

INSPECTION REPORT

MERSEA ISLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

West Mersea

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115311

Headteacher: Susan Shenton

Reporting inspector: David Marshall
27681

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th April 2002

Inspection number: 194715

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: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Barfield Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Anthony Prevett

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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27681	David Marshall	Registered inspector	Science Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
9614	Carolyn Webb	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development and attendance
20948	John Linstead	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	How well are the pupils taught?
18505	David Matthews	Team inspector	English	How well does the school care for its pupils?
27276	Carol Jarvis	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Religious education Foundation Stage	
18935	Christopher Bolton	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mersea Island School is a larger than average primary school with 463 pupils on roll. The school dates from 1871. It is the only school on the island, serving a closely-knit community with which it has strong links. There are seven buildings (including four Victorian) spread out across a wide, open site. A new Early Years Unit comprising four class bases was completed last year. Pupils come from a very mixed social background, and many of the pupils have parents and grandparents who attended the school. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally in line with national expectations for their age. There is a very wide range of ability in all years, with around 21 per cent identified as having special educational needs – close to the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is relatively low, at around six per cent. There has been one, fixed-term, exclusion this year. There are no pupils from an ethnic minority background, or receiving additional support for English as an additional language. The school is divided into four houses all named after ships, each led by an elected Ship Captain and First Lieutenant, who are responsible for leading the school community in a variety of ways.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Mersea Island is a good school. It has continued to improve since the positive inspection in 1997 and is well placed to make further improvements. The quality of education provided is good overall and the school is effective in raising standards. Pupils achieve well as they are suitably challenged and make good progress whatever their previous attainment. The school provides a broad curriculum, with a very wide range of additional activities. The quality of teaching is good; a substantial proportion of very good teaching was observed in addition to some excellent teaching. The headteacher provides good, clear leadership and an enthusiastic governing body supports her well. Lesson planning is thorough and the careful use of assessment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science ensures the progress of all pupils. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science when compared to those in similar schools, and standards of attainment are improving.
- Teaching and opportunities for learning are good.
- The headteacher is providing clear educational direction for the school in partnership with the senior teachers and governors.
- The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good. There are very good opportunities for personal development and so pupils acquire good attitudes to school; they behave well and are enthusiastic. They have very good relationships with one another and with adults in the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; these pupils have access to the full curriculum and make good progress.
- The support staff, site manager and administrative officers make important contributions to the effectiveness of the school.
- Parents have positive views of the school.

What could be improved

- The role of curriculum co-ordinators in managing and monitoring teaching and the delivery of provision in their subjects.
- The overall level of resources in the Early Years Unit so that adequate support and motivation is provided for all areas of learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected in June 1997, it was judged to be giving a good standard of education overall for its pupils. The school had many strengths and no major weaknesses. Since then it has made satisfactory improvement and this judgement is as true now as it was then. By identifying key skills within all subjects, particularly in literacy, the school has ensured steady progression from year to year, and raised standards overall. It has made significant gains in information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection through the provision of equipment and training. Pupils' attainment has improved so that it is now

broadly in line with national expectations although there are still areas where further improvement is needed. The school now has good systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and the information obtained is used well to guide planning. Although marking has generally improved, it could still be more consistently applied throughout the school. The new school buildings, where it has been possible to make changes since the last inspection, have enhanced the overall provision further. Thanks to this, and the good quality of the teachers and determination of the head, the school is well placed to make further significant improvements.

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	B	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	C	B	C	
Science	C	A	A	B	

National tests in 2001 for pupils at the age of seven showed that standards were well above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics when compared to all schools. When compared to pupils in similar schools, based on the number of pupils claiming free school meals, their results were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve at least sound standards in all areas of learning. In the last two years, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have reached the targets set for their results. The table above shows the results obtained at the end of the last academic year at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in English was in line with national averages, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. It is broadly average in English and mathematics when compared to that in similar schools, and above average in science. Overall achievement is good, and over time the school is improving at the same rate as most schools. By the age of eleven, current attainment is average in English, but above average in mathematics and well above average in science. In music and art and design, pupils attain standards above those expected by the time they leave school. In history, geography, physical education, ICT, design and technology and religious education, pupils are achieving standards in line with what could be expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set for them. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. Most pupils are interested, enthusiastic and enjoy all school activities. They take an increasing responsibility for their own learning as they go through the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. There is no sign of bullying or oppressive conduct. Pupils are aware of the effect of their actions on others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils form very good relationships with their teachers, other adults and with each other. This makes a large contribution to the school's positive atmosphere.
Attendance	Overall, attendance is in line with other schools in the country, but is marred by the increasing number of holidays taken during term times.

The personal, social and emotional development of all pupils is very good. The relationships they form are very good and the way they work together so well makes a significant contribution to their overall learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Foundation Stage	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching overall has maintained the good position recorded at the time of the last inspection. In the Early Years classes, the teaching is good overall, but variable. It could be consistently better if the area had better resources. In this Foundation Stage, teachers plan work that is adapted to meet the children's different abilities when they enter the school. As a result children make good progress. Throughout the school, the overall good quality of teaching enables all pupils, regardless of their individual needs, to achieve well. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good throughout the school. This enables them to teach English and mathematics, and the essential basic skills of literacy and numeracy, effectively and for pupils to learn well. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils, which result in the overall good behaviour and good learning. In most lessons, class discussions are lively, consistently of a good pace, and pupils enjoy their learning. Questions are well focused and designed to bring all pupils into the discussions. Pupils learn to listen carefully and sustain their concentration for longer periods of time as they get older. Teachers relate very well to them and they manage classes well. The teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and they achieve good standards in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities are good overall. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good overall. Pupils are well known to all staff and well supported throughout the school. Their progress is tracked very regularly.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision and support in this area is good when required. Pupils make good progress and achieve appropriately high standards.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good provision overall. There is a strong emphasis on developing good moral and social attitudes that is evident in much of the curriculum. The spiritual and cultural development of all pupils is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection are good. There are good procedures to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are also good.

The school works well in partnership with parents. The quality of information provided by the school about the pupils' progress is good. Parents are sent frequent newsletters and are provided with details of the curriculum so they can help their children at home. Parents are involved in fund-raising activities and extra-curricular activities and provide good support to the school in its work. The curriculum provided by the school is good. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and gives a clear direction to the work of the school. The deputy head and assistant head work effectively with the head to monitor provision. Other staff, as co-ordinators, are not being given sufficient opportunities to monitor teaching consistently and therefore make their best contribution to developing the curriculum and to improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They visit regularly, offer very good support and understand the needs of the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The school has addressed well the priorities and areas for development since the last inspection. Standards have improved as a result of lesson observations by the senior management team.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Financial planning is carefully linked to the need to raise standards. All specific grants are used very well.

The current level of staffing is good. Although some of the school accommodation has been well renovated, or recently replaced, there are still areas that are below normally accepted standards. The level of resources is good and meets the needs of all pupils and the National Curriculum. The finance officer carries out the day-to-day functions of the office very well. The school has good procedures to ensure that it gets best value for its expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • Behaviour in school is good. • The head and all teachers are welcoming and eager to please. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The quality of information they receive about their children's progress. • How closely the school works with them as parents.

Inspection evidence confirms the largely positive views of the parents. The inspection team does not agree with some parents about the range of activities outside lessons. Their children are given many additional opportunities and the quality of extra-curricular activities is generally very good. Inspectors feel the school gives parents good information on their children's progress and makes every effort to work closely with them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children are first admitted to the school, initial assessments show that their attainment is in-line with the expected levels for their age in many of the early learning goals¹ for the Foundation Stage. Their language development, personal, social and emotional development, creative skills and knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical skills and physical development are broadly what could be expected. Children in the reception classes are making sound, and sometimes good, progress in their learning as a result of the effective provision. During their time in this class most children become ready to move on to the National Curriculum at the expected time. By the end of their reception year, children attain standards in line with those expected nationally in the six areas of learning. In particular their creative, personal and social and physical development are good. The class teachers and assistants work together well in planning and assessing pupils' achievements to enable the good progress the children make.
2. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, the pupils had results that were well above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with pupils from similar schools, the pupils' results were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. In science the teachers' assessment in 2001 at the end of Key Stage 1 showed the percentage of pupils who achieved level 2 and the higher level 3 was well above the national average. The results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6 show that the proportion of the school's pupils achieving national expectations was average in English and mathematics, but well above average in science. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was average in English and mathematics, but above average in science. When the school's results are compared with similar schools based on the number eligible for free school meals, they are broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
3. The school's targets for pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science in 2001 by the age of eleven were achieved, with an increased number of pupils reaching the higher than expected levels. This is a clear indication that the school is now well placed to extend and challenge all pupils further. Over the last three years the school's results have followed the national upward trend. In 2002 the school's targets have been raised to an appropriate level in all subjects.
4. In English, standards at the ages of seven and eleven are similar to those expected nationally. Pupils of all levels of ability make satisfactory, and often good, progress in literacy. The lower attaining pupils talk about how their spelling has improved through additional support in small groups and they show how their writing has developed. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. They listen carefully to what others have to say, and most Year 6 pupils speak confidently. Pupils respond well when teaching provides opportunities for them to raise their own questions. Pupils' progress in reading is sound. They are developing the skills and attitudes that they need to tackle increasingly difficult text. By the time they reach the end of Year 2 the higher attaining pupils read independently and they can discuss their favourite authors. By age eleven, brighter pupils are self-motivated readers; they are able to predict what will happen next, based on what they have read and they can make inferences from the text. Progress in writing is satisfactory overall. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, most

¹ Planning in the Foundation Stage is geared towards pupils achieving standards known as the early learning goals in six areas of development – personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

pupils communicate meaningfully using neat handwriting. By the end of Year 6 most pupils write neatly and legibly.

