

INSPECTION REPORT

GREENSTED INFANT SCHOOL

Basildon, Essex

LEA area: Basildon

Unique reference number: 112863

Headteacher: Mrs Patricia Hardy

Reporting inspector: Godfrey Bancroft
3687

Dates of inspection: 9 - 12 July 2001

Inspection number: 194793

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kirby Road Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS14 1RX
Telephone number:	01268 552535
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Barber
Date of previous inspection:	19 - 21 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3687	Godfrey Bancroft	Registered inspector	Science Information technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it ? The schools results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught ? How well is the school led and managed ? What should the school do to improve further ?
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils ? How well does the school work in partnership with parents ?
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	Special educational needs Equal opportunities How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils ?
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage English Music Religious education	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7 - 11
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12 - 13
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13 - 14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14 - 15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15 - 16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16 - 17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17 - 18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18 - 19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20 - 23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24 - 33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This infant school provides for children aged three to seven. There are 167 pupils on roll, with an additional 51 children who attend the nursery part time. The great majority of pupils are of white British origin and only one speaks English as an additional language. The area served by the school suffers from high unemployment and the crime rate is amongst the highest found in the Basildon district. The social abilities and language development of many children at the time they start in the nursery are well below those expected. Three pupils have statements of special educational need and a further 55 are on the register for those with special educational need. There are currently 52 pupils eligible for free school meals. These figures are very high compared to national averages. The school is part of the Basildon Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school in which standards, although still below those found nationally in some subjects, are rising steadily. The quality of teaching is good and the leadership and management of the recently appointed headteacher is strong and effective. This means the school is well placed to continue the current pattern of improvement. In view of this, and the good progress made by pupils, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and the quality of support provided by teachers' assistants is good.
- The strong and effective leadership provided by the headteacher.
- The good provision made to ensure the progress and care of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their learning.
- The shared commitment to improvement of all those involved with the school.

What could be improved

- Attendance.
- The standards achieved in speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- Communication and relationships with those parents who do not have a positive view of the school.
- The role of the governing body in monitoring the quality of education provided by the school and in understanding its strengths and weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected previously in May 1997. Since then satisfactory improvement has been made. Improvements in the standards achieved by pupils and the progress they make has been steady. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, particularly for English, mathematics and science in Year 2. Since the arrival of the recently appointed headteacher, arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision and identifying the training needs of teachers have improved significantly. The curriculum has been restructured and takes appropriate account of the requirements of the National Curriculum and of what pupils are expected to know, understand and do. Appropriate targets are also set for the attainment and progress each pupil is expected to make.

The involvement of the governing body in establishing targets for the school's improvement remains unsatisfactory and governors are not well placed to understand fully the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There have been significant recent changes to the membership of the governing body and a training programme for governors to address these issues is in place.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E	E	E	E
Writing	E	E	D	C
Mathematics	E	C	C	B

Key

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

The table above shows that pupils' attainment in reading was well below average last year. Standards for writing were below average and those for mathematics were close to the national average. Inspection evidence finds a similar picture amongst the current group of seven year olds, except that standards of work in mathematics are below average. However, standards have risen steadily, particularly in mathematics and science, and recently the school received a national School Achievement Award in recognition of this improvement, which is attributable to the good quality of teaching found in Year 2. In comparison with similar schools, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, last year's pupils did better than usual in mathematics, as expected in writing, but worse than usual in reading. Standards in science are typical for pupils of this age. Attainment in other subjects is close to that expected for pupils' ages, other than in geography and history where it falls below the levels expected. Standards are not as high as they should be, partly because of the high rate of pupils' absence, which is around 10 per cent at any one time.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, achieve well and make good progress. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is low, but they make rapid progress, especially in the reception classes. By the end of the reception year many achieve standards that are close to those expected for their age. Progress is slower in Year 1 and increases again in Year 2. This reflects difficulties in recruiting and retaining Year 1 teachers. This situation has been rectified for September 2001 by the appointment of two permanent teachers.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils understand the impact of their actions on others and show appropriate respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Very poor. Attendance very low.

Poor attendance poses a significant challenge to the school. Many pupils are absent for a high proportion of time when they should be at school and this means they do not achieve as well as they should. Not enough is done by the school or by parents to ensure that pupils attend regularly and on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall - 29	Good	Good	na

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.

Overall the quality of teaching is good and is a strength of the school. Inspection findings show teaching to be good in over 66 per cent of lessons and very good in over 25 per cent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and the activities planned ensure children enjoy this stage of their education. However, it is good overall for the Foundation Stage of children's education due to good teaching in the reception classes. Teaching for English and mathematics is good throughout the school. At the time of the previous inspection, teaching for English, mathematics and science in Year 2 was unsatisfactory. Teaching for this year group is now invariably good. Several parents expressed concern about the poor quality of teaching provided for Year 1 pupils. This was due to the school's inability to recruit permanent teachers. Teaching for this year group was good during the inspection and permanent teachers take up posts in September.

The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in English and mathematics lessons. However, insufficient attention is given to the teaching of these skills in other subjects.

The main strengths of the teaching are based on the very good provision made to ensure the progress of individual pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers cater well for the needs of these pupils and they are supported very well by teaching assistants. Relationships between pupils and teachers and other adults are very good and pupils are managed well. As a result, pupils behave well and this contributes significantly to the good progress that many make. Teachers frequently provide activities that often capture pupils' interest, helping many to become increasingly confident and enthusiastic learners.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The weaknesses evident at the time of the previous inspection have been eradicated. The curriculum is well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils and provides all the features required by law. Standards in geography are affected adversely by the lack of opportunities for field work. There are very few extra curricular activities and this is a weakness.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very Good. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met effectively. The special educational needs coordinator does an excellent job identifying, monitoring and planning work for pupils on the special needs register.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is only one pupil for whom English is a second language. This pupil speaks English fluently, is included in all the activities the school offers, and is making good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education is satisfactory. Provision for their moral and social education is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and their assistants know the pupils well and the quality of care is good. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are weak and there are shortcomings in the procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science and during the Foundation Stage. However, arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and personal development are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The recently appointed Headteacher is making a significant and very positive impact on the school. Senior managers, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator fulfil their duties well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil the duties required of them by law. The lack of involvement of governors in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education means they are not in a position to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and remains a weakness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Arrangements for the Headteacher and senior managers to monitor the school's performance and to take appropriate action in response to findings are good. Progress on this feature is recent and rapid.
The strategic use of resources	Staff, accommodation and resources for learning are adequate and used appropriately. Difficulties in recruiting Year 1 teachers have been overcome. Educational priorities are supported through sound financial planning.

