments of pupils on entry to school and show a further improvement on previous years. The school is being particularly successful in reducing the numbers of pupils attaining below levels expected for their age, and is gradually increasing numbers achieving at the higher levels. These results show good achievement by the majority of pupils in relation to their starting point at the beginning of Year 1. This year's science assessments show fewer pupils reaching the higher levels. The evidence suggests that this is due to the nature of the year group in 2001 who had lower standards of attainment on entry to Year 1.
4. Inspection findings broadly reflect the pattern of attainment found in national tests for reading. In writing and mathematics attainment is broadly average. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in relation to prior attainment and they attain standards that are average to above by the time that they leave the school at the age of seven. More able pupils make good progress and attain standards above those expected for their age.
5. The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded and is having a significant impact on the standards that the school achieves in English. The majority of pupils achieve the standard expected for their age in reading and many achieve above. In writing and speaking and listening, most pupils achieve the standard expected and a significant minority exceed it. Standards are broadly in line with those found in the last inspection even though attainment on entry to the school is lower. There has been a significant improvement in the last three years in reading and spelling. Performance in reading remains ahead of that in writing, and, overall, pupils' skills in listening are better than their skills in speaking. Pupils' knowledge of phonics is well developed. This makes a significant contribution to their standards in reading because it helps them to decode new or difficult words. Pupils make good use of the library and have a good understanding of how it works and of how to use books to find information. Where there are weaknesses in reading it is because pupils do not always understand the meaning of new words. Standards of spelling are also good and written work is nearly always correctly punctuated and well presented. Where there are weaknesses in writing and speaking, it is because pupils have a limited vocabulary and they find it difficult to sustain and develop their ideas in complex sentences
6. In mathematics, pupils' knowledge and understanding are broadly average at the beginning of Year 1. They make sound progress to attain standards that are a little above those expected

for their age by the end of Year 2 and this represents good achievement in relation to their starting points. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly in place and is now having a significant impact on the improvements that the school is making in that more pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age than last year. Strengths in the subject are pupils' sound understanding of mathematical terminology and a secure factual knowledge of number, shape and measure. For example, they know the meaning of such terms as 'find the difference', 'multiple' and make use of these terms for solving number problems. They have a sound knowledge of mathematical facts, such as addition and subtraction up to a hundred, odd and even numbers and place value. Their ability to count in a range of different ways contributes to the speed and accuracy of their calculations. For example, older pupils can quickly work out how many whole pies can be put together from a given number of fractions. Pupils' good knowledge of the properties of shapes is evident in their accurate recognition of shapes such as trapezium and pentagon and in their ability to distinguish the differences, for example in the number of sides and angles. Pupils' skills in using their knowledge of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum is sound. For example, they accurately read simple scales for length, mass and capacity and know something about how to compile information in the form of graphs. Where there are weaknesses it is because pupils are not able to extend their powers of reasoning to higher levels.

7. Standards in science are broadly average at the age of seven, which represents good achievement in relation to their starting points at the beginning of Year 1. The small minority of pupils whose scientific knowledge and understanding are above average at the beginning of Year 1 make sound progress. Particular strengths are pupils' knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. For example pupils know about the life cycles of chickens, butterflies and frogs. Their 'bean diaries' show that they carefully observe and measure plant growth, and understand that water and light are needed for growth. They have a basic understanding of magnetism and electricity, for example, Year 1 pupils understand that some metal objects are attracted to magnets whilst others are not. Year 2 pupils know that a circuit must be complete for electricity to flow and light a bulb. Where weaknesses occur it is because pupils do not fully understand the idea of fair testing, of the importance of an organised approach to scientific enquiry and have insufficient opportunities to extend their thinking skills through their own scientific enquiries.
8. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with those expected for their age when pupils reach the end of Year 2. This is similar to the last inspection. Pupils' achievements in ICT are as a result of a satisfactory ability to enter, save and retrieve their work on the computer independently; and a sound knowledge of an appropriate range of software. Their skills in using a computer in other subjects of the curriculum, for example English, science and mathematics, are satisfactory. Their skills have not yet been sufficiently extended to the use of spreadsheets and the use of email.
9. Standards in religious education are mainly average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Work on Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism results in pupils acquiring a sound understanding that religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian and that other principal religions are also represented in their community. As a result of their work on special books and special places, pupils begin to develop an understanding of the richness and diversity of religion and how believers express their faith in the way that they live their everyday lives.
10. Pupils' standards in art and design are above average. Pupils benefit from opportunities to work with professional artists, for example, in designing and making a three dimensional model of the Great Fire of London; and from taking part in local art projects. Standards in the performance of music are good; pupils achieve well when playing untuned percussion during lessons and during assemblies. Few lessons were seen in design technology, history and geography but from the evidence of pupils' work, standards are judged to be good for design technology and about average in history and geography. In physical education pupils reach standards in line with those expected for their age in games. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards in dance and gymnastics.
11. Pupils with special educational needs are set manageable targets; reviews show that a high proportion of these are met. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment as a result of the good support they receive. The most able pupils make good progress overall. For the most part, they achieve standards which are above average for their age, and which

appropriately reflect their capabilities, in English, mathematics and science. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported in lessons and in small withdrawal groups to ensure that they have full access to the curriculum. As a result they make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

12. The school has met most of the targets that it has set itself for this school year although the numbers of pupils reaching above average levels in mathematics and writing fell short of predictions. Although standards on entry have declined, standards in art and design and music are above those found in the last inspection. The school achieves similar standards to those found in the last inspection in English, information communication technology, design technology, religious education and physical education. Although standards are in line with those expected for seven year olds in mathematics, science, history and geography, they are below those found in the last inspection when attainment was judged to be above average in these subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' good attitudes have been broadly maintained since the last inspection. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are interested in their work as result of good teaching. They respond well in lessons, are quickly engaged in the tasks set, work hard and make good progress. Pupils respond particularly well when teachers' expectations of them are high and activities are interesting. For example, in a Year 1 numeracy lesson on how to halve numbers, they reacted with enthusiasm and worked very hard in response to the sense of fun and liveliness engendered by the teacher. The visit of a two-month-old baby to science lessons, illustrating growth and change, produced an equally involved response. Pupils have the confidence to ask questions when they are uncertain, such as "What does overlap mean?" in a Year 1 art lesson where they were starting to create a self-portrait from different materials.
14. The behaviour of all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnic background, is good. Pupils have a clear sense of right from wrong. They have a clear understanding of the school's expectations of behaviour, know the school and class rules and take care to abide by them. This is evident in good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils are friendly and polite with adults and visitors, for example greeting inspectors as they went in and out of assemblies and talking politely to them over lunch. There was no evidence of bad behaviour or bullying during the inspection. No pupils have been excluded, either for a fixed term or permanently.
15. The pupils' response to the school's provision for their personal development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' personal and social development is below average when they enter the school. They are carefully introduced to school life and as a result of the good relationships that they have with their teachers and classroom assistants pupils feel that they are secure, liked and encouraged and this helps them learn. Reception aged pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the roads and practise the rules of crossing the road in outdoor role play involving toy vehicles and a zebra crossing. Older pupils know how to keep themselves healthy by eating the correct food.
16. During lessons pupils are generally able to apply themselves sensibly to their work when their teacher is not working directly with them. They do not always know what to do when they get stuck and when they have completed their work however and are sometimes over dependent on the adults around them for the provision of materials and equipment. Relations between pupils and teachers are particularly good. The quality of the relations between the pupils is less strong. Many still find it difficult to share and take turns in Years 1 and 2.
17. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. The rate of attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Authorised and unauthorised absence is below national averages. Most authorised absence is due to illness or holidays taken during the school term.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall. During the inspection three quarters of teaching was good or better and in twenty two percent of lessons it was very good. No teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, information communication technology, art and design, design technology, geography, physical education and music, and satisfactory in history. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in religious education. The improvement in the quality of teaching is having a significant impact on the standards that are being achieved and the progress that pupils make. Particularly effective examples of very good teaching were seen in mathematics, science, history, physical education, art and music.
19. Where teaching is best, teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a range of lively teaching strategies, which make learning interesting for pupils and successfully develop their understanding. For example, in a literacy lesson the teacher read 'On the Ning Nang Nong' by Spike Milligan, with wonderful expression, to demonstrate how poets play with words to bring humour into their work. In a geography lesson pupils are taken on an imaginary journey to Scotland, using bus, plane, train and boat and then a puppet and photographs are used to show what the Scottish islands look like. This is very effective in deepening pupils' understanding of what it might be like to live there. Clear explanations are used effectively to enhance pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills. For example, pupils are enabled to increase their understanding of how to access information using computers as a result of a clear explanation of how hyperlinks work. Features of the best numeracy lessons were the teachers' own mental dexterity in mathematics together with an ability to ask skilful questions. This helps pupils to increase their skills and overcome misconceptions.
20. High expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are evident in very good teaching. In these lessons, teachers rarely accept the first answer that pupils give but encourage them to develop their ideas further. In the best lessons there is uncompromising use of a subject specific technical vocabulary and pupils use this to share their ideas. For example, in a literacy lesson reception aged pupils enjoyed spotting c-v-c words (those which had the pattern of consonant- vowel-consonant) in their spelling. In an art lesson pupils were able to use a range of appropriate vocabulary as they made decisions about the media and techniques that they would use in creating a self-portrait using the skills and knowledge gained in previous lessons. Pupils rise to the challenges when they are set, work hard to overcome difficulties and are proud of their resulting achievements. High quality work, on display in all classrooms and central areas, makes an additional contribution to the clear messages that the school gives about the standards of work that are expected and that can be achieved.
21. Planning is very good throughout the school. There are clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils and lessons are carefully structured to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that have been identified. Teachers plan and evaluate together in year groups on a weekly basis. Plans are shared with the special needs co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for pupils who speak English as an additional language. This ensures that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum and that ongoing work is planned on the basis of what has been already learned. There are good assessment procedures and teachers know their pupils well. As a result learning objectives are very precise and work is well matched to pupils' differing needs. Ongoing discussions with individual pupils are used well to help them overcome misconceptions. Marking varies between classes. Where it is most effective it includes constructive written feedback to help pupils know what to do to improve their work.
22. In the best lessons teachers use a range of methods to engage pupils' attention and this ensures that all pupils, who learn in different ways, have access to the curriculum. For example, a puppet together with photographs in a geography lesson was effective in engaging pupils in active learning and helping them to understand more about the Scottish Islands. There were also opportunities for pupils to talk their ideas through with a classroom assistant, to demonstrate answers in practical ways, and to represent their ideas in picture form. In physical education and music there were also some good opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas by working with others, and to then demonstrate their skills or perform their compositions. In the main, however, the talking and instructional style of teaching predominates, and there is scope to develop teaching methods which give more opportunities for pupils who learn in visual and practical ways to access learning. There is also scope to develop, more consistently, questioning strategies to ensure that all pupils are involved in