5. In mathematics, pupils attain above the expected level by the time they leave school. Pupils enter the school with average numeracy skills overall and make good progress. The standards achieved by seven year olds are above the level expected. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the difference between centimetres and millimetres and begin to experiment and measure accurately. They can round up their measurements to the nearest ten. More able pupils have a good understanding of number patterns and have a sound grasp of mathematical signs. Pupils can assemble data and represent it in a bar chart, although less able pupils struggle to do this. They know the properties of simple shapes and recognise lines of symmetry. Most pupils are able to explain their strategies for solving simple problems. By Year 6 pupils understand the concept of halving and doubling clearly. They gain a good understanding of place value and show this by using calculators well. They use ICT well to create spreadsheets. They extend their understanding and use of numbers and other mathematical ideas. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge well in other subjects such as science and geography.
6. Inspection evidence in science shows that pupils are making good progress throughout the school and the high results of the published tests in 2001 for pupils aged seven are continuing to be achieved. This is consistent across all strands of the science curriculum. By the age of eleven, pupils are working at levels of attainment that are well above the national average. Year 1 pupils studying the five senses show good knowledge and understanding by determining the taste of different items. Year 2 pupils were make good progress in discovering how plants and animals grow. Final versions of written work in their books are usually neat and carefully presented. The work in books of Year 6 pupils shows very good levels of attainment. The standards of presentation and care are high and pride is taken in their work.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress throughout the school. A great deal of care and attention is paid by the special educational needs co-ordinator, and all teachers assess the pupils' levels of achievement and then match instructions for written tasks to the pupils' lower reading levels. As a result, all manage well to complete the work they are set. The school has strategies in place to identify pupils with higher ability and, whenever necessary, pupils receive extension work in literacy and numeracy. Work is very well matched to the needs of all pupils, and achievement is good for all groups of pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language.
8. Pupils make sound progress in ICT throughout the school, and levels of attainment are in line with expectations for their age by the time pupils are seven, and when they leave the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils can use a computer mouse competently to load a program and to draw, using a number of functions from different art programs. They are also able to use different word-processing packages. These skills are at a good level and the opportunities they have are now good, and better than at the time of the last inspection. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on their previous knowledge well. They can store data in word-processing programs and databases. This progress is now consistent.
9. Pupils in both key stages meet the expected levels of attainment in religious education as identified in the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and can make comparisons with aspects of other religions. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed their understanding of world religions further and often have the speaking, listening and writing skills to be able to make relevant comparisons.
10. Pupils make sound progress, and attainment is at the expected levels in design and technology and physical education at the end of both key stages. Pupils' achievements in art and design are above levels expected for their age by the time they leave school as they make good progress as they go through the school. Pupils make sound progress in history and

geography and achieve levels in line with those expected for their age by the time they are eleven. In music, pupils make good progress in singing and attain standards above expectations for their age. Many have above average performing skills by the time they leave school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. This school has always been a focal point for the island community. Many parents and some staff attended as pupils. Parents appreciate the positive attitudes to learning and moral values instilled from the time children arrive and are pleased with the aims and ambitions staff have for their children. All pupils, whatever their individual circumstances or problems, are well integrated with, and supported by, their peers, demonstrating the school's inclusive society. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
12. Children like coming to school and the majority are waiting in the playground for the bell to sound the beginning of the school day. Their attendance is in line with other schools in the country, but is marred by the increasing number of holidays taken during term times.
13. Children quickly learn right from wrong and what is expected of their behaviour from their time in the Foundation Stage classes, and develop good social skills. The good work ethic and enthusiasm for lessons continues for most when they enter the main school. In classes where pupils are excited by their lessons, such as in the Year 6 science session, when they eagerly discussed amongst other variables the likely increase in a hedgehog's weight when pregnant and decrease during hibernation, a lively and purposeful atmosphere prevails. When researching through books and the CD-ROM for information on the Ancient Greeks, pupils in another Year 6 class were surprised to find that not all the information agreed; for example, Hades was said to be both the god of the underworld and the underworld itself, which puzzled them. In Year 3/4, traffic and other surveys were carried out enthusiastically and carefully recorded on tally charts, each group eager to share their findings with the others. Year 2 pupils tried very hard to skip forwards and backwards as part of their physical education lesson, and were delighted when their efforts and success were recognised.
14. Pupils' behaviour is good overall although a very small minority, mainly boys and at the top of the school, have become disaffected and they indulge in immature and silly behaviour, sometimes spoiling the learning for others and drawing younger, more impressionable pupils along with them. Parents support the school's efforts to contain this unacceptable behaviour and it has improved since last year. Pupils are keen to receive the merit and ship points and the certificates awarded for effort, attitudes, good work and achievements both in and outside school. They look forward to sharing their success in the weekly achievement assembly and in particular to the annual award evening celebrations. Sanctions are 'stepped' and all are aware of these and what will happen if the code of conduct is not followed. There is little bullying, but when this occurs it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Serious discussion with the class teacher follows, and classmates give their opinions about what they would feel if it happened to them and why someone might be a bully. 'Community service' enables pupils to give back something in the way of a special duty and 'Time Out' spent in another class gives the transgressor an opportunity to calm down and reflect on what went wrong. There has been only one exclusion in the past twelve months.
15. Outside play is exuberant and carefree. Lively and hard fought football games are enjoyed and many pupils were seen developing remarkable skill with the twirling ribbons, spacehoppers and golf clubs, which were amongst the excellent variety of play equipment provided for their use. All have their chance to use these. Inevitably, minor collisions occur and when first aid is needed, a friend accompanies the injured child for treatment.
16. Pupils' personal development is very good and a credit to the school. Assemblies, circle times and personal, social and health education lessons promote thoughtful discussion and the latter give good opportunities for problems to be aired and sensitively resolved. Membership of

the school council, captains and lieutenants elected democratically for the four ships, and monitors appointed for a variety of tasks, including registers, assemblies and the 'bus list', all enable pupils to demonstrate their caring, mature and responsible attitudes developed during their time at school. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and a lot of money was raised for the Blue Peter appeal as a result of one girl's persistence and good organisation. Some pupils in Year 6 help with those in the Foundation Stage. School council members sell 'Healthy Tuck' at breaktime, when queues form and all are eager to see what the cook has made for them. The trays are quickly emptied! As a result of participation in many local festivals and sports competitions, pupils meet others from local schools. Through their French lessons, held once a month in the local secondary school language laboratories, they quickly become familiar with these surroundings. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching in all year groups. There was a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the juniors mainly because work was not well matched to the needs of the pupils. The overall good quality of teaching enables pupils to make good progress in their learning throughout the school. The majority of pupils are interested in their work and work hard, responding well to the individual targets set by their class teachers. Pupils' ability to use language and recall mathematical facts improves well as a result of the effective way the national strategies have been introduced. They acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding effectively through the provision of a good range of interesting activities.
18. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection with many of the strengths identified then still apparent. For example, teachers make good use of questioning and handle pupils' responses well in order to help their understanding. Teachers continue to build good relationships with their pupils and generate enthusiasm to learn. The areas for development identified last time were in the planning of work, marking and in challenging higher attainers still further. Teachers have improved their day-to-day planning so lesson objectives are clear and usually shared with the class. In addition, teachers check how well pupils have understood the work and plan the next stages accordingly. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of marking seen in different classes and different subjects that prevents some pupils from making maximum progress. The needs of higher attaining pupils are largely met although in English lessons there was some inconsistency in providing work that sufficiently challenged and engaged the interest of all pupils, and so pupils' writing ability is not always enhanced sufficiently.
19. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory throughout the school with good and some very good lessons seen in the older classes. These lessons ensured pupils were completely involved in the work and encouraged to contribute throughout. For example, from their teacher's excellent choice and reading of a story, pupils empathised with the position of evacuees in World War II. This enabled them to make insightful comments in the ensuing discussions. The teaching of numeracy is good because of the careful planning that takes place. Pupils are given activities which they enjoy and match their levels of understanding. This was well illustrated when pupils enjoyed using acetates and an overhead projector when exploring two-dimensional shapes. They were all then well motivated to volunteer their comments and attempt to answer the teacher's questions.
20. Throughout the school, teachers share the lesson objectives and make it clear what is expected of pupils. This sets the scene for learning well and often leads to excited anticipation of what is to come. For example, younger pupils were desperate to discover the identity of something their teacher had 'lost' after she asked for their help in finding it at the start of the lesson. Through giving tantalising clues to help them find it, she was able to sustain their interest so helping them learn what was relevant and irrelevant data.
21. The improvements in planning include the better identification of exactly what it is pupils are to learn and how they are to achieve this. In science, teachers want pupils to understand the

principles of investigation and so they are given many opportunities to carry out experiments, record and hypothesise. This has led to good gains in pupils' achievements, especially in the junior classes. Teachers question pupils well, include them all in discussions and make them think more deeply. In addition they rephrase pupils' responses well as a means of helping all other pupils understand the points being made. So, for example, pupils offering that "fifteen is ten and five" are encouraged to also see it as "one ten and five units", "ten add five" or "five less than twenty".