Arrangements for planning school improvement are effective. Appropriate targets for development and improvement are set and the allocation of resources is linked suitably to these. Criteria by which the success of planned improvements will be measured are realistic and suitably linked to rising standards. The governors, headteacher and senior managers apply the principles of best value effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like the school. • Children are making good progress. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities offered outside lessons. • The extent to which the school works closely with parents. • The amount of homework given to children. • Information about how their children are getting on. • The leadership and management of the school.

Only 17 per cent of parents returned questionnaires, making findings less reliable. Inspectors agree with those features that please parents most about the school.

Inspectors agree with parents that extra curricular activities and homework arrangements could be better. The range of activities currently offered outside lessons is unsatisfactory. The amount of homework provided for children varies. Provision in Year 2 is good. However, provision in Year 1 has been weak due to frequent changes in the teachers for that year group. The school should develop a clear and explicit policy for the provision of homework and ensure that this is communicated to parents.

Inspectors disagree with other assertions. The school makes every effort to work closely with parents. It is particularly effective in its work with the parents whose children have special education needs. Opportunities for parents to visit the school are similar to those found elsewhere. However, many parents choose not to take advantage of these opportunities. Reports about how children are getting on are generally good. The leadership provided by the recently appointed headteacher is having a significant and positive impact.

(The Foundation Stage refers to the provision made for children before they are five. The foundation subjects are those contained within the National Curriculum, other than English, mathematics, science and religious education.)

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of the most recent national tests (2000), taken when pupils are seven, indicate attainment in reading is well below average. Standards for writing are below average and those for mathematics are close to the national average. Inspection evidence gives a similar picture, although standards seen in mathematics are lower than those indicated by the tests. However, standards are rising steadily, particularly in mathematics and science and recently the school received a national Achievement Award in recognition of this improvement. The improvement is attributable to the good quality of teaching found in Year 2. Overall standards are close to those found at the time of the previous inspection with the exceptions of history in which standards are lower and information and communication technology in which standards have risen. Standards are not as high as they should be, partly because of the high rate of pupils' absence, which is around 10 per cent at any one time.
2. In comparison with similar schools, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, attainment in reading falls below the level expected, that for writing is similar, and that for mathematics is above. The proportion of pupils attaining at levels higher than those expected is very low in reading. However, in writing, where overall standards are below average, the proportion of higher attaining pupils is close to that found in other schools. The proportion of higher attaining pupils in mathematics is also close to that found in other schools.
3. Standards in English amongst the current group of seven year olds are below average and are not as high as those found in mathematics and science. Attainment in reading is well below average and writing remains below average. Inspection findings show attainment in science to be close to the average. Attainment in other subjects is close to that expected for pupils' ages, other than in geography and history where it falls below the levels expected.
4. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, achieve well and make good progress. This is because arrangements to include these pupils in all aspects of learning are effective. The attainment of many children at the time they enter the nursery is well below that expected, especially in speaking and listening and their personal and social development. By the end of the Foundation Stage of their education many have made rapid progress, achieving standards that are close to those expected for their age. The rate at which pupils make progress slows down during their time in Year 1 and increases again in Year 2. This is because, at the time of the inspection, the school had difficulty in appointing permanent teachers for the Year 1 classes and pupils have been taught for the past year by a succession of temporary and supply teachers. This situation has been rectified for September 2001 by the appointment of two permanent teachers for this age group.
5. During recent years girls have attained higher standards than boys. The most significant differences have been in reading and writing with a narrower gap evident in mathematics. At the time of the inspection the attainment of girls and boys is similar. The abilities of pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects are satisfactory, although opportunities to do this are few. Their abilities to apply their literacy skills in other subjects are weak due to their poor development in reading and writing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The school has maintained the high standards that were reported at the time of the previous inspection. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good and pupils' personal development is satisfactory.
7. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good attitudes to their learning. They are keen to learn, well motivated and interested in their work. They listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions. Many are keen to ask and answer questions and participate in discussions. For

example Year 2 pupils in a science lesson about forces were keen to answer questions about what will happen if two marbles collide.

8. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. This creates a pleasant atmosphere in the school that supports learning well. Pupils understand the standards of behaviour expected and respond well to the recently introduced school rules. At lunchtime they use their 'lunchtime voices' in the dining hall. They play well together in the playground. Pupils work in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour. Around the school pupils are friendly and polite. The school has had no exclusions in the past year.
9. Relationships in the school between pupils and their teachers and teachers' assistants are good despite the number of staff changes some pupils have experienced. These contribute to their motivation and consequently to their learning. Pupils settle to work quickly and are able to work independently and in small groups. They co-operate well and share equipment and resources.
10. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils generally listen carefully to each other during lessons and respect the feelings and values of others. They spontaneously celebrate the successes of lower attaining pupils and those with special needs. As they progress through the school, pupils become increasingly aware of, and contribute to, the caring ethos. They conscientiously carry out the classroom tasks given to them, such as returning registers to the office.
11. In contrast to these strengths, levels of attendance are very poor and have declined significantly since the previous inspection. Levels of attendance are very low in comparison with other schools. Many pupils have poor and irregular patterns of attendance. Almost half of pupils in the school have attended for less than 80 per cent of the time. In Year 1 overall attendance falls below 90 per cent. This high level of absence significantly impedes the learning and progress of many pupils. A variety of contributory factors affect overall figures. These include pupils staying at home for health reasons, holidays and family circumstances. The most significant, however, is the casual attitudes of many parents to the importance of regular attendance. Many pupils start school and leave during the year and whilst this affects attendance figures, it is not a major factor. Additional factors contributing to the low levels of attendance are the lack of regular procedures to monitor attendance and follow up absence. There is no whole school system to encourage pupils to attend more regularly. Registers are not always carefully marked or reasons for absence correctly recorded. Unauthorised absences are well above the national average. The school enquires about pupils when they are absent but many parents are not available when they are telephoned. The majority of pupils arrive punctually for school, although there are a small number who are frequently late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. Overall the quality of teaching is good and is a strength of the school. Inspection findings show teaching to be good in over 66 per cent of lessons and very good in over 25 per cent. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and the activities planned ensure children enjoy this stage of their education. However, it is good overall for the Foundation Stage of children's education due to the good teaching in the reception classes. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. At the time of the previous inspection teaching for English, mathematics and science in Year 2 was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching for this year group is now invariably good. Several parents expressed concern about the poor quality of teaching provided for Year 1 pupils. During the past year the school has been unable to recruit permanent teachers for this year group and pupils have been taught by a succession of temporary and supply teachers. This has affected the quality of teaching and learning adversely. However, during the inspection the quality of teaching provided for this year group was good and permanent teachers are appointed from September 2001. Overall teaching for pupils between the ages of five and seven is good, helping pupils to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
13. The main strengths of the teaching are due to the very good provision made for ensuring the progress of individual pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers cater

well for the needs of these pupils and the support provided by teaching assistants is very good. Teachers and their assistants have established very good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. As a result, pupils behave well and this contributes significantly to the good progress that many pupils make. The interesting activities provided capture pupils' interest, many of whom are becoming increasingly confident and enthusiastic learners.