whole class sessions. For example, in a particularly effective mathematics lesson questions were particularly targeted to different ability groups and there was good use of open questions which encouraged appropriate responses at a range of levels in an art lesson. The school has introduced strategies to help the more able develop their thinking skills. There is scope to develop these opportunities to all pupils. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to work as a whole group, individually and in small group situations. Weaknesses occur when pupils are working collaboratively and they find it difficult to share materials and equipment without being reminded that they need to do so. More needs to be done to help pupils develop their skills of independent learning so that they become more confident in themselves and what they can achieve as learners.

23. Classroom organisation is very good, pupils are well managed and there are high standards of discipline. This ensures prompt starts to lessons and efficient use of the time available for learning. Lessons proceed at a good pace, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Routines and procedures are well established; rules and boundaries to guide pupils' behaviour are consistently applied. Good behaviour is praised and rewarded and pupils have a clear understanding of exactly what is expected of them. There is good attention to health and safety in physical education. In these, and other lessons, appropriate resources are well prepared and lessons are well paced. Classroom assistants are well deployed and they give very good support to pupils to help them make progress. There are clear procedures for reporting back on the work that they do with the children.
24. Homework is set on a regular basis, and is effectively planned and followed up. However, the amount of homework varies between classes with some pupils being set more work than others. Most pupils receive good encouragement from parents with the work that they do at home and this makes a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. Where they receive less support from home, for example with reading, pupils' progress is slower, although the school works hard to compensate for this.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well so that their needs are met. Teachers and support assistants work together, often with advice from the school's special needs co-ordinator, to plan suitably matched work, which directly addresses pupils' individual targets, needs and stages of development. Where necessary or appropriate, the advice and support of outside specialists is sought. Various therapists also visit the school to work with those children who need specific help, for example with aspects of their speech. In many lessons, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics, pupils with special educational needs benefit from the very good support offered by classroom assistants. These valuable members of staff are well briefed about what the pupils might be expected to achieve, and are well trained so that they are able to interact very constructively with groups of pupils and with individuals, helping them to make good progress. They also play a valuable role in assessing pupils' responses and progress in relation to tasks, and class teachers are able to benefit from the information gathered when they plan new activities for these pupils. Class teachers take care to include pupils with special educational needs very positively in most activities, although there are occasions when they need more encouragement to take part in class discussions. Pupils with English as an additional language are taught well so that their needs are met and to ensure that they have adequate language skills and vocabulary to cope with literacy and numeracy. Work is carefully planned to ensure that they have good access to learning and additional support is provided by a well trained and highly skilled support assistant.

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

26. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is satisfactory and has been maintained since the last inspection. The strong emphasis on the basic skills in literacy and numeracy provides a secure base for the national curriculum. Very good planning ensures that all elements of the curriculum for the under-fives is covered. However, there is scope to give greater emphasis to learning through practical experiences in order to help children develop their own imaginative and exploratory ideas and to learn how to work and co-operate with each other.

27. The quality of the curriculum for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 is good overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. The curriculum for pupils aged five to seven meets the statutory requirements. It covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and provides a satisfactory balance of opportunities for pupils to develop academically, physically and aesthetically. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy and good use is made of this time. In other subjects, the curriculum enables pupils to make sound and often better progress. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and make a significant contribution to the very good curriculum planning which is effective in ensuring that all pupils have access to the curriculum and that they are offered opportunities to make progress. The school has recently organised its information technology facilities into a computer room, as well as having computers in all classes. This enables basic computer skills to be taught to whole class groups and ensures that all pupils have an immediate opportunity to practise what they have learned and to apply their skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
28. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall. Outline guidance ensures a range of planned opportunities for pupils' personal development, for example, the policy for sex education is implemented well. There is a well thought out policy on drugs education and pupils have a range of good opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy, including visits from the school nurse. There is a need, however, to establish expectations about what pupils should do for themselves during the course of lessons and to address the development of their social skills with greater precision. The school ensures that all pupils have access to the curriculum, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. Higher attaining pupils are identified and appropriately challenging work is provided for them, for example, in mathematics and writing workshops. Additional opportunities are given to higher attaining Year 2 pupils in a weekly session that aims to develop their thinking and problem solving skills. There is scope to extend this to all pupils.
29. The school offers a good range of extra curricular activities including sports activities, recorder club, and maths club. Children can also borrow mathematical games from the school to take home. The school makes good links with the local community and these have improved since the last inspection. A large number of visitors come in to speak to the children on a wide range of issues. One such recent visitor was an African drummer who made music with the children. A local sculptress has helped the pupils design and make a three dimensional model of the 'Great Fire of London'. Worthwhile educational visits are made to places locally and further afield including the local cathedral and museum. There have been some very good links with local businesses and services. For example, pupils have visited a local fruit farm and the Fire Service has made a visit to the school. The school has very good links to the neighbouring junior and secondary school. Junior pupils have been trained to act as servers at lunchtime, and the junior school headteacher regularly visits to lead assemblies. These and other arrangements ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to the junior school. Pupils benefit from being able to join with pupils from other local schools in music and art activities.
30. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and has been maintained since the last inspection. Assemblies and religious education lessons are used well to help pupils learn about different aspects of their own and other people's lives. Assemblies are also used to give pupils the opportunity to share the work that they do in lessons. In one assembly, pupils talked about their work in mathematics. They enjoyed celebrating their achievement with the rest of the school. There is well-planned provision for spiritual development within curriculum subjects. For example, in music lessons pupils are made aware of the natural world that surrounds them. Year 1 pupils think about the sound of raindrops and compare it to the sound of rumbling thunder. Reception children show amazement at the way a single large bubble floats through the air and wait expectantly until it bursts. They then make up their own music to describe this. All these experiences help to foster pupils' spiritual awareness. The school meets the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
31. The provision for pupils' moral development is good and has been maintained since the last inspection. Assemblies and class 'circle times' are used as a way of further developing pupils' understanding of the things that affect their own daily lives. For example, they are also reminded of the school rules in assemblies and pupils are involved in making their own class rules and suggest rules for when they are in the playground. This makes an effective contribution to pupils' understanding of right from wrong. All learning support assistants and

midday supervisors have received appropriate training and as a result there is a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour.

