

INSPECTION REPORT

GIDEA PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Romford

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102308

Headteacher: Mrs B E Rowland-Frank

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd November 2001

Inspection number: 194847

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lodge Avenue Romford Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Gidea Park Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor E A Munday
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

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9542	Brian Jones	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
9446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
19227	Paul Missin	Team inspector	Provision for children in the Foundation Stage, Art and design, Geography, Physical education.	
14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Science, Design and technology, Religious education, Pupils with special educational needs.	
22745	Rosalind Johns	Team inspector	English, History, music, Pupils with English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is larger than most schools with 326 pupils on roll, including 45 children in the Foundation Stage who attend full time. There are 45 more boys than girls. The school is situated among mostly privately owned houses. Around 11 per cent of the pupils are on the register for special educational needs, mostly with moderate learning difficulties; this percentage is less than normally found. Five pupils have statements of special educational need, which is about average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and none of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language requires extra support. Three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. When pupils enter the school, their skills are above the levels found nationally. During the last school year, 16 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and four left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This degree of mobility is not unusual.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where the strong leadership by the headteacher and good teaching ensure that nearly all pupils attain national standards by Year 6 in the national tests. Pupils make satisfactory progress, behave well, work hard and enjoy learning. Parents' views of the school are very positive. The finances are managed well, and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teachers have particularly high expectations of pupils' work in mathematics and instrumental music, and standards are well above average.
- The headteacher leads the school well, with a clear view of how to raise standards of teaching and learning.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good, and has a positive impact on pupils' attainment.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, and are very proud of their school.
- The very good links with the local community help to enrich the curriculum.

What could be improved

- Higher attaining pupils do not achieve well enough in writing in Year 6.
- The resources for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory, and this affects pupils' standards.
- Aspects of the accommodation, such as the library and the classrooms in 'temporary' huts, are unsatisfactory.
- The teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is more than an hour below the recommended minimum, and this restricts the time that pupils have to learn.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997, and has made good improvement since then. The school has addressed the main issues from the previous report well. The development plan now has clear and achievable targets which reflect its main priorities. The quality of teaching has improved significantly as a result of better lesson planning and rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and senior staff. The

school has worked hard to improve the quality of information for parents, and this is now good. New guidelines for art and design have raised standards significantly, and pupils' work is now average. The school has put many measures in place to raise the standards achieved by higher attaining pupils, and they now achieve appropriately high standards in mathematics and science. In this year's national tests, over one third of Year 6 pupils attained the higher Level 5 in both subjects. In English, however, higher attaining pupils still do not achieve well enough, particularly in their writing. Compared with the previous report, standards attained by Year 6 pupils are higher in English (although similar in writing), mathematics and art and design, lower in information and communication technology and physical education and similar in all other subjects. In view of the strengths in leadership and teaching, the school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	C	C	D
mathematics	A	C	A	C
science	A	B	C	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The trend in Year 6 pupils' attainment is upwards, and broadly in line with that found nationally. The results compared with similar schools were lower in English and science than in mathematics because too few pupils attained the higher Level 5 in these subjects. The school easily exceeded its targets for both English and mathematics. The results for Year 2 pupils were above the national average in reading and writing, and well above in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, they were average in reading and writing and above in mathematics. The results of the teachers' assessments for science, however, were well below the national average. This inspection finds that standards attained by Year 2 pupils are above average in all aspects of English, mathematics and music, and average in all other subjects except information and communication technology. In Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics, and above average in reading, speaking and listening, science, religious education and music, where their performance skills are very good. Improvements in the way that teachers use assessment to address pupils' weaknesses account for the higher standards found in science compared with the latest national tests. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain standards that are above those expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical and creative development. Standards in their personal, social and emotional development are well above average. Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are average. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs do well, and make good progress towards their targets and other pupils achieve satisfactorily.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils are very proud of their school, show a great thirst for their work, and delight in their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally good, both in class and outside in the playground. Most pupils listen very carefully to their teacher, although a few take a time to settle, and find it difficult to remember rules.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They are keen to take responsibility, work independently when required and are quick to show initiative. Relationships are good between all members of the school community.
Attendance	Good. The attendance rate is better than found nationally, and this has a positive effect on pupils' progress.

Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and enthusiasm for school have a positive effect on their learning. The good relationships make this a happy school where pupils and staff enjoy their work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good, and this is why pupils' standards are improving. The difference between the best lessons where pupils learned quickly, and those that had shortcomings, was usually the varying degree of effectiveness of the teacher's control of the class. In a few lessons, time was lost as teachers continually reminded pupils not to call out, and this limited the pupils' learning. Teachers are well prepared and confident in teaching all subjects, and their planning of lessons is good. The teaching of reading skills is good, and pupils read fluently. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, but does not extend higher attaining pupils enough, and that is why standards in writing are not high enough. Teachers are especially good at teaching number work, and pupils do very well in the national tests as a result. Otherwise, the quality of teaching is good in science, music and religious education and satisfactory in all other subjects. Although some computers were being used in lessons, no information and communication technology lessons were seen. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, and develops children's early skills well. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support within the classroom and when withdrawn for specialist work. Teachers ensure that pupils

with English as an additional language are supported well, and that they are included in all school activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well organised, and gives pupils a rich variety of experiences, whilst focusing appropriately on the tasks necessary to develop their literacy and numeracy skills to the full. Weaknesses in information and communication technology, however, mean that the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. There is a very good range of extracurricular activities, including sport, after school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils have clear targets set for them, and their good progress is monitored carefully. Pupils with statements do well, and benefit from good support in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory provision, which supports pupils appropriately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Good spiritual provision in assemblies and lessons gives pupils the chance to reflect on issues, and to develop a clear understanding of the place of God in their lives. Good moral provision gives pupils a clear understanding of right and wrong. There is a very good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills, and learn to work productively with one another. Good cultural provision supports pupils' learning of art, music and literature. Good multicultural provision teaches pupils about how people around the world live and worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Pupils' progress and personal development are monitored carefully, and this helps teachers to provide good support for their academic and social development.

The well-planned curriculum is helping to raise standards, but weaknesses in information and communication technology mean that this subject does not meet statutory requirements. The school's partnership with parents is very good, and has a good impact on pupils' standards. There are good assessment procedures in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but not all other subjects have clear and consistent ways of measuring pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The good leadership of the headteacher inspires pupils and staff to aim for high standards in their work. The school runs very smoothly, with all of its members pulling together. There is good support from the deputy and senior staff, who carry out their duties effectively and form a strong management team with the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very committed to the raising of standards and support the school well. All statutory requirements are met apart from the provision in information and communication technology. They give well-informed advice, but rely too heavily on the headteacher's ideas about the school's future direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses the performance of pupils and staff very well. Pupils' results in the national assessment tests are examined carefully to see where improvements can be made. The quality of teaching is monitored systematically, and teachers benefit from good guidance about how they can improve the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning.
The strategic use of resources	Specific grants are used well to, for example, support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. There is a good supply of educational support staff, who provide cost-effective help to pupils with special educational needs. The school's development plan is clear about its targets, and how much they will cost.

The school has satisfactory procedures for obtaining the best value from its spending. The school is well-staffed, and teachers' qualifications and experience provide good coverage across the National Curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, but there are significant shortcomings. The library has very limited space, and this restricts pupils' opportunities to choose books or use it for research. The demountable huts are in poor condition. Resources are good overall. They are very good in music and religious education, and good in English, mathematics, science and design and technology. However, the school has one computer for 20 pupils, compared with the national average of one computer for 11 pupils and this affects pupils' standards in information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards the school achieves. • The high quality of relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resources for information and communication technology.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher’s strong leadership. • Consistently good teaching. • Good provision for pupils with special educational needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of sporting activities after school, and competitive team games.
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The inspection team agrees with parents’ positive views. The team also agrees that computer resources are unsatisfactory. However, there is a satisfactory range of sporting activities after school, of which a reasonable amount is competitive.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school’s results and pupils’ achievements

1. Since 1998, pupils’ standards in the national assessment tests in Year 6, as measured by their average scores, have risen steadily, and broadly in line with the national trend. In English, there has been a big increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 since 1998, from 79 per cent to 95 per cent this year. This percentage is well over the national average, and that of similar schools. However, this year the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 in English is well below the national average, and very low (in the lowest five per cent) when compared with similar schools. Pupils’ writing is the weakest element here, and few pupils write in sufficient length, or use complex structures in their work. Mathematics is a strength of the school, and the high expectations of teachers enabled over a third of pupils to attain Level 5 in the 2001 tests.

2. The national test results for Year 2 pupils are above average, overall, and average compared with similar schools. Writing and mathematics are the strongest subjects, where the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 is well above average.

3. In the Foundation Stage, children are on course to attain standards that are above average for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical and creative development. Standards in their personal, social and emotional development are well above average. Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are average. Since the last inspection, the high standards being achieved in language and literacy and mathematics have been maintained whilst those in physical and creative development have been improved. At the last inspection, standards in knowledge and understanding were above average, now they are average. Children make satisfactory progress from their above average levels of attainment on entry to the school. The most significant improvement is in their personal, social and emotional development. Here, all the staff work hard to ensure that children settle quickly, remain interested and well motivated and become independent learners as soon as possible.