14. Lessons are usually planned well and give due regard to the importance of meeting the needs of pupils from all ability groups. This is particularly true of English where the Early Reading Research programme is having a positive effect on standards. Considerable thought and time are given to lesson planning in mathematics, ensuring consistency throughout the school. The enthusiastic teaching of science, particularly in Year 2, often inspires pupils and they, in turn, become enthusiastic learners.
15. Within English and mathematics, the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has made a significant impact. Teachers apply the principles of both strategies effectively and this is helping standards to rise. However, not enough attention is given to extending pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
16. Teachers know their pupils well and respond effectively to their needs during lessons. Strategies for day to day assessments are used very effectively and enable teachers and their assistants to respond promptly to the needs of their pupils. This practice is developed well and is a strong feature of the good teaching and support pupils receive.

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

17. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced, providing a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for pupils. Provision includes all those features required by law.
18. The quality and impact of the curriculum are enhanced by the opportunities provided for pupils to develop their individual learning skills. For example, pupils have good access to computers, both in the classrooms and in a dedicated area. The provision for outdoor play for the youngest children is good. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop fieldwork in geography, resulting in standards that are lower than those expected.
19. There is appropriate equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The provision for Foundation Stage is satisfactory and reflects the demands of the early learning goals set for this age group. Overall, the curriculum has improved since the time of the previous inspection and the content is now matched more closely to pupil's needs and abilities. However, in some of the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum the school's planning does not take sufficient account of the levels of attainment expected of pupils. This means opportunities to extend pupils' learning are sometimes restricted.
20. Provision for English and mathematics is good. Opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in other areas of the curriculum are limited. Positive examples include, Year 1 pupils using their knowledge of number to process data and produce charts, and Year 2 pupils using their writing skills to produce a sequenced account of the Great Fire of London. Pupils are encouraged to become independent in their learning and are also helped to work effectively in small groups. Both the National Numeracy Strategy and the Literacy Strategy have been implemented satisfactorily and are having a positive impact on standards.
21. The opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs are very good. These, coupled with the excellent support these pupils receive ensures they make good progress. Their needs are identified at an early stage. The effective provision is enhanced by the good liaison between class teachers and the special educational needs coordinator.
22. The range of extra curricular activities is unsatisfactory and parents are concerned about this. However, some pupils do take part in local music festivals. Visits to local places of interest are

available to pupils, but these are limited. Provision for play at lunchtimes and breaks is good. It includes a recently installed outdoor play area and pupils are encouraged successfully to take part in play, for example, skipping games have been introduced to promote this.

23. The school maintains good links with the local educational community. The links created through the local Educational Action Zone (EAZ) and with a nearby 'beacon school' have resulted in improved provision for the pupils by providing training for teaching and non-teaching staff. The support team from the local education authority has helped the school to establish routines for behaviour management. There are effective links with the adjoining junior school and pupils from local secondary schools visit for work experience. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are helped by the good quality of guidance provided at the time they change schools.
24. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Daily assemblies contribute to pupil's spiritual awareness. At these times pupils have good opportunities to consider important moral issues and to reflect upon their own and the achievements of others.
25. The school is a quiet and orderly place in which pupils have a clear sense of responsibility for their own actions. This is achieved through pupils reaching agreement over their own rules for their conduct and behaviour. These are re-enforced effectively by displays around the school and in the classrooms. Pupils show respect for the achievements of others and provision for their moral development is good.
26. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop socially. In lessons they are expected to work closely with others, sharing their ideas and supporting those who find things difficult. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in activities and regularly take an active part in assemblies. The good relationships between pupils enhance the opportunities for them to develop in a sociable and responsible way.
27. The opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness are satisfactory. Opportunities in music and art are limited, although the library is well stocked with books on western art. However, the pupils are encouraged with increasing success to recognise and respect people of other faiths and cultures. This is reflected in displays around the school and in the choice of books available in classrooms.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS ?

28. The school continues to provide a caring environment that meets the wide variety of personal and educational needs of pupils. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and are committed to providing a high standard of care. Pupils feel safe and secure and this creates a good atmosphere in which they can learn.
29. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good overall. Child protection is taken very seriously. Local child protection procedures are followed and an appropriate school policy is in place. Staff refer any concerns to either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. However, there is no regular pattern of training for staff, including new staff, to ensure they are clear about the procedures. Day to day first aid and care for pupils who are unwell are satisfactory, although there is no designated room to treat minor injuries. The school has good procedures to ensure that staff are aware of pupils with medical conditions.
30. Monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory. Unexplained absences are followed up but procedures are not sufficiently rigorous to improve attendance or reduce the high levels of unauthorised absence. Registers are not checked regularly and there is no formal system to identify the high number of pupils with unsatisfactory and irregular patterns of attendance. The school has worked with the education welfare officer to support pupils with particularly poor patterns of attendance. This has not been effective in reducing the high levels of absence in the school. There are no formal systems for monitoring pupils who arrive late.

31. Teachers assess and record the attainment and progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science accurately. However, not enough is done to record the progress and attainment of pupils in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. Current procedures do not take sufficient account of the recommended levels by which attainment is judged. In the nursery and reception classes assessment procedures are not linked closely enough to the early learning goals by which pupils' achievements are measured. Older pupils are aware of how well they are doing because targets for their improvement are set by their teachers and shared with them. Good use is made of the information gained from assessments to identify areas of weakness and to decide what should be taught next. The best practice is evident in English, mathematics and science. However, this has not been extended into other subjects.
32. Pupils' personal development is well supported through the caring atmosphere in the school and the good relations that exist between teachers and their pupils. Despite the turnover of staff, class teachers supported by their assistants know pupils well and understand their individual needs and difficulties. They use this knowledge to informally monitor personal development and frequently discuss any issues or concerns with the headteacher or special needs co-ordinator. Where necessary, individual systems to monitor and track those pupils causing concern are in place, although there is no standardised system for class teachers to record or monitor pupils' personal development. Pupils' achievements are regularly recognised and rewarded in assemblies.
33. The procedures to encourage good behaviour are effective and are reflected in the orderly atmosphere in the school. The school is working closely with a behaviour support team to develop a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Expectations of how pupils will behave are well established and effective. They are reinforced in a variety of ways, including by the photographs displayed in the hall. There is a new framework for rewards and sanctions. Teachers use this well together with their individual discretion to manage behaviour in classrooms effectively. Bullying in the school is rare and appropriate procedures are in place to deal with any incidents when they occur.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS ?