32. Provision for social development is satisfactory overall, but is not as effective as in the last inspection. Although it gives good support to the majority of pupils and helps them relate well to each other, there is insufficient guidance to help a significant minority of pupils develop the skills they need to work together in the course of lessons. There are satisfactory systems to encourage pupils to take responsibilities around the school. For example, older pupils act as library monitors, help in assemblies, and support younger pupils in the playground. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils to collect for charities and to think of those less fortunate than themselves. These have included a Wear Yellow Day when pupils collected money for the local hospice. More could be done to help pupils use their initiative and take responsibility in lessons.
33. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils look at the work of well-known painters in art and design and listen to different musical styles in assemblies. A community artist and a sculptor have visited the school and pupils have been to a museum and Cathedral. The provision for developing pupils' multi-cultural awareness is a strength. There is a range of multi-cultural books in school and a co-ordinator who has an oversight of the provision. The library has an effective display of African art, including a clay pot made in Kenya and a bird made in Zimbabwe. Pupils have visited Aklowa, the African village near Stansted. An African musician has visited the school to perform to pupils. Attractive displays around the school further enhance this provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school looks after the pupils in its care very well. All members of staff know the pupils well and use this knowledge very effectively in the way that they look after them. Class teachers employ their good knowledge of pupils to make them feel happy and secure in the school. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' safety and they are followed carefully both within the school and on visits outside. The head has the designated responsibility for child protection, procedures are very good and regular training and guidance is given to members of staff.
35. Procedures to record and monitor attendance are very efficient. They include early contact between the parents and school on the first day of absence. The school has adopted a positive approach to behaviour as recommended by the Local Authority. These good procedures to promote discipline and good behaviour are consistently implemented by all members of staff. They include the effective use of praise and commendation to motivate pupils to work hard and strive for high standards.
36. The quality of the educational and personal support and guidance is good overall. The good standards noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. The records that the school keeps of the academic progress that pupils make are comprehensive and thorough and are used very effectively to support and guide pupils during their time at the school. Most aspects of pupils' personal development are also efficiently recorded and monitored although more could be done to monitor the development of social skills
37. Arrangements to assess and monitor the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are good. Pupils are assessed on entry to the school. The results of assessments are used well to plan support both within classes and small withdrawal groups. Their progress is regularly re-assessed, and provision adjusted accordingly.
38. The school has adopted the good local education authority baseline assessment arrangements for pupils starting school. They are analysed carefully and used well to inform starting points for learning when children start school. They are also used well to predict pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2. From regular assessments and careful observation of pupils in class, special educational needs are also identified and individual education plans drawn up by the coordinator and class teachers. Realistic and manageable targets are set for pupils, which are reviewed termly. Careful ongoing records of the progress, with samples of their work as evidence, are kept in individual folders. Pupils with statements receive their full allocated

support, and their annual reviews are carried out thoroughly. The help and advice of outside agencies is sought as required, and support for pupils requiring speech and language therapy is provided within school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parents generally hold the school in high regard, like what it provides for their children and report that their children enjoy coming to school. They are pleased that staff have high expectations, believe that they encourage pupils to work hard and that their children are successfully helped to become mature and responsible. Parents think that their children are taught well, and that the school is well led and managed. They feel comfortable approaching the headteacher and teachers with questions or problems. Inspectors agree with all these positive views held by parents. Some of the parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting have concerns about homework, about the amount of activities outside school and the extent to which the school works closely with them. Inspectors consider that the school does all within its power to work closely with parents and that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities for an infant school. Inspectors judge the homework policy to be clear and appropriate. It is not yet fully embedded, however, and more homework is set in some classes than in others.
40. The school has effective links with parents and works hard to maintain a good partnership. The good standards noted in the last inspection report have been maintained. Should parents want to see them, members of staff are readily available and approachable. The head greets pupils as they arrive each day and this is greatly appreciated by parents who often take the opportunity to ask questions or pass messages. The school holds curricular evenings on particular topics, the most recent being an explanatory session before the annual statutory tests. Contact books to support the home/school reading scheme are also used very effectively to pass messages between home and school.
41. Parents are sent very good, well presented information, both about the school and the progress that their children make. Parents are very well informed about the progress their children make through consultation evenings and a full annual report. At consultation evenings parents can examine their children's record files, which note and track the progress they make throughout the year. The full annual reports give parents a clear view of what their children can do in the subjects they have been studying and suggest targets to help them improve. The well-written prospectus gives very good initial information and the governors' annual report to parents summarises the events of the previous year in a very readable manner. Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date.
42. Parents themselves contribute well to the work of the school and their children's learning. A good proportion of parents regularly come in to the school to help; others do so for particular events. The majority of parents listen to their children reading at home and help with mathematics games and spellings and this makes a significant contribution to the progress that is made and the standards that are achieved. Attendance at consultation evenings is very high. The school association – SMILE – is very active. It runs successful events to buy things for the school, for example playground equipment and computer hardware.
43. Interpreters are available if needed to support parents whose children speak English as an additional language and to ensure that they receive the information that they need. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed of the progress they are making. They are invited to reviews and most attend.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management of the school is very good. The new headteacher, deputy headteacher, and governing body have been effective in maintaining the high standards that were evident in the last inspection and improving the weaknesses identified.
45. The headteacher has a secure and confident drive for quality, which gives a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to the school. The recent improvements that have been

made in standards owe much to her energy and commitment. She has high expectations, which have a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and are also reflected in the standards of teaching and learning. The deputy headteacher and senior management team provide good support in all aspects of school life. The delegation of roles and responsibilities is excellent. Strong and committed teamwork, which is focused on improving provision and raising standards, is now a feature at every level within the school. Everyone knows that their work is valued and that they have an important part to play in the development of the school.

46. The school benefits from a highly committed governing body and Chair of Governors. They take a keen interest in the school and visit it regularly. The chair's positive and constructive approach to school development has a beneficial effect on both the academic and pastoral life of the school. Governors work well with the headteacher, and an appropriate range of committees are in place. The chairs of committees carry out their responsibilities well and meetings are always well attended. Governors with responsibilities for monitoring aspects of the curriculum, such as literacy and numeracy, take a keen interest and are well informed about their subjects. In summary the governors have a good awareness of the school's performance, know the challenges that it faces and ensure that the statutory requirements are met.
47. The headteacher and staff have identified priorities for development and work together efficiently for improvement. The headteacher, deputy and staff are fully involved along with the governors in agreeing priorities in the school development plan. Success criteria have been improved since the last inspection so that the effectiveness of developments in improving teaching and learning can be evaluated. Developments in the curriculum have been effectively managed. The role of the co-ordinators was relatively under-developed when the school was last inspected in 1996; it is now a strength of the school. All co-ordinators now have a good understanding of the subjects they lead and are able to demonstrate good teaching through their own practice. In addition they monitor planning, observe lessons across the school, sample work and provide their colleagues with useful feedback. The advice and guidance they provide is having a significant impact on raising standards. For example, the information communication technology (ICT) curriculum has made great strides forward under the leadership of the co-ordinator, and all staff have benefited from her expertise. All co-ordinators have an allocated budget and use this effectively to maintain and develop their subject area. Well thought-out action plans ensure ongoing improvements.
48. The school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its own performance are very good. The headteacher's commitment to overseeing all aspects of the school's work has been a significant factor in forging a sense of common purpose to help the school move forward. She has successfully introduced systems to analyse results of both national and non-statutory tests and assessments. She and the governors have also made good use of data on national comparisons to identify what they need to do to improve further. For example, following concerns about standards of spelling, test results were analysed to see why. As a result of this research new methods of teaching spelling have been introduced and this is now having a positive impact on standards. The headteacher and co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and observe lessons to assess the quality of teaching and learning. They provide valuable feedback, which has a beneficial effect on teachers' professional development.
49. The school has a very effective administration team who work closely together to ensure the smooth running of the school. Newsletters, curriculum and policy documentation are all extremely well presented to ensure that all those within the school community are kept informed about current issues. All visitors to the school are made to feel welcome and day-to-day matters are dealt with calmly and efficiently and make an important contribution to the calm and orderly atmosphere that is prevalent throughout the school. The school financial officer provides strong and effective support, which ensures finances are efficiently managed. The budget is carefully targeted towards school improvements and governors are provided with excellent budget reports, which are comprehensive and easy to understand. There is an appropriate 'Best Value' policy and governors debate expenditure rigorously. Strategic financial management is very good and ensures that there are sufficient funds to sustain developments. Budget under spends are used as part of the school's ongoing work to further improve its accommodation.

