

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HILLDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Romford, Essex

LEA area: 311 L.B. of Havering

Unique reference number: 102325

Headteacher: Mrs. Susan Boyers

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Mary Summers  
25455

Dates of inspection: 8-11 October 2001

Inspection number: 194845

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grange Road Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM3 7DU
Telephone number:	01708 342453
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Brian Davy
Date of previous inspection:	23 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25455	Mary Summers	Registered inspector	Music	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9502	Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school working partnership with parents?</p>
20339	Victoria Plotkin	Team inspector	Art History	
25787	Edmond Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22545	Valerie Hobson	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Geography	
23402	Birendra Singh	Team inspector	Science Information technology Religious education	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hilldene is a very large community school catering for 684 pupils of between three and 11 years of age. Ninety children attend the nursery part-time. The school is popular and there is a waiting list for entry to the nursery. Most of the children are from white UK backgrounds, with very few from ethnic minority groups. Only a few are learning English as an additional language. Nearly a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is more than in most schools. A fifth of the pupils in the school are identified as having special educational needs, which is about average, and the percentage with statements of special educational need is broadly average. There is a high rate of pupil mobility, with about one fifth of the pupils starting or leaving the school during their primary education. Children's levels of attainment are generally below average when they start school.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Hilldene Primary is a school where pupils enjoy learning and achieve well in relation to their starting points. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is often good in Years 5 and 6, where pupils make the most progress. The headteacher, governors and staff work closely together to plan for continued improvement in standards. The school gives its pupils and their parents satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school helps pupils to develop good attitudes to their work, very high standards of behaviour and respect for one another's values and opinions.
- Pupils reach high standards in religious education, information and communication technology and physical education by the time they leave the school.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and direction to the school and is supported effectively by senior staff and governors; they are committed towards raising standards and improving provision for the pupils.
- The school provides a very caring and safe environment, where pupils feel comfortable, supported and ready to learn.
- The school has extensive accommodation which is kept clean and in good condition; bright and stimulating displays of pupils' work make the classrooms and corridors inviting and interesting.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English are below average, particularly in speaking and writing at both key stages.
- Assessment procedures are not effective enough in tracking pupils' progress through the school and not sufficiently used to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Attendance levels are below the national average.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in June 1997. Standards have risen in many subjects. The quality of teaching is judged to be satisfactory now compared to good at the last inspection because there has been a considerable changeover of staff since then and many new teachers are still settling in. The quality of leadership and management remain strong and the school continues to provide well for pupils' personal development and welfare. The last inspection report said that teachers should be using more focused assessment to help them plan to meet children's needs and this continues to be the case.

## 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	C	C	B
mathematics	D	D	D	C
science	D	C	D	C

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

Results in national tests up to 2000 have been rising faster than in most schools. However, provisional results from the 2001 tests suggest that standards fell to below average, although this was predicted as the particular cohort of pupils was not as strong as in previous years. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are reaching average standards in mathematics and science but their attainment in English is below average. This is due mainly to weaknesses in pupils' speaking and writing skills which are not being addressed systematically as pupils move up the school. They are not extending their vocabulary and use of language enough and this means that they are unable to write in an exciting and interesting way. Pupils reach average standards in art, design and technology, geography, history and music and their work in religious education, physical education and information and communication technology is good.

In the 2000 national tests for seven year olds, pupils reached average standards in reading but their work in writing and mathematics was well below average. Provisional results for 2001 suggest that reading and writing standards were well below average and that standards in mathematics were below average. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are reaching average levels in mathematics and reading but their work in writing and science is below average. Standards in physical education and information and communication technology are above average and standards are average in all other subjects.

Children make steady progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and reach nationally expected levels in their personal, social and physical development by the time they move to Year 1. Their attainment is below average in all other areas of their development. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the infants and the lower juniors but their progress is good in Years 5 and 6 because the teaching is of high quality. By the time they leave the school, they have achieved well, compared with their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, and those for whom English is an additional language make sound progress. The school expects to improve standards this year and has set appropriate targets for pupils in Year 6 to achieve in the national tests in 2002.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are proud of their school and are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in class and in the playground. They play and work together happily. Behaviour in assembly is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	The school is working hard to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem so that they realise that they can reach even higher standards in their work. Relationships are very good; pupils help one another willingly and listen respectfully to others' opinions.
Attendance	Below the national average.

Pupils' good attitudes and their very high standards of behaviour help their progress at school. However, many still lack confidence and do not speak up enough in class lessons. Too many children go on holiday during term time and this disrupts their progress, especially at the beginning of the school year.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

Teachers are very good at managing their pupils; they have good relationships and treat them kindly, praising them readily for good work and behaviour. They use assistants well to help pupils, making sure they are clear about what they have to do and what the pupils have to learn. Teachers use the good range of learning resources to illustrate and explain their teaching points. Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6, where lessons are often conducted at a brisk pace to challenge and stimulate the pupils, who concentrate well and work hard.

In infant classes, teachers usually plan a range of work to meet the needs of pupils who learn at different rates. However, in the juniors, the work is sometimes too difficult for the lower attaining pupils or too easy for those who learn quickly. Teachers do not assess pupils' progress well enough in many lessons nor use their findings to help them plan for the next stages of pupils' learning. Pupils are not involved enough in setting and working towards targets for improvement. Teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall; although teachers provide good models of speech for their pupils, sometimes they do not encourage pupils to speak up, practise new vocabulary and present their ideas to the class. Teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is satisfactory.

The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. In the Nursery and infant classes these pupils usually receive good focused teaching which meets their needs effectively but this is not so well organised in the juniors, where some literacy groups receive work which is much too difficult. Teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for children in the Nursery and Reception classes and satisfactory in the rest of the school. National strategies for literacy and numeracy are firmly in place and the careful use of the Numeracy Strategy is gradually improving standards. Pupils visit a range of interesting places to complement and enrich their studies.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good although it varies throughout the school. It is good in the Nursery and infant classes, where class teachers provide well for the pupils and the support given by the specialist teacher and assistants is very good. It is not of the same high quality in the juniors, where the extra support is sometimes weak.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. A visiting teacher supports these children for a small amount of time every week to help develop their language skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school actively teaches personal and social skills through the use of 'Circle Time' where pupils gather together to talk about their views and feelings. Other aspects of their development are catered for well through assemblies, religious education and clear systems to teach good moral and social values.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very effective systems to ensure pupils are cared for within a safe and supportive environment. Although good in mathematics, assessment procedures are not effective in tracking progress in other subjects and highlighting the next steps in learning.

Parents have positive views of the school. The information provided for parents is good. The school continues to work hard to encourage parents of all those children who have special educational needs to attend meetings to review their progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a strong lead and is ably supported by her senior staff. Subject co-ordinators are planning well for development in their subjects. There is a good team spirit amongst the staff which ensures that the school's aims and values are well met.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors do a good job. They use their individual skills well to support the school. They organise their activities efficiently and monitor the school's work and its finances effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses information very carefully to pinpoint areas for development. This has helped to raise standards in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is not monitored rigorously enough to identify weaknesses and take effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses the funds which it has at its disposal effectively to benefit the children's learning. It has budgeted carefully to improve provision for information and communication technology and this has helped to raise standards. Security has also been greatly improved and there is a very effective rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment to maintain the high quality of the building.

The school is well staffed and has good accommodation and learning resources. It is using the principles of 'best value' effectively in its efforts to improve provision and standards.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard and teaches them to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The teaching is good and helps their children to make good progress.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The activities on offer to children outside the school day.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents, although it finds the teaching to be satisfactory rather than good. The team does not support parents' concerns about out-of-school activities; indeed it finds the range and number of these to be good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. When children start school in the nursery, they are at levels which are generally below average for their age. They make steady progress during their time in the nursery and Reception classes and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, children reach the nationally recommended levels for their age in their personal and social development and in their physical development. Their experiences in the nursery and Reception classes enable the children to develop these skills well; they are encouraged to develop good manners and listen to one another's ideas, learn to share toys, take their turn and to become more independent. The pleasant outside areas provide them with good opportunities to use bicycles and scooters, and they experience a wide range of practical work such as model making and painting to help them develop their physical skills. Although they make steady progress, their attainment in other aspects of their development is still below average when they leave the Reception classes. Levels of communication remain weak, with many children speaking indistinctly and using a very narrow range of vocabulary. Reading and writing remains at a low level, with many children still unable to recognise letter names and sounds and showing weak skills in handwriting and the spelling of simple words. Many make sound gains in their mathematical development, and are able to work with numbers to ten and recognise simple shapes, but many children continue to find this difficult. Their awareness of the world around them remains weak and their creative development shows little use of imagination in, for example, art activities and role-play.

2. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, pupils reached levels which were average in reading but well below average in writing and mathematics when compared with schools across the country. Even when compared with similar schools, the standards they reached were below average in writing and mathematics. The results of teachers' assessments showed below average standards in science. Following the last inspection, the school focused on raising achievement in reading and these levels rose steadily up to 2000. The provisional results of the 2001 tests indicate that standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics, but that pupils were reaching expected levels for their age in science.

3. The findings of this inspection show that those pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching average standards in reading and mathematics, including numeracy, but below average standards in writing and science. Despite a fall in reading standards in 2001, reading levels look better this year because of more focused teaching and good levels of support for pupils who have special educational needs. Standards in mathematics are improving because of the good use of the National Numeracy Strategy and some good teaching in Key Stage 1. Although pupils' knowledge and understanding of key scientific principles are secure, overall standards are affected adversely by pupils' inability to explain their investigations and findings clearly and use the correct scientific vocabulary. Standards in religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history and music are average and those in physical education and information and communication technology are above average. Standards in art and design and technology are lower than those found at the last inspection because the school now spends less time on these subjects than it used to.