22. A significant strength of teaching throughout the school is the use made of resources to sustain interest and help pupils to a greater understanding. Pupils were helped to a good understanding of the construction and use of Carroll diagrams by going outside and using very large squares and different colours. Pupils' whiteboards are used to good effect in many lessons. Pupils write 'answers' in direct response to teachers' questions, for these responses to be checked and commented on immediately. Older pupils' estimating skills were clarified through the wide range of measuring instruments and resources available to them. In history lessons, pupils are able to see and handle ration books, tea towels or read from school logbooks kept during World War II to help them understand what life might have been like at the time.
23. Teachers make good links between the work pupils are doing in their lessons and that in other areas or undertaken previously. This helps give relevance to work and helps them set the work in context. For example, pupils in the younger classes looked at the development of frogs and tadpoles. They were reminded of the work they had already done on how living things grow and what they require to go on growing. They also linked the work to 'life cycle' poetry read in earlier literacy lessons. Pupils' movements in gymnastic lessons were developed through work, which built on skills previously learnt. For example, pupils executed twist, tuck and star jumps from apparatus having previously practised them extensively on the floor. Younger pupils extended 'clown movements' in one lesson to include more difficult movements in the next, including the use of music.
24. The use of ICT has improved since the last inspection, especially in numeracy and literacy lessons. Although there are increased opportunities for pupils to use computers when writing, they are not used regularly by pupils to draft and redraft their work. Pupils use computers to compile charts and graphs of their data or digital cameras to record their work. Younger pupils photographed their recent visit, helping them, for example, to later study closely photographs of the mini-beasts they found. Teachers are also making increased use of ICT to develop knowledge and understanding in other curriculum areas but as yet this is not an integral part of most lessons.
25. Teachers have improved their day-to-day assessment of pupils since the last inspection. This has led to improvements in the setting of work that extends the learning of all abilities. This takes place both within and between lessons. In gymnastic lessons, for example, pupils' performances are closely scrutinised by teachers and other pupils alike. Points for improvement are made and given, allowing the performers to act on them and improve before being assessed again. In mathematics, the work for the different sets is well matched to the different abilities, enabling all to make good gains in their understanding. For example, very good progress was made by pupils in a class of less able mathematicians learning about 'mass'. This was because the work was interesting and had enough challenge to keep them trying hard.
26. In the lessons where the work is not well matched or sufficiently challenging, pupils quickly become disenchanted or bored. Older pupils in one English lesson, for example, were asked only to copy work from the board; they quickly tired of this and stopped working. In another lesson, pupils of all abilities were asked to carry out the same research task in an English lesson. This did not extend higher attaining pupils and less able pupils could not do it so that there was very little progress made. It is this area that the very able co-ordinators could monitor and ensure consistency as pupils respond well to their teachers when given

appropriate work. They get down to work quickly and do their best. In several classes, however, there are pupils whose behaviour and attitudes can be challenging. The school's behaviour policy is constantly updated and is being applied consistently now. There is some inconsistency in the quality of marking. This ranges from work just being ticked or praised to more useful comments on how it could be improved next time.

27. Homework is used appropriately in all classes to support the work done in school. In addition the school provides a homework club which is especially helpful to those pupils who may find it difficult to find a quiet time and place at home in which to work.

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

28. The school provides a good range of curricular and other learning opportunities for the pupils. Statutory requirements are met fully, including the teaching of religious education, and personal, health and sex education as well as the danger of misuse of drugs and medicines. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is sound, and teachers are offering a range of planned experiences to allow good coverage of the early learning goals for children of this age, despite the relative low level of resources seen in use during the inspection. As well as giving due priority to the teaching of English and mathematics, curricular breadth is achieved by the provision of an appropriate balance of other subjects. The school's strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are well established in all classes.
29. Curriculum planning is secure. All subjects have appropriate plans that clearly identify what is to be learnt and how this is to be done, and are linked to the National Curriculum levels. There are planned opportunities for pupils to learn from different subjects in a single lesson, for example, using ICT and literacy skills in a history lesson. Time is used in well-structured ways to ensure pupils derive the maximum benefit from the teaching. For instance, in a Year 1 science lesson on the five senses, a range of activities that included a discussion, planning in pairs, trying out ideas and recording all occurred within this single lesson.
30. The curriculum is inclusive and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to it. The school seeks to offer the same opportunities to take part and succeed, irrespective of academic ability. 'Booster' support classes also help to realise this aim.
31. A significant feature of the school is the very good use it makes of visitors to the school and visits of interest to supplement the curriculum. These include a two-day visit to East Mersea Adventure Centre for pupils in Year 5, and two days of water sports for Year 6 pupils. These are used well to develop pupils' confidence and social skills. Every class goes on a major visit each year, for example, to the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, as part of their history topic. Visitors to the school include authors, artists, Shakespearean workshops and the vicars of the local churches. Fire personnel give health and safety talks to support personal and social education.
32. The school's provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. These include a very good range of sports; recorders, a choir of about 100 pupils, which is open to all, a popular gardening club; a computer club and a French club. The school provides extra support for pupils through a homework club and study club for Year 6 pupils.
33. The school takes part in sporting programmes available locally and pupils have opportunities to represent their school against others.
34. The school's links with the community are very good. The school hall is used widely and pupils participate in a variety of activities organised by local people, such as judo and disco dancing. Pupils enjoy singing in the local music festival and at fetes. They raise money for charities such as Comic Relief, and have sponsored a child in Uganda for a number of years, exchanging letters with her. These experiences contribute well to pupils' moral and social

awareness. There are no regular ongoing links with businesses at present because there are few on the island. There is some supervised access to the Internet and plans are in hand to extend this to enrich pupils' links with the wider world.

35. The school's location makes it difficult to develop links with other primary schools. It has close relationships with the playgroup on site and links with the local Montessori school. There is good liaison between the school and the local secondary school that has received recognition as a language college and is enabling French to be taught weekly in Year 6. There are good arrangements to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils. Participation in teacher training schemes, such as the graduate entry scheme, enriches the education provided for pupils in the school.
36. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school has maintained this good provision since the last inspection.
37. The school makes good provision for its pupils' spiritual development and there are many examples in the daily life of the school. Young pupils experimenting with paint and water pencils for the first time were amazed at the richness of shapes and colours they produced. Year 4 pupils were enthralled by discovering patterns and relationships between numbers in mathematics. Through many aspects of the curriculum, such as art, music and poetry, pupils gain a sense of wonder of life. School displays of pupils' work and celebration assemblies remind everyone of the value and the uniqueness of each individual.
38. Some of the school buildings are sited within an attractive, well cared for landscape of grass, mature and newly planted trees, and paved areas. This encourages reflection and wonder. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Music is used well to create a sense of special occasion. Moments of stillness and quiet reflection are included in assemblies. Pupils also develop an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs in their religious education lessons
39. The provision for the moral development of pupils is good. The school places a high priority on the teaching of moral values. The ethos of the school is firmly based on respect and care for others. On occasions, disruptive behaviour from a very small number of pupils disturbs the flow of lessons. When this happens, whilst teachers are very patient and understanding, they also help pupils to be aware of the responsibilities they have for their own actions. The school effectively teaches the values that distinguish right from wrong. Moral dilemmas and issues are planned for and discussed in personal and social education lessons. Ideas and feelings are explored, for example, in English and history lessons. As part of their topic on World War II pupils develop considerable empathy with children who were evacuees during the war.
40. The provision for pupils' social development is good. There are very many occasions when pupils work together as a whole class, discussing, listening and responding to each other well. Plenary gatherings towards the end of lessons allow pupils to contribute to the pool of ideas of what has been learnt during the lesson and where individual and group successes are celebrated. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility. The school council provides a forum for the exchange of views and gives insight into the democratic process. Older pupils feel responsible for the welfare of younger ones. They write books for younger pupils, improving their own literacy skills and giving them insight into the needs of these youngsters.
41. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through many subjects of the curriculum and in assemblies, pupils become aware of their cultural heritage. They have access to a wide range of literature, including poetry, from popular authors, as well as classical literature. The oldest pupils study the work of Shakespeare. They listen to, discuss and perform good music. They begin to appreciate the styles of famous painters, such as George Stubbs. They study the culture of other countries. A good example is the way they learn about France through learning French. Pupils develop an understanding of the contributions of ethnic groups within the United Kingdom. In Year 2 pupils learned about the

Chinese New Year and the local restaurant cooked a meal for them. An Indian visitor showed pupils a variety of clothes worn by Indian people and explained how they are worn, as part of their topic of India in geography. Pupils study world faiths. They learn, for example, of the symbolism associated with the artefacts of the Jewish faith from visitors to the school. The reading scheme reflects the diversity of cultures in this country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. This is because it has very detailed and comprehensive procedures for measuring pupils' achievements as they move through the school, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers have effectively built on the extensive and largely successful arrangements that were reported at the time of the last inspection. They have introduced further tests in Years 4 and 5, which add to the available information about how well pupils are doing. Teachers regularly look at samples of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science and this helps them to agree the levels at which individual pupils are working. The school has identified the need to involve more teachers in judging pupils' attainment in writing to refine their skills. In most subjects of the curriculum, teachers have a clear picture of pupils' current strengths and weaknesses.
43. The school uses the information from assessments well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment information is recorded clearly and consistently using computers. This enables teachers to monitor the progress of pupils carefully and to identify those who will benefit from English and mathematics booster classes. Assessment information is well used to group pupils into mathematics sets where teachers can focus more accurately on pupils with different levels of attainment. Pupils are involved in setting their own individual targets in mathematics and English and this gives them a good understanding of their learning. Teachers make good use of test results to identify and strengthen areas of relative weakness. This led, for example, to a focus on improving pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. Information from science assessments is used well to plan what pupils will learn next. Teachers effectively use what they know about pupils when planning work in other subjects, notably physical education. In subjects where assessment is less rigorous, such as religious education and design and technology, there is less information available to help teachers in their planning and the impact of assessment is more limited. Assessment information is used very well to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
44. The school continues to provide the good attention to pupils' health, safety and welfare noted in the previous inspection report. Regular risk assessments are carried out not only with regard to the school fabric and the security of the large, open site but also for the visits made outside the school grounds. Pastoral care is one of the school's many strengths. Trained first aiders are on site at all times and any incidents requiring attention are recorded and monitored. Effective child protection procedures are in place and training is shared in the staffroom, thereby ensuring that all teaching staff know and understand these issues.
45. The comprehensive, well-written and consistently implemented behaviour policy, resulting from extensive consultation with staff, parents, governors and pupils, contains very clear and appropriate expectations of and guidelines for pupils and staff alike. Rules for the classroom, in assemblies and in the playground are prominently displayed around the buildings and attached to the fencing dividing the car park and playground. The carefully graduated rewards and sanctions system encourages good behaviour and supports those pupils whose actions fall below those expected. Teachers' disappointment when this occurs plays an important part in the effectiveness of the school's procedures, which are well known to, and clearly understood by, the whole school community. Recognition of good behaviour and attitudes as well as achievements both in and out of school is celebrated and enjoyed by all in the weekly achievement assembly.

