

INSPECTION REPORT

GREAT BARDFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Great Bardfield, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114835

Headteacher: Mrs A Barney

Reporting inspector: Mr J Bishop
12184

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 October 2001

Inspection number: 194693

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Great Bardfield
Nr Braintree
Essex

Postcode: CM7 4RN

Telephone number: 01371 810252

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Rooney

Date of previous inspection: 14 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12184	John Bishop	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? b) The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector		How high are standards? a) 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?
18360	Cecelia Davies	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Art Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs English Geography History Religious Education	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Great Bardfield Primary School is a community primary school for boys and girls of all abilities aged 4 to 11 years. There are 141 pupils on roll including 12 children aged under 5. The school is situated in the attractive Essex village of Great Bardfield, close to Braintree and serves a community where most families own their own homes and have at least one parent in regular employment. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. On entry to school, pupils have a very wide range of abilities which, overall, represent average standards of attainment. Most have had some form of pre-school experience in the facility based in the school grounds and they are keen to learn. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average although no pupils have statements of special need. The school has recently experienced teacher recruitment difficulties, which has resulted in two classes being taught by temporary and part-time teachers. The school last had a full inspection in 1997 when it was found to have serious weaknesses. The present headteacher was appointed three years ago. In addition, there have been numerous changes amongst the teaching staff with only one teacher remaining from the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strengths. It has greatly improved many aspects of school life since 1997. The many changes in provision in the past three years have started to be effective with standards sharply rising in 2001. It serves the community well. The quality of teaching is good and the pupils are encouraged to work hard. The leadership and management of the school are very good and manifest themselves in a strong commitment to raising standards while offering a broad and interesting curriculum. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has made substantial all-round improvement since the last inspection four years ago.
- Results in the national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of their last year in school are well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Standards are very good in art, and are good in information and communication technology and in music. Art and music are good by the end of Year 2.
- Most teaching is good or very good and results in the pupils making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and progress well towards their targets.
- The leadership and management of the school are very strong. The headteacher, staff and governors are very committed to the raising of standards and continual improvement.
- The school is a caring community with a strong ethos based on the values of respect and co-operation. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good and results in pupils' good behaviour. Consequently relationships and personal development are very good.
- The school has won the confidence of parents; home/school links provide very good support for pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in all subjects except music and art are not consistently as good as they might be in some year groups.
- The levels of support in the Reception/Year 1 class are insufficient to ensure that the Foundation Stage curriculum is fully implemented.
- The role of subject managers in monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects are under-developed; this restricts the sharing of the very good teaching practice available in the school.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment in some subjects other than English and mathematics is insufficient to measure the individual progress of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The present headteacher has been in post for three years. The developments made in this time are resulting in many improvements in the school's provision. The school has successfully addressed the issues in the last inspection report. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology have started to rise again to appropriate levels, especially at Key Stage 2. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching. The school's action plan has appropriate priorities and these are leading to improved systems of assessment, an improved environment, greater staff knowledge of subjects through staff development and an effective system of self-evaluation. Co-ordinators now have clearly defined roles but there are still further developments required in monitoring pupils' work and evaluating teaching. Subject policies and schemes of work have been reviewed and are beginning to influence the raising of standards. Governors are closely involved in the work of the school and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. ICT is a greatly improved subject and overall resources are sound. Improvements made since the last inspection are very good and the capacity for further improvement is also very good. I am, therefore, of the opinion that this school is providing a very acceptable standard of education and that it no longer has any serious weaknesses.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	B	D	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	D	B	C	
Science	A	B	A	A	

The above table reflects the significant rise in standards over the past year. This progress is more evident in Years 5 and 6 although there is still much to achieve by improving the consistency of teaching in all years while the recent improvements in the school's provision are consolidated. A scrutiny of pupils' work seen during the inspection indicate that it will be difficult to maintain these standards in 2002. Nevertheless, there is much determination to do so and evidence suggests that the generally upward trend should continue and the school is on course to meet its targets. Progress is less evident for pupils at Key Stage 1. Standards are improving but progress is much needed in writing and also in science where there has been insufficient challenge for the more able. Standards in all other subjects are at least satisfactory which is a great improvement on the last inspection. Standards in art are very good at Key Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 1. Musical standards are good throughout. ICT is good at Key Stage 2. The overall standards of work seen in the present Year 2 suggest standards are satisfactory in English, mathematics and science. In Year 6, work seen indicates that standards are good in English, satisfactory in mathematics and very good in science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are keen to come to school and concentrate well in lessons.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop confidence as they progress through the school and become increasingly more responsible. The very good relationships within the school help to create a safe and stimulating environment.
Attendance	Good. The attendance rate is above the national average. Lessons start promptly and no time is wasted.

The pupils' positive approach to school provides a sound basis for their learning and makes an important contribution to the levels of attainment they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is generally good or very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching varies in quality from class to class and is best when teachers have been established in the school for some time and have benefited from the available staff development. There are good procedures for inducting new teachers into the school but recruitment difficulties have made staff development difficult and two classes have teachers on short-term contracts. In the better lessons, lesson objectives are clear in the planning and are shared with the pupils, resources are readily available and teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. In the less successful lessons, the pace is slow and pupils are insufficiently involved in discussions and become unsure of what to do. Accommodation is insufficient in some areas of the school, for teaching to be fully effective. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants and they receive appropriate work. Literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout with teachers having a good understanding of their subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of learning experiences. A wide range of extra activities supports the statutory curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and progress well towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The management and organisation of provision are good and staff work well as a team to meet the needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development through the promotion of spiritual awareness, knowledge of social and moral responsibilities and the experience of cultural activities is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of their pupils and make satisfactory provision for their welfare, health and safety.

The headteacher, staff and governors are keen to ensure that pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum as well as successfully meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and other national initiatives. This is achieved by good planning and the provision of a wide range of extra activities, including sporting events, drama performances and an excellent school orchestra.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the aim to raise standards. She is effective in motivating a team with a shared sense of values and priorities. The deputy headteacher and other key members of staff ably support her.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their roles well and are fully involved in the school development process. They support and work with the staff effectively and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school effectively analyses its strengths and weaknesses in order to decide what to do next.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages and uses its resources soundly and priorities for development are appropriately financed. Staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • The teaching is good. • The school expects the children to work hard and achieve his or her best. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and quantity of homework. • More information about how their children are progressing.

Inspectors endorse the positive views held by parents and the regard they have for the school. The school provides homework in amounts in line with the national guidelines; this is, as appropriate, mainly in English and mathematics. Inspectors understand the views of a minority of parents who would like more information about how their children are progressing but believe the school offers sufficient opportunities for parents to talk to staff as well as providing very good written information.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of attainment. Initial assessments carried out soon after children start school indicate that, in most years of entry, children are generally in line with what is expected nationally in all areas of learning. Children in the reception year make sound progress and on entry to Year 1, their attainment is typical for this age group; most are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Most children are aware of different forms of print and contribute well in discussions. They are being introduced to the alphabet through work on initial letter sounds; they enjoy handling books and develop appropriate early writing skills. They count up to 10; some correctly discuss the differences between a range of two-dimensional shapes with their mathematical vocabulary developing well.
2. At the end of Year 2, standards reported in the national tests for 2001 indicate that pupils are attaining levels in reading and mathematics which are above the national average and in writing below the national average. This represents a considerable improvement from 2000 when reading and writing were well below. It largely restores the situation at the time of the last inspection in reading; mathematics has improved results but writing has declined. In 2001, standards have shown some improvement when compared to those in similar schools; standards in the national tests bring mathematics and reading to the average level of similar schools but is well below average in writing. In 2000, results were well below average in reading and writing and very low in mathematics – work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are continuing to improve and there is a continuing rise in the quality of work produced by the pupils. Teachers' assessments in science gave no pupils the higher Level 3 and this was instrumental in the school's performance being below the national average. There are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls.
3. At the end of Year 6 in 2001, national test results in English and science were well above the national average and above average in mathematics. This represents a considerable improvement on 2000 when English and mathematics were below average with science above. It improves on the situation at the time of the last inspection when English was reported as below national expectations at the end of Year 6 and mathematics and science were in line. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in 2001 was also well above average indicating that the more able pupils are being well challenged. When compared to pupils in similar schools the results achieved are well above average in science, above average in English and in line in mathematics. Work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils in the current Year 6 are, at present, achieving above the national average in English, in line in mathematics and well above in science. Boys slightly out-perform girls but these differences are not significant. Standards are continuing to rise and are set to maintain the upward trend. The school has achieved appropriately challenging targets for improvement set in all three subjects.
4. Progress in English is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Pupils generally listen well to one another and to adults. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 acquire an understanding of the basic sounds suggested by letters but do not always sound out words with confidence and this prevents them achieving as well as they might. Pupils are taught to write systematically and many are proficient, by the end of Year 2, in relating real or imagined events in a logical order. Progress is good at Key Stage 2 because pupils are set challenging tasks and because literacy is well used to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
5. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory and pupils in all years are making at least sound progress and often very good progress by the end of Year 6. In Years 1 and 2 numeracy skills are developing well with pupils confident in measuring in metres, writing numbers to 20 and recognising many two and three-dimensional shapes. In Years 3 to 6, pupils gain a sound

knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They carry out mental calculations well and are developing skills in recording data using line graphs and information charts.