50. There are sufficient teachers, and collectively the staff have the experience and expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. There are very good procedures for staff development and induction which make a significant impact on the quality of teaching. For example, all co-ordinators have received training to carry out their roles and responsibilities. The school's 'Investors in People' status has had a significant impact on procedures for staff development. Performance management procedures are fully in place and, in addition, the school offers all non-teaching staff an annual review of their work. The results are used well to identify training needs.
51. The accommodation is in sound condition and recent improvements, such as the development of a computer suite, are having a significant impact on improving standards. It is kept in immaculate condition by the school's conscientious cleaning staff. There is good use of display throughout the school to support, inform and celebrate learning. Classrooms are of a good size. There is a good sized hall which is well used for physical education and assemblies. There is a very good library, which is well stocked with a wide range of books. It was well used during the week of the inspection. The attractive grounds are used well. The school has a wide range of good quality resources to support and enrich the curriculum in all subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1) Develop pupils' skills of independent learning by;
- establishing whole school agreements about what pupils should do for themselves in the course of lessons; (see paragraphs 16, 22, 28, 32, 76, 93, 80)
 - ensuring precise guidance to guide progression in pupils' personal, emotional and social development; (see paragraphs 16, 26, 28, 32, 36)
 - ensuring systematic opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of collaboration and co-operation. (see paragraphs 16, 22, 26, 28, 32, 70, 93, 96, 115)
- 2) Extend opportunities for learning by:
- developing opportunities for pupils in reception to initiate their own learning through well planned, practical experiences, including play and talk; (see paragraphs 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 65)
 - developing the range of opportunities for pupils to learn in a variety of different ways, particularly in English and mathematics; (see paragraphs 5, 6, 74, 80)
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills. (see paragraphs 67, 73, 79, 80, 86)

In addition the school should also consider the following less important weaknesses for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- Improve the vocabulary and grammar of lower attaining pupils and their use in writing. (see paragraphs 5, 57, 69, 70, 73)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	20	53	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		244
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		55

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	41	37	78

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	36	35
	Girls	33	31	34
	Total	66	67	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (87)	86 (89)	88 (90)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	37	40
	Girls	32	35	37
	Total	66	72	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (84)	92(92)	99 (92)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	169
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.2
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	163

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	522518
Total expenditure	509674
Expenditure per pupil	2039
Balance brought forward from previous year	42056
Balance carried forward to next year	54900

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	244
Number of questionnaires returned	90

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	32	6	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	47	43	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	50	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	38	22	6	0
The teaching is good.	51	42	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	50	14	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	40	7	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	34	1	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	32	44	13	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	43	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	30	28	8	20

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views of the school. The evidence of the inspection is that the school generally works well with parents and does all within its power to address their needs and concerns. It provides a reasonable range of activities outside lessons, which are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the pupils. Inspectors judge the reports that the school gives to parents to be of very good quality and that there are good opportunities for parents to visit the school on both an informal and formal basis to find out how their children are getting on. Inspection findings agree in part with parents' views on homework because there are inconsistencies between classes in the way it is set.

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

52. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the school year in which they become five. Induction arrangements include appropriate opportunities for parents and children to visit the school in the term prior to starting. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision, including local pre-school playgroups. The school has good links with these groups and there are plans to extend them, for example, by offering opportunities for the shared use of the computer suite.
53. There is a very wide spread of attainment on entry to the reception classes. A small minority achieve above the expected levels, but for the majority it is generally below the average expected for their age. Many children have poorly developed language skills and find it difficult to articulate their feelings, needs and ideas because of a limited vocabulary. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points to reach standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their age by the end of the reception year; and they are appropriately prepared for the curriculum for five to seven year olds. This is because of the good teaching they receive. The school provides a curriculum, which is very well planned and soundly based on the national guidance for young children. There are good arrangements to ensure that children gain the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, opportunities for children to learn through well planned practical experiences involving play and talk require further development.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Many children enter the school with below average personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in their personal and emotional development in the reception classes. Teaching is satisfactory and the supportive and caring ethos helps children to settle quickly into well-established procedures and results in them being eager to learn because they are confident and secure from an early stage. Children learn how to take care of their own day to day needs and also learn something about how to keep safe. For example, in the course of outdoor role-play they learn the rules of road safety whilst working with toy vehicles and playground markings which represent real roads and crossings. The language of feelings and emotions is developed during the course of whole class sessions when children sit in a circle and all are given a chance to speak. For example children tell each other how they felt on occasions when they have been brave. They then sing the song 'I'm a Brave Brave Mouse' with great expression and feeling. The development of pupils' social skills is less secure. Whilst many children make good relationships with others in their class and have positive relationships with them, a significant number of children find it hard to share and take turns when working together. There is scope to develop opportunities for children to make informed decisions and choices about the activities that they will take part in and to report back on what they have done. Behaviour is good. They understand something of the differences between right and wrong, and are developing an understanding of the consequences of their actions on others. Their self-care skills are good. Children dress themselves independently and tidy and put away equipment with great efficiency.

Communication, language and literacy

55. Assessments of children's early literacy skills, made during their first term in the reception classes, show that their performance is below average in comparison with other schools in the Essex area. Inspection findings confirm these assessments. Although a small minority of pupils achieve above the standards expected, overall, children's speech, vocabulary and other language skills are below average when they first join the reception classes. The good teaching that they receive ensures that they make generally good progress in relation to their starting points and the majority attain standards that are expected for their age by the time that they move on into the Year 1 classes.
56. Most children in the reception class learn to listen attentively, follow discussions well and show good concentration. Higher attaining and more confident children are keen to answer

questions and also ask questions of their own, or pass comments, for example when learning how to use books to find information or when discussing how to construct a nursery rhyme in the correct order. They are articulate, and they express their ideas clearly and well. However, a significant number of children are reticent and not readily drawn into discussions. When they do, they often experience problems as they search for suitably precise words to communicate their thoughts, and they find it difficult to express their ideas clearly and logically. There are also insufficient opportunities for children to develop their own imaginative stories through play and talk.

57. All children enjoy sharing stories, poems and rhymes with their teachers. For example, they readily volunteer that 'happy hippo' might like to play 'hopscotch' or 'hockey', in the course of writing their own sentences involving the letter 'h'. Children listen carefully to stories being read out loud and follow the events closely as the plot unfolds. They have learned special words such as 'author' and 'illustrator', and they are accustomed to discussing the feelings of characters in the stories they hear. The more able children already read simple texts aloud, accurately and independently. Most other children recognise some key words on sight and are developing a very sound awareness of phonics, which enables them to read most words aloud accurately in very simple texts, even though they may not yet read fluently. Children are beginning to identify meanings beyond the literal in the stories that they read or hear. Lower attaining children, including those with special educational needs, have not yet had sufficient experience of the world around them to make use of the links between the illustrations and the text to help them with new words; nor do they have sufficient vocabulary to make use of clues from the context in stories to establish or confirm meaning and this impedes the progress that they make.
58. When account is taken of their starting points, all the children are making sound or better progress in letter formation and handwriting. Most children can form their letters accurately and write their own name neatly; higher attaining children are able to compose, and write down, short simple statements and sequences of ideas, although they are not yet using punctuation consistently to show where one 'sentence' might end and another begin. Most children can use their knowledge of letter sounds to build simple three letter words, while the more able children already make very plausible attempts at spelling the words they need to convey their own ideas. The 'emergent' writing of lower attaining children shows that they understand the need for spaces between words and that writing moves from left to right across the page. They are beginning to produce some recognisable words, and they can usually 'read' their own writing to tell someone else what it is they have wanted to say. Most importantly, all children, including those with English as an additional language, whatever their ability or stage of development, are developing very positive attitudes to writing, as, indeed, they are to all aspects of their language work.

Mathematical development

59. When children enter the school at the age of four a small number achieve above the standards expected for their age. The mathematical development of the majority of pupils, however, is below the average expected for their age. As a result of the good teaching they receive children make good progress so that by the end of the reception year the majority attain the levels that are expected for their age. They confidently count to at least ten and more able children can count well beyond that. Most children can recognise numerals from one to nine. Children solve practical problems, for example, when taking part in number games. Many children have a limited mathematical vocabulary when they start school, and although some still find it difficult to articulate their mathematical ideas by the age of five, they do begin to use words such as 'more than' and 'less than', for example, in comparing their estimates of a number of pencils in a pot to the actual numbers of objects, and relate 'addition' to combining two or more groups of objects. By the end of the reception year children can select from number cards up to ten to show their answers to 'one less' than a given number. Many can tell the time on the hour using simple clocks and know something about the passing of time and the pattern of the school day. Many children can identify simple two-dimensional shapes such as a square, circle and triangle and recognise the language of position such as 'behind', 'in front' and 'inside', as a result of their work using construction toys and in the course of following directions in physical education. When making models of vehicles out of cartons and boxes children begin to develop their understanding of three-dimensional shapes, how they fit together and the language by which to describe them. They create simple patterns, for

example, arranging beads on a lace in different patterns and are also able to control a programmable toy by giving it the correct instructions for the direction and distance they want it to travel. More needs to be done to encourage pupils to develop their mathematical ideas and to apply their more formal skills in practical situations involving play and talk.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Evidence from teachers' planning, and discussions with staff and pupils shows that children in the reception classes develop a satisfactory understanding of past and present in relation to their own lives and to the wider world and that teaching is satisfactory overall. For example, in the course of a topic on 'Spot', they chart significant steps in Spot's life and also consider their own development since birth. They become aware that interests, activities and accomplishments change as they grow older, just as surely as they have changed in size and physical appearance. Children also develop a satisfactory understanding of the wider world in which they live through visits to the local area.. They learn to follow simple maps and directions. For example, they plot their own journeys around the playground, draw a map showing significant features and then ask a friend to follow their instructions. They demonstrate an understanding of countries beyond the United Kingdom when they draw on their own holiday experiences as they work in a role-play area which has been set up as a travel agents. Many of these activities are teacher directed however, and more needs to be done to encourage children to initiate their own explorations and practical experiences.
61. Children make accurate observations of beans that have been grown in the outdoor area. They notice and talk about their leaves, stems and flowers. They take great care when planting seeds and, because they are given responsibility for watering the plants, begin to understand the importance of water to their growth and survival. The children develop their understanding of the life cycle of a butterfly as they look at a chrysalis very closely and observe the emergence of a butterfly. Overall, children make good progress in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding, and are beginning to recognise the wonder of the world. However, their skills in describing what they observe or feel are a little below average, and sometimes teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to develop their speech, particularly in the course of practical and play experiences.
62. Children achieve well when making vehicles from card and paper, and make sound progress when using construction kits to make simple models. As a result of the very good teaching they receive children demonstrate high levels of achievement for their age when using computers. They mix text with pictures, use a word-bank, make the computer speak their text and save their work.