4. Standards in writing are hindered by the poor development of pupils' speaking skills. Their use of language is often weak when they start in Year 1 and there is not enough emphasis placed upon improving these skills in a systematic way during their time in the infants. Many opportunities are missed to build up pupils' vocabulary and give them opportunities to use it in their written work. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to speak up in class; teachers provide good models in their own speech, but often they are satisfied with simple one word answers and do not push their pupils further. In a few classes, there are some very good

examples of teachers providing planned opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills. This was noted in a Year 1 class, where the teacher finished off the lesson by giving her pupils two minutes to discuss what they had learned, then invited one pupil from each group to tell the class. However, this is the exception rather than the rule; teachers are not planning well enough to develop this aspect of children's learning.

5. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2000, pupils reached average standards in English, although standards in mathematics and science were below average. However, when compared with schools in similar circumstances, standards were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The percentages of pupils reaching nationally expected levels had risen at a faster rate than the national trend and the school received a National Achievement Award because of this success. An appropriate number of pupils reached higher levels in the tests. The provisional test results for 2001 suggest that standards in English, mathematics and science fell to below average, but the school projected this as the particular cohort of pupils contained many who were identified with special educational needs.

6. The findings of this inspection indicate that pupils in Year 6 this year are reaching average standards in mathematics, including numeracy, and science but that standards in English, including literacy, are below average. Standards have improved in mathematics because of good teaching within the National Numeracy Strategy, effective assessment procedures and focused leadership by the subject co-ordinator. Standards in science are better because of improved plans for the subject and good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Standards in art, design and technology, geography, history and music are average. Those in religious education, physical education and information and communication technology are above average and show good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' knowledge and skills in these subjects are strong and enable them to present these lessons in a clear and interesting manner. The arrangements for setting pupils in ability groups for English and mathematics are helping to raise standards, particularly when large sets are broken into smaller groups for more focused support at certain times of the year.

7. English levels, particularly those in speaking and writing, remain below average although these were described as well below average at the last inspection. The lack of a well-planned programme to develop pupils' skills in spoken language affects their progress in writing as they are unable to put over their ideas in a lively and interesting manner. Vocabulary is not being emphasised and extended enough in lessons. Assessment procedures are not as good as those in mathematics, and do not give pupils and their parents enough information about what they have to do to improve.

8. Based upon the levels at which they start school and the high rate at which pupils enter and leave in the middle of their primary education, pupils at Hilldene achieve well in many subjects by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. They are reaching average levels in most subjects and good levels in some. The rate of pupils' progress varies tremendously according to the quality of the teaching. They are making faster progress at the top end of the school and this is why they are achieving well in many subjects. However, some of their English skills are not being developed as well as they might be throughout the school and the teachers in the oldest classes cannot address these major weaknesses in just one or two years. The targets the school has set for pupils this year in the national tests in 2002 show that the school is expecting to improve on the 2001 results and reach standards which are more in line with those expected for eleven-year-olds.

9. Although there were indications in the national tests that girls in Key Stage 1 were not doing as well as boys, this is not the case this year. Gifted and talented pupils make steady progress because the school identifies these children early and they attend borough courses to supplement their work in school. The school is presently reviewing the provision made for these children in class lessons, to ensure that teachers plan work which is challenging enough to help

them reach high levels. In some lessons, for example, literacy, these pupils are not set challenging enough work which really extends their learning.

10. There are very few pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language. Inspection findings indicate that these pupils are making satisfactory progress overall.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school. Their individual education plans are carefully tailored to their specific needs, set realistic yet challenging and achievable targets and are regularly reviewed. Work in class is usually provided at a suitable level, based on prior attainment, which results in pupils making good progress. Children in the nursery and reception classes and pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress due to the good support they receive from learning support teachers and assistants. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress overall as, although they are well supported by learning assistants, some of the support teaching is unsatisfactory.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. Pupils have positive attitudes to school. Most arrive on time, ready for work. They are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about their schoolwork such as projects they have undertaken and about the range of extracurricular activities they can become involved in. Many particularly enjoy challenges set, such as the one posed in assembly to find out how many words can be made from the letters in "Harvest".

13. As at the time of the last inspection, behaviour throughout the school day is of a very high standard and the school has a calm and businesslike atmosphere. Pupils behave very well as they move around the school and as they come into assembly. Because of the length of time it takes to seat the whole school in the hall, many classes waited patiently and quietly for the Harvest assembly to begin. Their behaviour and involvement in this celebration was excellent. Behaviour in lessons is good; pupils settle to their tasks without fuss. At break time and lunchtime pupils play together and share games well.

14. The school has a variety of strategies to deal with pupils with behavioural problems and as a result these pupils rarely disrupt the learning of others. Last year, three pupils were excluded for a temporary period; these exclusions were carried out appropriately in line with school policy. There was no evidence of bullying or racism during the inspection.

15. The school is working successfully on developing the self-esteem of pupils as it sees this as the key to raising attainment. In 'circle time,' pupils talk thoughtfully about themselves and their feelings. Older pupils have a clear understanding of the effect of their actions on others. They have a strong sense of their own community and are beginning to develop an awareness of others' ideas and values. Those pupils who are peer mediators have a clear sense of their role in seeing both sides of an argument and carry out their duties effectively. All staff and pupils have very good relationships with one another. Pupils work well together as was seen in a Year 3 mathematics session where they were measuring desks and books, helping one another successfully. Pupils are encouraged from their first days at school to take responsibility for themselves and to find their coats and resources and have opportunities to be responsible, for example, in taking the registers to the office. Older pupils undertake library duties, help with younger pupils at lunchtime, arrange music and chairs at assembly and act as monitors. They approach these tasks maturely. A school council has been elected and is due to meet in the near future. Those pupils involved are excited at the prospect.

16. Attendance levels are below the national average. The main reason for this is the large number of pupils who are taken out of school for holidays in term time, usually at the beginning of the autumn term. Last year this numbered nearly a third of the pupils on the school roll.

17. Pupils with special educational needs who have identified emotional and behavioural difficulties are well managed in class and during breaks. They usually participate fully in lessons and their behaviour is not detrimental to their own learning nor to that of their classmates.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

18. The quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory. At the last inspection it was judged as being good but there has been a great changeover of staff since then and many of the new teachers are still settling in. Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils make good progress in these classes. This enables them to reach nationally expected standards in many subjects by the time they leave the school. During this inspection, 14 per cent of lessons were very good or excellent and 38 per cent were good. Forty-five per cent were satisfactory and only three per cent were unsatisfactory.

19. Teachers are particularly sensitive in managing their pupils. They do this consistently well across the school. They are quick to praise and recognise their pupils' achievements and this makes pupils feel positive about themselves and about their learning. This is evident in all classes, although a very good example was noted in a Year 2 numeracy lesson, where the teacher kept a close eye on all her pupils while they were working by themselves, encouraging and praising particular children who found it difficult to concentrate. The children responded well to this, wanting to please their teacher and they worked hard on their tasks.

20. Teachers use a good range of different methods to interest and motivate their pupils. Question and answer sessions at the beginning of lessons are used to remind pupils of previous work and to find out what they have remembered. In a good religious education lesson in Year 6, the teacher asked very challenging questions which made her pupils think very deeply about how they made choices based on their beliefs and values. Other methods used successfully include clear explanations and demonstrations, as in a games lesson in Year 6, where the teacher showed how to dribble a ball in basketball. Because of her good demonstration, one of her pupils who had found the action difficult was able to do it successfully.

21. Teachers use their classroom and special needs assistants extremely well to benefit the children's learning. They plan their input carefully and ensure that the assistants know not only what to do, but what pupils are expected to learn. Teaching assistants are therefore able to give the teacher clear feedback about pupils' progress at the end of the lesson. Support assistants show great skill and enthusiasm for their work and have a real impact on pupils' learning. In one Reception class, where the pupils were playing with sand outside on the patio, the assistant joined in with the children, directing their attention skilfully to the containers and how much they held. In this way the children began to understand about volume.

22. Teachers use the good range of books and equipment which they have at their disposal very well to illustrate their teaching. The teaching of history is made exciting and interesting by the excellent range of historical artefacts in the school. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher was able to show her pupils a washtub and mangle as well as a range of other kitchen equipment from Victorian times which helped them to understand more about the past. The children asked lots of questions and were fascinated by the objects on display.

23. The school has spent a great deal of money recently developing their information and communication technology provision and the results of this can be seen in many lessons. Teachers use this new technology confidently in their lessons. They encourage pupils to word process their work and use programs to help pupils learn about sounds and numbers in the Reception classes. Lessons in the computer suite are taught well, mainly because the teachers have developed very good knowledge and skills in the subject. They present their lessons well, encouraging the pupils to learn correct vocabulary. In Year 6, the teacher's careful demonstration resulted in her pupils being able to devise their own slide shows on the computers, adding

relevant pictures and text. Good teaching in this subject has led to pupils reaching standards which are above average for their age.

24. In some lessons, however, there is a lack of pace and challenge which results in the lesson being dull. Repetitive exercises in some literacy lessons, where pupils have to copy out large amounts of text, do nothing to motivate pupils or extend their learning. In some music lessons, teachers are unable to adapt the commercial plans well enough to suit the needs of the pupils and this results in unexciting and undemanding work. Even in these circumstances, the pupils always behave well and try their best.

25. Sometimes teachers are too easily pleased with pupils' initial answers and do not question them further to really extend their learning. In some cases, teachers spend too much time talking and pupils spend too much time listening; this does little to develop pupils' speaking skills. It also results in their being passive rather than active learners.