6. By the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, pupils have made very good progress in science. They leave with high standards achieved according to national test results and work seen during the inspection. The scheme of work followed throughout the school is based on investigation and pupils' skills are well developed. Teachers receive much support from the scheme of work and from lessons prepared for by the subject leader. Teachers provide planned extension activities to challenge the more able pupils at Key Stage 2 and this is helping to raise standards.
7. Across both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by both teachers and learning support assistants. Those requiring support are identified early and the school takes the right steps to ensure that their progress is continually monitored and that the provision offered is constantly under review. Testing procedures are appropriate, systematic and manageable. In all of this work, the school receives sound support from external agencies.
8. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Recent substantial additions to the resources available are becoming effective in raising standards. Skills are taught systematically but pupils' individual progress is not monitored sufficiently to ensure that each pupil receives appropriate work. The technology is well used for the learning of ICT skills but is under-used to support the other subjects of the curriculum.
9. Standards in all other subjects are at least satisfactory. In art, they are good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2, music is good at both key stages. This represents a very good improvement from the last inspection report when English, history, geography, design and technology, ICT and religious education were deemed unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall the pupils' attitudes towards learning are good and have a beneficial impact on standards of attainment. Pupils say they enjoy school, and the enthusiastic way they talk about extra-curricular activities and their keen uptake of them is further evidence that they like school and all it has to offer. Most pupils take an interest in their lessons. They settle quickly to tasks and sustain concentration though this is less obvious in lessons where pupils have not been well briefed or they are insufficiently challenged. Some pupils, particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2, show real enthusiasm for learning. This was evident for example, in a Year 6 art lesson when pupils very clearly enjoyed producing double portraits in a range of media and styles. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They are keen to answer questions and take turns when doing so. Many have the confidence to participate in discussions and make thoughtful contributions appropriate to their age and level. A good example of this was seen in a Year 4 information and communication technology lesson when pupils carefully evaluated the effect of the pictures they had made using the paint tool. Some older pupils show good independent learning and research skills developed by well planned lessons based on the key elements of enquiry and interpretation, for example in history and science.
11. Because they are taught about the importance of friendship and the feelings and needs of others, relationships amongst pupils and with adults at the school are very good. Pupils mix well, working and playing together harmoniously. Several instances of them working constructively in small groups and pairs were seen. A good example was in a Year 3 physical education lesson, when pupils collaborated well to produce a line dance sequence to 'Cotton Eye Joe'. Parents are particularly impressed by the kind and caring attitudes pupils show towards each other, and inspectors agree that this is a strength of the school. That pupils are caring is manifest, for example, in the way they help anyone hurt in the playground or look after pupils new to the school. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and

pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. One pupil was excluded for a fixed term, last year. Pupils relate well with staff and are open and pleasant towards visitors.

12. Most pupils behave well throughout the school day. In lessons they understand and follow set routines and codes of conduct and respond positively to most teachers' high expectations. This ensures that behaviour is good, there are few interruptions and little time is wasted. In a few lessons where the teaching lacks pace or fails to sustain the pupils' interest, children misbehave. They become restless, distracted, call out inappropriately and fail to make progress. Behaviour at break time is also mainly good; this is, at least in part, due to the good range of large and small play apparatus available enabling pupils to engage in constructive play. Pupils say that there are occasional lapses and inspectors noticed a small amount of inappropriate behaviour. For instance, one or two pupils were seen pushing others roughly and boys did not always take care when kicking footballs in the relatively confined space of the playground areas. Pupils generally behave appropriately in the dining hall and other common parts. Inspectors were especially impressed by the orderly and sensible way pupils conducted themselves in assembly and in classrooms when they came in early on a wet day. Most pupils are courteous and considerate to each other and adults; they show a good understanding of appropriate behaviour in a range of social situations. Pupils look after their own and the school's possessions very well, and there is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism. The total lack of litter in the Key Stage 2 playground after the morning break was particularly noteworthy.
13. The very positive way pupils respond to opportunities for taking responsibility and to the trust placed in them makes a major contribution to the confidence and maturity most of them possess by the time they are eleven. From the earliest age, pupils perform duties such as returning registers, 'buddying', (looking after younger pupils) and taking weather readings conscientiously and with pride. Representatives on the recently formed School Council undertake this role seriously and sensibly and this will further aid the development of their initiative and autonomy.
14. Overall attendance is good; it has gradually increased since the previous inspection and is now well above the national average for primary schools. There are few unauthorised absences and most of these are for children whose parents have taken them on holiday in term time without obtaining the headteacher's permission. Most pupils are punctual and there are no persistent latecomers. The school has successfully addressed the key issue from the previous inspection, requiring it to comply with legal requirements with regard to registration. Registers are now taken promptly and marked according to local authority guidelines at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon, and are then returned immediately to the administration area for checking.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Only one lesson (3 per cent) of teaching across the school was judged to be unsatisfactory; this is a significant improvement in quality since the last inspection, when 16% was unsatisfactory.
16. One of the reasons for the improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection is that teachers now possess a better understanding of the subjects they teach, particularly at Key Stage 2. This is because the school has worked hard both to ensure that teachers gain in confidence in teaching all aspects of the curriculum and to ensure that each subject is taught systematically. A particularly successful characteristic of teaching across the school is that questioning is used well to engage pupils' thinking and to probe their understanding, not only when new work is being introduced to the whole class, but also when teachers are working with individual pupils. Another strong feature of teaching is the quality of the relationships between teachers and their pupils. Pupils are managed well in most lessons, and the atmosphere of mutual trust that pervades the school contributes to a good classroom ethos and makes a positive impact on the quality of learning.
17. In the lessons observed in the Foundation Stage, three quarters of the teaching was satisfactory and a quarter was good. Lessons are generally planned so that there is a good

range of activities for children to follow, but sometimes these are not sufficiently targeted on what it is that pupils need to learn so that the teaching is not as effective as it could be. Helpful curriculum plans have been drawn up for the Foundation Stage, but these are not yet fully implemented. Because children under five share their class with pupils in Year 1, they sometimes require additional assistance in completing their tasks. This is not always available and the teacher has to work hard to ensure that all the learning needs of her class are fully met.

18. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen at Key Stage 1, and good or very good teaching was observed in almost 60% of lessons in the course of the inspection. However, an examination of pupils' work and current standards indicates that teaching over time is only of satisfactory quality. This variation occurs because teachers' expectations for pupils' achievements here are not consistently high, and because planning does not always focus sharply on what the lesson is trying to achieve, particularly in Year 1. Most lessons move at a brisk pace, and learning support assistants are generally well briefed and offer good support. Basic skills in English and mathematics are competently taught. In one very good lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils were set a challenging task to improve their knowledge and understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes. The work proceeded at a good pace and pupils made good progress in their learning.
19. At Key Stage 2, exactly two thirds of the lessons seen were of good or very good quality while almost all the remainder were satisfactory. While a number of good or better lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4, teaching is more consistently good or very good among the older pupils in the key stage. This is because pupils of different aptitude and achievement are set challenging tasks and because teachers have high expectations for the success of their pupils. Teachers across the key stage generally make effective links between current and previous learning, and this, together with clearly defined targets for each lesson, enables pupils to develop a clear idea of what is expected of them. While in a few lessons for younger pupils in the key stage, for example in history, tasks are set that limit pupils' scope to show what they really understand, much teaching affords pupils opportunity for enquiry and discussion which does not set a limit on what they are expected to achieve. In science, for example, pupils in Year 5 discuss the inequalities inherent in a form of testing which is superficially fair, while those in Year 6 explain to others how the evidence derived from certain artefacts leads them to conclusions about the nature of life in Saxon times.
20. In English, teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The principal difference in the quality of teaching between the key stages resides in the teaching of higher level reading skills; for example, many older pupils in Key Stage 1 have difficulty in breaking down previously unencountered words into their constituent syllables, while those at Key Stage 2 become adept at skimming non-fiction texts for meaning by the time they are ten. Similarly, there is scope for improvement in the quality and detail of pupils' writing at Key Stage 1. The structures afforded by the National Literacy Strategy are generally well used in the teaching of English. Across the school, however, teachers do not sufficiently monitor the progress of other pupils when they are offering support to a particular group.
21. Overall, the teaching in mathematics is good at both key stages. Good lessons were observed in most classes across the school in the course of the inspection. These are well planned and teachers display good subject knowledge, using the National Numeracy Strategy sensitively and successfully challenging pupils so that they make good progress. Pupils' targets for their learning are regularly shared with pupils, with the result that they have a good understanding of what is expected of them.
22. Overall, the teaching of science is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Some very good teaching was also observed. In Year 5, for example, the teacher displayed good subject knowledge and used questioning well to fire the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject, motivating them well to achieve the tasks she had set them. Across the school, pupils are given sufficient opportunities to investigate and learn some of the principles of scientific enquiry.