34. Many parents are supportive of the school. Few returned the questionnaire however, and of these a significant minority expressed concerns about several areas of school life. Most feel their children like school. They feel they are expected to work hard, make good progress and are encouraged to become mature and sensible. The inspection findings support these positive views. A small number of parents express concerns about teaching and behaviour, but inspection evidence finds these features are good. Some parents do not feel the school is well led and managed, not all feel comfortable approaching the school and they do not feel they receive sufficient information about their children's progress. They are unhappy about levels of homework, do not feel the school works closely with them and feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum. Inspection evidence supports some of the issues expressed by parents but not all their concerns are justified. For example the information provided to parents about their children's progress is very similar to that offered by most schools and the school is led and managed well. In contrast, parental concerns about the very limited range of extra curricular activities are justified.
35. Many parents are not actively involved in the life of the school or the education of their children. This is a change from the previous inspection. The new headteacher is eager to develop a full partnership with parents and soon after taking up her role invited them to information meetings. Few attended. Parents have also been invited to attend the fun sports days and end of term assemblies. Induction procedures into the nursery are satisfactory and staff make home visits. Class teachers are available for parents to see on a daily basis if they wish. Currently there are several initiatives to encourage parents to work more closely with the school and the headteacher is keen to develop these further. Few parents help in classrooms or with other school activities. Some did accompany the recent school trip to Colchester Zoo and a small fundraising committee is making a significant contribution to the provision of new playground equipment.

36. Some parents make insufficient contribution to their children's learning at school or at home. From the nursery onwards, pupils are encouraged to take reading books home but a regular system is not in place. A few parents do share books with their children and listen to them read. Home school reading diaries are in place but are not being used as a regular method of communication. Pupils in Year 2 receive homework but a consistent pattern has not been established for all classes, particularly Year 1 which has experienced a number of staff changes. There is no homework policy and parents have not received any details about the work their children will receive each week.
37. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory overall but there is one significant shortcoming. They are not provided with regular information about the curriculum or topics being covered in lessons during the term. Curriculum focus meetings are not yet a regular feature in the school although the headteacher plans to introduce them next term. This considerably reduces the opportunities for those parents who wish to assist their children at home. Newsletters and notices on classroom windows do provide information about school matters, key dates and forthcoming events. The prospectus contains basic information about the school. However, the governors' annual report does not include all the information required. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through two formal consultation meetings as well as an additional, optional, opportunity to discuss their child's written report. Annual written reports inform parents about what their child can do and include brief targets for future learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. At the time of the previous inspection, serious weaknesses were identified in the leadership and management of the school. Some of these weaknesses are still evident. However, significant and rapid improvements have been made following the recent appointment of a permanent headteacher. The morale of the staff is improving and a clear educational direction, to which all subscribe, is established. The capacity for the governing body, headteacher and senior managers to ensure the continued improvement of the school is strong.
39. The recently appointed headteacher liaises closely with the governing body and with colleagues, ensuring that they are kept informed of the identified priorities for improvement and the proposed strategies to bring these improvements about. The previous school improvement plan was not sufficiently precise in its identification of the areas for improvement or how these would be achieved. Following the appointment of the headteacher, a short term action plan is in place and this addresses the immediate priorities for development. These include the health and safety of pupils, improving the environment of the school, agreeing approaches for teaching reading and recording pupils' progress, establishing systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education, enhancing the role of teachers' assistants and improving the quality of teaching for pupils in Year 1. How these priorities will be addressed and how their success will be judged is clearly identified. Good progress has already been made towards addressing the issues identified.
40. The headteacher undertakes regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision for all year groups. Her findings are recorded clearly, shared with the teachers concerned and appropriate action is taken to ensure any necessary improvement takes place. Since the time of the previous inspection, the role of subject leaders has been improved. They are appropriately involved in monitoring the quality of provision for their subjects. The best practice is evident in English, mathematics and science where classroom observations have taken place. This aspect of provision is developed less well for other subjects. The school is aware of this and has plans to address the need for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision for other subjects. Assessment data and test results are analysed to identify any areas of weakness and decide how results might be improved and standards raised.
41. The governing body fulfils those duties required of it by law. However, weaknesses are still evident in the capacity of the governing body to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and to be involved in shaping its educational direction. This is because governors are not involved sufficiently, at first hand, in monitoring and evaluating the quality of

education. Many members of the governing body are recent appointees and the curriculum committee of the governing has only recently come into being. Because of this, there have been few opportunities for governors to visit classrooms, look at samples of pupils' work or to discuss developments for subjects with subject leaders. A programme of training to help governors fulfil these duties is in hand.

42. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers and the performance management of staff are in place. These are judged to be effective by an external adviser and are making a useful contribution to improvement by setting targets for development and identifying the training needs of staff. Arrangements for the induction of new staff and for the training of new teachers are good.
43. The support of educational priorities through sound financial planning is another area of improvement since the time of the previous inspection of the school. These are now suitably linked through the school improvement plan and its identified priorities. Governors, in partnership with the headteacher, are suitably involved in financial planning and are kept aware of the progress of spending under particular budget headings. However, arrangements to consider the impact of addressing priorities in relation to raising standards are not yet sufficiently refined. Support staff use new technology appropriately to ensure the day to day and financial administration of the school is efficient and effective.
44. Specific grants allocated to the school are used effectively for their designated purpose. The use of funding to support the progress of pupils with special educational needs is used especially well. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. However, the recruitment and retention of staff is a difficulty faced by the school. The contribution made by support staff to the progress pupils make is a particular strength of the school. The available accommodation and resources for learning are adequate and satisfactory for their designated purpose.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to maintain the current rate of improvement the governing body, headteacher and staff should
 - take steps to improve pupils' attendance by regularly reinforcing its importance and establishing effective systems for monitoring. (Paragraphs: 1, 11, 30, 63)
 - raise standards in English, including speaking and listening, reading and writing by the continued use of the recently introduced strategies to improve spelling and encouraging pupils to read at home. (Paragraphs: 1, 2, 3, 5, 55, 56, 57, 58)
 - improve the quality of communications with parents and improve relationships with those parents who do not have a positive view of the school by the continued promotion of the many positive features of the school. (Paragraphs: 34, 37)