26. In the infant classes, teachers plan work which generally meets the needs of pupils of different abilities. This was the case in a very good literacy lesson in Year 1. The lesson focused on the 'o' and 'e' sounds in the middle of words. The teacher had planned a range of activities which helped the more able pupils to work independently, while the support assistant was directed to work with children with special educational needs, helping them to sound out letters and write down their words. In a Year 2 geography lesson on coordinates, different activities were planned, so that more able pupils were challenged and those who found the concept difficult had extra support.

27. In the juniors, however, lessons are not always so well organised to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Ability sets for mathematics and English group pupils of similar abilities together, but even within these sets there is considerable variation in what pupils know, understand and can do. In top sets, some very able pupils are not being challenged enough and likewise in some lower sets some pupils find the work too difficult. This is particularly the case in literacy in Years 3 and 4, where the needs of pupils are not being met effectively.

28. This weakness has come about because teachers are not assessing their pupils' progress carefully enough on a day-to-day basis. This information could be used to identify the next steps in pupils' learning and plan appropriate work. The school's recognised planning format does include a column for teachers to identify which children did or did not achieve the objective but this is not being used well enough. Marking of pupils' work is not always helpful to pupils in telling them how to improve their work.

29. Children are not involved enough in assessing their own progress; although in some subjects, such as mathematics, they are given targets to achieve, this is not consistent across the school. Pupils are therefore uncertain what they have to do to improve and their motivation suffers.

30. The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is satisfactory overall although some good lessons were observed in Reception classes. Work is planned well in both the Nursery and Reception classes with reference to the nationally recommended areas of learning.

31. At the time of the inspection, children had been in the nursery for only two weeks and were still in the process of settling in. Children trust the adults in school who are sensitive to their concerns. For instance, some children in Reception were worried about changing for games lessons but they were encouraged to watch and join in by helping the teacher to pick out good performances. Behaviour management is very good in both Nursery and Reception. There are clear boundaries and expectations for good behaviour including sharing and turn taking. Weaknesses in teaching centre around assessment procedures and the use made of these to inform planning. At the end of each session nursery nurses and the nursery teacher make notes about individual pupils which focus mainly upon their social and emotional well being. There is no

system, at this stage, of evaluating children's performance and participation against the nationally recommended areas of learning. Children's progress is assessed more formally at the end of the first half term to enable the school to identify any with specific needs and to give a clear picture of the overall levels of the particular cohort of children. It is assessed again at the end of their Nursery year to note overall progress, but the lack of continuous assessment means that it is difficult for teachers to plan effectively for the next steps in children's learning.

32. Class teachers give good support to those pupils who have special educational needs. Work is usually set at an appropriate level to enable such pupils to make good progress and, where possible, is linked to the targets set in the individual education plans. Learning support assistants are used well and work very closely with teachers. They give good support to individuals and groups of pupils and have a significant impact on the good progress they make. The quality of the teaching by special needs teachers varies. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is good or better and has a significant impact on pupils' learning. Some of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is less than satisfactory as the work is not closely matched to the individual needs of the pupils and they do not learn as effectively as they could.

33. Class teachers have to depend upon their own skills to provide for the needs of those children for whom English is an additional language. They have had no specific training from the borough's support teacher who visits for a short time each week to provide intensive language support for these children. Despite the limited support, teachers ensure that pupils are supported appropriately in class lessons and always check to ensure their understanding. These pupils take a full part in lessons, showing enthusiasm and enjoyment.

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

34. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught to pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. There is an appropriate allocation of time for the teaching of English, mathematics and science that enables all aspects of these to be taught throughout the school. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are firmly in place and are proving effective in raising standards, particularly in numeracy where attainment is now similar to that found nationally, compared to the below average levels found at the last inspection.

35. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and planned effectively according to nationally recommended guidelines for young children's learning. This has a positive impact on the rate of development of children's skills in all six areas of learning.

36. The school has suitable schemes of work in place for all National Curriculum subjects and these are used carefully by teachers to plan appropriate work. Planning of the curriculum is satisfactory with particularly good curriculum plans being used in physical education and information and communication technology. In these subjects the planning gives pupils a good range of relevant activities to interest them and improve standards. Setting of pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy lessons is generally effective in identifying the broad needs of particular groups, although further refinement within sets is necessary to meet the needs of all the pupils. Personal, social and health education is mainly taught through circle time and the school is currently working towards achieving the Healthy Schools Award.

37. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and, where possible, closely linked to the targets in their individual education plans. The provision for these children in the nursery, reception classes and Years 1 and 2 is good and they make good progress due to the effective support received from teachers and special needs support assistants. For junior pupils the provision is less effective, as some of the teaching of pupils withdrawn from class for additional help is unsatisfactory. However, the special needs support assistants used in these year groups give good quality support to the pupils both in class and

small groups. For example, pupils withdrawn for the reading recovery sessions are being given well-focused and useful help to improve their skills.

38. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language receive satisfactory provision. A teacher from the borough's support service visits for a short time each week and withdraws children for intensive language support. However, teachers in the school have had no specific training to help them cater for the developing language needs of these pupils and their provision is very much dependent on individual expertise. Despite these limitations, the pupils observed during the inspection were making satisfactory progress and were able to take part in all the lessons.

39. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school enabling them to benefit from the many learning and social opportunities provided. A few pupils are occasionally withdrawn from class lessons for additional support. This is carefully monitored to ensure that they do not miss the same lesson on a regular basis. In fact, wherever possible, the work they do in these sessions is directly linked to the work being covered by their classmates. For instance, pupils withdrawn from a Year 1 numeracy class were observed working with a special needs teacher and receiving very good teaching. They made great strides in their learning about two-dimensional shapes and by the end of the session all of them knew the names and some of the properties of squares, triangles and circles. The rest of their class were learning similar facts and at the end of the lesson they rejoined them to share and discuss their findings. Hilldene is a school in which all pupils are valued and great efforts are made to include them in all aspects of the curriculum.

40. The curriculum committee of the governing body meets regularly to approve policies and discuss future strategies and initiatives. There are designated governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. These governors take an active interest in developments in their chosen area and give good support to the co-ordinators by meeting with them on a regular basis. They keep the governing body fully informed of developments and the impact of any new initiatives on standards. The governors have adopted policies for sex and drug education and parents are fully informed about the provision. All statutory requirements are met.

41. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visits to places of interest, which are linked to work in class. Recent visits include Colchester Castle, Chalkwell, the Tower of London, Havering Country Park and Ilford Synagogue. All of these visits help inspire pupils and add a new dimension to their classwork. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to go on a residential visit. Last year they went to the Isle of Wight and Stubbers Activity Centre. These visits included many good quality educational and adventurous activities as well as giving pupils many opportunities to develop socially and learn to live in an environment away from home. Visitors to the school also help to enliven and extend the curriculum. Police and Fire Officers are regular visitors to teach pupils about safety in the home and on the street. Local clergy also visit regularly and take assemblies as well as giving general support within the school. There are a good number of out-of-school clubs for pupils to attend. These include art, choir, mathematics, football, badminton, basketball, science and information technology. All of these help extend pupils' learning and give talented pupils the opportunity to develop their skills to a higher level. Gifted and talented pupils also have the opportunity to attend borough courses to help them reach higher levels. The school is presently developing a policy to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met more effectively within lessons. There are good links with the local secondary schools to help ease transition. Year 5 pupils visit for three days to work in the science, art and technology departments. Students from local secondary schools also visit Hilldene for work experience or as part of their Service in the Community course.

42. At the last inspection the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was 'a strength of the school'. Current provision is good and there are still

significant strengths in certain aspects, particularly in moral provision. However, cultural provision does not draw sufficiently on the traditions of other cultures.

43. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies are planned carefully. They follow a theme and provide an act of daily worship that fulfils the statutory requirement. The theme during the inspection was harvest and a moving Harvest Assembly for the whole school was led by the headteacher, with support from a local clergyman. In all assemblies, both junior and infant, pupils listen attentively, join in the singing and are very quiet and respectful during prayers, clearly reflecting upon the suggested theme. Opportunities are given for pupils to develop insight into the values and beliefs of others in religious education lessons. Circle time is used well to enable pupils to reflect on their own and others' experiences. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were asked to empathise with someone who had been bullied and to say how that person might feel. They responded thoughtfully and sensitively by making statements such as "I would feel painful inside" and "I would feel I had no-one to turn to or talk to". In Year 1 pupils learn to value each other as they think of things they like about a class member to be written on his "Special Person of the Week" certificate.

44. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. Its values are promoted very well. They are given a high profile through consistent, day-to-day adherence to the new assertive discipline policy where good behaviour of all kinds in all areas of the school, including the playground, is rewarded with stickers and certificates. Pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong. They are aware of the school code of conduct, which is displayed in classrooms and in communal areas. Religious education lessons and assemblies add to the development of strong moral values.

45. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils learn how to relate to others as they work together in pairs or in groups in lessons. Staff are courteous towards pupils and provide good role models. There are opportunities for pupils to take some responsibility as helpers: taking messages to different parts of the school and preparing the hall for assemblies. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have greater responsibilities: an effective system of monitors is securely in place and the new peer mediation project is going well, giving trained Year 6 mediators responsibility for solving potential conflict between pupils. It has been particularly effective in reducing the number of confrontations at lunchtime play. A school council has been set up and is due to begin meeting this term. Pupils develop a good understanding of living in a community through such activities as collecting for a variety of charities, distributing harvest parcels to senior citizens and listening to talks from the local police constable on good citizenship.