46. The school has effective procedures for promoting and monitoring absence. Registers are called as soon as practicable after pupils enter the buildings and registration provides a calm and purposeful start to the school day. Daily checks are made on the numbers for school dinners and packed lunches. Too many requests are received for holidays to be taken during term time, although parents are regularly reminded that such absences are detrimental to their children's education. With the appointment of the new education welfare officer, regular visits can now be established to enhance the school's good systems.
47. Pupils' personal development is well promoted and monitored through teachers' extensive knowledge of pupils in their class and their carefully recorded documentation, shared at the end of each academic year with pupils' new teachers. Pupils are given many opportunities for taking responsibility, for example as monitors for registers, assemblies and the library and as elected school council members, as well as those elected as captains and lieutenants of the four 'ships'. They carry out these responsibilities well. Assemblies and well-planned personal, social and health education lessons, timetabled throughout the school, enable fruitful discussion of moral and social issues. Visits from the school doctor and nurse assist in health education lessons. Unfortunately regular visits from the police and some other agencies have been difficult to arrange in recent months although the school is hopeful that these can be re-established soon in order to alert pupils to the difficulties and dangers existing outside their school community. Pupils are well prepared for, and look forward with confidence to, the next stage in their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school has improved on the good links enjoyed and effective partnership with parents recorded in the 1997 inspection report and these are now very good. Parents, many of whom attended this school, are pleased to see their children following in the family tradition and value the school as an important part of the island community. They are supportive of the school's aims and ambitions for their children and demonstrate this support in practical ways. Many assist teachers, hearing reading for example. Others help to provide the varied extra-curricular activities and nearly 50 parents, dedicated members of the Mersea School Association (MSA) committee, run very successful fun and fund-raising events including the forthcoming summer fete. These events, enjoyed by relatives and the local community alike, raise between £9,000 and £10,000 each year to provide extra resources and fun for children. Recently the MSA have given the school £3,500 towards the library project and within the last year new staging was installed in the hall and £1000 donated for furniture for the Foundation Stage classrooms. When school productions take place the hall is filled to over-flowing with parents, grandparents and siblings to see children perform and to celebrate their achievements.
49. All parents are kept very well informed by the school. Those whose children have special educational or other additional needs are involved in their individual education plans and the regular reviews, and are very well supported and informed by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Home-school reading records are well used to help parents assist their children with reading at home in the infant and lower junior classes. Interim reports given in the autumn and spring terms, detailing grades for effort, provide a solid information base for the annual reports sent out in the summer and for the parents' consultation evenings. Attendance at these meetings is excellent, reaching almost 100 per cent, and parents are pleased with the opportunities they have to talk to teachers and to discuss their children's work and progress or any concerns they may have. The regular news and other letters, sent home via 'pupil post', ensure that all are aware of future events and 'happenings' at school. Friendly and approachable administration staff are always available to help with form-filling or with anything else parents require.
50. The school plays a pivotal role in life on the island and the good practice of inclusion extends not only to pupils, parents and staff but to the whole island community. Governors and staff are delighted that the school buildings and grounds are used for the many and varied after-school activities, which include local meetings, parenting workshops for those of the youngest children and line dancing, which children as well as adults enjoy. Parents, through their

involvement in and strong support for their children's education, make very positive contributions to their academic achievements and to their personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good and the school is effective. This continues the improvement noted at the time of the last inspection.
52. The headteacher provides strong leadership in all aspects of the school's work. She has a clear vision of the purpose of education and the direction of the school and has a commitment to achieving high standards. She is an effective manager, has a deep understanding of the school's needs and is aware of what has to be addressed in order for standards to improve further. The teaching staff are very aware of their particular roles and responsibilities and support all school developments with a commitment that is very impressive. They are fully aware of the school's aims, values and policies that they helped to formulate and were particularly effective in supporting the necessary changes since the last inspection.
53. The headteacher meets regularly with the chair of governors to review the progress of a range of issues both on an informal and a formal basis, and he is now acting as the necessary critical friend that is very much appreciated by the head and teaching staff. The chair and the other governors are also fully aware of the school's aims, values and policies and support them well. They fulfil all of their statutory requirements and have made a significant contribution to the school's recent building improvements. The school has a very clear sense of purpose and direction in meeting its aims, values and policies. This is reflected throughout in all aspects of work and leisure. The school's aims and requirements are clearly understood by staff, parents, governors and pupils and can be seen in the day-to-day life of the school. They all work hard to fulfil the school's aims. This is reflected in subject areas and through a very positive moral and social development programme resulting in the school's ethos and a positive and effective learning environment based on very good relationships and pupil behaviour. This allows all pupils direct access to all learning experiences in an enjoyable and supportive environment.
54. As co-ordinators, individual teachers consider and discuss all curriculum provision and are now confidently taking an increasing role in the monitoring of their subjects. Since the last inspection, their hard work to prepare policies and a number of schemes of work has had a positive impact upon provision for the pupils and the quality of teaching. At the moment most only monitor teaching in their subjects through carefully evaluating teachers' plans and pupils' work on a very regular basis. They are not yet given time away from their class to monitor the teaching and overall provision in their subjects effectively. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been ably led by the co-ordinators with the support of particular governors. All staff are committed to the implementation of the strategies in order to raise standards and achieve the targets they have set for themselves.
55. The quality of the school development plan, which is determined through consultation with all teaching staff, is good. All teachers provide up-to-date information in their own action plans. These provide carefully identified targets and deadlines. Planning is appropriately forward looking and governors are already considering initiatives that extend beyond the current year. The headteacher and the governors carefully monitor the development plan, and they review the financial considerations and evaluate the school's progress towards meeting its targets.
56. The management of the school budget is good. The governors and headteacher work together closely to identify the needs of the school and plan the budget accordingly. Financial planning is very firmly linked to the need to raise standards and the school evaluates the effectiveness of all decisions made. The governing body receives regular reports on the state of the budget and analyses these carefully. The school's effectiveness is due in no small part to the contribution made by the administration officer who is valued by all concerned.

57. The close attention to value for money given by the governors and senior management team is enabling the school to move forward well. Resources are used effectively and best value is sought in purchases. The effective leadership and management have been responsible for the improvements that the school has made since the last inspection. Staffing costs are quite high in comparison with other schools, but standards are rising and pupils' achievement is improving. When all factors are taken into consideration the school gives good value for money.
58. Taking into account the way that governors, headteacher and staff have worked together to secure the improvements since the last inspection and the school's successful drive towards raising standards and meeting its own targets, the capacity for further improvement is judged to be good.
59. Good appraisal of staff currently takes place. The headteacher discusses professional development with each teacher annually. This provides an effective platform for discussion about their individual training needs and the needs of the school. The school has a good performance management policy, approved and used by the head and governors. Newly appointed teachers receive an appropriate programme of support from a senior member of staff during the first part of their appointment to the school.
60. There is a good number of suitably qualified teachers so the school can effectively carry out its curriculum aims. The full range of pupils' needs is met through this provision and the work of a large number of learning support assistants. Teachers plan and work closely with these well-trained assistants to the benefit of all pupils. Those with special educational needs are especially well supported so that their achievements are good. The number of teachers enables the school to keep class sizes relatively low so that most have less than 30 pupils.
61. The school continues to make good provision for the continuing professional development of its staff under its performance management procedures. This fits in well with the school's already well-established procedures for identifying and providing for teachers' training needs and towards its recognition as 'Investors in People.' The previous report noted a lack of staff confidence and expertise in ICT. This has improved somewhat as all staff have received training through national funding. The school also recognised this was insufficient and is currently providing teachers with additional training in ICT based on individual need. This provision is gradually raising the level of staff competency. The school now has one male member of staff thus improving slightly the position reported at the previous inspection. An important contribution to staff expertise is provided through the development of trainee teachers in the school. Although ostensibly the teaching staff is providing training for these students, there is also a benefit to the school. The school acknowledges that students bring with them fresh ideas and enthusiasm that benefits both pupils and mentors alike.
62. The school has invested a lot of time, thought and funding in the development of its buildings and surrounding area. This has resulted in a big improvement to the learning environment and the school has plans to improve it still further. The position is much changed from that reported in the previous inspection. Most notably the ageing swimming pool has been demolished, 'mobile classrooms' have been removed, a new Early Years Unit has been built and there has been the provision of a computer suite and library. These measures have significantly raised the quality of the school's accommodation. The upkeep of old buildings and a large site is a considerable drain on finances. Nevertheless, the school is welcoming, with extensive grounds used well to provide pupils with attractive play and work areas. These include separate play areas for juniors and infants and a secure hardplay area for the early years children. The new library is still being developed and at the moment it houses books on unattractive temporary shelving. The computer suite provides pupils with 18 workstations and the opportunity for large groups to be taught at the same time. This is rather a small area, though, without adequate ventilation and the school is experimenting with different ways of using it to its best effect. Some teachers, for example, plan lessons so that half the class can comfortably use the computers while the other half use the adjoining library. The school has

plans to reduce the number of computers in the suite still further and at the same time increase the numbers being used in classrooms.