Physical development

63. Children in the reception classes benefit from suitable opportunities to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys, and when painting, drawing and cutting. They make sound progress and develop an appropriate degree of dexterity for their age because of the good teaching they receive. Children have regular access to an outdoor play area, which is appropriately supervised by an adult. This gives them appropriate opportunities to develop the co-ordination of their arms and legs as they control wheeled toys such as model cars and tricycles.
64. Appropriate use is made of the hall and outdoor area for physical education and involves the children in more formal activities in preparation for the curriculum in Year 1. Children listen carefully and respond to instructions to move around the playground in various ways. They show a good awareness of their own space in relation to others, and are able to control the speed of their movements. In a games session, they respond well to the teachers' instructions to develop their skills in catching and throwing and working with a partner.

Creative development

65. Children respond well to opportunities to express their ideas when moving and dancing to music. As a result of good teaching they have learned a good range of songs by heart, sing them enthusiastically and can dance or clap hands to them. There were very good opportunities for children to use musical instruments during the inspection. For example, the teacher used bubbles to capture pupils' interest and then asked them to play long sounds as

the bubbles were floating and short sounds when they burst. Children enjoy using paint, crayon and other media to make representations of what they observe in the real world, for example, in their paintings of sunflowers. More could be done to help them represent their own imaginative ideas.

Subjects in Years 1 and 2

ENGLISH

66. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the school. Although a small minority of pupils achieve above the average expected for their age, attainment overall is below average, particularly in language and communication skills. Children make good progress in the reception classes as a result of the good teaching they receive. They are given a secure foundation in literacy, which prepares them well for the national curriculum. When they enter Year 1 the majority of pupils achieve the standards expected for their age.
67. The results of statutory tests, taken at the end of Year 2 in 2000 are above the national average and the average for similar schools. This is because more pupils achieve above average levels in reading and in writing than other schools. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. The results of national tests declined following the last inspection because of the change in catchment area and higher numbers of pupils entering the school with below average attainment. Since then results in reading and writing have shown a steady improvement as a result of the school's sustained school improvement efforts. They are now close to the levels found at the time of the last inspection. This represents a significant achievement given the low starting points of pupils on entry to school.
68. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced successfully, and there has been increased support to help pupils of differing abilities, including those with special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and the more able pupils. The percentages of pupils achieving standards above those expected nationally for their age are increasing gradually. Any variations, year-on-year, reflect the particular attainment levels of particular year groups. There have been marked improvements in spelling. The results for 2001 have exceeded the predictions for reading and writing based on assessments of pupils on entry to school and show a further improvement on previous years. The school is being particularly successful in reducing the numbers of pupils attaining below the average for their age. The results show good achievement by the majority of pupils in relation to their starting point at the beginning of Year 1.
69. Inspection findings broadly reflect the pattern of attainment found in national tests for reading and writing. Standards on entry to year 1 are mainly average. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in relation to prior attainment and they attain standards that are average to above average by the time that they leave the school at the age of seven. More able pupils make good progress and attain standards above those expected for their age. The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded and is having a significant impact on the standards that the school achieves in English. Most pupils in Year 2 achieve the expected standard for their age in reading and writing and in speaking and listening. A significant minority do even better. However, performance in reading remains higher than in writing, and many pupils' skills as listeners are better developed than their skills as speakers.
70. In Years 1 and 2, pupils of all abilities make consistently good progress in listening. They listen politely and with genuine interest to their teachers, and to other adults who work with them. They are able to follow and respond to instructions without having to be told things more than once, and, because they are keen to learn and to do their best, they concentrate well and absorb information. For example, in a teacher-led discussion in a Year 2 history lesson, pupils reveal their quite extensive knowledge of the Great Fire of London. They are not always as skilled in listening to one another, however, and there is scope to develop their skills in negotiating and taking into account the views of others. The higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are confident and articulate, speak Standard English correctly, and can adapt their speech to suit various audiences and purposes. However, whilst most pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire the specialist vocabulary they need to discuss their work, the general vocabulary of many

pupils, particularly the lower attainers, is rather limited and these pupils experience difficulties expressing their thoughts and ideas clearly and sharing their ideas with others.

71. In reading, pupils' developing awareness of phonics is particularly helpful to them when attempting to decode unfamiliar words, and the more able pupils read very fluently, with expression and understanding. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils can read texts appropriate for their age and can talk with understanding about the events and about the characters in stories. They display particularly good understanding of characters' feelings, and they can usually predict what is going to happen next. However, many pupils of all abilities are unsure of the meanings of uncommon words, and some lower attaining pupils find it difficult to use inference to work out hidden meanings.
72. Teachers in both years introduce their pupils to non-fiction texts in literacy lessons and in other subjects and this has a positive impact on pupils' ability to use information books independently to find things out. These skills are now being extended through the use of computers to find information. During the week of the inspection pupils used the library confidently, making informed decisions and choices about the books they would take home to read. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop particular strengths in the 'secretarial' aspects of writing. They form their letters accurately and they learn to produce neat, legible writing, which is consistent in size. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have already developed, or are developing, a controlled, cursive style of handwriting, and almost every pupil takes great care to present his or her work neatly.
73. Most pupils use full stops and capital letters accurately to demarcate sentences, while higher attaining pupils use speech marks, question marks, exclamation marks and commas, for the most part accurately. The school has made a sustained effort to improve spelling and this has been effective in helping most pupils to spell correctly in the course of written work: they draw competently on their knowledge of phonics and on spelling patterns they have committed to memory. All pupils write for a suitable range of purposes in literacy and other lessons. Most pupils write interesting simple stories with a clearly defined structure, while the work of the more able readily engages the reader and is made richer by the use of dialogue and descriptive detail. The written work of lower attaining pupils generally lacks the fluency and coherence of work by more able pupils, and is sometimes rather stilted. This is often because they use a fairly limited vocabulary and do not develop their ideas in more complex sentences.
74. The quality of teaching is good overall and the teaching of literacy hours is never less than sound. All teachers and support staff have a good level of knowledge and understanding of the literacy strategy. They work very hard to help pupils to do their best, and are committed both to raising standards and to providing pupils with experiences they need. Lessons proceed at a good pace and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the talking and instructional style of teaching predominates and there is now scope to develop teaching methods which give more opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills and to learn in visual and practical ways.
75. All staff have established very good relationships with their pupils. There is mutual respect between teacher and pupils and, as a result, pupils enjoy their lessons, have very positive attitudes to reading and writing, whatever their ability, and are keen to do their best. Teachers always plan their lessons well and make sure that pupils are aware of what they are expected to learn. They organise lessons effectively, and they manage pupils, tasks and resources to good effect. All staff provide good role models for pupils in their own use of language and as readers, and in the best teaching they insist that pupils speak correctly in the course of answering questions and discussions. Support staff are well informed and well deployed, and they play a very constructive role, giving effective, focused attention to those pupils who need it.
76. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection, and weaknesses associated with the teaching are general rather than related to specific lessons or individuals. For example, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to talk, both in literacy lessons and in other subjects. They also respond sensitively to what their pupils have to say. However, there is scope to encourage pupils to develop their speech at greater length, to rephrase what they have to say in a more articulate way, or to use more specific vocabulary. Teachers pay very good attention to the secretarial aspects of writing and to basic sentence structure. When good

standards of writing are achieved it is because there has been skilled intervention, through shared writing, guided writing, and marking. This helps pupils to combine ideas in a logical sequence, how to achieve overall coherence in extended pieces of writing, and how to improve the organisation and structure of their work. The texts chosen for shared and guided reading lend themselves admirably to the main purposes of helping pupils to learn, and to apply, a range of reading strategies. Teachers also use them to good effect to develop pupils' understanding of plot, character and feelings. There is scope to build on this good work in pupils' writing. Opportunities to use the computer suite are having a significant impact on the progress that pupils make in developing their writing skills and their skills of research. Although pupils work conscientiously when the teacher is not directly with them, they do not always know what to do when they have completed their work or when they cannot spell a new word. They are over dependent on adults for the provision of resources.