23. In all the lessons seen, the teaching of information and computer technology was either good or very good. Computer programs are used imaginatively to support the teaching of some other subjects, such as art. Although pupils learn a wide range of skills in the computer suite, they do not always have time to practise and consolidate them in the classroom.
24. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 in religious education. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall but the lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 were good. There was sufficient evidence to indicate that teachers' knowledge of the subject, criticised at the time of the last inspection, is now at least satisfactory.
25. The teaching of art and music is generally good across the school. The school promotes both subjects strongly, and pupils have frequent and systematic opportunities to practise their skills. The teaching of close observational drawing, for example, is often used to support pupils' work in history, geography and design and technology. Instrumental music and singing make an important contribution to the promotion of the pupils' cultural and social development.
26. The quality of teaching in history, geography and design and technology is satisfactory. For different reasons, standards in each of these subjects were below those expected at the time of the last inspection. They are now satisfactory because teachers' knowledge and understanding of each subject have improved, and because each is now taught systematically across the school. The teaching of physical education is also satisfactory; teachers plan their work well and offer pupils sufficient opportunity to practise a range of different skills. In the best lessons, expectations are high because pupils are encouraged to refine the sequences of movement they have practised.
27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, and the special needs co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the support they require despite the limitations of her contact with the school. Pupils' needs are identified early, and each has an appropriate individual education plan. These identify both long-term objectives and short-term targets for the pupils to achieve, and suggest helpful and sufficiently detailed strategies by which these may be met. The plans are well maintained and used regularly by staff for reference. The co-ordinator reviews these plans at least twice annually, appropriately advising and consulting parents, and making adjustments where necessary. Well briefed by the co-ordinator and other staff, learning support assistants make a positive contribution to the quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs because they develop a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and where appropriate receive extra challenge and support. Information and communication technology (ICT) is very effectively used to teach ICT skills in the computer suite but pupils generally have insufficient opportunities to use and consolidate these skills in the classroom.
28. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The differences between the key stages directly relate to the differences in teaching already described. An important feature of pupils' success in learning across the school is their knowledge of their own progress. This is acquired when teachers share with pupils the objectives of their lessons, although this is not consistently carried out by all teachers, and because targets are set for each group or individual, according to the context of the lesson. Because of this good classroom communication, pupils display a real interest in their work in most lessons. Pupils are well motivated to learn because relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. There is much good and very good teaching in the school but subject leaders are insufficiently involved in sharing exemplary practice with colleagues.
29. Homework is set regularly across the school, and parents support well their children's efforts in learning to read and spell. The fact that the school monitors the quality and nature of pupils' reading after they become independent readers ensures that their progress in learning in this aspect of English continues at a good rate until they leave the school. The quality of marking contributes positively to pupils' learning in most classes. Teachers take a real interest in pupils' written work, and their comments are often lively and incite pupils to higher achievement.

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

30. Overall, provision is good. In the previous inspection, the curricular arrangements were judged to need improving in certain areas. There were no detailed schemes of work and some subjects (information and communication technology, design and technology and history) had no long term or medium-term planning. Time allocations were inconsistent in different classes. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and addressed the key issues successfully overall. All subjects now have policies and schemes of work, which clearly indicate the aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding, which pupils should demonstrate by the end of each year. However, some policies are still in draft form. The amount of time allocated to each subject is appropriate.
31. The planned curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but, in practice, activities seen in the classroom are often more appropriate for Key Stage 1 pupils. This constrains the learning opportunities for Foundation Stage children. The school meets all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In addition, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to learn French. The curriculum reflects the aims of the school; it is broad and balanced and all pupils have access. It is well planned but day-to-day planning does not always give specific details of what it is that pupils will learn in a lesson. Governors meet their statutory obligation in relation to the curriculum, including provision for sex education and drugs education.
32. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. It is timetabled and regular opportunities are made for pupils to talk and discuss matters of interest and concern to them. Members of the local community, for example the nurse, policeman and road safety officer, come into school. During the summer term, a "life skills" evening is held for Year 6 and their parents. This evening effectively raises pupils' awareness of issues relating to smoking, drugs and alcohol.
33. The school has successfully implemented the strategies for literacy and numeracy. This has increased the confidence of staff to teach literacy and numeracy effectively. The impact of these strategies on standards is monitored and evidence shows that they are improving standards. There are nominated governors for supporting and monitoring the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are carefully written to provide programmes of work which enable each pupil to have full access to the curriculum. Provision and procedures are consistent with the nationally accepted Code of Practice for special educational needs.
34. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities. These activities include recorder lessons, football, netball, country dancing and gymnastics. In addition, all pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to learn to play a range of musical instruments. Fifty-eight pupils take part in instrumental lessons.
35. The school provides a very wide range of visits to enrich and extend the curriculum further. Pupils visit such places as Cressing Temple, Colne Valley Railway, the Saxon Village at West Stowe and Colchester Castle as part of history topics. A field trip to the Isle of Wight for older pupils provides opportunities to study a different locality. Regular visits to the theatre, such as the visit to see Macbeth and the visit by Key Stage 2 to the Barbican Spring 2001 "Fiesta", enhance the curriculum. The school has very good links with the community, which contribute appropriately to pupils' learning. Links with local schools are well maintained and transfer arrangements with the local secondary schools are satisfactory.
36. At the time of the last inspection, overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was sound. Since then, the school has improved in all areas and provision is now very good overall.
37. The provision for spiritual development is good and promoted through assemblies and the calm atmosphere in the school. The school's ethos contributes to valuing and celebrating each other's achievements. Listening to music in assembly and some religious education lessons

helps create an atmosphere for reflection and contemplation. Within art, music, literacy and religious education, there are opportunities for spiritual growth. Pupils take part in Christmas, Easter and harvest services at the local church, providing opportunities for developing spiritual awareness.

38. The provision for moral development is very good, with the school providing good teaching on right and wrong. There is a positive ethos of thinking and caring about other people and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Circle time helps the moral development of pupils, where they can discuss incidents. There are clear codes of expectations for the behaviour for pupils. Class rules are displayed in classrooms. Pupils understand the concept of fairness and show respect for others.
39. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. Pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to good social behaviour. Year 6 pupils enjoy helping younger pupils and the "Buddy" system works very well in ensuring that Foundation Stage children quickly settle into school routines. The school council, made up of pupils from each class, is a good feature of the school. During the inspection, senior members of the School Council attended a meeting of the Parish Council. The School Council provides pupils with opportunities to make decisions relevant to them and to develop an understanding of democracy. Pupils raise funds for charities; this year, money was raised for the NSPCC. Within some lessons, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively; opportunities to perform together playing instruments also contribute significantly to the development of social skills.
40. The school makes good provision to support pupils' cultural development. The programme of religious education, art, music and literacy support this aspect well. A whole range of visits and visitors enrich pupils' cultural experiences. Although the provision for celebrating the cultural and linguistic diversity of British society is limited, pupils have positive attitudes and are interested in learning about their own cultures and those of others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Teachers provide pupils with effective personal support; they know them well and take careful account of their individual needs. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect between staff and pupils. This promotes an atmosphere in which pupils feel happy, secure and valued and is reflected in the confidence with which they approach staff and their positive attitudes to school.
42. Arrangements for the pupils' welfare are generally satisfactory. There is first aid cover throughout the day. However, because there is no medical room, this has to be administered in a corner of the school office. All incidents resulting in injury are recorded and parents are informed if their child receives a blow to the head. The school follows the local authority guidelines for child protection. The headteacher is the designated responsible person and has undertaken training. She makes sure that staff are kept appropriately informed. They, in turn, are sensitive to child protection issues and are quick to alert her of any concerns.
43. Fire drills are held, logged and carefully evaluated each term. Electrical, physical education, fire and play equipment are checked annually by outside specialists. The school is kept very clean and is generally well maintained in a safe condition. Governors have dealt with most of the recommendations from a full health and safety audit commissioned after the previous inspection. A member of the governors' premises committee holds a brief for health and safety. She is aware of the need for vigilance if all potential hazards are to be identified and makes regular checks together with the headteacher. Health and physical education programmes are used well to promote healthy life styles, contributing constructively to the pupils' social development.
44. Good standards of discipline and behaviour are promoted by the development of positive attitudes and the pupils' self-esteem. Most staff consistently praise good or improved work and behaviour which is further reinforced by the judicious use of rewards such as the award of a gold 'crown' or acclamation in a celebration assembly. Through circle time and assemblies

pupils learn about the results of their actions on others; instances of roughness and unkindness are discussed and this helps to reinforce the importance of care and consideration for others. Pupils say the 'ownership' conferred on them by each class devising its own code of conduct is also very effective in ensuring good behaviour. The school deals effectively with ongoing poor behaviour. Incidents are carefully logged and parental co-operation is sought. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants who ensure that the requirements of pupils' individual education plans are adhered to.

45. The school is successful in promoting good attendance. Its ethos and approach ensure that pupils want to attend and the majority of parents confirm their children enjoy school. Parents are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and most make sure their children attend regularly. However, a significant minority of parents continue to remove their children for holidays during term time, sometimes without the headteacher's permission. Guidelines for reporting absences are clear and all unexplained absences are followed up on the first day. Pupils' absence and lateness are carefully monitored. If there is any cause for concern the education welfare officer works with the school to effect improvement.
46. The previous inspection reported that teachers did not fully consider assessment criteria and methods of assessment when planning lessons. This meant that their assessments were not complete enough to inform planning of future work to help pupils make progress. The school has made sound progress with this issue. In English and mathematics, teachers now use an appropriate range of formal systems to assess and record pupils' attainment. Data from these and national test results are well used to inform curriculum planning both at the individual and larger group level. For example, an analysis of assessment results indicated that pupils' problem solving skills were weak. In response to this, the assessment co-ordinator sought advice and a framework for problem solving skills was introduced throughout the school. However, in science, assessment procedures are still not used to identify what individual pupils need to learn next. Improved assessment practice has not yet been applied to information and communication technology or the foundation subjects and the school sees this as a priority area for development. The school also wishes to refine and extend its recently introduced practice of target setting. Staff feel that sharing targets is effective because it enables pupils to know what they have got to do to improve, and their self-esteem rises when a target is met. Parents, too, are pleased because they say it enables them to support their children more effectively. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are mainly informal but nonetheless satisfactory. Teachers work closely together as children pass through the school and a good exchange of information means that their individual needs are effectively met. Each pupil is made to feel valued and respected whatever their academic ability, strengths or problems.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school's good partnership with parents reported in the previous inspection has been strengthened with parents now expressing higher levels of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. They are especially pleased about recent improvements in the management of the school. Some parents express concern about the amount of homework given but inspectors found this to be appropriate. Most parents are rightly satisfied with the school's termly consultation arrangements for keeping them informed about their child's work and progress. They particularly appreciate learning about their child's targets at these meetings and through the home school diaries, because it gives them a clear idea of what their child should be achieving. In addition, parents feel able to approach teachers at any other time to share concerns about their child's education as they find staff very willing to listen and to help. Pupils' annual reports are also very useful. They meet statutory requirements and are detailed and informative.
48. Arrangements for keeping parents informed about the school's work are also very good. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents both give a very clear picture of the school in accordance with statutory requirements. Details of day-to-day matters are provided via regular newsletters and notices displayed around the school. The style and presentation of all written communications are of an extremely high quality and are a credit to the school. A very

clear overview of what is taught is given in the prospectus and teachers send parents regular topic information sheets. Those for mathematics are particularly helpful because they contain details of expected targets and suggestions for 'home' activities to support classroom work. Curriculum meetings on such topics as aspects of numeracy, learning styles and the purposes and value of the Year 5/6 residential stay on the Isle of Wight are regularly held. Another good feature of the school is the opportunities it provides for parents to discuss school policies at coffee mornings held each half term.