63. The level of resources is less than adequate in the Early Years Unit. Despite the best efforts of the teachers the area for the youngest pupils is unattractive and uninspiring. The school has adequate resources to support teaching and learning in all other areas of the curriculum. In ICT, the school has spent a great deal of money to help it address a key issue in the last inspection to meet statutory requirements in the subject. There have been problems associated with the installation of Internet connections and currently this facility is not making a significant contribution to pupils' learning. This in turn means that the school's e-mail use is also very limited, preventing, for example, pupils exchanging ideas and work with other schools. However, the school's plans should see the position reversed shortly, together with the provision of further laptop computers, workstations and associated equipment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to continue to build on the improvements already made, the governors, headteacher and staff should :

- (1) Further develop the potential of some co-ordinators in the management of their subjects, and to support their colleagues further, by providing opportunities for them to monitor teaching and the delivery of provision in their subjects. This should enable them to make sure all pupils are appropriately challenged in all lessons, and provision in parallel classes in the same year group is consistent.
Paragraphs 26, 83, 95, 99, 103, 112, 129, 133
- (2) Ensure that the Early Years Unit has adequate resources for all areas of learning to enable teachers to plan effectively and deliver the appropriate range of activities for pupils of this age.
Paragraphs 28, 63, 66, 67, 72

OTHER MINOR ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- (3) Ensure that the school's marking policy is implemented consistently across the whole school.
Paragraphs 18, 82, 88

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

81

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	16	32	28	3	0	0
Percentage	2	20	40	35	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	463
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	94

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.2

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	25	26	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	23
	Girls	25	23	25
	Total	48	46	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (96)	90 (96)	94 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	23	25
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	49	48	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	94 (92)	100 (95)
	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	30	34	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	25	31
	Girls	25	24	28
	Total	50	49	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (89)	77 (78)	92 (98)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	84 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	27	33
	Girls	27	26	28
	Total	54	53	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (86)	83 (80)	95(95)
	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	389
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)	19.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	263

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1019826
Total expenditure	1028729
Expenditure per pupil	2252
Balance brought forward from previous year	10330
Balance carried forward to next year	1427

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	463
Number of questionnaires returned	92

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	35	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	52	13	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	13	3	2
The teaching is good.	46	46	8	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	46	13	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	27	7	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	43	16	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	41	12	5	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	5	3	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	54	5	7	10

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

65. The Foundation Stage children are now taught in a purpose-built Early Years Unit that is a significant improvement since the last inspection. All children start, either part-time or full-time, in the reception classes in the September of the school year that they are five. Most children's attainment on entry to the school is average in all areas of learning. All children receive well-planned support to enable them to achieve well and make good gains in all areas of learning. Based on the inspection evidence, most children will reach the expectations for their age in all the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. These findings maintain the good position at the time of the previous inspection report. Children's achievement in all areas of learning is consistently good. This is due to the good quality teaching, particularly for the majority of children who are full-time. Children with special educational needs receive very good support to enhance their progress in the reception classes. Where children have been learning English as an additional language they did equally well and showed good progress throughout the Foundation Stage.
66. The overall quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning, although there is variation between that offered for the older, full-time, and the younger, part-time children. The provision for the older children is consistently good. Teachers provide experiences that are relevant, imaginative and enjoyable, despite the fact that in some areas the resources are barely adequate. Teachers' planning reflects all areas of learning and effectively builds upon children's existing skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are appropriate and the tasks match the children's level of attainment well. The learning is extended to embrace and link to the work children will do in Key Stage 1, particularly in the literacy and numeracy strategies. All teachers of reception age children plan effectively, with clear reference to what children will learn. Teachers' short-term planning links learning objectives to all the areas of learning. In addition to the assessments taking place on entry to the reception classes, there are consistent procedures for assessing children on a daily basis, to support planning of work to meet children's specific learning needs. Homework in the form of borrowing books is used well on a regular basis to enhance children's progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because the adults in all classes emphasise this aspect of the children's development strongly and teaching is good. By the time they leave the reception class, all the children attain the early learning goals and a considerable number achieve above. Teachers' expectations are high and the carefully planned routines and good organisation encourage children to respond well. They choose activities in both classes and sustain concentration and perseverance. Children sit quietly and listen to their teachers and answer questions or offer suggestions in front of their group. Although some activities observed, such as the walk to the pond, motivated and interested the children, some were not exciting because the resources and displays were not stimulating. Children were excited when they discovered their grass growing in pots or when they helped to build a bridge for the Three Billy Goats Gruff.
68. Praise and encouragement build children's confidence and independence. At snack time in the reception, children help to give out the drinks and take round the biscuits. They encourage one another to say "Thank you", one child replying, "Good girl." Children tidy away happily and sensibly when asked, and dress and undress for physical activities, folding and tidying their clothes. Every opportunity is taken to model good relationships and develop tolerance and valuing one another. Carefully planned activities and sensitive interventions encourage co-operation. As a result, children play and work together harmoniously. The youngest children build models together, learning how to share the bricks and agree about their ideas. Older

children share books together, help each other with aprons for painting and enjoy the social occasions of snack time and lunch. Sensitive discussions and stories encourage children to become aware of the needs of others. For example, when discussing what could happen to the troll when he fell in the stream, one child said he might die and other replied, "That's sad!" Children become aware and accept that people from different cultures may wear special clothing. This can be through reading their books, or from role-play when dressing in saris. Adults manage children with more challenging behaviour skilfully and sensitively and motivate them to become part of the group.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Most children make sound progress and attain the early learning goals in this aspect of their learning. Teaching of this area is satisfactory overall. Teachers encourage children to listen carefully to adults and each other through effective story telling and questioning. Children listen with enjoyment to stories and join in at appropriate times. They learn to take turns when talking and speak clearly and confidently. The younger children talk happily to adults and at times to each other, about what they are doing. Older children confidently discuss the story the teacher is reading or explain patterns they have created. Children extend their vocabulary through teachers' emphasis upon and repetition of new words and good individual and group interactions. They use language imaginatively in role-play. Some children acted as customers and owners in the 'café' and older children acted out the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff outside. Some children were observed playing alongside each other but their talk was limited when adults were not joining in.
70. Throughout the unit children enjoy books and are eager to share them with adults and each other. They handle books correctly and many read familiar words and sentences independently or with little help. All children enjoy listening to stories, and occasionally when adults read from small books to the younger children they were made to listen more carefully as they could not see the pictures. Teachers talk about letters from the day they start so children begin to know which letters represent some sounds. With the older children, teachers use a structured approach to develop children's knowledge of letter sounds and familiar words. Children are eager to identify words they know. Teachers encourage children to read books at home and provide information for parents on their child's progress. Older children talk about their stories because teachers question them effectively.
71. Most children, after a few weeks in the school, make recognisable attempts at writing their names. They have some opportunities to write, such as a 'bill' in the café or in the writing area. By the end of reception, most children write their names clearly, begin to form recognisable letters and begin to write simple words. Higher attaining children write sentences with some correctly spelt words and recognisable attempts at others. Children begin to spell words correctly and read simple words because teachers use the Early Reading Research programme daily.

Mathematical development

72. Good teaching enables children to make good progress and most attain the goals in this area of learning. Teachers of the full-time children challenge them well and encourage them to count up to 20 and back from 10 with help. They show a good understanding of how young children learn by using their own bodies when learning about patterns. Emphasis on these patterns in different activities ensures children develop a secure understanding and strengthens their learning. For example, children made patterns with their feet of 'heel, toe, heel, toe', in their physical education lesson. Children make simple repeating patterns using pictures or beads. High attaining children make a repeating pattern using four items. Good use of stories and games engages children's interest and enables them to investigate numbers, size and shapes. Systematic assessments of children's achievements enable teachers to

modify lessons appropriately. This is an area where inspection observations show that better resources for the children would further enhance learning opportunities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Good teaching and planned curriculum extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world satisfactorily. By the end of reception, most children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. There are good opportunities for children to find out about their environment when going on a 'looking walk' to the pond for instance. They comment on the blossom, birds, plants and tadpoles. However, teachers missed some opportunities to excite and motivate children, when they were playing with newly mown grass, for example. Older children in reception dig the garden and plant bulbs and flowers. They investigate and correctly identify magnetic and non-magnetic articles. Children also learn to build models from construction kits and draw their models and the pieces they used in reception.
74. Teachers provide interesting activities to encourage children to enjoy their experiences and plan opportunities for them to investigate with and without adult intervention. Children build waterspouts to wash Incy Wincy Spider down and use the camera to photograph clouds. They select resources to make hats and adjust the size after discussion with an adult. They chop vegetables to make soup and make and decorate cakes. This provides opportunities for them to taste soup and watch the change when cakes are baked. However, there are too few opportunities for children to use the computer or a tape recorder.

Physical development

75. A range of outdoor play equipment and carefully planned sessions in the school hall enables children to attain the goals in physical development by the end of reception. Younger children use the large equipment well and all pedal and manoeuvre wheeled toys with ease. Encouraged by staff, they throw quoits successfully and move around without bumping into one another. Reception children push each around on wheeled toys and make good use of the space available. In the hall, clear explanations and a brisk pace maintain children's enthusiasm and ensure they listen and follow instructions carefully. They know that their hearts beat faster when they exercise, and warm up by moving different parts of their bodies. They stride, jump and hop in different directions and balance in different positions on the floor and a mat. Good attention to safety ensures children carry mats safely and work away from the sides of the room.

Creative development

76. Most children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning and many achieve above, particularly in art and design. Overall, good teaching in reception contributes to their good progress. Regular opportunities to paint, build models and play in the role-play area for the part-time children develop their imaginations soundly. However, greater input and involvement by adults would enhance their learning. For older children, role-play is linked well to planned themes and adults promote it well through careful planning and good adult involvement. Teachers use interesting pictures, such as Van Gogh's 'Starry, starry night' to stimulate children's ideas for artwork. They show them new techniques and enable them to use a range of media. Children show an awareness of shape and colour in their 'Starry night' pictures. They experiment with paint to produce different textures and illustrate their stories. In assemblies, they join other children to recite words with actions.

ENGLISH

77. By the ages of seven and eleven, inspection evidence shows that pupils are achieving standards in line with national expectations in all areas of the English curriculum. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection and pupils' test results in recent years. Pupils of all

levels of ability make satisfactory progress. The lower attaining pupils talk about how their spelling has improved through additional support in small groups and they show how their writing has developed. The number of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher level 5 each year is similar to that found nationally. The school is attempting to increase this number by using its systematic assessment arrangements to identify and boost pupils who are capable of reaching this level of attainment. Although the school has made satisfactory improvements generally since the last inspection, raising the expectations of the higher attaining pupils still remains an identified priority.

78. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. Most pupils use Standard English well when expressing themselves in speech and in writing. On the rare occasions when this is not the case, pupils use incorrect grammar when talking. Most pupils listen carefully to what others have to say, particularly when their interest is captured, for instance by a visiting speaker. Most Year 6 pupils speak confidently. A few listen with limited concentration, especially when the teaching does not inspire them. Pupils respond well when teaching provides opportunities for them to raise their own questions such as in the Year 5 lesson when pupils questioned others about the character they had created for their writing.
79. Pupils' progress in reading is sound. They are developing the skills and attitudes that they need to tackle increasingly difficult text. Most pupils read at home. Reading records show the books that each pupil has read, and contain useful guidance for parents of pupils in the infant classes about how they can support their child with reading. Some records clearly support pupils' progress by stating what each child needs to do next to improve. However, this is not consistent in all junior classes, where some teachers have provided written guidance for parents about how they can help their children to develop their reading skills, but others have not. All pupils use the library. Some pupils in the infant classes use it particularly effectively. For example, pupils in Year 2 spoke clearly about how they use their well-developed independent research skills to find information on particular topics, such as trees. This makes a strong contribution to their personal and social development as well as to their skills of enquiry. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, the higher attaining pupils read independently and they make reasoned comments about their favourite authors. Lower attaining pupils try hard when they meet new words though they are not always aware of their own errors and they sometimes have difficulty in understanding the text. By age eleven, brighter pupils are self-motivated readers: they are able to predict what will happen next, based on what they have read and they can make deductions from the text and say what will happen next. Average attaining pupils are not always fluent when reading aloud, and they are less confident when talking about their reading preferences. Lower attaining pupils sometimes lack fluency in their reading. However, some can work out new words such as 'cousin' using the context and some know the meaning of challenging words such as 'avenge'.
80. Progress in writing is satisfactory overall. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, most pupils communicate meaningfully using neat handwriting. Some lower attaining pupils, however, do not form letters accurately or consistently, and spelling of simple words such as 'with' is sometimes incorrect. Some average and brighter pupils do not systematically write in sentences that end with a full stop. Higher attaining pupils' writing, though relevant, is not always interesting enough to engage the reader well. By the end of Year 6, most pupils write neatly and legibly. However, some lower attaining and average attaining pupils do not always join letters and this weakens the presentation of their work. Pupils of all levels of attainment write poems, such as 'The fire song', that are lively and thoughtful. Brighter pupils' poems show heightened sensitivity, for example, to the horrors of war. The writing of some average attaining pupils is not always extended sufficiently to incorporate their own original ideas, and punctuation is not always accurate. Weak spelling is a feature of lower attaining pupils' work, including simple words such as 'off' and 'were'. More able pupils imaginatively choose words such as 'frustrated' and 'execute' to add to the complex sentences that they structure into their paragraphs, some of which are presented using computers.

81. Teaching is mainly satisfactory. Some teaching during the inspection was very effective, although there were features in other lessons that did not work to support pupils' learning well enough. The good teaching made effective use of a visiting author to encourage pupils to generate original ideas for their writing. It enabled them to think imaginatively about the qualities of the characters they would write about and to structure their stories effectively by noting the key features that they would include. This acted as a supportive framework, particularly for pupils with special educational needs who lack confidence or have poor writing skills. Where teachers did not ensure that these pupils had a secure outline of the whole story, they later struggled. "I don't know what to put", one said. Teaching is less effective when pupils are given tasks that they find uninteresting, too easy or too difficult. In these cases they lose interest and their learning is not as good as it could be. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, some boys were bored by copying work about a visit because it lacked challenge. One told how he enjoyed writing about Mersea Island towards the end of the lesson, "Because I can use my own ideas". In a Year 2 lesson, the work about an author was too difficult for some pupils while in a Year 5 lesson, teaching did not sufficiently challenge the higher attaining pupils. Teaching contributes well to other aspects of the curriculum. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher successfully enabled pupils to recreate the world of an evacuee during World War II through listening to part of a story and discussion. In a Year 4 lesson, teaching contributed well to pupils' moral development through discussions of what they would do in certain dilemmas. Other subjects contribute well to pupils' learning in English. For example, science teaching in Years 3 and 4 provides good opportunities for pupils to describe the properties of materials and teachers enable pupils to talk about their own and others' performance in their physical education lessons.
82. Teachers do not always make best use of marking to develop learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils' inaccuracies in joining letters are not always identified and in Year 6, teachers do not ensure pupils act on the comments that teachers write. Resources in English are satisfactory overall but there is room for improvement in the number and range of books provided in the library. Classroom resources are also satisfactory. ICT resources are now being used to develop pupils' information seeking, word-processing, drafting and presentation skills.
83. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has supported the raising of standards by working closely with colleagues, particularly in planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Currently there are few opportunities for her to see teaching in other classrooms, in order to be able to share with teachers what works well and what needs to be done to improve learning. This has been identified as an area for development within her management responsibilities.

MATHEMATICS

84. Inspection findings, from classroom observations, analyses of pupils' work and talking with them, are that pupils attain above average levels of attainment by the time they leave school. These standards are the similar to those at the time of last inspection.
85. Pupils enter the school with average numeracy skills overall and make good progress. The standards achieved by seven year olds are above the level expected and have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the difference between centimetres and millimetres and begin to experiment and measure accurately. They can round up their measurements to the nearest ten. More able pupils can explain in simple terms why, for example, the number 55 is rounded up to 60. They have a good understanding of number patterns and have a sound grasp of mathematical signs. More able pupils have a good range of multiplication and division strategies that they can use to solve simple problems. Pupils can assemble data and represent it on a bar chart, although less able pupils struggle to do this. They know the properties of simple shapes and recognise lines of symmetry. Most pupils are able to explain their strategies for solving simple problems.

86. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. In Year 3 they understand the concept of halving and doubling clearly. They compute using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with three-digit numbers. By Year 4, pupils have a good understanding of place value and show this by using a calculator. Higher attaining pupils understand Venn diagrams and can use these to illustrate multiples of three and five, for example. Year 5 pupils have a sound understanding of fractional parts as several sections of the whole and can change fractions into decimals. By Year 6 more able pupils can group data efficiently and show them in frequency tables. They use ICT well, for example to create spreadsheets. The lower attaining pupils find problem solving difficult, because of limited reasoning skills. Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress in extending their understanding and use of numbers and other mathematical ideas. These include properties of angles and shapes. They can use more complex fractions, percentages and decimals. They have a good mathematical vocabulary and can explain terms, such as mean, median and mode. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects such as science and geography.
87. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall with some very good teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and make regular use of subject-specific words. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical vocabulary are extended. In planning, teachers set out clear learning intentions in lesson plans and on the board so that pupils know exactly what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning achieved. In some of the best lessons seen, teachers set pupils limited amounts of time to complete various tasks. Pupils rise to the challenge, find their mathematics exciting and are keen to learn. Teachers manage pupils well. They expect pupils to concentrate in lessons and this has a positive effect on the quality and quantity of work produced. Very occasionally, the presence of a small number of boys towards the top end of the school disrupted the group and there was a loss of focus in the learning for some pupils. A feature of the best lessons is the effective use of questioning to challenge pupils of all abilities and to check pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on doubling numbers, careful questioning enabled students to find out some of the features of this process for themselves. Many opportunities are given to pupils to reflect on their learning and to explain their thinking, particularly in the whole-class session at the end of the lesson. Within the 'set' classes, further groupings are often made, enabling teachers to work with pupils at a common level of understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
88. The quality of assessment that teachers make is good overall and provides for the planning and setting of targets for individual pupils. However, marking is inconsistent across the school. Where it is good, teachers mark in detail and explain how pupils can improve their work. Records of pupils' progress are regularly updated and keep teachers informed as to how well each pupil is achieving. The co-ordinator for this subject has a good understanding of her role and the targets set for further improvements are realistic. Whilst the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been monitored, there is little monitoring of teaching at present to ensure that the schools' above average standards are maintained. The range of mathematical equipment necessary for teaching numeracy is satisfactory. Resources for teachers are good.

SCIENCE

89. Standards in science are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The results of the most recent published tests in 2001 confirm these standards and are consistent across all strands of the science curriculum. By the age of eleven, test results showed they were well above the national average as was the proportion achieving the higher levels. Since the last inspection, effective strategies for raising standards in science have been put into operation and there is evidence that further measures to improve standards are being planned. Inspection evidence

in the lessons seen and from the work in books shows that standards in science are continuing to be consistently above expected levels.