77. The literacy co-ordinator is currently on leave and the role has been taken over by the headteacher until she returns. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in ensuring that the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully and that staff are united in their endeavours to raise standards. She has monitored literacy lessons throughout the school and has given staff helpful, positive feedback on their lessons. Assessment procedures are good and have improved since the last inspection. The results of tests are appropriately analysed to inform whole school improvements and to plan work and set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. This is having a significant impact on raising standards. Resources for English are good and are well organised. There is an attractive and well-stocked library, which is now well used. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Parents show interest in their children's work and clearly value the teachers' efforts on their children's behalf. The majority of parents hear their children read at home and this makes a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make.

MATHEMATICS

78. Pupils' attainments in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 were overall below the national average. They were also below average when compared with schools having a similar intake. The percentages achieving the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3 were both below national figures. This shows a decline since the last inspection when standards were above those expected nationally. The school's results in mathematics showed a steady fall in 1998 and 1999, due largely to a change in catchment area, resulting in overall lower general attainment on entry and a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school recognised this, and through the careful tracking of pupils' progress with increased support especially for pupils with lower and higher ability, is raising standards. The effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has also been beneficial. Indications from national testing in 2001 are that standards have risen and that the majority of pupils achieve standards expected for their age and this is borne out by inspection evidence. Results show that the majority of pupils have met or exceeded the standards predicted by tests when they entered school and show good progress in relation to prior achievement. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
79. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, they have developed sound number concepts. Their written work shows that there is much consolidation of basic number work; they understand how to identify hundreds, tens and units in three digit numbers, and order their numbers correctly. They readily identify odd and even numbers, and know different strategies for finding answers, such as doubling, halving and rounding numbers. Whereas lower attaining pupils use strategies as they are taught, more able pupils confidently select from strategies previously learnt to find solutions to problems. They name two and three-dimensional shapes and point out their properties, are able to show lines of symmetry. Standard units of length have been introduced. Pupils estimate and measure the length of classroom objects, with more able pupils reading different scales, for example when using a thermometer. They collect information, and display and compare it using pictograms. Where weaknesses occur it is because pupils are not able to discuss their mathematical strategies or explain their thinking.
80. Teaching overall is good, and as a result pupils learn well. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and

generally manage behaviour well, creating a good atmosphere for learning. Lessons are very carefully planned across each year group. The weaknesses in planning noted in the last inspection have been improved. All lessons are now based on clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils. They then know the purpose of what they are being asked to do and can consider, at the end of the lesson, how well they have done. Well-paced mental sessions at the start of each lesson help pupils to develop their knowledge of addition and subtraction facts, for example accurately recalling number bonds up to ten and twenty. Tasks are well prepared for different ability groups; lower ability groups, including pupils with special educational needs, are well supported by the tasks provided, which enable them to make good progress towards achieving the learning objectives for the lesson. Where learning support assistants are in lessons they provide good support. Activities for higher attaining pupils often provide additional challenge, expecting them to develop skills further. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on halving, pupils partitioned numbers into those that they could halve in order to work out their answers. Year 2 pupils, once a week, work in ability groups, so that well focussed teaching and support can be given. In the higher attaining group, pupils were expected to use a range of strategies to solve money problems; in the lower attaining group, taken by a class teacher and the special educational needs coordinator, pupils had activities to help them develop number bonds up to twenty. Teacher talk and instruction predominate in most lessons. There is scope for greater use of open questions and opportunities for pupils to discuss their strategies and develop their mathematical thinking. Although pupils listen very attentively to their teachers, they do not always listen to each other in whole class sessions. They are over reliant on adults for the provision of resources and equipment and to know what to do when they are stuck or have finished work.

81. Pupils are enthusiastic about their mathematics' lessons and generally show a strong interest in the work that they are doing. However, weaknesses occur when pupils are expected to work independently without the support of an adult, and they are slow to organise themselves and unable to co-operate together in their learning. They are not always able to co-operate with each other when sharing resources and equipment, and do not always take other pupils views and ideas into account. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning; home contact books inform parents of current learning objectives, and pupils are able to take games to play at home to help in their learning. Numeracy events have been organised for parents by the coordinator.
82. Mathematics is occasionally used in other subjects, for example in design and technology when measuring materials. Opportunities are taken during registration to practise counting and number calculation. Information and communication technology is used, for example in storing information and displaying and comparing it in pictograms. Pupils have opportunities in assemblies to talk about what they have been doing in mathematics' lessons.
83. The coordinator provides very good leadership and management for the subject. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are very good and the results used to inform action planning for improvement. Test results have been thoroughly analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses, and the learning of different groups of pupils. Teaching has been observed and areas for development discussed with individual teachers and with staff as a whole. For example, the questioning of pupils in lessons has been identified as an area for further development. Pupils have been interviewed and their work sampled to ascertain the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Very careful assessments are made of pupils' attainment and progress so that further support can be given where required. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Mathematics is well resourced with each class having the day-to-day requirements for the numeracy hour at hand.

SCIENCE

84. In 2000 the proportion of pupils achieving the national standards in science assessments at the end of Year 2 was well above average. The proportion reaching the higher level was also well above the national average. Indications are that in 2001 standards are broadly average. This is lower than in the 1996 inspection when attainment in science was found to be good. Evidence suggests that this is due to the nature of the current Year 2, who on entry to the school had generally lower attainment than in previous years. However, they have made good

progress in relation to prior attainment. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys.

85. The quality of pupils' learning is mostly good, and directly reflects the quality of teaching they receive. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Pupils steadily build up their knowledge across the various areas of science.
86. In Year 1, pupils enjoy opportunities to explore and investigate, for example, when they listen to sounds around the school and find out what happens to sounds as they get further away and when they investigate the items that are attracted to magnets. In Year 2, pupils look at the life cycles of chickens, butterflies and frogs. They find out about pushes and pulls in their work on forces, and investigate toy vehicles moving down a slope. They look at what happens to materials when heated, and start to understand the difference between reversible and irreversible processes. Their 'bean diaries' show that they carefully observe and measure plant growth, understanding that water and light are needed for growth. They know that a circuit must be complete for electricity to flow and light a bulb. Although recorded in a variety of ways, their work, particularly that of higher attainers, does not sufficiently show an organised approach to scientific enquiry and in discussion, pupils were unsure about fair testing. There is scope to extend pupils thinking skills through opportunities to follow their own scientific enquiries.
87. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are very well planned and there is appropriate reference to investigative and experimental work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Clear learning objectives are identified and are shared with pupils so that the purpose of the lesson is known. Resources are well prepared, as in a Year 2 lesson on circuits, which enabled groups of pupils to make their own circuits, and to investigate what happened when further bulbs and lengths of wire were added. In Year 1 lessons, pupils were looking at growth and the differing needs of babies, toddlers and children. The introduction of babies into these lessons, seeing them being bathed and dressed, with careful questioning of pupils, was a very effective aid to learning. It also created a true sense of awe and wonder for pupils. Pupils enjoy these practical approaches to science and respond positively to lessons.
88. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics in science, for example when measuring the distance travelled by toy vehicles or the height of bean plants. The different needs of pupils are met in a range of ways. For example, in some lessons pupils work in literacy groups, where the tasks set reflect their differing literacy skills and provide opportunities for their use. The use of science based big books in the literacy hour is starting to make relevant links between English and its application to science, for example when learning how to label diagrams. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning, for example when storing and displaying data. A collection of CD Roms on science topics is being built up.
89. The coordinator for science provides very good leadership and management of the subject. The school is now trialling national guidance to ensure continuity and progression in learning opportunities. There are very good procedures to help the coordinator keep track of what is happening in the classroom and judge its effectiveness on pupils' learning. For example, samples of pupils' work are monitored for content, standards and progress. Lessons have been observed and feedback given to teachers with a view to improving the quality of teaching. Good support is given to teachers when planning work. Pupils are carefully assessed through recorded work, discussion and assessment activities, and account is taken of this when planning future work. There are very good resources for science that have recently been checked and organised to match the topics of the new scheme of work.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Standards in art and design are above those expected nationally for pupils of this age, and show an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average.
91. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills and aptitudes, enabling them to make good progress. By the end of Year 2 pupils have experienced a good range of materials and techniques in their work, including pencil, pastel, paint, clay, silhouette,

collage and papier mache. Their understanding of colour and tone has been developed well in a range of ways. For example, in Year 1 pupils have made clay tiles showing warm and cold colours to represent 'welcome sunshine' and 'raindrops keep falling on my head'. Pupils' growing understanding of the work of famous artists is evident in their work on portraits. They have compared the faces of Paul Klee and the photomontage of David Hockney's mother and then used these techniques effectively to create their own pictures. Pupils' ability to observe carefully and represent what they see in line drawing and colour is good. For example, Year 1 pupils looked very carefully at different fruits and vegetables and made detailed sketches of them. Pupils make good use of sketch books to support their design work and this contributes to the quality of the finished work. For example, Year 2 pupils have made collages using natural materials such as pressed leaves, twigs, sand and shells. These were carefully thought out showing what materials were to be used and where.