49. The school considers it essential that parents support their children's education and very actively encourages them to become involved. Most do so. They monitor homework and have a positive impact on progress in English by effectively helping their children with reading at home. Many enjoy attending celebration assemblies, musical events and picnics with the children. Some are more actively involved in the life of the school. Several give valuable classroom support on a regular basis by listening to children read or by helping with design and technology. Others assist with swimming and book sales and on trips. One or two provide regular football coaching for the pupils on Saturdays. A few give 'one off' talks on areas of expertise such as first aid and the life of Florence Nightingale.
50. The school continues to enjoy and much appreciate the support of the very active parent-teacher association. The association works hard to raise funds and engenders a community spirit through nearly new uniform sales, boot sales, cookery demonstrations and various social events. Profits are used to purchase books, play apparatus, science and technology equipment and many other resources for the benefit of all the pupils. Association members also make a valuable contribution by helping with special projects such as the development of a 'secret' garden.
51. The very good links the school has forged with parents have a beneficial impact on the pupils' quality of learning and their personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good. The headteacher, teachers and governors have worked together to revise the school's aims and these now influence all aspects of the school's work, particularly the raising of standards. The headteacher's leadership provides very good educational direction for the school and this has been instrumental in eliminating the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. The school community has been drawn together effectively to raise standards and ensure that pupils have high expectations of themselves. Only one teacher is left from the time of the last inspection. In spite of this considerable staff turnover, morale in the school has remained high. Parents have confidence in the school and its leadership and offer strong support to the many changes in provision that have taken place in the past three years. Rigorous analysis of the school's test results has been made and this has identified areas of learning, such as pupils' writing, that require improvement. The school has a happy and caring ethos and this impacts positively on the standards of pupils' behaviour, thus creating a good learning environment. Equal opportunities are provided and the progress of all pupils is monitored carefully to ensure that they participate fully in all work and activities. However, some pupils are withdrawn from class for extra support and miss the same lesson each week.
53. The governing body fulfils the legal requirement to ensure that the school teaches the whole of the National Curriculum. Governors fill their statutory responsibilities well and are closely involved in all aspects of the school's work. They monitor what happens in classrooms following clear and agreed guidelines and comprehensive training. They have numerous committees, with financial and curriculum matters well discussed to the benefit of the school's development.
54. There are appropriate schemes of work for all subjects and these are either fully in place or with their development well under way; this is a marked improvement on the situation reported at the last inspection when management of the curriculum was described as under-developed. However, due to the high staff turnover and the recognised importance of raising standards in

English and mathematics, subject managers do not play a sufficiently active and efficient role in monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in their other subjects. The consequences of this have been that good practice in teaching has not been effectively shared. The school has focused attention on the basic skills to good purpose as well as setting up strong systems which offer guidance and support to teachers in all subjects. This has resulted in all-round standards rising well over the past three years and especially in the past year.

55. There are sufficient experienced and qualified staff to teach the full range of the National Curriculum, religious education and Foundation Stage. Children in the Foundation Stage share a class with Year 1 pupils, which presents problems for the teacher who has to teach two different curricula. At present, the teacher of this class receives insufficient adult support in the classroom for this provision to be fully effective. The considerable turnover of staff in the past three years along with long-term sickness has been exacerbated by difficulties in recruiting teachers. This is resulting in two classes being taught by temporary staff. However, the school's induction procedures are effective and enable standards to continue to rise. The school's performance management system is well based on individual targets for staff, but the system is delayed temporarily while new staff settle in. The teamwork between teachers is very good and this takes the school forward effectively and adds pace to improvements. The school has successfully evaluated its own performance and this has resulted in a development plan with appropriate priorities detailed.
56. Overall, financial planning is sound. The carry-forward at the end of last year was appropriate at just under 5 per cent. The responsible governor meets regularly with the headteacher and the accounts manager to discuss the progress of the budget and this gives the leadership of the school a clear understanding of what is available to fund the appropriate issues in the school's development plan. Governors ensure that resources are obtained at the most competitive prices. Systems for the regular financial management in the school office are good and audit recommendations are promptly acted upon. Matters are dealt with effectively so that they do not impinge on classroom teaching and teachers can proceed with their work uninterrupted.
57. The learning environment has been much improved since the last inspection and plans are in place to improve the few out-of-date areas remaining although difficulties present themselves in those classrooms which lack sufficient space for teaching to be fully effective. The school is a pleasant place in which to work. Learning resources are sound overall. The specific grant for information and communication technology resources has been well spent and supplemented by locally raised finance and computer resources are very good.
58. The key issues in the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. Curriculum provision is enhanced, the quality of teaching is improved. As a result, pupils' levels of attainment have risen well. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The governing body should include the following specific matters as key issues in its post inspection action plan. It is recognised that the school has already identified several of these in its development plan.
 - (1) Consolidate and continue to raise the already improving standards in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that the helpful curriculum plans for learning in the Foundation Stage are carried out in practice; (Paragraphs 31, 60, 68)
 - increasing the levels of classroom assistance in the Reception /Year 1 class; (Paragraphs 55, 61, 64)
 - further raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading and writing at Years 1, 2 and 3; (Paragraphs 2, 4, 20, 75)
 - more consistently sharing the learning aims of lessons with the pupils so that they know better what it is they have to do to improve; (Paragraphs 18, 28, 91)

- ensuring that subject leaders play a more active role in monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects; (Paragraphs 54, 92, 99, 105, 110, 123)
 - arranging for the very good teaching evident in many classes to influence the consistency of teaching across the school; (Paragraphs 28, 54)
 - devising appropriate, helpful and manageable procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in subjects other than English and mathematics. (Paragraphs 46, 92, 95)
- (2) In addition to the above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:
- ensure that the school's handwriting policy is consistently implemented in all classes; (Paragraph 74)
 - increase the use of computers based in classrooms so that the skills acquired when using the computer suite can be consolidated and used more widely to support learning in other curriculum subjects; (Paragraphs 8, 23, 77,83, 113)
 - review procedures to ensure that pupils do not miss the same lesson each week when they are withdrawn for extra support. (Paragraph 115)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	16	16	1	0	0
Percentage	0	21	38	38	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	144
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	33

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	3.8	School data	0.2
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	9	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	13
	Girls	8	9	9
	Total	20	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (71)	83 (67)	96 (71)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	9
	Girls	9	9	7
	Total	20	20	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (71)	87 (71)	70 (75)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	7	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	8	11
	Girls	7	6	7
	Total	17	14	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (63)	78 (67)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	11
	Girls	7	7	6
	Total	17	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (58)	89 (67)	100 (96)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	144
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	23.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	365,520
Total expenditure	366,914
Expenditure per pupil	2,698
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,404
Balance carried forward to next year	15,010

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	141
Number of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	43	5	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	58	7	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	46	3	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	50	18	4	4
The teaching is good.	47	43	5	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	46	9	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	1	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	30	4	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	42	47	8	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	45	0	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	43	4	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	39	4	0	1

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The questionnaires indicated strong parental support for the school. A few parents were concerned by the provision for homework. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting believed the homework set to be appropriate and the inspection team agreed with this view. A further few required more information about how their children were progressing. The inspection team found the school to be particularly open and available in this respect with good information offered.

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

60. Overall, the provision for children under five is satisfactory. The school has maintained provision for the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Children attend school full time in the term of their fifth birthday. They enter school with a wide range of experiences, but overall, attainment is that which might be expected of children of this age. At present, children in the Foundation Stage are in a class with Year 1 pupils. Although there are sound curriculum plans in place, which reflect the Early Learning Goals, daily activities are sometimes more appropriate for Year 1 pupils. This does constrain learning for the youngest children. Overall, Foundation Stage children make satisfactory progress and by the age of five, most children are likely to attain what is expected for their age in all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. A stimulating learning environment is created where children enjoy working together. They are encouraged to make choices and to be independent. By the age of five, children dress and undress themselves independently, tidy up after their activities and are ready to listen to their teacher. Having an older pupil as a 'Buddy' helps these young children to settle quickly into school routines. Role-play opportunities, such as the fruit and vegetable shop, are provided and children play well together. They quickly develop the confidence to ask for help when they need it. Some children find it difficult to persevere with a task; there is insufficient adult support in the classroom so that the youngest children are unable to have sufficient support in this area of learning. Teaching is satisfactory and a positive attitude to learning is encouraged and achieved.