46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is sound but limited. Different cultures are reflected in some subjects but the multicultural aspect of Britain today is not highlighted enough throughout the school. For example, pupils study Malawi in geography; Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism and Hinduism in RE; aboriginal art, and music and dance from different cultures in music and physical education lessons. Western cultural traditions are well represented through the curriculum and visits and visitors to the school. However, the school has very few multicultural resources and there are few positive images of other cultures projected through displays, artefacts and books.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

47. The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils have improved since the last inspection. They are now very good and a significant strength of the school. These procedures help the children to feel safe and cared for in school and confident to approach their learning.

48. Health and safety procedures are given a high priority and all relevant policies and risk assessments are in place. The site manager and a member of the governing body carry out an inspection each week and any concerns are addressed promptly.

49. There is good coverage for First Aid and detailed records are kept of any incidents. The local guidelines for child protection are implemented effectively and all teachers and most of the support staff have undergone recent training. The school receives good support from the school nurse, the Child and Family Consultation Service and the Behavioural Support Service which helps them provide appropriately for children with specific needs.

50. Procedures for attendance are applied consistently; registers are filled in accurately and unauthorised absence is low. Absences are followed up rigorously and attendance of individuals monitored carefully and the school is supported well by the local authority and the educational welfare officer. The school promotes good attendance through newsletters and certificates but many parents still take their children on holidays in term time. As a result the figures for authorised absence are high and the continuity of pupils' education is affected, particularly at the beginning of the school year.

51. Since the last inspection the school has introduced an assertive discipline policy which is followed consistently across the school and is very effective in promoting good behaviour throughout the day. Pupils like the rewards and recognition of receiving stickers and certificates at a weekly celebration assembly for good work and effort, good manners and kindness. The midday assistants reward them for good lunchtime behaviour. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are monitored and tailored plans are put in place for children whose behaviour gives concern. Although appropriate procedures are in place to deal with bullying and racism, there is little evidence of incidents of this nature and relationships between pupils are good.

52. Regular circle time sessions, where pupils gather together to talk about their feelings and opinions and a good programme of visits from the police, the fire service and the road safety team support pupils' personal development. The school is well on its way to achieving the Healthy School Award and has introduced peer mediation, which is enabling pupils to resolve playground conflicts themselves. As part of its continual drive to ensure high standards of behaviour are maintained, the school is about to introduce a House system to promote rewards and teamwork.

53. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good in some subjects, such as mathematics, but are not organised well enough in other subjects. The school analyses test results effectively for differences in boys' and girls' achievements and makes changes to the curriculum as necessary, for example, in aspects of English and mathematics. The pupils are grouped effectively into sets for English and mathematics depending on the National Curriculum level they achieve. This provides teachers with a satisfactory overview of the needs of each group. However, individuals' strengths and weaknesses are not analysed closely enough to help teachers' plan effectively for all the pupils in their set or class. As a result some pupils make insufficient progress in lessons. Assessment procedures in the Nursery and Reception classes are also not well enough developed to enable pupils' progress to be tracked effectively and to allow teachers to plan for the next steps in their pupils' learning.

54. Target setting for individual pupils is in the early stages of development. It is used well in mathematics to inform the parents about the areas their child needs to work at and to ensure that pupils are clear and motivated about what they have to do to move on. In Year 1 and 2 classes teachers use a skills and knowledge target sheet for science and geography which is displayed at the front of pupils' books. Pupils are involved in checking off what they have achieved and this provides teachers with a visible record of progress, as well as enabling pupils to see how well they are doing.

55. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Pupils' successes or bad behaviour are recorded carefully and this information provides staff with an overview of the development of individuals.

56. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school life and their needs are accurately assessed in most classes. They are given suitable work and, where applicable, good quality individual education plans drawn up by their class teacher supported by the special needs co-ordinator. These plans are reviewed regularly with new and appropriate targets set. The nine statemented pupils receive good and well-focused support. The school fully meets the statutory requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice.

57. The school maintains a register of pupils for whom English is an additional language so that their language development can be monitored as they move through the school.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

58. Parents' views of the school are positive. This was clear from the many favourable replies from parents in the questionnaire as well as at the meeting held before the inspection. In the questionnaire over a quarter of parents did not feel that the school provided an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum but the inspection team judged this area to be good.

59. The school provides good information for parents. In addition to the prospectus, parents receive a useful handbook about starting school and all parents of nursery children receive a home visit to ensure good liaison from the beginning. While little is published about the curriculum taught to each year group, parents are invited to attend meetings on aspects of the curriculum, for example, reading, the national tests and sex and drugs education. Annual reports on pupils' progress are well written and explain clearly how pupils are progressing and what they can do to improve. Parents appreciate the fact that teachers are always ready to talk to parents and many were seen dealing with queries at the end of the day. Teachers adhere to the school's homework policy, which is sent out to parents at the start of each year. Homework in the nursery is a particularly good feature with ideas for games and activities related to school learning sent home each week.

60. Many parents are involved in their children's education effectively, hearing their child read regularly and ensuring that homework is done. Spellings and tables are particularly well supported. Parents' consultation evenings are generally well attended although few parents attend review meetings of junior pupils who have special educational needs. The school is conscious of the need to encourage parents of these children to attend and to involve them more in supporting their children's progress. Parents of these children are sent copies of progress reports whether they attend the meetings or not and are therefore kept up to date with action taken by the school. Only four parents help in school on a regular basis although many more help with specific fundraising activities and with trips. The harvest festival that took place during the inspection was particularly well supported with a great number of gifts of vegetables and tins of food being brought from home by the pupils. Concerts and sports days have a high number of families attending and book fairs, bring and buy sales and sponsored events are always well supported. There are always a sufficient number of nominees for any parent governor vacancies on the governing body.

61. The current levels of attendance, which are below average, reflect the number of holidays taken by pupils during term time. The school reminds parents frequently that this is disruptive to their children's education but this type of absence is increasing.

62. The Nursery is very popular with parents and is oversubscribed. Children are settled effectively over a period of time, with daily contacts with parents or carers who contribute well to this process. Relationships between the staff and parents and carers are good. There are notices, photographs and letters in the entrance hall and parents and carers are well informed about progress. There are good opportunities for parents and carers to talk with adults in the Nursery about any concerns they have about their children.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

63. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, who is supported effectively by her deputy, senior managers and the governing body. There is a strong community feeling to this large school, which operates very efficiently on a day-to-day basis and this is due to the good relationships which exist between all members of staff. Communication is very effective and ensures that everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities and that they all work together for the good of the pupils. Subject co-ordinators lead their subjects well, devising action plans which form part of the school's annual improvement plan. They monitor standards and provision in their subjects appropriately and their findings inform future plans. Early Years co-ordinators manage provision effectively and have been successful in improving the levels of resources and in planning the curriculum to take account of the national recommendations for young children's learning.

64. The two special educational needs co-ordinators have produced a clear and comprehensive action plan to further improve the provision and help introduce and implement the new Code of Practice effectively. The special needs governor, who visits the school regularly, meets with the co-ordinators to discuss the provision and monitor its effectiveness, and reports back to the governing body each term to keep it fully informed.

65. The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in June 1997. Standards have risen in many subjects, mainly at the end of Key Stage 2, due to good teaching in the oldest classes. However, standards in some subjects have fallen, for example, in design and technology, art and music at Key Stage 1. The school's action on the key issue to raise standards in reading has been effective, although there is still more work to do to raise standards still further in speaking and writing. The effective use of extra teachers to support literacy and numeracy lessons in Year 6 has improved standards gained in the national tests. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall, although it was judged as good at the last inspection. This is due mainly to the changeover of staff in the intervening years. The leadership and management of the school remain strong and this is why the school continues to improve. However, its progress on addressing one of the areas identified at the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Despite assessment procedures being improved in some areas, there are still weaknesses in the systems that are in place to monitor the progress of individual pupils and in how this information is used to meet their needs effectively in lessons.

66. The governors carry out their responsibilities efficiently, in line with statutory requirements and their individual skills are used well to help the school. For example, they have co-opted the site manager on to the governing body and she ensures that the governors receive comprehensive reports about the premises and grounds. In this way, governors are able to plan improvements based on first hand information and it is clear from the immaculate appearance of the buildings that they are doing a good job. They have excellent systems to monitor health and safety and these ensure that the school is a safe and comfortable place for children. They also monitor the curriculum effectively, through their visits to the school and through regular meetings with subject co-ordinators. Governors get clear information about children on the register for special educational needs and are able to monitor the school's provision and success with these children. The success of the school improvement plan is monitored carefully at meetings, where the governors receive detailed information from the headteacher which enables them to judge the effectiveness of their spending decisions.

67. The school has good systems to identify and meet the training and development needs of the staff. There are detailed training plans for each member of staff and these are linked to targets which have been identified through the performance management system. Whole-school training needs are identified and met effectively, often through in-house sessions, for example on assertive discipline and more recently on improving teachers' computer skills and knowledge. Newly qualified teachers quickly learn about school procedures and expectations and their performance is monitored and supported carefully by other more experienced teachers. The support and training given to teaching assistants help them to do an effective job and feel valued

within the school community. Although the quality of teaching is monitored by the headteacher, sometimes the action taken is not effective in improving provision for the children. This results in the inefficient use of resources and weaknesses in support for some pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2.