- develop the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education provided in order that they may have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school by providing training for governors and opportunities for them to undertake this duty. (Paragraph: 41)

In addition to the above key issues the school should consider the following lesser issues

- improving arrangements for assessing children's progress during the Foundation Stage of their education, making them more relevant to the early learning goals for this age group. (Paragraphs: 31, 47)
- improving arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum to give appropriate regard to the recommended levels of attainment for each subject. (Paragraphs: 19, 31, 82, 86, 102, 106, 110, 114)
- ensuring appropriate homework is set regularly for each year group and that parents are aware of what the homework will be and when it will be set. (Paragraphs: 34, 36)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	24%	41%	33%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	R – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25.5	167
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	R – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	55

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	10.1
National comparative data	4.3

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.26
National comparative data	0.3

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	30	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	24
	Girls	23	25	28
	Total	29	42	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (71)	75 (71)	93 (83)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	22	25
	Girls	23	26	28
	Total	38	48	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (65)	86 (78)	95 (59)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	104
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: R - Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.87
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: R - Y2

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	122

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 01
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	£
Total income	490533
Total expenditure	454560
Expenditure per pupil	2361
Balance brought forward from previous year	22297
Balance carried forward to next year	35973

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	212
Number of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	17	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	6	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	51	14	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	9	53	12	24	3
The teaching is good.	35	47	6	6	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	40	14	11	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	43	6	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	54	3	6	3
The school works closely with parents.	20	37	20	17	6
The school is well led and managed.	23	31	9	14	23
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	51	6	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	12	26	32	18

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

46. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. There is a school nursery and two reception classes. Children are admitted to the reception classes in the term in which they become five years of age. At the time of the inspection there were 51 children attending the nursery part time and 55 children in the reception classes.
47. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected. During their time in the nursery most children make satisfactory progress. However, by the time they enter the reception classes levels of attainment are still below those expected from children of the same age nationally. In the reception classes they make good progress and most are likely to achieve the national expectations in all areas of their learning by the time they are ready to begin the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs, the more able children and children from different social groups make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The support provided for children with special educational needs is effective. Procedures for assessing children when they enter the nursery and reception classes are satisfactory and detailed records are kept of each child's progress. The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is good. Teaching is carefully planned to ensure that the curriculum provision is appropriate for these children. Appropriate emphasis is placed on children enjoying their learning. Teachers are aware of the 'stepping stones' for children before they achieve the early learning goals for their age. However, assessment procedures are not always related to these goals. The school is in the process of improving the assessment procedures to bring them into line with the requirements of the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development.

48. Most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year. When children enter the nursery many have personal and social skills which are well below those normally expected. Occasionally, a few children show signs of poor behaviour. However, adults in the classroom provide satisfactory support for these children. As a result, they quickly settle down to the routines of the classroom and begin to feel more secure. By the time children enter the reception classes, many show a good improvement in personal and social skills, although they still remain below the expectations for their age. During the reception year, children's social skills develop well. Most children show caring relationships with each other. They play well together in the classrooms and the playground. Teaching is good. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to talk about themselves in a secure atmosphere.

Communication, language and literacy.

49. By the end of the reception year, most children achieve the early learning goals for speaking and listening and for reading and writing. Many children enter the nursery with speaking and listening skills that are well below those normally expected. However, in the reception classes they make good progress in speaking and listening. They show increased confidence when asking and answering questions and in talking in front of the class. Most children are attentive listeners, both in class and in assemblies. They listen well to stories and enjoy looking at books. For example, nursery children like sharing a book about their visit to Colchester Zoo. They look at the photographs and begin to identify the same word when it re-occurs in the text. Children in the reception classes use picture clues well to help with their reading. Many read simple words accurately and a few children read more difficult texts with skill. Children are developing satisfactory writing skills. In the reception classes, the majority of children can write their own names and begin to construct simple sentences. They show satisfactory attention to writing correct letter shapes. A few children spell simple words correctly and others gain confidence by sounding out words to help them. Handwriting skills show satisfactory development. This was evident in a lesson when children were writing invitations for their class tea party. Teachers mark work carefully. Detailed comments are made about children's

work and these enable an individual child's progress to be carefully monitored. Teaching is good and children's learning is supported well by other adults in the classroom. Effective displays around the school aid children's learning.

Mathematical development.

50. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in mathematical development. Children can count to ten, with many showing an awareness of numbers beyond ten. They know different shapes, including circle, square and triangle. They compare different objects and use simple mathematical terms to describe their answer, such as longer than and shorter than. They begin to show confidence when recording their work. They pretend to be in a shop and use role-play to take money and give change. Teaching is good. Lessons and the use of resources are well-planned. Work is carefully matched to individual children's ability levels. Opportunities are made for children to develop their number skills in other areas of the curriculum. Children's learning is re-inforced through singing songs and saying counting rhymes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

51. By the end of the reception year most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children plant seeds and watch them grow. They talk about the animals they saw when they visited Colchester Zoo and understand how they are different from each other. They use magnifying glasses to look at objects. They understand the difference between smooth, shiny, rough and soft materials. They draw a picture of themselves and label some of the parts of their bodies. They know how a mouse works for a computer and use simple computer programs to assist in their learning. Teaching is good. Appropriate resources and classroom displays assist children's understanding.

Physical development.

52. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals for their physical development. In physical education lessons, children find different ways to move their bodies. They run and jump and skip and move quickly and safely when changing directions. They use all the space in the hall when pretending to be mice from a well-known nursery rhyme. They ride two and three wheeled bikes in the playground, with some children riding them unaided. They handle small tools with care and use playdough well to make different shapes. They make jam sandwiches and spread butter evenly on the bread. Teaching is good. Appropriate care is taken to ensure children's safety.

Creative development.

53. By the end of the reception year most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals for creative development. Nursery children use paper plates for their drawing of an elephant. They use different coloured paints and mix them together to obtain the effect they want. Reception children respond well to music. They sing a song about a clock and enjoy adding percussion instruments in the right places. They use role-play well to pretend that they are in a travel agents. They look at the holiday brochures and talk about them to each other. Teaching is good and other adults in the classroom provide effective support for children.
54. The resources are satisfactory and are readily available for children to use. There is a secure outdoor play area for nursery children. Reception children use the large playground or visit the nursery play area at convenient times.