Communication, language and literacy

62. The majority of children are keen to communicate with one another and with their teacher. Their speaking and listening skills are good; however, opportunities are missed to further extend these skills because sufficient adult support is not available for group activities. Children enjoy books and handle them with care. They enjoy sharing a 'big book' and talk about the pictures in "Handa's Surprise", using well-developed language. Through class reading of texts, several children are beginning to learn frequently used key words. Most children are aware that print carries meaning and by the age of five, they read a range of words and simple sentences accurately. Good opportunities are made for writing. Supplies of paper, pens, crayons and pencils are made available in the classroom 'office', and children readily use them. Many children attempt to write and form letters with increasing accuracy. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and attainment by the age of five is likely to be at the level expected.

Mathematical development

63. Attainment is appropriate to that expected for children of this age and teaching is satisfactory. A number corner encourages interest in mathematics. Children recognise coins and are becoming more confident in identifying numbers, writing them to 10 and ordering them. Mathematical vocabulary is developing appropriately. Children enjoy saying number rhymes and this helps to develop their mathematical understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children enter the reception class with a good general knowledge and they continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world effectively because of satisfactory teaching. Children are growing in confidence when using computers, controlling the cursor on the screen with increasingly deft use of the mouse. They are interested in looking at and tasting fruit, some of which they read about in their literacy work. Children enjoy sampling the different

kinds of fruit and making decisions about what to include in the fruit salad. Regular 'wellie walks' in the school grounds, where there is a focus such as shape or seasons, encourage children to observe and investigate. Early geographical skills are developing, with children creating a picture and model map of the village. Most children have a good sense of how to join things together and they build imaginatively with interlocking blocks. Teaching of this aspect is sound with the children receiving a wide range of experiences in conjunction with the Year 1 pupils in the class, but both age ranges cover similar work due to the lack of adult support.

Physical development

65. By the time they are five, children are likely to meet the expectations for their age. Teaching is generally satisfactory, but much of the outside play is unsupervised so that opportunities are missed to extend children's physical development. Children move confidently with increasing control. They have good awareness of space and move around the classroom and playground with due regard for others. The provision of large wheeled toys contributes significantly to children's progress. Within the classroom, children are given a range of opportunities to develop their co-ordination and manipulative skills, as when using construction toys where they are required to fit small pieces together. Children handle crayons, pencils, paintbrushes and scissors well.

Creative development

66. Children make sound progress in this area of learning and attain what is expected of similarly aged children. They paint imaginative pictures, using bold strokes. A wide range of resources is provided and teaching is satisfactory. Children are confident in choosing materials and in using them independently. In role-play areas, children imagine themselves as shopkeepers or customers. Children play imaginatively with the dolls house and small world toys. They enjoy music making activities, deciding appropriately which instruments should be shaken or banged.
67. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory and children respond well to routines, listen attentively and work sensibly with others. Their co-operative skills are developing well; with children taking their turns without fuss in practical and role-play situations.
68. Assessment procedures are developing well and are beginning to be used to inform planning and this improves on the situation reported at the time of the last inspection. At present, there is insufficient non-teaching support and children in the reception class are often left to work at activities without adult intervention. This constrains learning. Teachers work very closely with parents to ensure a smooth transition from home to school.

ENGLISH

69. Standards in English are in line with national averages by the age of seven and above the national average by the time pupils reach the age of eleven. Current standards are a little below those recorded at the end of both key stages in 2001 because of differences in attainment between the different year groups. Nevertheless, this inspection confirms that standards overall have improved considerably since the last time the school was inspected, and especially during the last eighteen months. This is because staff are identifying with greater precision those areas where improvements in learning for individual pupils need to be made, and are using this information more effectively in planning the next stages of their teaching.
70. There are some variations in the rate of improvement between the two key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils are given a good grounding in the basic skills of reading, learning thoroughly the sounds suggested by letters used individually or in combination. Older pupils in this key stage do not always sound out new words with confidence because they have not yet learnt to break them down into their constituent syllables. Pupils are taught to write systematically and, by Year 2, many are proficient in relating real or imagined events in a logical order. However,

standards could be higher still if pupils with particular aptitude and ability were encouraged to write in greater detail and to punctuate their work with greater accuracy. Standards have risen more sharply at the end of Key Stage 2 because there is consistently good teaching among older pupils in the school. Expectations here are high, pupils are set challenging tasks to improve their writing skills, and literacy lessons are used imaginatively to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, such as history. Boys and girls perform equally well. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their acquisition of reading and writing skills; they are well supported by both teachers and classroom assistants.

71. Standards in speaking and listening are above average at both key stages. Pupils are given good opportunities to express their views or to justify an opinion. Many pupils at Key Stage 1 are articulate and offer reasons to support a view. By the age of eleven, many are confident speakers, expressing themselves convincingly or persuasively on matters that concern them, or articulating the views of others, for example in discussions in the School Council. In most lessons, pupils listen very attentively. Younger pupils generally concentrate well, and teachers employ good strategies to hold their attention. Teachers use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding, leading them on to the next stage in their thinking and not setting a limit on the length of response pupils are expected to make. They read expressively to the class so that pupils become absorbed in the texts they are sharing. Pupils listen carefully to others when they are discussing work in pairs or in groups, generally accepting the views of others or putting a contrary opinion without imposing themselves.
72. Standards in reading are in line with national averages at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. By the age of five, many pupils recognise whole words and identify individual sounds. As they move through the key stage, they develop a good understanding of the value of sounds indicated by letters used singly or in combination because these are taught regularly and systematically. Pupils practise reading regularly, receiving good support in their efforts both at school and at home, so that, by Year 2, some are reading fluently and competently. Although older pupils in the key stage develop good strategies for tackling shorter words, many sometimes have difficulty in reading longer ones because they do not possess the skills to break them down into their constituent syllables. This is because they focus too closely on individual letters rather than on the unit of sound suggested by each group. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their reading because skills continue to be practised regularly. For example, teachers expect that all will read regularly at home, and pupils' progress is generally well monitored. Those who read fluently are often guided to read different and more challenging texts, so that pupils are introduced to a range of writing for different purposes and audiences. In turn, this helps to improve the quality of pupils' own writing. Older pupils with particular aptitude and ability begin to read from a wide range of non-fiction texts, and are proficient in using the library to gain access to information. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading, receiving good support from classroom assistants who are well briefed, both by the teacher and the special needs co-ordinator.
73. In Year 2, standards in writing are in line with the national average. From the age of five, many pupils write short captions to explain pictures or recount in a sentence a single event in their lives. Pupils are able to sequence a number of events, describing real or imagined experiences logically; some pupils of particular aptitude and ability begin to develop an awareness that their writing will be read by others, expressing views and opinions, and setting the context for their writing in a brief introduction. Some begin to write well from the point of view of others, for example, by describing the events of the Great Fire of London through the eyes of an onlooker. Standards at the end of the key stage could be higher still if pupils were consistently expected to write in more detail and at greater length, for example by thinking more systematically about the planning of their writing before they begin it. By the end of Year 6, writing is above the national average because older pupils in the key stage are invited to write at length on a range of themes. Studies in history and geography are used imaginatively as a starting point of descriptive writing or poems. In Year 4, pupils practise different writing techniques, for example, they write introductory settings for stories or attempt to persuade the writer to take part in a particular activity or sport. Building on this, many pupils in Years 5 and 6 write fluently for a range of audiences, becoming aware of the different registers of vocabulary necessary when persuading, or writing instructions or criticisms. Many pupils display an

obvious appetite for writing that is encouraged because teachers impart their own enthusiasm for the subject.

74. Standards in spelling across the school are good because this aspect of English is taught systematically and regularly. There are clear expectations at both key stages that spellings will be learnt each week, and parents support pupils' efforts well. Home-school contact books ensure that there is good liaison between parents and teachers for both reading and spelling, and a useful dialogue often develops so that pupils' progress is constantly monitored. In handwriting, standards are more variable. While a cursive script is taught systematically from Key Stage 1, there is not sufficient insistence on its application in everyday writing, with the result that some pupils write in a fluent, joined hand by the time they reach Year 6, while others are still printing their writing. Standards of presentation vary similarly across the school.
75. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, although some good teaching was also observed at Year 2 in the course of the inspection. Teachers use clear explanations and careful questioning to determine pupils' level of understanding and ensure that they know what is expected of them when a new task is set. Teachers know their pupils well and understand what they need to learn next. Generally the work is well matched to the level of ability of each pupil. However, teachers' expectations for the achievement of their pupils are not always sufficiently high. For example, pupils are not always expected to write in sufficient detail, nor is there always an insistence on the consistent use of simple punctuation, so that higher attaining pupils may apply its principles well in one piece of work but do not do so in another. Lessons are well structured and proceed at a good pace. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall because their work is well monitored and supported. The national literacy guidelines are used well to inform teachers' planning. Work is generally marked carefully, and teachers' comments help pupils to improve. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory in Year 3, and good in Years 4 to 6. Good lessons are characterised by well planned teaching which sets targets for each activity so that pupils are in no doubt as to what they are expected to achieve. Expectations are high; open-ended questions engage pupils' thinking, and the challenge offered in whole-class activities is continued in the individual tasks that are offered. In one lesson, for example, pupils of different ability were set a range of imaginative tasks related to a poem the teacher had previously read to the class, and made good progress because they clearly understood what was expected of them. Across the school teachers do not always monitor with sufficient frequency the progress of all pupils during the course of the literacy lesson; as a result, they are not always sure whether some pupils have encountered difficulties in their work. Those with special educational needs, however, are closely monitored and supported. Teachers generally manage their pupils well because they develop very good relationships with them and because pupils generally enjoy the work they are set.
76. The English curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and the subject is very well managed. As a result, the school carefully identifies strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and is aware of the steps it needs to take to continue with the improvements it has made in recent years. Pupils' learning is monitored rigorously and the information is used to increasing effect when teachers are planning new work. The curriculum is enriched imaginatively with weekend theatre trips which have included visits to see a children's production of 'The Tempest', and 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'.
77. Resources for the subject are generally good. There are sufficient fiction and non-fiction texts, readily accessible and generally in a good condition. Pupils have good opportunities for word-processing in the computer suite, but the skills they have learnt are not always practised with sufficiently regularity in the classroom. Pupils' work is sometimes published in the parish magazines, and the school further encourages good reading habits both through its regular book club, and through a book week at which authors are invited to speak.