68. Generally there are good systems in place to plan the use of the funds which the school has at its disposal and target these effectively. Governors are involved in planning improvements and in monitoring the school's spending. The school commits a substantial amount to support children with special educational needs and, in the main, this is well spent. The high number of well-trained support staff is an example of this, and these people have a significant effect upon the progress these pupils make. However, as mentioned above, there are some weaknesses in provision in Key Stage 2 and this results in inefficient use of funds. Major improvements to the fabric of the building and to grounds and security systems have resulted in the school being a very pleasant and safe place in which to work and learn. There is a rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment to ensure that classrooms remain clean, bright and contain suitable furniture and fittings. Consultation with pupils resulted in new toilets in the junior building which pupils appreciate. The major spending project to update information and communication technology provision has been extremely successful and has contributed greatly to improving standards in the subject. The school is using the principles of 'best value' effectively.

69. Overall, the school's accommodation is of a high standard and contributes greatly to the progress which pupils make. They enjoy the computer suite, two halls which are used for physical education, spacious grounds for games and environmental work as well as good amounts of space outside classrooms for practical work. There are many smaller rooms which are used effectively for group work, music tuition and for peer mediation meetings. The staff work hard to ensure that pupils' work is displayed carefully on classroom walls and corridors and this adds to the bright and stimulating atmosphere. There is plenty of equipment to support teaching and learning in all subjects, particularly in history, geography and art and the provision of books to support the literacy hour is good. However, many of the non-fiction books in the libraries are old and contain out of date information. They do nothing to stimulate pupils' interest in libraries or in finding things out for themselves. The libraries are also under-used to teach specific library and research skills.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

70. The headteacher, governors and staff should now:

**(1) Raise standards in English at both key stages by:**

- Planning more systematically to extend pupils' skills in spoken language;
- Providing more planned opportunities for these to be developed in all subjects;
- Improving resources in the libraries and making more effective use of these to extend pupils' library and research skills;
- Ensuring that teachers are aware of the stages of writing development and use this knowledge effectively in planning to meet individual needs;
- Ensuring that pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 and 4 receive effective support.

(Paragraphs 1-9, 11, 24, 25, 27, 28, 32, 36, 37, 74-77, 87-99)

**(2) Ensure that pupils' progress is tracked more effectively and that teachers use this information when planning to meet the different needs of pupils in lessons.**

(Paragraphs 7, 27-29, 53, 65, 95, 98, 106, 114)

- (3) Continue to work with parents to improve attendance rates, by discouraging holidays during term time.**  
(Paragraphs 16 and 50)

#### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Improve standards in science at Key Stage 1. (Paragraphs 2, 3, 108, 110)
- Provide more opportunities to enable pupils to understand the multicultural aspect of Britain today. (Paragraphs 42, 46, 97)
- Motivate pupils further by involving them more effectively in the target setting process and in monitoring their own progress. (Paragraph 54)
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is monitored more rigorously and that effective action is taken to address weaknesses. (Paragraph 67)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	118
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	16	45	52	4	0	0
Percentage	1	14	38	44	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR - 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	45	594
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		166

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	112

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	59
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	73

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	43	41	84

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	33	38
	Girls	32	27	35
	Total	70	60	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (76)	71 (79)	87 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	35	38
	Girls	30	35	34
	Total	63	71	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (78)	83 (87)	86 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	40	50	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	29	35
	Girls	37	27	41
	Total	66	56	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (65)	62 (64)	84 (87)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	29	34
	Girls	31	25	40
	Total	55	54	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (51)	60 (64)	82 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	481
Any other minority ethnic group	5

*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	3
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)	25.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	336.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	45
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	22

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	1,397,532
Total expenditure	1,406,631
Expenditure per pupil	2,208
Balance brought forward from previous year	121,786
Balance carried forward to next year	112,687

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	684
Number of questionnaires returned	102

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	29	8	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	50	41	4	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	52	7	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	50	8	1	8
The teaching is good.	49	41	1	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	38	10	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	28	4	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	36	47	8	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	54	36	6	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	39	2	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	28	17	8	24

## **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**

71. Children enter the nursery at three years of age and they attend part-time. Their levels of attainment are generally below average for their age. They transfer to the Reception classes the following year aged five and they then attend school full-time. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, they reach expected levels for their age in personal and social education and in their physical development. In communication, language and literacy, in mathematics, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, their attainment is below average. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the nursery and Reception classes, where the teaching is sound and plans are based firmly on working towards the nationally recommended goals for young children's learning. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, although there are still not enough planned opportunities for pupils to extend children's spoken language skills and develop a wider vocabulary.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

72. Children enter the nursery over a period of weeks but settle quickly and after just a few weeks come into school happily, leaving their parents and carers behind. This is due to the warm, caring and happy atmosphere in the Nursery which makes the children feel confident and safe. They trust and relate well to the adults working with them. Children are less aware of each other, however. Although they work and play alongside each other, they need reminders to share and take turns. Many children move round the activities and choose their favourites. A few need encouragement to try some of the activities. There is no system for checking that children are sampling the full range of activities and developing the necessary skills.

73. On reaching Reception, children are more willing to be directed by adults to the various activities and have a better understanding of their surroundings. Interaction between children is still limited but is developing, as is sharing. Teachers keep records of children's attempts at activities and what they achieve. Classroom assistants also keep records of activities and pupils' responses ensuring progress is tracked in the different areas. Routines are well established and understood by Reception children, including lining up and walking quietly down the corridor to the hall, for instance. Teachers use praise and rewards well to encourage good behaviour and relationships. Lunchtime supervisors also play a part in this aspect and give 'dockets' for good manners and good behaviour.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

74. A significant number of children enter the Nursery with limited vocabulary and poor articulation, for instance single words and short phrases are used instead of full sentences. There is often a lack of consonants in the phrases used by a number of children. More complex sentences are used only by a few children but topics are very much centred on themselves and their immediate environment. There appears to be little interest in other children and the wider environment and concentration periods are short. Good models of language are provided by adults and a range of interesting topics and objects introduced to widen their experience, but adults are not developing the children's spoken language skills and vocabulary in a systematic way.

75. The majority of children have poorly developed skills for writing. They do not apply pressure with pencils, crayons or chalk and the marks they make seldom resemble letters. The drawings and paintings of the Nursery children are at an early developmental stage for their age.

They attempt to write their name and draw what is familiar to them, themselves or a parent, for example, but the marks made are not recognisable in many cases.

76. By the time they reach the Reception classes, children's language skills are still under-developed but the majority of children make sound progress in these classes. However, there are still many children with unclear and immature speech patterns. Many also remain self-centred and have few extended conversations with each other. They are keener to relate to the classroom assistant or the teacher.

77. Letters are more recognisable and some children are able to write their name accurately with well-formed letters. By the end of the Reception year, as observed in the present Year 1 workbooks, many children are beginning to attempt independent writing. They can write their names and familiar words and copy others from cards in the classroom.

### **Mathematical development**

78. In the Nursery, the children are beginning to sort objects and are at the early stages of counting. They sing rhymes and songs to help them. Children are good at recognising colours and shapes and some of the more able are beginning to use the language of size and recognise shapes in everyday objects. Two children were observed using the computer independently to practise their recognition of simple shapes, for example stars, circles and squares, as well as the shapes of clothing - shoe, skirt, trousers.

79. In the Reception classes, opportunities are exploited to improve children's use of mathematics. For instance, children counted the numbers of children having packed lunch and school dinners and drew the numbers in the air. The teacher wrote the numbers on the board for them to refer to at lunchtime. Many children are working well towards achieving the early learning goals; many can already count to eight, nine or 10 but there are many who still cannot count to five and who are unable to recognise patterns or write their numbers clearly. Abilities in sequencing activities cover a wide span. Some children are able to produce neatly executed two colour patterns, others can colour well but cannot complete the sequencing accurately, whilst a few are unable to make any attempt at the activity at all. Mathematics is incorporated into everyday activities and displays document children's investigations into pattern and shape around the school buildings.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

80. In the Nursery, the resources for this area of development are good. There is a wide range of activities set out for children to explore. The topic under investigation for the week of the inspection was fruit and vegetables and at 'talk time' adults began with familiar items before moving on to unusual fruits. Parents contributed well to this and a large amount of fruit was accumulated by both morning and afternoon groups. A few children were able to name familiar vegetables accurately.

81. Children concentrated for short periods during the 'talk time' and sang songs related to the topic, such as 'One potato, two potato'. Some were given the opportunity to guess which vegetable was in the bag and, with help, described the item. However, this took the form of closed questions to which only 'yes' or 'no' was required or single word answers, for instance, 'Is it long or short? Is it big or small?' Opportunities were not taken to encourage children to talk at length and use some of the words which the adults had been using. This activity lost some of its impact in a large group of over 40 children, because few were able to have a go in the short time they could concentrate. It also took time for children to move to the front to participate as they were in a confined area.

82. In the Reception classes the theme of fruit and vegetables was continued. Here, children were able to use different vegetables for more complex printing sequences, for instance, blue pepper and green potato. The majority of children could name familiar fruit and vegetables.

Children in Reception were able to relate some routines to time; for instance, knowing playtime comes after snack time. Awareness of the environment is also developed well with displays showing that they had investigated the school area and found a variety of features. However, children have little appreciation of others' cultures and beliefs; for instance no books in other languages were seen nor displays depicting the multicultural aspects of today's society.

### **Physical development**

83. Children in the Nursery have good opportunities to practise movement in music, songs and rhymes. Their skills are well developed in climbing and using bikes and scooters. Many children are able to propel or pedal these and are aware of others when they are moving around. They respond well to instructions requiring them to stop and listen. The majority of children are beginning to thread large beads and post shapes either into boxes or as puzzles. A few children can also manipulate the cursor on the computer using a mouse.