ENGLISH

55. The 2000 results for seven year olds showed reading to be well below the national average and writing to be below the national average. When compared to similar schools, reading was below the national average and writing above the national average. There has been some improvement in the 2001 results, although these cannot yet be compared with the national average. Reading and spelling have improved, but attainment in writing has remained the same. Inspection evidence finds that by the age of seven, attainment is below the national average in speaking and listening and in reading and writing. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. There is a high proportion of pupils in the school with special educational needs and a number of pupils are absent at some time during a term. This depresses standards. Pupils enter the school with below average levels in all aspects of English. However, they achieve well in relation to their age and ability. Pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and those from different social backgrounds make good progress in their learning. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in both provision and the standard of pupils' work.
56. By the age of seven, pupils' speaking skills are below those expected from pupils of the same age. However, many pupils make good progress and begin to use an increasing range of appropriate vocabulary as they progress through the school. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson, when pupils were speaking in front of the class in connection with their work on the great fire of London. Some pupils were interviewing others about the fire. They spoke fluently and communicated well, using clear diction. Most pupils answer questions in class, but a few do not always appear confident when doing so. A few pupils are reluctant speakers and are nervous when speaking to others. Listening skills are similarly below expectation. Although pupils generally listen well in lessons and assemblies, some pupils show insufficient concentration and, as a result, find difficulty in understanding what has been said by teachers and other pupils.
57. Reading skills are below average by the age of seven. However, there are signs that reading skills are improving throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils are confident readers. They enjoy talking about books and use a range of different strategies to assist their reading. They say what their book is about and talk about the different characters. When reading is good, pupils understand the meaning of the text and their reading is fluent. When it is weaker, pupils make insufficient use of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. Their reading lacks expression.
58. Writing skills are below the national average. Although pupils quickly settle to writing tasks, their work is often limited in its use of interesting vocabulary. Pupils construct short sentences, but frequently forget about using correct punctuation. However, pupils' spelling skills are improving and many are able to use different spelling strategies to assist them. Handwriting skills are below expectation overall. A number of higher attaining pupils join up their writing by the age of seven and present their work well. There are some pupils, though, whose work is often untidy and their writing is difficult to read. Higher-attaining pupils show a good understanding of different spelling patterns and pay attention to accurate punctuation. They are able to write longer sentences and to make their writing interesting by using descriptive words. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson when pupils were writing a short poem about snails. A few pupils showed skill at using the descriptive words provided by the teacher. They used words, such as 'slippery' and 'slimy', correctly to bring their writing to life. In a lesson, Year 2 pupils wrote questions to ask the diarist Samuel Pepys about the fire of London. They wanted to know when and how the fire started. There are some examples of pupils writing confidently and fluently. However, a few pupils' writing shows little use of punctuation and little attention to capital letters. The school is aware of the need to develop a wider range of writing styles for pupils and to give more attention to extending their vocabulary.
59. Pupils' weak speaking, listening and literacy skills have an adverse effect on their work in other subjects. However, good opportunities are provided for Year 2 pupils in history and geography, where they write about the rainforests of the world and the animals that are found there. They also write their own version of some of the Bible stories told by Jesus in religious education lessons.

60. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned well and good use is made of resources to support pupils' work. When teaching is good, skilled use is made of questioning to extend pupils' understanding. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, their teacher enabled pupils to understand the difference between fact and fiction. This was done as a result of good, targeted questioning and had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Work is carefully marked and pupils are given a clear indication as to how their work might be improved. Targets are set for individual pupils and are discussed with them. This provision has been put in place since the previous inspection. Learning support assistants provide good support to both individual and groups of pupils. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well by teachers and this is shown in the improving results. The previous report found that there was some unsatisfactory teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection. The report also stated that some teachers had insufficient knowledge of how to teach reading and spelling. Satisfactory procedures are now in place. The Early Reading Research programme is used well by teachers. This regular, daily practice is aimed at enabling pupils to gain confidence and fluency in English and is proving to be effective.
61. The majority of pupils have good attitudes towards the subject. They settle to tasks and behave well. Although a few pupils are slow workers, they usually complete their work and show interest in what they do.
62. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Records are kept of pupils' attainment and their progress is carefully monitored. Resources are satisfactory and include a number of newly purchased books. The library is adequate and is in the process of being further developed by the school

MATHEMATICS

63. By the time they are seven, pupils attain standards below to those expected for their ages in all areas of mathematics (number, algebra, space, shape and measures). The 2000 national test results paint a similar picture and also show that standards are above those of similar schools. The improvement in standards between 1997-2000 was recognised by a School Achievement Award in 2001. However standards remain lower than they should be, partly because of the high rate of pupils' absence, which is around 10 per cent at any one time.
64. No marked differences in the performance of boys and girls were observed during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, of which there are over 30 per cent in each year group, are very well supported and make good progress.
65. By the age of seven, most pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100. They know some of the properties of two and three - dimensional shapes and can use measuring instruments with some accuracy. Pupils in Year 1 measure capacity using rice and water. They transfer the materials from one container to another using a standard measure and begin to estimate how many standard measures will fill a given container. Pupils become confident in halving and doubling numbers up to 100. They use information and communication technology to extend their learning. In Year 2 pupils add and subtract measures of capacity. They can count in 5s and 10s and can draw lines to the nearest centimetre. They also analyse and present collected data in different ways.
66. Teaching and learning throughout Years 1 and 2 are good, overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and 40 per cent of teaching is very good. Teaching is consistent in Years 1 and 2 because teachers have adopted a similar strategy. This enables them to set appropriate expectations of achievement for the pupils. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are good. A supportive and challenging atmosphere aids pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy their work. They are polite and well motivated, because of the effectiveness of the teaching. Towards the end of lessons teachers pose questions that help pupils monitor what has been learnt in a simple but effective way.
67. In the very good lessons, pupils are challenged to achieve targets to work against the clock. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them because teachers have good knowledge of the

subject and set high standards. Teaching is brisk and friendly and well matched to the abilities of the pupils. Classroom assistants are effective in helping individual pupils, whether they be high or low attainers. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their learning. This allows them to make good progress. Teachers use information and communications technology to support pupils' learning and this is particularly effective among the lower attainers. Teachers make very good use of the final session of each lesson where pupils are expected to review what they have learnt, but also look forward to the development of that learning in the next lesson.