MATHEMATICS

78. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the age of 7 were above the national average for all schools.

When compared to schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds, results were similar. The attainment of girls showed little difference to that of boys. Based on the figures for the last five years, the trend in results is generally improving. However, in 2001, results in the National Curriculum tests are above the national trend. At the age of 11, results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests were above average for all schools. Results were in line with those of similar schools. Trends over the last five years show an improvement overall and the results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests continue this upward trend.

79. In the work seen in the inspection, pupils' attainment by the age of 7 is what might be expected of pupils of a similar age nationally. Numeracy skills are developing well. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 count forward and backwards in two's. They are secure in adding and subtracting numbers to 20. Older pupils at Key Stage 1 recognise objects which are longer or shorter than a metre and accurately measure parts of their bodies in centimetres. In Year 2, lower attaining pupils count forward and backward to 20. They write numbers to 20 in words and partition a 2-digit number into tens and units. Most pupils in Year 2 recognise common 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes and higher attaining pupils describe their properties. Younger pupils in Year 1 recognise coins from 1 pence to £1 and higher attaining pupils know that five 1 pence coins are the same value as a 5 pence coin.
80. By the age of 11, attainment is on course for most pupils to achieve at least average levels by the time they leave the school. A small group of Year 6 pupils should achieve above that expected of similar age pupils nationally. The school has developed strategies to improve attainment and this is now beginning to have an overall effect on attainment in national tests. Year 6 pupils generally have a firm understanding of the basic processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They have well developed numeracy skills and their ability to carry out mental calculations is developing well. This indicates an improving trend in teaching and effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 check division calculations with a calculator, using the inverse operation and showing the correct use of brackets when setting out their work. These pupils accurately add three 4-digit numbers together and work out the fractions of numbers with a numerator of more than one. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 add and subtract three-digit numbers and multiply a two-digit number by a single digit number. Standards of presentation in all four years are generally satisfactory. However, in lessons seen and in the sample of work presented, there is insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning.
81. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress. They receive a high level of support from their teacher and support assistants so that pupils stay on task and have help in understanding difficult concepts. In the better lessons, work is modified to take into account the specific needs of pupils and this contributes well to their progress.
82. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. There are examples of good teaching, particularly for the older children at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Teachers generally plan lessons well. They clearly identify what pupils will learn although the effectiveness of this is reduced when teachers do not share these aims with the pupils. Teachers structure the lessons to retain pupils' interest and motivation. There is good use of overhead projectors in demonstrations as seen in a Year 6 lesson when pupils explained their calculations. Overall, teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and in the best lessons there is an enthusiasm for mathematics, which motivates the pupils to want to learn. Teachers generally manage pupils well and this generates a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their mathematics which extends their learning. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and respond well to questions. In the majority of lessons, teachers assess pupils' understanding effectively by careful questioning. This encourages pupils to explain what they are doing and monitors their understanding. Teachers use an effective combination of explanation, discussion and individual work that maintains the interest and motivation of pupils. The opportunity to generate their own numbers by using dice was very successful in maintaining the interest of Year 6 pupils. In lessons, praise and support are very effective in raising confidence, which contributes to pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to practice multiplication tables at home and "learning activities" are sent home. This is beneficial in helping to raise standards.

83. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. There is a commitment to raising achievement and staff are working well together under dedicated and enthusiastic leadership. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and setting targets for the next stages of pupils' learning. The overall level of resources is good but ICT is not integrated effectively into lessons in order to enhance learning. There are good displays in classrooms that encourage pupils to develop an interest in mathematics.
84. Progress since the last inspection has been good although standards could be higher in all years. The school recognises the need to improve standards and has developed strategies to achieve this. These include continuing to implement the National Numeracy Strategy, assessment being used effectively to inform target setting at pupil, cohort and school level, and a draft policy drawn up in consultation with staff.

SCIENCE

85. Results in the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds in science were well above average when compared to the results of pupils from similar schools and also with schools nationally. Results of the teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 2001 showed that levels of attainment for pupils were well below average when compared to schools nationally and to similar schools. All eleven-year-olds achieved the expected Level 4 with over half achieving the higher Level 5. 78 per cent of seven-year-old pupils achieved the expected Level 2 but no pupils achieved the higher Level 3; this was a significant factor in the school's poor performance in this age range. There are no significant differences between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs progress well; this is illustrated by the fact that all eleven-year-old pupils achieved at least nationally average standards.
86. Pupils' current performance in science is likely to be in line with the national average by the time they are seven years old and above the national average by the time they are eleven. Progress is better in Years 3 to 6 than it is in Years 1 and 2. In the past, teaching has not always built well on the skills achieved in the reception class and teaching has not always been systematic and regular. This has changed in the last year with a new scheme of work based on scientific investigations providing detailed and systematic support for teachers. The subject manager provides prepared lessons and this, along with in-school training, is increasing teachers' understanding of the subject so that pupils learn from first-hand experience and gain greater understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. As a result, current standards for seven-year-olds are higher than those recorded in the national assessments of 2001. Similar systems for delivering a scientific understanding have been in place longer for older pupils with these generally gaining a very good understanding of investigative science and how to plan and evaluate experiments.
87. By the age of seven, pupils understand the principles of force and test, for example, the effects of height on a model car coming down a ramp and identify and sort things that have lived from inanimate objects. They plan how to establish the tests and describe why the tests are not fair. They try to predict outcomes of the tests but this is a skill most pupils are finding difficult.
88. By the time they are eleven, pupils are adept at setting up experiments in areas such as magnetism, insulation, force and gravity. They predict well what will happen and evaluate sensibly and logically. At present, Year 6 are concentrating on recording skills using charts, graphs and information and communication technology skills. The teachers have identified recording as an area for improvement. Pupils in Year 5 measure force in Newtons working out how much upthrust is evident when an item is placed in water. Year 4 set up electrical circuits and experiment with shadows and how light is bent. Year 3 investigate bread and its various textures and learn much about healthy and unhealthy foods.
89. This systematic approach to science is rapidly improving the basic skills of prediction, evaluation and recording. Many are confident scientists who work well together in pairs or groups to solve problems and explore the world around them. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported with appropriate work and the more able pupils are very well challenged by the skills required to set up experiments to fair test and evaluate.

90. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was generally very good at both key stages. There was one satisfactory lesson at Key Stage 2. Lesson planning for all classes was led by the subject manager and was very good and this produced an effective use of time and resources. Most teachers have good levels of subject knowledge. Those who do not are well supported by the subject manager. Preparation of lessons is meticulous and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning, encouraging them to want to discover. The good quality teaching has caused standards in science to rise very considerably since the last inspection. This improvement is very evident by the time pupils are eleven. Progress has, so far, been less evident for Years 1 and 2 but inspection evidence indicates that sound improvement is being established.
91. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high and there is a brisk pace to lessons. Teachers have clear objectives but these are not always made clear to pupils so that they know what they are supposed to do and learn. Class management is good and there is skilful use of praise, questioning and encouragement. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and sustain their concentration in individual and group work. They remain on task, work with interest, treat resources with respect and enjoy discussing what they are doing with adults and with one another. Relationships are excellent and pupils work happily and productively.
92. The science subject manager leads the subject very well. She shares her enthusiasm with colleagues and all are keen to raise standards. The performance of the pupils is regularly assessed throughout the year and this gives information which will improve the subject's planning for next year; this is an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection. However, the present assessment system does not give detailed information on the progress of each individual pupil. There are plans to rectify this later this school year. The subject leader does not have sufficient time to monitor pupils' work and evaluate teaching in this subject and so has insufficient information to fully support colleagues and share the good teaching practice evident in some classes. Few science lessons at present are being supported by the very good information and communication technology available in the school. Resources are good and they are well organised and stored. Pupils in the upper part of the school have beneficial experience of fieldwork during an annual residential visit to the Isle of Wight.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Overall, the quality of provision is good. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one lesson being taught. From looking at pupils' work, by the age of 7 pupils are attaining standards that are above average. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils. They mix paint well to show colour ranges and their drawing skills are developing well. Pupils make detailed observations of shells using pastels effectively to show colour and texture. Younger pupils use paint and collage to create a 'Rainbow Fish' inspired by a book read in Book Week. Year 2 pupils produce some striking wax resist patterns.
94. By the age of 11, attainment is well above that expected for their age, with pupils successfully completing work using two and three-dimensional media. In a Year 6 class, pupils practised a gentle tone variation as they completed portraits portraying relationships and self-images. On display are some well made clay figures and masks embellished with striking ornamental decoration. Pupils think carefully about the media they choose, making very good use of sketchbooks to experiment with techniques. Older pupils notice how different artists use different techniques to achieve particular effects, with higher attaining pupils incorporating them into their own work. Observational skills are well developed with pupils in Years 4 and 5 making very detailed drawings of a cross-section of a piece of fruit. Watercolour paintings based on the designs of William Morris are of a high standard as are the detailed paintings of Bembridge Windmill. Pupils create designs based on aboriginal patterns using batik techniques. Their ability to use computer art applications in Year 4 enables pupils to create pictures in the style of Monet.