84. By the time they reach Reception, they have a well-developed awareness of space and other children. They enjoy physical activities and perform well, showing good skills in using small apparatus such as balls and beanbags. They take turns well in pairs, small groups and teams and are aware of the need to keep noise to a minimum. Teachers have developed suitable strategies for making sure the children listen and perform safely. The children in Reception classes are able to use the large toys outside with confidence. They demonstrate good balance in formal lessons and on scooters, staying upright and gliding for long stretches.

### **Creative development**

85. In the Nursery, the children have good opportunities to explore different media and most have good recognition of shape and colour. Some are able to join in the simple songs and rhymes, using actions to match the words; others will watch and listen. They enjoy simple role-play undertaken by adults, but there is little evidence that they co-operate with each other to re create their own role-plays and engage in conversation with one another. Their drawings and paintings show that many are still in the early stages of their development in observing the features of things around them.

86. By the time children reach Reception, creative skills have developed appropriately so that they are confident with tools and a variety of media. However, there are examples of adults controlling some activities too much and this restricts children's imagination and independence. For instance, when printing vegetables, children took it in turns two at a time, while five others watched. Children's work on display is sometimes uniform, emphasising process rather than creativity. Role-play in the home corner encourages co-operative play, but at times opportunities for language development are not grasped by adults and vocabulary and use of language extended. Music and singing sessions are at times unenthusiastic, with children unsure of the words of familiar rhymes such as 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' and 'Humpty Dumpty'.

## **ENGLISH**

87. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils gained standards which were average in reading but well below average in writing. Provisional results for 2001 indicate below average standards in reading and well below average standards in writing. The findings of this inspection indicate that pupils aged seven years are achieving below expected levels for their age because of limited language skills both in spoken and written English. They are making better progress in their reading which is about average for their age this year. Considering their low levels of language development which they have when they first start school, their progress is satisfactory overall.

88. Standards for pupils aged eleven were average in the 2000 tests but provisional figures from the 2001 tests suggest that standards fell to below average. The school had forecast this

because of the high number of pupils who sat the test who had special educational needs. However, the findings of this inspection indicate similar standards this year, because of weaknesses in pupils' spoken language skills which inhibit their ability to express themselves clearly and imaginatively in their written work. This represents little improvement since the last inspection, when standards in these aspects were also below average.

89. Standards in reading have improved because of the good work the school has done in analysing the results of tests and highlighting areas which need development. Raising standards in reading was a key issue identified for improvement at the last inspection and the school has addressed this effectively. However, weaknesses in other areas of pupils' development have been missed. There is no clear plan to ensure the development of spoken language skills as pupils move through the school. Weaknesses in ongoing assessment mean that teachers are not always providing appropriate work to help pupils move on in their writing skills. This means that pupils are not making enough progress in these aspects of their learning.

90. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language have limited support but their progress, overall, is sound. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress, particularly when they have the effective support of additional adults, but those in Years 3 and 4 often make insufficient progress as a result of weaknesses in support teaching.

91. Standards in reading are satisfactory. Younger pupils make good progress in learning their letter sounds and make good attempts at unknown words. Pupils targeted for additional help from special needs support staff make particularly good progress although their comprehension skills need further development. Older pupils begin to read into the text and discuss the characters and plot but they often have a restricted vocabulary that limits their understanding of the story. They have good dictionary skills and make appropriate guesses at the meanings of unknown words using clues in the text. Higher attaining pupils discuss their favourite books and authors giving reasons for their choices.

92. Standards in writing are below those expected for both infant and junior pupils. Although the older higher attaining pupils are able to write extensively and use interesting sentence structures and vocabulary, the majority of pupils find this difficult. The lack of emphasis on the pupils' ability to express their ideas orally in extended sentences using new words means they have few opportunities to rehearse these skills before writing them down. Pupils achieve well below the standards expected in speaking skills although their listening skills are good. Teachers do not use nursery rhymes, songs and poems sufficiently in infant classes to develop pupils' speech rhythms and language patterns.

93. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but is inconsistent across the school. Some examples of good and very good teaching were seen and these were generally where teachers matched the work closely to pupils' needs and involved their pupils well during all parts of the lesson.

94. Teachers plan appropriate activities for younger pupils in Year 1 and 2 but at times there is too much emphasis on writing rather than learning the skill. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1, four pupils struggled to write, when cards with letters would have provided them with opportunities to sound out words and achieve the task set for them. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subject and the focus is firmly on writing and reading. Pupils' oral skills are less well developed in the majority of lessons. Teachers use new vocabulary in the National Literacy Strategy correctly but many do not expect pupils to use it in their answers. In many lessons observed during the inspection, pupils gave short or one word answers and teachers did not encourage them to answer at length using the correct vocabulary. Many pupils have difficulty writing for an audience as their work lacks expressive language and excitement.

95. Teachers are skilful at assessing their pupils' needs during lessons but they are not recording them systematically to build up a clear picture of their progress and to help them plan the next steps in pupils' learning. The assessment column of the planning sheet too often refers to the success of the lesson and not the outcomes for pupils. In Years 1 and 2 teachers group their pupils well and match work appropriately to their abilities. Older pupils are set according to their attainment and work is often planned for only two groups within each set which means tasks are not always appropriate to lower or higher attaining children.

96. Pupils have good relationships with the staff and each other. They are eager to answer and listen well in class sessions. They work hard to complete tasks although sometimes the presentation of their work is untidy. Many of the older pupils do not use joined handwriting consistently and spellings of common words are forgotten as they complete the work. Younger pupils often have poor pencil control and write letters incorrectly.

97. Planning for the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although pupils' reading skills are developing steadily, they are not using the library well enough. Many of the books on the shelves are out of date and do not reflect today's society and its multicultural makeup. Classes visit the library regularly but they change their books quickly and do not learn the enjoyment of choosing a book with care or looking for information. The time is often too short to enable these skills to be taught successfully. There is no clear policy for the use of the library or a scheme of work to develop skills. The use of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory but there are missed opportunities to use drama and debate and develop a range of writing for other purposes. For example, in science there are limited opportunities to write up experiments using a scientific format.

98. The school analyses the results of tests and has adapted the curriculum to develop writing and reading. However, target setting for smaller groups of pupils is less developed and teachers and pupils do not have an easily accessible record of the steps needed to reach the next level.

99. The co-ordinator provides good support to teachers. There has been regular monitoring of the reading and writing elements of the curriculum. Improvement in the subject has been satisfactory and standards are rising, but the library, the development of oral skills, and the use of assessment are areas still needing further development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

100. The results of the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed pupils gained well below average standards in mathematics. The provisional results of the 2001 tests showed pupils reached below average standards. The findings of the inspection indicate that the current pupils in Year 2 look likely to attain average standards for their age in numeracy and other areas of mathematics by the end of the year.

101. The national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 showed below average standards but in 2001, provisional results suggest that standards fell to well below average. The cohort of pupils who sat the tests contained far more who had special educational needs and this affected standards overall. The pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining standards similar to those found nationally which represents good improvement since last year and since the last inspection.

102. At both key stages, the benefits of the National Numeracy Strategy are starting to be seen amongst the pupils. The setting of pupils in three ability groups per year and the good teaching in Years 1, 2 and 6 seen during the inspection are proving to be instrumental in raising standards for pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them as they move through the school. This is due to the good support they receive in class from their teachers and learning support assistants and the careful

planning which takes the needs of all pupils into account. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.

103. At the end of Year 2 pupils understand the language of number, have a good knowledge of place value to at least a hundred and can quickly recall addition and subtraction facts to twenty. Pupils know the names and some of the properties of two-dimensional shapes, such as, the number of sides and corners. They solve shopping problems to a pound with more able pupils confidently working to five pounds or more. Pupils can tell the time in hours, half and quarter hours using analogue and digital clocks. They know simple fractions such as a quarter and a half and use their knowledge to find the fraction of a given number such as a quarter of twenty.

104. By the end of Year 6 pupils have progressed to having a good understanding of place value to at least a thousand with higher ability pupils confidently handling numbers to a million. Pupils accurately add, subtract, multiply and divide two and three digit numbers with the majority able to work to two decimal places. They draw a range of polygons by accurately measuring the angles and, during their regular mathematics lessons in the information technology suite, reinforce their learning by using a program that allows them to input a set of procedures to construct polygons. The completed work seen in the mathematics books of the pupils who left last year varied greatly depending on which set they were in. Those pupils in the higher ability set were given work at far too simple a level to help them achieve as well as expected. Many aspects of the subject, for example data handling and probability, were not being covered. These weaknesses in provision affected the standards reached by these more able children. However, pupils in the other two sets were given work at a suitable level and were often presented with challenges to extend their thinking and understanding. These pupils made good and often very good progress during the year.

105. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good teaching seen. One lesson observed was of the highest quality and one was unsatisfactory. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is mainly good or better as is the teaching in Year 6. Planning is good throughout the school and is firmly based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers plan lessons with due regard to the prior attainment of their pupils and the content is carefully designed to meet their specific needs. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 lower ability set learning about money. The teacher had planned three different activities for the pupils with the more able in the set challenged to make up twenty pence using different coins, those of middle ability to ten pence and the lower ability pupils playing a game to teach them to recognise various coins. All the pupils in this set made good progress during the course of the lesson and were justifiably proud of their achievements. Teachers manage their pupils very well and create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and learn effectively. Pupils respond well to this and behaviour in lessons is good with pupils eager to learn and enthusiastic about the work provided for them. Lessons move along at a brisk pace with all pupils fully involved. For instance, in an excellent Year 6 lesson the pupils were constantly set precise time limits for the completion of their work. They were given exactly two minutes to learn their seven times table which they did with great enthusiasm. Individual whiteboards and number fans are often used most effectively during the mental mathematics session at the start of lessons. Using these helps teachers to assess the understanding of all the pupils and thereby set work at the correct level.