90. At the age of eleven there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the very good level of support they receive.
91. Year 1 pupils studying the five senses show good knowledge and understanding by determining the taste of different items. In a good lesson they passed things very carefully to each other and showed awe and wonder when they identified a smell that they knew, and where it normally occurs. In previous work they have successfully matched pictures of adult animals with their young when studying the idea of growing up. In a good lesson, Year 2 pupils were making good progress in discovering how plants and animals grow. The delight of the group collecting and comparing tadpoles from the school pond was very evident. In their books there is evidence of the composition of a healthy diet. Pupils enjoy recording by drawing and colouring. The final versions in their books are usually neat and carefully presented.
92. In a very good lesson, Year 3/4 pupils of all abilities were successfully studying different materials and using the appropriate scientific language. They were recording their findings independently and well. For those of lower ability, the learning support assistants and teacher helped them very well. Year 4 pupils have investigated aspects of growth in humans and record well using tables and charts and they are able to draw conclusions from the data they collect. Year 5 pupils investigating solids and liquid satisfactorily record how liquids such as oil and water flow when compared to one another. In a good topic on healthy eating, Year 3 pupils show that they have good knowledge of the basic principles of nutrition.
93. Year 6 pupils have been studying adaptation and interdependence in animals and have recorded several food chains. When talking to a group of Year 6 pupils they were aware of the idea of a food web. The work in books of Year 6 pupils shows good levels of attainment. The standards of presentation and care are high and pride is taken in their work.
94. In all lessons observed the standard of teaching was at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well. They clearly state what the learning intentions for the lesson are, and inform pupils of what they want them to learn in the lesson. When summing up at the end they return to these intentions to ascertain if they have been achieved. In a very good lesson for Year 1 on the five senses, skilful questioning by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson established what pupils already knew about the subject. The enthusiasm of the teacher gave rise to pupils' enjoyment of the lesson. A contributory factor to the good rate of progress made by pupils is the questioning given to make pupils think. Teachers give very clear instructions on what to do but at the same time allow pupils to show initiative. In a very good Year 3/4 lesson, pupils were given very clear instructions on the principles for sorting materials. However, they were still able to show initiative by sorting to their own criteria. The pace in lessons is brisk and there is little wasted time due to the good methods used and the management of both pupils and ancillary staff. Good links are made with literacy by developing appropriate scientific terminology. Pupils are encouraged to record their findings neatly. Teachers set appropriate challenges to include all ability ranges, including those with special educational needs. Good systems are in place to record pupils' achievement and progress. Analyses of tests and assessments are very well used at present to guide future planning.
95. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. He has supported the raising of standards by working closely with colleagues, particularly in planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Currently there are few opportunities for him to see teaching in other classrooms and this has been identified as an area for development within his management responsibilities.

ART AND DESIGN

96. From the two lessons observed, one in each key stage, discussions with teachers and pupils and evidence from their work, pupils make good progress and attain standards above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Good support for pupils with special educational needs also enables them to make good progress. Standards are higher by the end of juniors than they were at the time of the last inspection. Successful implementation of national guidance supports teachers' planning. These are improvements since the last inspection.
97. Teaching is good overall and teachers develop pupils' art and design skills well so that they use a range of media effectively and confidently. They achieve high standards in two-dimensional work, such as pencil, pastels, paint and textiles, and in three-dimensional sculptures in paper, plastic or clay. Pupils make good progress because teachers build effectively on pupils' learning. For example, pupils use paint to produce different effects. Year 1 pupils use the pointillist style in a simple landscape when studying the work of Impressionist artists. Year 4 pupils create silk paintings of traditional Indian design and Year 6 pupils use watercolours. A good aspect of teaching is the way teachers demonstrate and explain techniques clearly and provide good opportunities for pupils to experiment for themselves. Pupils in the juniors use sketchbooks to plan ideas and investigate the use of different methods and media. They extend their use of shading to show shape and light sources, which they use increasingly in their work. Although pupils in the infants experiment with different techniques, they do not use sketchbooks to collect ideas or examples of their own work. Teachers make good use of the work of famous artists or art from different times and cultures to stimulate pupils' ideas and to develop an appreciation of art. Pupils discuss artists and their styles knowledgeably. For example, Year 6 pupils describe the work of Clarice Cliff as, "angular shapes with vivid colours".
98. Good links to other subjects, such as illustrated stories and collage urns from Ancient Greece, highlight the importance of art and contribute to the high standards. Pupils' enthusiasm extends beyond lessons when they organise a competition of 'pavement art' for St George's Day. Opportunities to work collaboratively, for example to plan and produce a tapestry based on the Bayeux tapestry, encourage pupils to build good relationships. However, although pupils experience a wide range of activities, they have few opportunities to choose their own materials or methods of representation. ICT is not yet being used effectively to extend learning in art and design.
99. The co-ordinator supports colleagues well informally. The systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements are based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Assessments are carried out at the end of every topic.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. There was one lesson seen during the inspection. This lesson, discussion with teachers and pupils and examination of their work, show that pupils make good progress and achieve standards as expected for their age in Year 2, but achieve above expectations when they leave the school at eleven years. This remains the same as at the time of the last inspection. A greater emphasis on designing shows improvement in this aspect but allows less time for making products or developing skills. The introduction of national guidelines supports teachers' planning, including addressing the needs of pupils with special educational needs, and provides suggestions for assessment. Reorganisation of tools and materials has ensured they are accessible to all classes. These are improvements since the previous inspection.
101. Pupils experience a range of tools and materials so that they select appropriately when making their own designs. Teachers enable pupils to investigate products and mechanisms to provide information about design and construction. For example, Year 1 pupils draw diagrams of pivots and Year 2 pupils use construction kits to build lighthouses. Teachers develop pupils'

skills well. Pupils learn to use wheels and axles, construct nets and understand and demonstrate cams and followers, for example. In Key Stage 2, design briefs, such as building a crane to lift a cream egg onto a three-brick high wall, challenge pupils well and enable them to use all their designing and making skills effectively. Teachers extend pupils' planning and evaluative skills soundly. By Year 6, pupils produce detailed annotated plans, make prototypes and evaluate their own and other products. They disassemble manufactured goods and identify components, such as cams and followers. They use electrical circuits and computer programs to move models. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their work.

102. Teachers emphasise safety when using tools such as saws, drills or the sewing machine. They enable pupils to measure, cut and join wood, paper, card, and textiles correctly. Pupils experience food technology, but this is difficult as there is no room set-aside for this purpose. However, there are school plans to remedy this in the future.
103. The co-ordinator has identified strengths and weaknesses in provision and standards but has little opportunity to formally monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm motivates pupils and teachers and increases their interest and enjoyment for design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

104. When pupils leave the school at eleven, standards of work in geography are at a level expected for pupils of this age. However, in some topics pupils make good progress and the standards attained exceed expectations; for example, the study of how people can cause damage and improvement to the environment in Year 5, shows good levels of geographical investigation and understanding. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards barely reached the expected level. The standards achieved by seven year olds are at the level expected due to their sound progress and are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
105. By the end of Year 2, pupils successfully compare life and features of West Mersea with those found in an island off the coast of Scotland. They are able to describe differences in environments and draw simple maps of their own locality. In a survey of pupils' and visitors' favourite holiday destinations they can explain in simple terms the physical and human features that people enjoy. In Year 6, pupils have appropriately extended their knowledge, skills and understanding of geography. They express well thought out views about how the environment is changing and how people can damage it. They have a good understanding of life in a village in Uganda, where the school has sponsored a child for a number of years. They express their own views about it and make comparisons with life in this country. Pupils demonstrate sound research skills in their topic work, including use of books, photographs and CD-ROMs.
106. The quality of teaching is good overall. The lessons are well prepared, and a range of stimulating resources is gathered to capture the pupils' interests. For example, in Year 4, travel brochures and maps prompted careful observation of temperatures, prices and features of holiday destinations. Relationships are good and pupils work hard and are enthusiastic. Pupils co-operate well and share ideas and information. ICT was used well in some lessons seen, for example to construct a database for a survey in Year 2 and to research information about Spain using a CD-ROM in Year 4.
107. The school provides good learning opportunities for all pupils to gain knowledge, skills and understanding through first-hand experiences. Teachers achieve this by giving pupils in Year 1, for example, focused tasks to achieve during a walk around the locality. Pupils in Key Stage 2 participate in a range of visits further afield. These enrich the learning for pupils. At the time of the last inspection there were problems with planning and assessment in geography. These have since been resolved. Planning is now based upon national guidelines to ensure pupils'

knowledge and skills build up as they move through the school. There is a straightforward system of assessment in place to check pupils' understanding of geography. As a result all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

HISTORY

108. By the time pupils leave the school, their knowledge and understanding of history are at a level expected for pupils of this age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The school has successfully maintained the profile of the subject within the limited time available and provides a satisfactory range of topics relevant to the age and interest of the pupils. In some of the topics studied, pupil's learning about history is good. Examples include the study of Ancient Greece in Year 6, which shows good levels of investigation skills and understanding.
109. By the age of seven, pupils have gained a good knowledge of famous people they have studied, such as Grace Darling. They know the story well and produce very good pieces of writing about her bravery. They record the differences between houses in Victorian times and the present day. They understand aspects of the passing of time and sequence events in the development of their own families. In Year 6, pupils develop a good knowledge of different historical periods, for example, during World War II. They produce good quality writing, reflecting considerable empathy with the child evacuees during this period. Research skills develop well and older pupils can explain how we find out about the past. They know the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence. Pupils across the school learn successfully from visits each year to places of historical interest, such as Kentwell Hall to find out about life in Tudor times. Literacy and numeracy skills develop appropriately in history. Pupils construct time lines and produce good pieces of extended writing.
110. It was not possible to observe any history lessons in Years 1 and 2 and so a judgement on the quality of teaching in those year groups cannot be made. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this gives depth to the pupils' learning. Good questioning skills enable pupils to understand historical events. Teachers give careful attention to important skills such as the evaluation of evidence. The use of resources is good and pupils were fascinated by the implications of ration books and identity cards in their study of World War II, a feature of this topic being an observation post set up in the classrooms. Pupils took it in turns to man this and made records of the weather in order to anticipate enemy bombing raids!
111. Pupils' attitudes to the learning of history are good. Pupils behave well, listen carefully to teachers and show respect for each other's contributions. They settle promptly to their work and show suitable independence in their research.
112. History is well managed throughout the school and the co-ordinator has maintained the provision of the subject despite constraints of time. Pupils are assessed at the end of each topic and this information is used to plan future work. The subject is monitored through oversight of teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

113. Standards in ICT are now in line with national expectations overall by the time pupils leave the school. The school has made sound progress in this subject since the last inspection in 1997, when the lack of provision was a key issue. Older pupils are achieving well and in a Year 6 lesson observed they were aware of their own skills and felt very confident in their abilities. Learning throughout the school is satisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. Teachers are now aware of the potential of the computer suite and are planning tasks appropriately for pupils of all abilities.