95. In the one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was very good. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how to teach art and communicate knowledge in an interesting way. This ensured that pupils were eager to learn and made very good progress. The art lesson seen was full of interesting practical activity that kept interest high. This successfully motivated pupils to learn. A wide range of materials is used in lessons and this variety of stimulus brings learning alive, ensuring that pupils are challenged. Pupils are regularly told what they need to do in order to improve their work and they respond positively. For example, higher attaining Year 6 pupils modify and improve their portraits and choose background colours after discussion with the teacher. There are high expectations for behaviour and pupils learn in a calm atmosphere without interruption or distractions. Assessments take place in lessons, but as yet, no formal procedures are in place for recording these.
96. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection because of the enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator. However, whilst the management of the subject has improved and standards have risen, not all staff are confident in their subject knowledge. The co-ordinator is aware of this and gives practical support to colleagues but has insufficient opportunities to monitor the teaching in other classes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. The standards achieved by pupils in design and technology are similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally at both key stages. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have an opportunity to work with a broad range of materials including paper, card, food, fabric, threads and recycled materials. They acquire an appropriate range of basic skills such as cutting, folding, stitching, and sewing. They learn to work safely and co-operatively, helping each other when necessary. Pupils understand the idea of the design process. They are encouraged to use their own ideas when making items, after first being taught a relevant range of skills by the teacher. With teachers prompting, pupils make evaluative comments about what they have done and suggest how it could be improved. They say what they found difficult and why; keeping needles threaded was a frustration for some when sewing veins into leaf shapes. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have opportunities to investigate design applications, for example as they make musical instruments in Years 5 and 6 or when making money containers in Year 4. Information and communication technology is well used when using a colour design program to create Christmas cards. Travel bags have been made at Year 3 with pupils planning and designing their work well. Initial designs are generally pictures of what pupils intend making and include sufficient detail of how items are to be made and what materials will be used.
98. Pupils enjoy their design and technology activities and take a pride in their finished results. They particularly enjoy making things and respond well to the challenge offered to them. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress even though their planned work is no different to that of other pupils due to the level of support they receive. More able pupils would further benefit from more evaluation tasks at the end of set tasks. Pupils listen to instructions and watch demonstrations of skills carefully and this helps them achieve appropriate results in their practical work.
99. There were few opportunities to observe the teaching of design and technology during the inspection; one lesson was seen at Year 2 and one at Year 4. Teaching in both lessons was satisfactory. Consequently, judgements on the quality of teaching are mainly based on discussion with pupils, teachers and the subject leader, examination of the subject's policy and scheme of work and on the observation of completed work. Teachers plan an interesting range of activities for the pupils as well as focused tasks that develop practical skills but the objectives of the lesson are not often shared with pupils and they are uncertain of what it is that they are trying to achieve. Whenever possible appropriate links are made to ongoing work in other subjects. This makes the tasks more relevant and realistic, for example, candle holders were made by Year 4 as part of a Victorian Day, Year 3 have designed and made Greek urns, Year 6 have made Naan Bread as part of work on India. Teachers' planning is based on a new scheme of work based on national guidance. This has boosted teachers' knowledge and confidence with the support it gives to the progressive development of skills. The subject

leader has not been able to closely monitor classroom practice to ensure that good teaching practice is showed amongst all teachers. However, since the last inspection, standards of attainment have risen and are now satisfactory throughout and teachers are more knowledgeable about how and what to teach.

GEOGRAPHY

100. No lessons in geography were seen during this inspection, and therefore no judgement on the quality of its teaching is possible. However, sufficient evidence was gained from an analysis of work and from interviewing pupils and staff to form a judgement on pupils' attainment in the subject.
101. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards in geography are in line with those expected nationally. There is a clear evidence of improvement in the subject since the time of the last inspection, when standards across the school were below those expected and progress was unsatisfactory. This is because geography is taught regularly and systematically and because teachers now display satisfactory knowledge of the subject.
102. By the age of five, pupils have become familiar with the surroundings in which they live, and understand that others live in towns and villages different from their own. They become aware that relative distance can be expressed in the terms 'near' and 'far'. As they move through Years 1 and 2, pupils become better acquainted with the locality of home and school, and begin to describe the differences between city, town and village. Many are aware, for example, that London is much bigger than Braintree, and understand that the town offers more amenities for everyday life than the village. Pupils describe and draw the principal buildings of the village, understanding their role and their function. They compare the local village with a seaside resort, noting the principal differences in climate, patterns of traffic and facilities offered by each, and offering simple explanations for these differences. They understand that information about a locality may be represented on a map or plan of different scales.
103. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make progress at the expected level. By the age of eleven they understand how to describe a location using coordinates and have used a compass to plot direction when orienteering. They compare in detail the features of Great Bardfield with a village of similar size in a different locality, and draw conclusions about their similarities and differences. Pupils acquire a good understanding about some aspects of physical geography; for example, they become familiar with methods of recording elements of the weather and with explanations for the formation of river features, such as meanders and oxbow lakes. They have fundamental knowledge about the origins of some coastal features, such as bays and caves, and suggest some practical ways of preventing coastal erosion. While pupils' understanding of localities in the United Kingdom is at the expected level, their knowledge of places or environments in different parts of the world is currently below that expected. The school is aware of this shortcoming and has prepared plans to remedy this before the end of the school year.

104. Although no overall judgement on the teaching of geography is possible, an analysis of pupils' work indicates that teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and that basic skills in geography are soundly learnt. Pupils across the school are set tasks that allow them not merely to describe geographical phenomena, but also to enquire into the reasons for them and to offer explanations. Teaching methods are effective at both key stages and pupils display at least satisfactory understanding of the subject when interviewed and demonstrate good self-knowledge of their learning.
105. The geography curriculum is now sufficiently broad and balanced, but the school has experienced difficulty in ensuring coverage of every aspect of the subject for all pupils at Key Stage 2 because of the recent change from mixed- to single-age classes. Plans have been prepared to remedy this in the course of the current school year. The headteacher, currently managing the subject, has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards further, and is working with a newly-appointed co-ordinator to implement further improvements in the subject. However, there is currently no monitoring of teaching and learning, so the school cannot be sure where the strengths and weaknesses of pupils lie and cannot therefore clearly identify how teaching and learning may be further developed. Resources for the subject are generally satisfactory, but there are insufficient maps and plans to enhance pupils' understanding of the areas they are studying. Visits are generally used well to support the curriculum.

HISTORY

106. By the ages of both seven and eleven, pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations. Standards in the subject at Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection, when they were below the expected level. Because of some good teaching, pupils' historical knowledge and enquiry skills, criticised at the time of the last inspection, have improved significantly among pupils in Years 5 and 6. This has contributed in particular to the recovery of standards among eleven-year-olds.
107. By the age of seven, pupils describe some ways in which life in the past was different from what they experience today. In Year 1, for example, pupils learn about Florence Nightingale and know some of the difficulties she faced in her work. Pupils in Year 2 are aware of some of the details of the Great Fire of London; they are able to recount some of its statistics and explain why it spread so rapidly. They write lively accounts, imagining they witnessed the event, and attempt diary writing in the style of Samuel Pepys. Pupils compare holidays in the past with those of today, learning how people travelled and were entertained at the seaside a hundred years ago. Pupils display a good understanding of how such activities have changed, and appreciate how people themselves change with the passage of time.
108. By eleven, many pupils have a much clearer understanding of the correct sequence of the major eras of history. They begin to understand how evidence is gathered and interpreted, and draw their own conclusions from artefacts and other evidence with which they are presented. The younger pupils in the key stage learn about the Celts and the Roman invasion of Britain; many understand some of the reasons why their conquests were successful. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their work, but the written work they produce is often in response to closed questions and limiting tasks that do not encourage pupils to enquire and achieve all they can. As a result, some pupils, especially those with particular aptitude and ability, could make better progress than they do. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 often make good progress because they are offered tasks which do not limit their achievement. For example, they are invited to speculate on the use of replica objects from the Saxon period, employing their previously acquired knowledge and appropriate reference texts. The result of this is that different pupils acquire knowledge of different areas of Saxon life which they then share with others.
109. Although no lessons were seen at Key Stage 1, the evidence from an analysis of work and discussion with pupils indicates that teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is at least satisfactory, and that teaching methods are sound. The detail of the work seen further suggests that teachers have sound expectations for their pupils' achievements in the subject. At Key Stage 2, two lessons were observed, both for older pupils. Teaching here is also

satisfactory overall, but an examination of pupils' work reveals that while tasks offered to pupils in Years 3 and 4 often limit the achievement of pupils because they involve responses to questions that require specific answers, those set for older pupils invite research, speculation and an examination of evidence. This encourages pupils to explore the limits of what they know and understand. In one good lesson observed, for example, pupils were offered photographs of a Saxon grave and were invited to interpret evidence about its occupant. Pupils of different aptitude and ability across the school generally make equally good progress; those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants.