68. The teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. The three-part lesson structure is firmly established and planning is good, as it is matched to the ability levels of all pupils. Teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and this helps pupils to explain their work. However, pupils' use of spoken language remains limited.
69. The ability of the pupils to use information and communications technology to develop their mathematical knowledge is good. Here activities are well matched to what pupils have learnt in lessons. However, pupils make limited use of mathematics in other lessons.
70. Teachers know their pupils well. Teachers and pupils regularly assess what has been learnt and all pupils have achievement targets readily available, so that they can see the progress they make. Teachers use these assessments to provide challenge for the pupils.
71. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. The curriculum has been strengthened and there has been an improvement in teaching. Standards are rising. The co-ordinator monitors planning and some lessons as an aspect of performance management.

SCIENCE

72. Standards, by the time pupils are seven, are close to those expected for their age and are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress.
73. The work produced by pupils in Year 1 shows they understand and can describe the properties of different materials. Their knowledge of electricity and magnetism is developing appropriately. Many are able to predict accurately which materials are magnetic and which are not and list the components needed for an electrical circuit to work successfully. These pupils also know that electricity can be used to generate heat, light, sound and movement.
74. Pupils in all year groups plant seeds and observe their growth. Because of this their understanding of what living things need in order to thrive is well established. Their work, displayed in the hall, reveals clear understanding of how living things, such as birds, reptiles and fish, fit into different groups. Pupils also use information and communication technology effectively to illustrate the life cycle of a butterfly in a display. This is linked effectively to their work in mathematics by emphasising the symmetrical pattern of the butterflies wings.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils, particularly those in Year 2, benefit from enthusiastic teaching and many are becoming inquisitive and thoughtful learners. Teachers use questioning well to enable pupils to draw on their knowledge and on their previous learning. Pupils know the effect that the application of forces, such as bending, melting, squashing and twisting, have on a variety of materials. They know the application of force can cause objects to move and alter the direction the object moves in. They undertake experiments to illustrate this, organising themselves into groups and cooperating well. They pose questions for each other and ensure the tests they use are fair as they attempt to prove their theories. The higher attaining Year 2 pupils often introduce additional variables into their experiments to see what effect these will have on the predictions they have made. For example, they alter the angle of the ramps they have made to test what happens when a marble is rolled down a slope and collides with another one.

76. The experiments that teachers devise for pupils capture their interest and often they become totally absorbed in what they are doing. Teachers often help pupils to clarify the processes they use in their experiments and the results they find by providing clear structures for pupils to record what they have done. This is particularly helpful for lower attaining pupils who do not write well. However, this practice is not applied consistently. In some lessons, the structure of experiments and how to proceed is not made sufficiently clear to pupils. As a result, some pupils' written work and recording of their experiments is untidy and lacks clarity.
77. Arrangements to assess the attainment and progress of pupils in science are good and are linked appropriately to the levels pupils are expected to achieve as they pass through the school. Teachers retain samples of pupils' work that have assessed to illustrate the progress made. They also make good use of recording sheets that track the progress made by each pupil.

ART AND DESIGN

78. It was not possible to observe any teaching during the inspection and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and on the analysis of their work.
79. By the time they are seven, pupils attain standards that are close to those expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards in the current Year 1 are less satisfactory. Much of the art in this year is related to illustrating work in other subjects, usually taking the form of drawing and colouring. Much of this work is of poor quality.
80. Older pupils have produced art in a range of styles and for a range of purposes. Much of this work is of good quality and makes a significant contribution to many of the displays seen around the school. These include, for example, posters explaining the effects and value of exercise, keeping safe in the sun and road safety posters.
81. Many older pupils are beginning to draw accurately and paint with care and in styles appropriate to their subject. For example, many of their 'Burglar Bill' wanted posters are drawn with precision. Their still life paintings of vegetables and fruits show careful drawing skills and good use of colour matched suitably to the subject. Pupils have used various other materials effectively to produce leaf and sea and landscape collages and successfully painted in the styles of well known artists, such as Kandinsky, Matisse and David Hockney.
82. Assessments of how well pupils are attaining and progressing do not give sufficient consideration to the recommended levels for the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83. By the time they are seven, pupils attain standards that are close to those expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the previous inspection of the school.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes, for the oldest pupils, very good. Teachers work effectively to ensure their pupils make appropriate progress by organising work that is matched well to pupils' abilities. Pupils in Year 2 design, make and evaluate models that include a winding mechanism. When they do this they use terms, such as axle and mechanism, correctly. During the planning part of the process, pupils decide which materials will be the most suitable for their models. When they evaluate their work, they offer suggestions for improvements that might be made.
85. The oldest pupils have also made masks in the style of those used by the Egyptians. This work is effectively linked to the work pupils do in history. They also made monsters from construction kits and wrote about them as part of their writing for English. The documenting, by

pupils, of the planning processes they intend to use is a good feature of their work. This is supported by the helpful structures for writing that teachers provide for their pupils.

86. In Year 1, standards are also close to those expected for pupils' age. However, less work has been covered because not enough time is allocated for teaching the subject. Assessments of how well pupils are attaining and progressing do not give sufficient consideration to the recommended levels for the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

87. Standards in geography are below those expected of pupils by the time they are seven. This is mainly because they do not have sufficient access to practical fieldwork to support their learning.
88. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to describe features of their locality and are beginning to ask questions about why the environment is as it is. They study St Lucia and make some comparison between that island and their own locality. Pupils are aware of the growing cycle of bananas and of the importance of that crop to the island studied. They can describe the physical features of a rain forest and locate these forests on a map of the world. They develop their map work skills through working on plans of the school in Year 1 to using country and world maps in Year 2.
89. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching is supported by effective planning and has improved since the previous inspection. However, there is insufficient emphasis on using assessment to raise standards. Higher attaining pupils are keen and eager to learn, presenting their written work well and developing their numerical skills through writing accounts and through map work. These skills are less well developed for lower attaining pupils.
90. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Teachers' planning is regularly monitored by the co-ordinator to ensure that standards are maintained.