114. By the time pupils are seven, their attainment is in line with that expected of pupils of this age. Their basic keyboard and mouse skills are good and they confidently use the software programs the school has. Pupils experiment in creating their own pictures, combine text with pictures and enter data to create charts and graphs. Their word- processing skills are appropriately developed so they write sentences, and change fonts and letter sizes as well as editing their own work. Pupils have programmed a floor robot to follow a desired pathway and, recently, pupils have used a digital camera to record and present their own work.
115. Skills learnt in the infants are built on so that by the time they are eleven pupils' attainment continues to reach expected national levels. Word-processing skills are developed well and pupils produce finished work in various formats including columns for a newspaper front page or 'shaping' a poem. They combine text and imported artwork and with help can incorporate sound to make a presentation. A few pupils have experimented with multimedia software and are beginning to learn how to incorporate animations. Pupils are familiar with spreadsheets and with the use of simple formulae to plot different graphs. Pupils with computers at home are familiar with Internet and e-mail use but others have had very few opportunities at school, and consequently their knowledge of this aspect of ICT is not sufficiently developed. Pupils are becoming familiar with the use of digital cameras and scanners but as yet have had little or no experience of using sensing equipment in science investigations.
116. In other curriculum areas, pupils have used computers to research topics, in history and geography for example. In mathematics and science they have used the data collected to produce and interrogate graphs and charts. For example, older pupils compiled charts of 'Ancient Greeks' and recorded some of their characteristics. Readers of this chart were challenged to check the accuracy of the information shown. Pupils in both infant and junior classes can use CD-ROMs as research tools and download information found. This has been used to good effect, for example in studies on the Minoans, the first Greeks and Ancient Egypt.
117. Too few lessons were observed to make a judgement about the standard of teaching overall. Planning has improved enough for teachers to identify what skills are to be learnt. However, the assessment of how well pupils are doing is not sufficient to help teachers plan work to move pupils on quickly. This means teachers may waste time finding out what pupils can do, and pupils practising skills already mastered. The lack of resources in one lesson observed seriously hindered the learning of the pupils concerned. In this lesson pupils considered the use of e-mails and the teacher's planning required them to view these on screen. However, this facility was not available and their work was confined to using paper representations. Teachers continue to receive training in the use of computers and associated technology so that they are more confident.
118. Pupils observed using computers enjoyed doing so. In the computer suite when called upon to share equipment they did so very well. They took turns, shared ideas and suggested solutions when encountering difficulties. In discussions they expressed their preferences for certain programs and talked confidently about computer use generally.
119. The previous inspection made a key issue the need to increase attainment in ICT by improving resources and planning and by providing staff training. At that time attainment was below national expectations at seven and eleven and the progress of infants and juniors was unsatisfactory. Although the attainment of pupils at the end of the infants and juniors is now in line with national expectations, there are still weaknesses in what pupils know and can do.
120. The school has made significant gains since the last inspection through the provision of equipment and training. The co-ordinator for the subject is currently absent from school but she has produced the good plans which have brought the school this far and those designed to take it further. The school is well aware of the areas for development, including more staff training and the provision of more equipment. Resources are adequate with the exception of a suitable Internet connection, although there are plans to install this soon. In addition, the school will provide all staff with laptop computers and increase their use by pupils. Assessment and

the monitoring of lessons are areas that are still to be developed in the school's effort to raise standards.

MUSIC

121. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and standards are above those expected for pupils by the time they leave the school and are improved on the position noted at the time of the last inspection. There was abundant evidence during the week of the inspection to show that the standard of singing at both key stages is higher than is expected for children of these ages. Pupils' rhythm and diction are good and the children are able to follow the shape of a melody. They listen carefully enough to sing at the correct pitch and keep in tune. They sing regularly in the weekly hymn practices and they join in enthusiastically. There is very good evidence to show that pupils take part in many concerts and public performances and make good progress in this aspect of their musical development. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, learn well.
122. In a very good lesson, pupils in Year 2 had the opportunity to learn to play a range of classroom instruments and explore ways in which sounds can be made and changed. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sing in unison and match their voices satisfactorily to the shape of the melody. They keep time with the piano and taped accompaniment. Years 5 and 6 pupils copy simple rhythm patterns and show good control when playing percussion instruments and varying the volume to create a more interesting effect. They read and write simple graphic notation to represent the different length of notes. Pupils understand that sound can be used expressively. This was clear in a good Year 3/4 lesson where the teacher had chosen the music with great care and insight.
123. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good. Teachers' understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum for music is good. Planning is good and the scheme of work is a whole-school overview, allocating topics to year groups and particular terms. Teachers work from guidance issued by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority supplemented by materials from the co-ordinator.
124. There is evidence of good, and continuing, extra-curricular activity. The school has a large choir that meets regularly. Although the children are offered the opportunity to learn to play an orchestral instrument, only keyboards are being taught due to the lack of take up of the instruments offered. Resources for teaching the music curriculum are good, and are well organised. Assessment in music is effective, and dependent on individual teachers and the close attention paid by the co-ordinator.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Standards of attainment at end of both key stages are in line with national expectations. During their time at school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. By the time pupils are seven, their attainments in gymnastics and dance are in line with those expected of this age of pupil. No games or swimming lessons were observed but other evidence suggests attainments in these areas are also in line with expectations. Pupils employ a range of simple balances and control their movements well when performing short sequences. They understand the need to move safely and to have a warm up before beginning their work. They link movements together, often using music as guide or stimulus. Pupils also combine well with partners and use each other to enhance balances and movements.
126. By the time they are eleven pupils have developed their skills appropriately and reach levels of attainment in games, dance and gymnastic expected of pupils this age. No swimming lessons were observed but other evidence shows that the overwhelming majority is able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school. In games, pupils show skill and accuracy in

passing and dribbling balls in different activities, such as when playing basketball and football. In gymnastics they have developed earlier skills somewhat so that they can devise and perform longer sequences. However, many pupils have a limited repertoire of quality movements, able to perform, for example, a forward roll but without much finesse. Pupils in all year groups in the juniors have good perceptual skills evident in team games when looking for a team-mate to pass to. They are also very perceptive when watching and assessing others' performances, noticing some of the finer points in the movements seen.

127. Overall the standard of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and good in the infants. Lessons given by the co-ordinators in the juniors were also good. In these lessons the teachers' focus was on getting pupils to concentrate on improving the quality of their performance. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher urged and encouraged her pupils to think hard about the shapes of their bodies and limbs when making 'clown' movements. Pupils were chosen to demonstrate quality movements and others encouraged to see exactly what made them good so they might also improve. In the older classes, pupils were again told to concentrate on improving the quality of their balances and movements. Pupils acted as observers and gave reasons why they thought something was good or not. Their teachers then used these remarks to give the performers the means to improve. In one Year 4 lesson, the teacher then extended this by asking performers to practise again by using the advice. The performance was then looked at again. The benefit of this approach was that not only did the performer improve but the rest of the class also learnt how. In these lessons the teachers' subject knowledge was very good, enabling them to know how pupils could improve. For example, pupils finding twisting jumps difficult found success once the teacher had broken the skills down into their component parts.
128. Pupils take part in physical education lessons with great relish and obviously enjoy the work and tasks set. They observe health and safety matters well and try hard to improve their performance. They give and accept criticism well, understanding points are made to help them improve and respond accordingly.
129. The development of sporting activities is a school focus this year. The subject co-ordinators are working hard to create and sustain interest in a range of sports which pupils might continue outside of school. Inter-school sport has declined in the local area in recent times and again the co-ordinators are attempting to revive it. The findings of this inspection are very similar to those of the previous one. Both co-ordinators are keen, enthusiastic and understand what needs to be done to raise the standards of teaching, learning and attainment. Teachers are supported by a scheme that identifies skills to be learned. The expertise of the co-ordinators is not being used to its best effect as there is insufficient monitoring of lessons to share good practice.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. Standards of attainment at end of both key stages are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. During their time at school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. This remains the same as at the time of the last inspection. However, an improved range of artefacts ensures pupils gain a better understanding of aspects of different religions. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils begin to understand the importance of the Mezuzah to Jews when examining one and seeing how it is used. Teachers base their planning on the new guidelines of the school, national guidance and the locally agreed syllabus. This enables pupils to extend their understanding of different religions as they move through the school. They learn the traditions and beliefs of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Visits to all the local churches on the island broaden their understanding of the similarities and differences of Christian worship. Pupils have opportunities to consider moral issues, such as keeping people prisoner, and begin to interpret stories from religion. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to compare religions or to discuss or reflect on their own religious beliefs.

131. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a basic understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christians, Jews and Hindus. They describe their ideas about Christian love and express opinions about global moral issues. They consider the cycle of life when reading Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man' and later, when studying Hindi beliefs. Although pupils learn about people's different views, such as how the world began, there is little emphasis on comparing religious beliefs or practices. However, pupils show respect and tolerance for different religions and other people's opinions.
132. There were too few lessons seen to make an overall judgement on teaching in Key Stage 2. Overall, teaching is sound in Key Stage 1. The organisation of the timetable enables teachers to teach religious education every week or in blocks of lessons. This results in some year groups covering more religious education than others at this time in the year. Teachers accept pupils' ideas and give them time to answer questions fully. Pupils learn respect for religions and religious artefacts through the example given by teachers. This encourages them to ask sensible questions, such as, "Why did you become a vicar?" and "What is the difference between a vicar and a rector?" when visiting a local church. Teachers effectively relate new learning to pupils' own lives. For example, Year 2 pupils create attractive collage pictures to express their positive feelings during special celebrations. Clear explanations and reinforcement of new vocabulary ensure pupils develop a secure understanding of different religions. Opportunities for pupils to investigate or express their opinions through writing, drawings or discussion are sometimes limited. For example, in a Year 1 lesson a lengthy explanation and demonstration prevented pupils drawing and decorating an artefact. Although teachers make good links to other subjects, such as Hinduism in India when studying that country in geography, they do not make use of ICT to develop pupils' skills in religious education.
133. The co-ordinator is able to gain an overview of the subject through informal discussions and looking at displays. There are no formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has not yet been able to identify fully the strengths and weaknesses in the provision of the school or in pupils' achievements.