110. The curriculum for history is sufficiently broad, and the acquisition of skills and knowledge is generally given equal prominence across the school. In some classes, aspects of the curriculum are taught imaginatively as part of the literacy hour. The headteacher, currently subject manager, has taken the right decisions to bring about improvement in standards at Key Stage 2, and a new co-ordinator has recently been appointed to continue these developments. The quality of teaching and learning in history is currently not monitored systematically, so the school cannot be sure that pupils are making as much progress they could. Resources for the subject are good. Teachers use a wide range of primary and secondary sources to enhance the curriculum, and visits to places of historical interest, such as West Stow and local museums, are regularly arranged.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. By the age of seven, pupils are achieving standards which are in line with those expected of the same age nationally. The scheme of work has been re-written following recent national guidance. It ensures that pupils experience all that is required in the National Curriculum's programme of study for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Activities systematically build upon what pupils have already learnt and this enables them to become increasingly independent. In Year 1, pupils use a keyboard and mouse. They word-process their work using upper and lower case letters and full stops. By the end of Year 2, they select the size and style of font and alter the page layout. They print their work and most save it without help. Planning indicates that pupils learn how to control a remote control toy to make it move in different directions. This was not seen during the inspection but pupils were keen and knowledgeable when talking about it.
112. By the age of eleven, standards are above those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 3 combine text with graphics when adding graphics to words and are adept at altering the size of graphics. At Year 4, pupils used the computer to paint a picture in the style of Monet using differently sized pencils and brush tools. In Year 5, pupils successfully completed a search for data and then collated it into a useable form; this followed research into the physical features of classmates. Year 6 were sufficiently skilled to link screens together in preparation for a presentation about a recent historical visit to the Saxon village at West Stow.
113. Information and communication technology (ICT) lessons were only seen in Years 3 to 6. No judgement of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is therefore possible, but a scrutiny of the work completed indicates a satisfactory coverage of the curriculum. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 was either good or very good. Teachers ensure that pupils realise that using the computer is important but do not give them sufficient time to use the class based computers. This limits opportunities for pupils to consolidate the very good learning that takes place in the computer suite and also restricts ICT's value as a tool to support learning in other subjects. Teachers are now confident in their use of computers. Their subject knowledge is good as a result of the training they are undertaking. Competent demonstrations and explanations of how to use new programs are given to each class. Pupils understand what it is they need to do. At present, most assessment is limited to the overall success of lessons but a sound start has been made in monitoring which skills individual pupils have learnt and need to learn. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate work and support and make good progress. Pupils enjoy using computers and show good levels of concentration and motivation. They use them independently but are quick to offer help to one another when necessary. Pupils treat the machines with respect and are happy to take turns.

114. Resources in the school are very good. There are computers in classrooms in addition to those in the ICT suite. Many pupils take advantage of opportunities to use computers at lunchtimes. The subject leader provides a very good level of support for her colleagues. Since the last inspection, the great increase in resources and increased teacher competence have enabled pupils to achieve standards above those achieved by pupils of the same age nationally by the time they leave the school at the age of eleven.

MUSIC

115. Overall, the quality of provision is good. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils by the age of 7 and 11 are attaining standards that are above average. This is a good level of achievement for these pupils and an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good and they particularly enjoy singing and the composition work that they do in lessons. Many pupils receive instrumental lessons and this good provision for instrumental teaching has a positive impact on their musical education. However, some pupils miss part of the same subject each week when they attend their instrumental lesson and this constrains learning in these areas of the curriculum.
116. Singing is an important part of the music curriculum throughout the school. Pupils sing very well in acts of collective worship, contributing significantly to the reflective atmosphere of assemblies. As appropriate, they sing with a full-bodied and enthusiastic enjoyment, as when they practise the songs for the Christmas production. Their singing shows increasingly accurate intonation and diction as pupils move through the school. Parents and their children enjoy the Christmas concert, in which all pupils participate. At the end of the summer term, there is an opportunity for recorder players and instrumentalists to perform for an audience. Such performances, by soloists and the orchestra in school and in the local church, contribute positively to pupils' musical learning and social development.
117. By the age of 7, pupils make music well. They recognise whether a note is high or low and play tunes from a simplified staff. Pupils listen well and indicate with hand positions whether or not the note that they hear is high, middle or low. Pupils evaluate their own learning at the end of a lesson. Pupils in Year 6 suggest symbols to represent untuned percussion instruments and work together to compose a class tune. They maintain their own part in a simple notation piece of music. Their musical vocabulary is developing well. Pupils handle instruments with care.
118. Three lessons were seen during the inspection and in two of these the teaching was good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and class organisation, lessons were well planned so that pupils were inspired to make music and have a positive attitude. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were not challenged sufficiently and lost interest because of the insecure subject knowledge of the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to participate in all aspects of music making and make good progress.
119. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and this enthusiasm infects the pupils' learning, both in the classroom and in performances. Earlier this year, pupils at Key Stage 2 visited the Barbican Centre and brass players took part in the Schools' workshop. Extra-curricular activities contribute significantly to the music curriculum, with sixty pupils from Year 2 upwards learning to play the recorder. Resources are good and the scheme of work includes opportunities to use information and communication technology in order to enhance learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Standards in physical education are in line with what is usually expected nationally by the time pupils reach the ages of seven and eleven. This maintains the overall situation reported at the time of the last inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. Those pupils who show special talent are encouraged to join appropriate clubs in the locality.
121. Lessons were only seen in gymnastics and dance. Games lessons are planned for all classes with athletics, swimming and outdoor pursuits for the seven to eleven-year-olds. These activities take place at appropriate times of the year although games are all the year round.
122. Pupils work enthusiastically in gymnastics in the older years. They explore ways of changing speed and direction and build sequences out of curling, stretching and rolling movements. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy dance and interpret music with controlled movements in time to the beat. The quality of teaching is sound with one lesson in Year 5 being very good. A more detailed scheme of work has been introduced since the last inspection. This provides clear guidance to teachers and is enabling teaching to rise in quality through the extra expertise acquired. Standards of teaching in Years 1 and 2 are now sound and this is an improvement on the situation reported at the last inspection. Lessons have brisk pace but pupils do not always understand what is required of them as teachers often do not tell them what the lesson is trying to achieve. Demonstrations of good practice are regularly used but this usually comes at the end of an activity leaving pupils with no opportunity to evaluate or exceed what they have seen. Pupils who have special educational needs have full access to all physical activities and are well supported by classroom assistants when required.
123. The subject leader has been responsible for physical education for one year. In this time, she has introduced a new scheme of work and prepared an action plan, which identifies dance as the next area for development. She has analysed the last inspection report and introduced an effective new approach to the development of simple competitive games as a result. The changes are successfully raising the profile of physical education in the school. Resources have been re-organised for easier access and are good in quality. A wide range of extra-curricular activities such as hockey, football, netball and gymnastics supports the curriculum. The school enters local sporting contests with neighbouring schools. The formal lessons and the extra activities are much enjoyed by the pupils who participate enthusiastically and try to do their best. The skills of the subject leader are not fully utilised to raise standards in that she has insufficient time to monitor what is happening in other classes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards in religious education are in line with those expected by the Essex Agreed Syllabus, and pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject as they move through the school. There has been an improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection, when they were described as unsatisfactory.
125. By the age of seven, pupils know some of the stories of the Old Testament and can recount these in detail, such as those of Daniel and Joseph. Sometimes they confuse stories they have heard, such as that of Joshua, but know that all of these relate to events which took place before the birth of Jesus. Pupils also know a range of stories relating to the life and work of Jesus, and recall some of the miracles as well as the major events surrounding His life. Some have views about the truth of Biblical stories, and attempt to justify these. Pupils begin to learn some of the rites and customs of the Jewish faith, and draw some simple parallels between harvest festival celebrations and the Feast of the Tabernacles.
126. Pupils' knowledge and understanding continue to deepen as they move through Key Stage 2, so that by the age of eleven they are familiar with many of the principal figures of the Old Testament, such as Noah, Ruth and Jonah. They cite in detail some of the miracles that Jesus performed, such as the raising of Jairus's daughter, and explain the teaching of Jesus through some of His parables, such as that of the Good Samaritan. They are familiar with some of the customs associated with other religions, and make simple distinctions between the beliefs of

Christians and Jews. However, their understanding of some of the beliefs of the religions they have studied are not as well founded as their knowledge of the customs associated with them. Through their close contacts with the local church, pupils are familiar with some of the ceremonies of the Church of England. By the end of the key stage, they begin to use the Bible as a source text and to appreciate some of the feelings evoked by the psalmist, or examine the morals expressed in the Book of Proverbs.

127. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 during the course of the inspection, but from the evidence of work seen and interviews with pupils it is evident that teachers' knowledge of what to teach, and this was criticised at the last inspection, are now at least satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory, but some good teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6. In all the lessons seen, teachers prepared their work thoroughly, ensuring that there was sufficient time for a range of activities, including questioning, group discussion and a written task. Good reference is made to previous learning. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high, and pupils are set challenging work. Questioning is used very effectively to focus concentration and encourage pupils to understand some of the implications and meanings of the stories or texts they are studying. Pupils in Year 6, for example, work with Biblical texts and meet the challenge of explaining their meaning. However, pupils across the key stage are not always given sufficient time to complete the tasks they have been set, and better progress could be made if pupils had more time to explore their understanding of the work they are set.
128. The curriculum is sufficiently broad, although the school is aware of the urgent need to revise the teaching programme in order to eliminate the possibility of repeating work; this it plans to do by early 2002. The headteacher, currently managing the subject, has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve further the quality of teaching and learning. This includes the establishment of a revised curriculum and the regular evaluation of teaching and learning. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, although there are not enough Bibles or books on Christianity for younger pupils. The school has close links with the local parish church; this regularly offers use of its resources to enrich pupils' understanding of the Christian faith. However, the school does not yet make sufficient provision for pupils to have first-hand knowledge of the other faith groups, for example, by visiting their places of worship or inviting their representatives to make a contribution to pupils' understanding of their beliefs.