HISTORY

91. Standards in history are below those expected of pupils by the time they are seven. This is partly attributable to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and partly to the high rate of absence. Whilst older pupils have an understanding of historical evidence and change over time, their reading and writing skills are insufficiently developed to enable them to conduct independent research.
92. By the age of seven, pupils develop their understanding and knowledge of events that happened in the past satisfactorily. In their study of the Great Fire of London pupils recognise the cause of the event. They develop their sense of chronology by being able to chart the sequence of events that unfolded, and account for these in their writing. Pupils study photographs as historical evidence and begin to see the limitations of such evidence by identifying what the photographs leave out. In their work on Grace Darling they understand that the actions of individuals can change the course of events.
93. Teaching is good overall. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are good and this allows pupils to become confident in their learning. Pupils are well behaved and enjoy their learning. They co-operate well with each other to produce joint pieces of work. This is the result of the good teaching. There are insufficient artefacts to support pupils' learning about historical evidence.
94. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Careful planning supports teaching and learning. This ensures consistent and confident teaching, but assessment is not used sufficiently to raise the levels of pupils' attainment. The planning allows the co-ordinator to monitor the effectiveness of teaching. The quality of planning has improved since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

95. It was not possible to see the subject taught during the inspection and judgements are based on the analysis of samples of pupils' work and on discussions with pupils and their teachers.
96. By the time they are seven, pupils achieve standards that are close to those expected for their age. Most, including those with special educational needs, achieve well for their abilities. This is an improvement on the standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection when attainment fell below expected levels.
97. In addition to learning about information and communication technology in dedicated lessons, teachers and their pupils use the medium effectively to support learning in other subjects, such as English and mathematics.
98. Pupils in Year 1 use a data handling program well to produce different types of graph and pictogram to display information from surveys they have conducted. They also devise thoughtful questions to find out what they want to learn from the data they collect and about the quality of the program they are using. These pupils are able to name the parts of computer correctly and label them on a diagram.
99. The oldest pupils are developing appropriate keyboard skills. They use a mouse effectively, can open and close the programs they are using, and know what is likely to happen if they click on most of the icons displayed on their computer screen. They also know they can use the spacebar to create spaces between words when they use the computer for writing.
100. Use of the internet by pupils for research purposes is at an early stage. However, pupils devise sequences of questions for the use of search engines for finding the information they need.
101. The school has a gallery in which pupils from all years can display work they are proud of. Many choose to include items generated by the good use of information and communication technology. For example, they use various draw and paint programs to illustrate their written work, including poems about coral reef creatures and images from Roald Dahl's book about the "Big Friendly Giant".
102. The school has installed a small computer suite in addition to the computers kept in the classrooms. The suite is accessible for all classes and teachers are making effective use of the interactive white board to enhance the computer skills of their pupils. Assessments of how well pupils are attaining and progressing do not give sufficient consideration to the recommended targets set for the subject.

MUSIC

103. By the age of seven, attainment is in line with that expected of pupils of this age. Only two lessons were seen due to timetabling arrangements. However, evidence from talking to pupils and from their performances in lessons and assemblies confirm this judgement. The school has been successful in maintaining the standard of pupils' work since the previous inspection. Pupils gain confidence as performers. They sing well in assemblies, learn new songs quickly and play percussion instruments satisfactorily. They recognise different rhythms and make up simple rhythmic patterns to accompany their singing. The previous report stated that pupils' skills in this aspect of the subject were not well developed. Pupils now show skill at keeping a steady beat when clapping and when playing percussion instruments. They listen to music, in lessons and in assemblies, and talk about what they hear. Year 2 pupils sing a song about a lighthouse well. They listen to the accompaniment and sway in time with the beat. They understand how different instruments are used to create the effect of the water. They sing the melody, with a few pupils pitching their singing accurately. Many pupils are confident when singing in front of the class. Pupils in Year 1 move well to music. They dance in time to an accompaniment and use untuned percussion instruments satisfactorily to imitate the sound of a monster.

104. Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject. They are well behaved and handle the instruments with care. They listen attentively to music and enjoy singing together.
105. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Opportunity is given for pupils to experience practical music-making activities. However, no groups of pupils were seen composing short pieces together during the inspection. Pupils have taken part in the Christmas production and participated in the district music festival. These events have involved both music and drama. A small number of pupils are rehearsing for a performance as part of the Basildon Music Festival.
106. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership. However, assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and there is no consistent way at present of checking how well pupils learn and whether they are making enough progress. The resources are satisfactory and include a few instruments from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Standards, by the time pupils are seven, are close to those expected for their age. Most, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the previous inspection.
108. It was not possible during the inspection to observe lessons for sufficient time to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, pupils in Year 1 show good footwork and agility and are quick to respond when balls are either thrown to them or kicked or rolled towards them. Many throw accurately to the intended target area and catch with increasing success.
109. Teachers make wise decisions about which equipment will be best for pupils to use and this helps pupils to make appropriate progress. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to select the apparatus they would like to use and to justify the selection they make. For example, pupils decide which bat to use for striking a ball thrown towards them by their partner. Pupils also cooperate well when working in pairs and in groups and participate with great enthusiasm. This contributes to the satisfactory progress they make.
110. Standards in the subject are enhanced by the good use made of the well equipped hall and the good range of resources for teaching games. These resources are very well organised, making them accessible and easy to use by teachers and by pupils. This helps lessons to run smoothly without wasting any time. There are currently no opportunities for pupils to extend their physical skills and abilities in clubs or extra curricular activities. This is a weakness. Assessments of how well pupils are attaining and progressing do not give sufficient consideration to the recommended targets set for the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. By the age of seven, attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. No lessons were seen in Year 2 due to timetabling arrangements. However, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils confirm this judgement. The school has been successful in maintaining the standard of pupils' work since the previous inspection. Pupils understand how religion is important in some people's lives. They know about the stories told in the Christian Bible by Jesus and about some of the festivals and ceremonies of other faiths. Pupils know that Jesus made people well. They write about the story of the Good Samaritan and understand the need to be kind and helpful to each other. Pupils know about some of the special books and places associated with different faiths. Year 2 pupils learn about the Hindu faith. They know the story of Ramu and Sita and learn about a Hindu temple. They look at the way Hindus worship and the importance of prayer. They think about their own special place and the times when they need to be quiet. Pupils hear about different celebrations in assemblies. They know about celebrating their birthdays and receiving presents. They look at the different clothes worn to celebrate a wedding, both in England and in India.
112. Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject. They listen well in lessons and assemblies and are eager to talk about what they do.
113. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers make stories relevant to the everyday lives of pupils. They provide opportunities for pupils to express their ideas and to ask questions. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils listened to the story of Jesus healing the blind man. The teacher enabled pupils to talk about what it must be like to be blind. She told pupils about the way blind people are helped by reading Braille and by using a guide dog. Pupils were then able to talk about their own experiences of meeting blind people. As a result, pupils made satisfactory gains in their learning.
114. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. Assessment procedures are in the early stages of development and are not used to guide the way the curriculum is planned. The resources are satisfactory and include a suitable range of books and artefacts.