92. Art and design are used well to support learning in other subjects, as in the silhouetted buildings in Year 2's pictures of the Great Fire of London, and in Year 1's work on symmetry. Information and communication technology is being used satisfactorily by pupils to create their own pictures and designs.
93. From teachers' planning, pupils' past work, wall displays and lessons observed, teaching in art and design is good. During the inspection three lessons were seen, one of which was excellent. Very good planning within year groups, careful lesson preparation, challenging activities and high expectations all add to successful learning. This was evident in the excellent Year 1 lesson where pupils were making collage portraits, using a range of materials, and carefully cutting up photocopied portraits to make a photomontage. Three dimensional work is now appropriately represented in the curriculum and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils have positive attitudes to art and design and demonstrate an ability to make positive comments about each others' work. However, a significant minority find difficulty in organising themselves and in sharing materials and equipment.
94. The coordinator for art and design provides very good leadership and management for the subject. A recent development plan for the subject has been fully implemented. A new policy has been written with advice taken from an advisor for the subject. A nationally recommended guidance document is being trialled, which the school is starting to 'fill out' and adapt to its own particular needs. There are very good procedures to help the co-ordinator know what is going on in the classroom and to judge the effectiveness of the school's work on teaching and learning. Lessons have been observed and feedback given to teachers, with a view to improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. Good use is made of visiting artists. For example a sculptress worked with Year 2, and was a good stimulus for future three-dimensional work. Pupils take part in community activities, such as the Millennium Arts Festival, and are encouraged to enter competitions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

95. By the time they are seven years old, standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations. This is similar to the finding of the last inspection. As a result of pupils' ability to log on to the computers, type effectively, save, load and print their work pupils enjoy opportunities to use the technology and get great benefit from it. Pupils can write and correct short passages using a word processor. They can draw pictures on the computer, find information about the world from a simple computer based encyclopaedia and construct graphs from information typed into the computer. Pupils undertake some programming to control floor robots, and to program a turtle on the computer screen, but this is not undertaken in a structured way to develop mathematical skills. Standards of attainment are similar to those found at the last inspection. Areas of information and communication technology where learning opportunities are not fully in evidence are in the use of spreadsheets and email. They are not always able to cooperate with each other, however, and when working together on the same computer they have to be reminded to take turns
96. Pupils achieve well when working with information and communications technology and make good progress in relation to prior attainment. The re-organisation of the computers into a suite, in addition to computers in classrooms, has provided more opportunities for access. This has been effective in helping pupils to develop a wider range of skills and helping them to make

progress. For example, in Year 2, pupils use ICT confidently and methodically to search for information, when finding out about different creatures such as penguins, using a CD Rom. Children with special needs and with English as an Additional Language make sound progress and are well supported by teaching assistants as they work alongside other pupils.

97. The teaching of information and communications technology is good and sometimes it is very good. The strengths noted in the last inspection have been maintained. The teachers know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. Their planning is very good, and the work fits with the needs of the pupils. The teachers are generally confident in using most applications and are in the process of receiving training to improve their confidence in using databases and spreadsheets. They use appropriate strategies, demonstrating work to the whole class, and then letting the children work on the computers in pairs. When children are working on the computers, the teachers monitor and support them well, and classroom assistants or parent helpers are used effectively to support pupils.
98. The subject is well coordinated by an enthusiastic coordinator. There is a subject policy and a scheme of work. The school has access to an ICT technician who undertakes essential management tasks. This management contributes to reliability of the resources. Now the computers are arranged in a suite, access to resources is good and children can have regular lessons in the computer room. One significant problem is the lack of ventilation in the computer room, making it unpleasantly hot at times, with a consequent breakdown in concentration. At present, there is no large display screen, so when teachers are undertaking demonstrations, pupils at the back of the class have difficulty seeing the screen. Information and communications technology is used effectively in English, mathematics and other areas of the curriculum. The school has plans to open access to others, particularly local playgroups and pre-schools.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Only one lesson was seen in design technology but evidence from the scrutiny of work and displays indicates that by the time children are seven, standards are above average and pupils achieve well in relation to prior attainment. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils undertake the complete design, make and evaluate cycle. They use a good range of materials and techniques including food, textiles, mechanisms and construction kits. They also use mouldable materials, for example, clay and paper mache. Pupils develop their understanding of how simple mechanisms can be constructed to make things move. For example, pupils in Year 1 have made pictures with moving parts such as a crocodile's mouth. In Year 2 they have made moving vehicles and wind up toys. Pupils respond well to design challenges, for example in year 2, to design a strong carrier bag. Children also have the opportunity to work with food, making jam sandwiches and designing suitable menus from a given specification. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an Additional Language make good progress and achieve well. At the time of the last inspection, standards were also above national expectations, but given the increased numbers of pupils with special needs and English as an Additional Language, the school has done well to maintain this level. In the one lesson seen, pupils made hinged joints from a range of materials for the lid of a cardboard box. They make appropriate choices from a range of materials, and persevere as they experiment with ways of attaching the hinges. They make appropriate evaluations of their work as it progresses and adapt their designs as a result.
100. The teaching of the subject is good. Planning indicates that teachers' knowledge of the subject has improved since the last inspection. In the one lesson seen in the inspection, the teacher had planned her work well, demonstrated good relationships with her pupils and had deployed the learning support assistant effectively to help pupils with special educational needs. Pupils enjoy working on the subject. The practical activities involved give them a good context for developing skills, and links were made to other subjects so that English, maths and science skills were also being developed. Concentration and interest were sustained across the lesson. However, they were noted as working in single sex groups, the boys appearing reluctant to work with the girls.
101. The subject is managed well. At the time of the inspection, the subject was being coordinated by the headteacher on an interim basis. A subject policy and planning guidance are in place to

ensure continuity and progression. There is a good range of resources available, including an area specially dedicated to the subject. Teachers are confident with the subject as a result of the appropriate training that has been given.

HISTORY

102. Only 2 lessons were seen during the inspection, so scrutiny of work and displays were also used to assess standards. By the time pupils' are seven, standards of attainment in history are broadly average. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above national expectations. This change can be attributed to a decline in attainment on entry to the school. There is also now also a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an Additional Language. The evidence seen shows that pupils are making good progress across the school and are achieving well in relation to their starting points.
103. As a result of their work pupils develop a good understanding of chronology. For example, in Year 1, pupils keep personal diaries, showing a sequencing of events. In Year 2, pupils create a timeline of their school holidays. Pupils learn something about the changes that have taken place in everyday life as a result of comparing the lifestyles of people who lived a long time ago. For example, they learn about the life of Florence Nightingale and compared her work with that of a modern day nurse. They had also looked at seaside holidays of 100 years ago and the experiences of people in the Second World War. As a result of their work in history pupils begin to understand that there are a range of ways of finding out about the past and that accounts of what happened might vary. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an Additional Language learn well in lessons and make appropriate progress as a result of the good support that they receive.
104. Judging from the quality of work, discussions with pupils and the lessons seen, teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes it is very good. Teachers plan their lessons well and have a good knowledge of their pupils. Work is set to allow for the different levels of abilities in the classes. When teaching is very good there is a good pace to the lesson and interesting methods of teaching ensure that pupils are actively involved. For example, by giving their own eyewitness accounts of experiences as if they were involved in the Great Fire of London. Where weaknesses occur the pace of work is slowed by over-long introductions which result in a loss of concentration for some pupils. Stimulating and visually exciting displays are used effectively to inform and celebrate pupils' work. One particular work of note was a sculpture of the Great Fire of London, which the children had created with the assistance of an artist in residence in the school.
105. The coordinator for the subject is enthusiastic and has been trained, both in her subject and in the role of coordinator. She carries out her role well although she has only been at the school for a short time. Systems to help the coordinator check what is happening in classes and its impact on learning are very good and have improved since the previous inspection. They include observing teaching in the subject and looking at planning and pupils' work.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Only two lessons in the subject were seen during the inspection, so scrutiny of work and displays were also used to assess standards. By the time they are seven, standards of attainment in geography are in line with those expected and pupils have made good progress in relation to their starting points at the beginning of Year 1. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above national expectations. This change in can be related to the lower attainment levels of pupils on entry to the school. There is now also a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and with English as an Additional Language. The evidence seen shows that pupils are making good progress across the school and are achieving well. They are developing a sound understanding of where places are as a result of their work on local places of interest and places further a-field. For example, in Year 1, pupils are familiar with maps and are able to draw maps of Great Britain and can insert names of the countries and main cities. They have also drawn maps about a trip to Wales and of a walk around the school. In Year 2, pupils had drawn graphs of places where they had been on

holiday. They begin to develop an understanding that people who live in different places often have different lifestyles as a result of the features of the locality. For example, they compare lifestyles on a Hebridean island to life in Chelmsford. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the features such as Turkey, New Zealand and France. Visits to local places of interest such as a replica 'African Village' are effective in furthering pupils understanding that people in other parts of the world often live in ways that are different of their own because of the nature of the country and its climate. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an Additional Language were learning well in the lessons and making appropriate progress.