106. Where teaching is less effective the objectives of the lesson are not clear and the content is insufficiently demanding to move pupils on to the next stage in their learning. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' understanding through searching questions which challenge the pupils to explain their thinking. In some classes, work is not pitched at the correct level; more able pupils find it too easy and lower attainers find it too difficult. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well catered for. The teachers plan the use of any support they have carefully. Learning support assistants are included in teachers' planning and are used effectively to support individuals and groups of pupils in lessons. Their effectiveness is even greater when they are used to monitor pupils and their responses during the teacher-led parts of

the lesson. Good relationships are a strong feature with pupils being attentive to their teachers and able to work well together. Suitable homework, linked to work in lessons, is set weekly and is completed successfully by the majority of the pupils.

107. The management of the subject is good and has a positive impact on raising standards. Teaching, planning and completed work are thoroughly monitored to identify areas for improvement and celebrate success. Assessment procedures are also good and are used effectively to help future planning and to set targets for groups and individual pupils. A particular strength is the individual pupils' targets set each term that are sent home for parents. These help both pupils and parents to focus on the areas that are in need of improvement and are instrumental in improving learning. Test results are carefully analysed to identify any aspects of mathematics that are weak and to address these in future planning. For example, mental strategies and problem solving have been identified as areas in need of improvement and the school is currently addressing these through a range of measures including further training for staff.

## **SCIENCE**

108. In the assessments which teachers completed in 2000 for seven-year-olds, standards were below average although the provisional assessments for 2001 show that standards improved and are likely to be average in comparison with national figures. The findings of this inspection indicate that the pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to reach standards which are below average this year, which mirror the findings of the previous inspection. Although pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts is secure, lower standards this year are due mainly to weaknesses in pupils' ability to use correct scientific vocabulary and explain their ideas and findings clearly. Weaknesses in pupils' spoken language skills hinder attainment in this area of their work.

109. In the national tests in 2000 for eleven-year-olds, standards were below average in science and the results were similar in the 2001 tests, based on provisional figures. The findings of this inspection indicate that pupils in Year 6 this year are likely to reach standards which are broadly average for their age by the time they leave the school. This represents improvement on the past two years' results and on the findings of the previous inspection. This is due mainly to better planning for the subject and the good teaching which pupils are receiving in Year 6.

110. Standards in the infants are affected by pupils' abilities to use correct scientific vocabulary and explain their ideas and findings clearly. Children can carry out simple experiments safely, for example, they mix sugar and water, rice and water, and flour and water to test which substances dissolve but are unable to explain their findings accurately. This is also obvious in their written work.

111. By age 11 most children have gained a satisfactory level of skills in experimental procedures; they can carry out instructions and perform simple experiments safely. They have acquired a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas such as forces and electricity. For example, most know that the force of gravity pulls objects down to Earth, friction slows down moving objects and an electric bulb will not light if there is a break in the circuit. Some also know that forces are measured in Newtons. However, they are less able to use appropriate vocabulary to describe their observations or explain scientific understanding and their ability to represent their results in graphs is below that expected for their age.

112. Teaching is at least satisfactory with evidence of some good teaching in Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 6. In these classes the lessons are well planned, expectations are high, teachers' subject knowledge is good, questioning is friendly and focused on deepening understanding or revealing lack of it and pupils actively participate in the lessons. Teachers use appropriate vocabulary and encourage pupils to use it. However, many teachers in other year groups do not challenge their pupils enough to explain clearly what they have observed and

pupils are passive rather than active learners. This also inhibits the development of children's vocabulary.

113. Pupils behave well in science lessons. Most work hard and are productive. Relationships are good. Pupils share apparatus and materials well and act sensibly and safely when carrying out experiments. Older pupils engage in lessons attentively and enjoy their science lessons.

114. The science scheme of work is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, assessment procedures are not effective in tracking pupils' progress throughout the school and in planning the next steps in pupils' learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

115. Standards in art at both key stages are in line with those expected nationally. Standards are lower than those found in the last inspection because of the reduced amount of time the school spends teaching art.

116. Pupils study an appropriate range of techniques using different media, materials and processes. In Year 1 they use wax crayons and chalk pastels to reproduce a picture in the style of Van Gogh, carefully imitating his brush strokes in their mark making. Year 2 pupils copy Monet's painting of haystacks, mixing poster paints to get the right match of colours and refining the technique of stippling to create texture. In Year 3 pupils learn about primary and secondary colours, building on their skills in colour mixing and adding white or black to secondary colours to obtain the right shade to match coloured pieces of fabric. Year 4 pupils work on colour wheels painting in primary, secondary and tertiary colours. Pupils in Year 6 have researched the life and work of William Morris using the Internet and they are engaged in creating fabric designs, based on their observational sketches of fruits. Art work displayed around the school and in pupils' sketchbooks shows sound progression in drawing skills. In Year 2 viewfinders are used to isolate and record particular features; in Year 3 recordings of visual information are made about a specific location when pupils visit the park and in Year 4 quick drawings from observation are made to capture the lines and proportions of figures.

117. Teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good practice in both key stages. Teachers' relationships with pupils and their management of behaviour is good. Questioning is used effectively to take pupils' investigations forward and help them to work independently and resources are used well to support lessons. In Key Stage 1 teaching assistants are very effective in promoting all pupils' learning, including that of pupils with special educational needs. In most classes, pupils do not have enough opportunities to comment on each other's work and discuss how improvements might be made. Computers are used well to aid design work and to research famous artists. Teachers always manage their pupils well and pupils' high standards of behaviour and their enthusiasm for the activities helps them to make effective progress.

118. The co-ordinators have completed a sound scheme of work which covers all areas of the National Curriculum. There are some elements, such as the evaluation and development of pupils' work and the roles and purposes of crafts people in different times and cultures that are not planned at a high enough level to extend older pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Resources and accommodation for art are good.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

119. Using the limited evidence available during this inspection, standards appear to vary from year to year but in general are average for pupils' ages. No lessons were observed in the infant classes and only one in a Year 5 class was seen. Standards have fallen since the school's previous inspection when they were above average at Key Stage 1. This is due mainly to the fact that less time is devoted to the subject; design and technology lessons now alternate half-termly with art.

120. Displays in infant classes reflect elements of investigation, patterns and design around the school, on walls and drains, for instance. Displays also show evidence of computer-designed patterns and the use of materials from the raw state to finished products. It was not possible to determine pupils' abilities in the use of tools or in evaluating the products they make.

121. In the class observed, standards of attainment were satisfactory and the elements of investigation, design, planning and evaluation could be seen. The required elements are reflected in pupils' work in other Key Stage 2 years but with significant variations in some areas. Some pupils are able to use the planning frameworks competently and follow these up by saying how successful they have been, suggesting possible areas that could be improved. They can

also pick out what makes good design and incorporate this into their own project. In other class workbooks, there was little evidence of any of the key elements of the subject.

122. The pupils observed in the lesson made good progress, worked with enthusiasm and understood the need for the survey they undertook. Over a number of weeks, the questionnaire regarding biscuit types for marketing was conducted by groups who then went on to design and make what they thought would be most popular. They discussed the outcomes of the biscuit making and what the potential market for the different flavours might be. Displays around the school were of good quality and showed that a good range of projects has been covered.

123. From the limited amount of evidence available, indications are that, where staff are confident with the projects, as exemplified by pupils' work, teaching is good, although this is not consistent throughout the school. The co-ordinators for the subject are in the process of developing materials and resource boxes for design and technology in order to help improve the consistency of the teaching.

124. Nationally recommended plans are used and shortfalls in equipment have been identified. Plans are in hand to improve the levels of resources in the subject. Liaison between the information and communication technology and design and technology co-ordinators are beginning to develop an integrated approach to computer work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125. Standards are average at the end of both key stages although in some aspects of the subject, such as mapping, they reach high standards. This is as a result of good planning in the subject that builds effectively on pupils' previous skills and knowledge. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the local environment and the school. They use simple maps and plans of the school, its grounds and their classrooms. Older pupils extend their knowledge of the world to include continents and countries. They learn about the rivers and mountains of the world such as the Nile in Egypt, and they begin to understand how people affect their environment. In Year 3 they look at different playgrounds and begin to discuss how their own could be improved. In Year 5 pupils are encouraged to discuss their stereotypical ideas of an African country. Many were surprised to find streetlights and thought people wore rags. The topic on Malawi makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

126. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject but miss opportunities to develop extended projects and research. Teachers manage pupils very well and the use of the outside area as a teaching area is used effectively. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils learned about coordinates in the playground. They behaved well and listened carefully to their teacher, making good progress in their understanding. However, there is not enough emphasis placed on developing the children's vocabulary. While teachers use it effectively in lessons there are few opportunities for pupils to use it and thus develop their language. Older pupils' written explanations and descriptions are often limited by their lack of vocabulary.

127. The co-ordinator has a clear view of her role and has satisfactory plans to develop the curriculum, although these do not include infant classes. Although there is no co-ordinator for geography in the infant department, teachers have begun to trial a good system for recording individual pupils' knowledge and understanding. The resources are used well and the use of computers to find information for particular topics is good. The library books are less effective for research as many are old and do not show life today in many of the countries represented. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Monitoring of planning and pupils' books has resulted in appropriate adjustments to the curriculum

## **HISTORY**

128. Standards are the same as they were at the last inspection. By the end of both key stages pupils reach average standards but in some classes attainment is higher than that normally seen. This improving picture is due to more confident teaching underpinned by the revised, well-planned curriculum.

129. Overall, the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress in both key stages. In Year 1 pupils understand that there is a distinction between past and present. They show knowledge and understanding of aspects of the past as they examine Victorian household objects, such as a washtub and a dolly from the school museum, discuss their uses and compare them with the modern-day equivalent. They develop skills in historical enquiry as they comment on these differences, and begin to understand the changes to everyday lives brought about by such events as the introduction of electricity.

130. Pupils in Year 4 apply the skills already learned to a different, non-European society that existed a long time ago. They look at maps and pictures of the Nile, are told about the annual flooding and study the relationship between the geography of Egypt and the way of life of the Ancient Egyptians. In Year 5, pupils use books and photographs to research information and interpret the past. They work well in groups and carefully "dig" out paper "shards" of Ancient Greek amphora which depict various scenes from a potter's life. They identify what the potter is doing through referring to the video they have just seen about pot making in those times. Pupils in Year 6 research the life of Henry V111 using a selection of books and the Internet. They know how to find out about people from a range of sources and they select and record relevant information.

131. Teaching, which was satisfactory at the last inspection, remains satisfactory overall with examples of good teaching in Years 1,5 and 6. Most teaching interests and motivates pupils who contribute keenly in lessons and are positive about their work. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour that are well met. In the good lessons, activities are matched well to the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher worked with a group of pupils with relatively poor literacy skills to brainstorm a framework of questions to support them in carrying out their own historical enquiries. This helped them take a full part in the lesson and make good progress. Plenary sessions are used effectively to find out what pupils have learned and pupils' books, with a few exceptions, are marked with comments that support their progress in learning. Resources are good and used well. The use of information and communication technology is well established in lessons.

132. The subject is well led and managed. Improved history resources, which include the excellent resource of the Hilldene museum, considerably enhance the experiences offered to the pupils and help to bring history to life. Visits and a visiting theatre company enrich the curriculum for all year groups.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

133. Children reach levels which are above average for their age at the end of both key stages. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

134. By age seven most children are able to enter, save and retrieve work and they are able to talk about their experiences in information and communication technology in the wider world. Older children are confident users of computers. They are able to use the Internet, know how to send an e-mail, can write and edit text, can transport pictures, and cut, copy and paste text. Children in Years 5 and 6 are able to prepare a Power Point presentation. The majority are able to use appropriate sound effects and have a good awareness of the audience. Most can present information in different forms, for example, text, picture and text, and picture, text and sound.

They are aware of the need for good presentation. They are less confident in the use of control devices and sensing physical data.

135. Teaching and learning are generally good. They are particularly good in Years 5 and 6, where the lessons are well-presented and grab pupils' attention. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject because of the recent training which they have all undergone and they are using this well to demonstrate and explain new techniques. Expectations are generally high. Lessons are well prepared and questioning is challenging but supportive. Children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, generally make good progress and their learning becomes more secure as they progress into Year 6. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and contribute considerably to their progress. They are excited and enthusiastic about their lessons in the new computer suite. They behave very well and relationships are good.

136. The curriculum is well planned and provides good coverage of the National Curriculum. This provision is enhanced by a successful club which runs after school, which helps pupils to extend their skills further. The subject is very well led and managed, and the resources are good.

## **MUSIC**

137. Pupils throughout the school reach standards expected for their age and make steady progress, enjoying their music lessons. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers enables older children to learn to play a range of instruments, including violin, clarinet, recorder, flute and trumpet. These pupils make sound progress and there are opportunities for them to play in front of a larger audience in school concerts and assemblies.

138. Younger pupils sing well during their lessons and in assemblies, joining in enthusiastically and performing the actions well. In a Year 2 lesson which focused on developing their understanding of pitch, the pupils quickly gathered into a circle and began singing the song they had learnt in the last lesson, even before the teacher had started the lesson proper. They showed great delight in singing together. They learn to compose simple pieces of music to suggest mood and movement and use the tuned percussion instruments carefully and correctly.

139. Pupils in the junior classes further extend the basic skills they have learnt in the infants. In Years 3 and 4 they record their compositions in simple ways and in the older classes they learn the correct musical terms and are able to note down their work using correct notation. In subsequent lessons, they are able to develop their initial ideas by emphasising certain notes and phrases and they adapt their written compositions accordingly. They develop sound skills in the use of a range of instruments and are given good opportunities to play in groups and as a class. A good example of this was in a Year 4 class, where pupils were able to accompany the song, 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot', using glockenspiels and chime bars. They were able to follow a simple musical score, maintain their own rhythms during the song and achieved high standards for their age. Although in assemblies pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm, in class they are more reticent and the singing often lacks vigour and is poorly pitched. In Year 3, pupils show a lack of knowledge of simple Nursery rhymes, such as 'Three Blind Mice'. Pupils gain a reasonable knowledge of the music of famous composers and that of other cultures through the music played during assemblies and through their class music lessons.

140. The quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory overall. Teachers are supported well by a new scheme of work that provides lesson plans which ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered. Where teachers are more confident and have a greater knowledge of the subject, teaching and learning are good; these teachers are able to adapt the basic plans well to meet the needs of their classes and to bring the lessons to life. They inject their enthusiasm into the lessons, and present their pupils with a good degree of challenge. However, in some lessons, teachers' presentations lack confidence and excitement and the lessons become

repetitive and dull. Despite this, the pupils always try hard and clearly enjoy their work. Teachers always organise their classes well, enabling all pupils to participate and their skilled management techniques result in a calm and positive atmosphere during lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are always supported well as teachers always pay special attention to their needs. Special needs support assistants provide consistently good levels of support when they are present in music lessons. They encourage their pupils to take part in singing, playing instruments and contributing to class discussions. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language respond well during music lessons and take a full part in all the activities. They learn new songs quickly, which helps their understanding of language patterns and widens their vocabulary.

141. The specialist teacher who taught infant classes at the time of the last inspection has left and teachers throughout the school teach their own music lessons. The loss of this specialist is the main reason why standards have fallen in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, when they were above average. To support her colleagues throughout the school, the co-ordinator recently introduced the new scheme of work and this is being implemented effectively. The feedback she is receiving is enabling her to adapt those lessons which lack pace and challenge and provide further advice and support to colleagues.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

142. Pupils at both key stages reach levels which are above those expected for their age. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average.

143. By the time they are seven, pupils demonstrate that they can listen well and carry out instructions accurately. They have good awareness of space, move around with control and in a safe manner. They work co-operatively and enthusiastically with partners in sharing and turn taking. When using apparatus such as balls and bean bags they can throw and catch accurately, using a variety of speeds and heights. When asked to stop while the teacher made some important points, a Year 2 class listened without being distracted by the small apparatus they were using.

144. By the age of 11, pupils have well-developed skills for games. They are careful and thoughtful when working together in teams playing netball or basketball. They encourage each other and commiserate when things do not work successfully. However, they have not yet learned to analyse and evaluate each other's performance in a constructively critical way. Pupils listen to teachers' instructions well and respond immediately to stop commands. They work enthusiastically and can organise themselves quickly to work in groups.

145. The quality of teaching in physical education is good. Many very good lessons were seen, particularly where teachers were able to coach pupils successfully because of their good understanding of the skills required. Their demonstrations were clear and they were able to interest and motivate their pupils well. The pace of lessons is usually brisk and in those where apparatus was used, the teachers organised their pupils well to collect and return equipment carefully, demonstrating good personal development and independence. Teachers always ensure that pupils understand the need for warm up and cool down activities in their routines.

146. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress both during lessons and as they move through the school. Girls and boys perform equally well. Classroom assistants are not generally used in games or gymnastics lessons, but the well established rules and routines instilled by the teachers means they are able to structure their lessons to take into account the needs of all the pupils.

147. The co-ordinators provide good leadership and support for their colleagues. Nationally recommended plans are used alongside the borough guidelines to help with day to day lesson plans and this results in a well-planned range of physical activities throughout the year. This

includes swimming for Years 5 and 6, dance in the spring and summer terms, mixed football and netball teams after school, as well as a 'fitness' club. In the summer there is quick cricket and tennis and good use of outside school help is made in the form of personnel from Essex County Cricket Club and parent helpers for the after school clubs. Dance is also included in the autumn term through the Christmas play and concert.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

148. Seven-year-old pupils reach expected standards for their age in religious education and, by the time they are 11, standards are above average for their age. This shows a clear improvement since the last inspection.

149. By age seven, children are aware of the importance of the Harvest Festival and the format of a Christian prayer, for example, the use of 'Thank you God' and 'Amen'. Most can recognise good and bad characters in stories. Pupils are less aware of stories from religions other than Christianity.

150. Older pupils have a good level of understanding of the meanings of festivals and celebrations. For example, most understand the meaning of Harvest Festival as sharing and giving. They know that they share food at harvest time. The majority can argue a case for sharing and giving, such as children in a Year 5 lesson who gave reasons such as 'to help more people to be healthy' and 'if we share other people will share with us'. In one Year 6 class children were able to discuss the choices they make based on their values and beliefs. Most believe that being fair deserves respect and that unfair attitudes and behaviour are not worthy of respect.

151. Teaching is satisfactory in the infant classes. In the juniors teaching is generally good. Lessons are well prepared and expectations are high. Teachers ask probing questions and explain religious teachings well. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 with their understanding of right and wrong, becoming more secure as they progress into Year 3. Pupils make good progress in the junior school and their learning is most rapid in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is often challenging and exciting.

152. Older pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard at their tasks. Relationships are good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, take a full part in the lessons and confidently discuss issues based on their values and beliefs.

153. The plans for religious education are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus and meet the statutory requirements. Resources are good and the subject is well led and managed.