107. As judged by pupils work, discussions with pupils and lessons seen teaching is good. The strengths noted in the last inspection have been maintained. Teachers plan their lessons well. The good understanding of their pupils results in work being set to allow for the different levels of abilities in the classes. In the very good lesson, excellent use was made of a puppet as a character from the Scottish island which the children were studying. The children were asked to imagine the trip there, by train, coach and ferry. The pace was kept up and children were involved very well. In the good lesson a video about Edinburgh was used effectively for children to learn about life in Scotland.
108. The coordinator for the subject is enthusiastic and has been trained, both in her subject and in the role of coordinator. She carries out her role well although she has only been at the school for a short time. Procedures to check on the school effectiveness in teaching geography are very good and have improved since the last inspection. For example, the coordinator monitors teaching in the subject, looks at teachers' planning and samples pupils' work. In some lessons computers were used well for learning about the subject, with the computer based atlas called World Explorer being used by the children to learn about things such as the differences between animals living in Antarctica and the Arctic. The school also used local exhibitions and events to teach about Geography. In one case, pupils were taken to a Ghanaian village created locally in Essex. In another, they dressed up as children from around the world.

MUSIC

109. By the age of seven attainment is above that expected from pupils of a similar age. There has been a good improvement in pupils' attainment since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and the more musically able make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
110. Pupils are confident performers. They make-up simple compositions and show skill in performing these to each other. They sing well, begin to play tunes on recorders and develop an understanding of different rhythmic patterns. Pupils in Year 1 use voices and percussion instruments to make a sound picture of different weather. They know the names of some of the instruments and use these well in their work. Year 2 pupils listen to an extract of music from Pictures at an Exhibition, by Mussorgsky. They look at different picture postcards and select one that they like and create their own short piece of music to illustrate the scene on the postcard. They use drums to make the sound of soldiers marching, sandpaper scrappers to show rustling leaves and a tambourine and drum for a shooting star. Pupils in Year 2 learn to play the recorder. Many pupils are confident in playing simple letter notation and are able to follow a simple score. They show an understanding of basic music notation. Pupils sing well in assemblies. In a music assembly pupils sang Music is Fun as a two part round. They showed a good memory for the words, with many pupils developing some accuracy in pitch. The pupils in the orchestra accompany hymns well. They show confidence in playing their own parts and have a good sense of rhythm.
111. Teaching and learning is good overall and the strengths noted in the last inspection have been maintained. Lessons are well planned to ensure that pupils experience practical music-making activities linked to listening tasks. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to perform their ideas to each other. In a very good lesson, pupils' performances were evaluated by the teacher. This enabled pupils to see how a composition might be improved and had a positive impact on their learning. The previous report stated there was only limited use of information and communication technology. This is now being developed by the school. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. There is a recorder group, a choir which practises

at Christmas time and an orchestra made up of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. All these help to further develop pupils' performing skills.

112. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and the role has been developed well since the last inspection. Effective support is given to enable non-specialist teachers to feel confident in teaching the subject. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place. Pupils have sung at Chelmsford Cathedral and have taken part in an Arts Festival with local schools and also a local music festival. There are good liaison arrangements with the Junior school.
113. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Only one lesson was seen in gymnastics and no dance lessons were seen for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and so it is not possible to form a judgement about these aspects of the curriculum. In games pupils attain standards that are average for their age by the time they leave school at the age of seven. This is similar to standards found in the last inspection.
115. In the one gymnastics lesson seen pupils' ability to remember, reproduce and explore a range of balances, and ways of travelling, resulted in their developing controlled and co-ordinated movements during floor work. They begin to understand basic compositions of movement, for example, the ways in which changes in direction and speed of travel can add interest and variety to their movements. In the course of their work in games pupils demonstrated a satisfactory ability to co-ordinate their hand, leg and eye movements in striking, throwing and catching a ball. Pupils work well to practise and improve their individual skills but sometimes find it hard to work together when they have to share equipment and take turns. They begin to notice the effects that physical exercise has on their bodies, for example, that it causes them to feel warm and make their hearts beat faster. They have a good awareness of how to exercise safely and this results in an enhanced awareness of their responsibilities towards themselves and the effects that their own actions might have on others. For example, games apparatus is accessed safely and sensibly, and when using the bats and balls, pupils ensure that they do not get in the way of others. They sometimes find it difficult to share equipment and are sometimes inconsiderate when working together. For example, pupils have to be reminded to give each other a fair share of using the bats as well as they balls when working in pairs to practise batting and bowling skills. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support from classroom assistants who work alongside them during lessons and those who speak English as an additional language are also well supported, often working alongside classmates who are more experienced language users. This ensures that they are able to take part fully in lessons and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
116. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned with a clear focus for learning and this results in pupils having a clear understanding about the purpose of the lesson. Activities build on previous learning and are appropriately sequenced to enable pupils to develop and explore their movements and improve their skills. For example, travelling and balancing movements are introduced with pupils developing their own ideas in response to the teacher's instructions. Their skills are then extended through opportunities for pupils to compose their own sequences and then to demonstrate their ideas to others. There is skilful use of open-ended tasks, which allows all pupils to perform at their own ability level. Pupils who demonstrate higher levels of performance are encouraged to show their ideas to others and this inspires others to higher achievement. As pupils practise their movements, teachers give individual advice and coaching. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and the performance of others and, as a result, they work hard to refine and improve their skills and movements. Good use of praise and encouragement gives added incentive for pupils to persevere and do their best. There is good attention to health and safety, pupils are well managed and there are high standards of discipline. Pupils now access apparatus quickly and efficiently which avoids them having to stand around for long periods of time which was criticised in the last inspection. Lessons now proceed smoothly, behaviour is very good throughout lessons, and the maximum use is made of the time available for learning.

117. The subject is very well led and the coordinator has ensured that aspects of the subject are regularly revisited in order to ensure improved standards, as recommended in the last inspection report. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and sets a good role model by her own very good teaching. She has developed schemes of work and introduced the 'Top Play' and 'Top Gym' schemes to the school. She monitors the subject closely and has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the subject.
118. The school has sufficient good quality resources for physical education and they are well organised to ensure easy access in the course of lessons. There is a spacious hall, which is well used for all aspects of physical education. The outdoor area is also well used particularly in summer.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Only one lesson was seen due to timetabling arrangements. However, scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and teachers' planning confirms this judgement. The school has been successful in maintaining the standard of pupils' work since the previous inspection.
120. Pupils are aware of the importance of religion in some people's lives. They learn about some of the world religions and the different festivals associated with them. For example, Year 1 pupils write about the Christian festival of Easter. They know that it is a time for Christians to celebrate. They make a book about the Christmas nativity story and describe the events in pictures and simple sentences. Year 2 pupils make comparisons between a Christian and a Sikh wedding. They know about the type of clothes that are worn. They learn about the different places that are used for worship. They visit St. Luke's Church and take part in the Harvest Festival. They know that the synagogue is a place used by Jewish people. They learn about the Torah Scroll and the Star of David and the importance of these in Jewish worship. Pupils think about their own quiet place that is special to them. They know that the Garden of Gethsemane was a special place for Jesus and used by Him for prayer. They write their own prayers to help people that they know. Pupils in Year 2 look at the different clothes worn by the Reverend Chapman for taking services at her church. They learn about the things that she does during the day. They know that she tries to make people happy if they are sad.
121. No secure judgement can be made about teaching and learning as only one lesson was observed. The previous report stated that more use could be made of role play in lessons. Teachers' planning and evidence from the one lesson seen confirms that satisfactory provision is now made for role play within the curriculum.
122. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She regularly monitors teachers' plans and observes some of the lessons. This has a positive impact on maintaining the standard of pupils' work across the school. The previous report stated that assessment procedures were in need of development. There are now satisfactory procedures in place. The resources are good and include a range of artefacts, books, posters and videos. Effective displays around the school further develop pupils' awareness of different world faiths.
123. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.