4. The standards attained by the current Year 2 pupils are above average in all aspects of English, mathematics, including numeracy, and in music. Standards are average in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, religious education and physical education. Standards are below average in information and communication technology because the shortage of computers means that pupils spend too little time developing their skills.

5. The current Year 6, pupils’ standards are well above average in mathematics, including numeracy, and above average in reading, speaking and listening, science, music and religious education. Standards are average in writing, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, and, again, below average in information and communication technology.

6. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards, given their above average levels on entry to the school. Only in writing and information and communication technology do pupils not achieve well enough. An analysis of pupils' progress from the tests they took in Year 2 to their scores in the 2001 Year 6 tests shows that they have made good progress, overall, but poor gains in the proportion obtaining Level 5 in English. Otherwise, higher attaining pupils achieve appropriate standards, overall, and benefit from the ability sets in the junior classes which provide them with suitably challenging work.

7. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them, with some who make very good progress. Their targets are reviewed every term, and those for annual reviews help in focusing the school's provision for the pupils concerned. Pupils generally do well and attain, or come close to, average standards by the time they take the national assessment tests in Year 6. Overall, pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy, where the strategies are giving them good practice in the basic skills of reading and number. Pupils with statements of special educational needs do well at this school. They benefit from the help given by outside agencies, and together with the help received at school, this means that they make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from appropriate support from class teachers, and all make satisfactory progress in their use and understanding of English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils' behaviour is good, and their personal development and relationships are very good. These findings are an improvement on those of the last inspection, when these areas were generally good. Parents at the meeting and in response to the questionnaire felt very strongly that attitudes and behaviour were a strength of the school and that all staff helped their children to become mature and responsible.

9. Attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and punctuality is good. They concentrate well and are well motivated. They are confident and eager to answer. Sometimes, their interest and enthusiasm lead them to call out answers, but they are keen to put forward ideas. They work well in groups and independently and take pride in their achievements. Participation in extracurricular activities is very good.

10. Children in the Foundation Stage behave well, and show consistently good, and sometimes very good, attitudes to their work. They are often engrossed in their work and are sorry when lessons end. However, they stop very promptly when asked to do so by their teacher. They care for each other well, and are polite and respectful when, for example, they give out fruit at snack time and eat it together in their classes. In class discussions, they are keen to talk about what they know, listen carefully to adults and each other and work very well in groups when required. Most are able to work well, often with the minimum of supervision and encouragement from adults.

11. Behaviour is generally good in lessons, assemblies and at play times. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion. They are courteous and friendly to visitors. There have been no exclusions in recent years. In some classes, however, pupils take a long time to settle, and easily forget rules about calling out.

12. Older and younger pupils and boys and girls mix well together. There is no evidence of bullying and pupils feel confident that it will be dealt with quickly and fairly. Relationships within the school are good. Teachers act as very good role models of courtesy and fairness.

13. Pupils undertake responsibility very willingly, and there are many very good opportunities for them to do so. All pupils have tasks to do in class and older pupils have a variety of responsibilities, including helping in assemblies, setting up lessons, and playing with younger children at lunchtime. The opportunity to represent their year group in the school council is much valued by pupils. The house system and the prefect system make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are very keen to perform in public at concerts and have a strong commitment to their bands and the choir.

14. Attendance is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. In 2000/01 the level of attendance was 94.8 per cent, which was 0.4 per cent above the most recent average. Attendance is improving in the current year. For the first half of autumn term 2001, the rate went up to 96.1 per cent. The great majority of pupils arrive in good time to register at 8.55, and are ready to make a prompt start to the day. Unauthorised absence is very low.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. The quality of teaching shows a good improvement from that seen in the school's previous inspection, when a third of lessons were good or better but almost one quarter were unsatisfactory. In this inspection, only one lesson was unsatisfactory, and nearly two thirds were judged as good or better. The main improvements are in the infant and junior classes, and show the benefits of rigorous monitoring of teaching and good support from subject co-ordinators. The difference between the best lessons and those that had shortcomings was usually the varying degree of effectiveness of the teacher's control of the class. Although most teachers have very good strategies for managing pupils' behaviour, in a few lessons, the pace of learning slowed down as pupils continually called out and interrupted the teacher. Throughout the school, teachers mark pupils' work well, often with helpful comments to help them to improve. Teachers make good use of homework to extend the work done in class.

16. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good, and one quarter of lessons were very good. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour, and they respond well to this. Teachers demonstrate an open, warm, welcoming approach, which settles children well. It encourages them to do their best, to have a go at new learning and keeps them well motivated. Where lessons are very good, they are taught at a brisk pace and children are moved forward very quickly in their learning. Several features of very good teaching, which led to very good learning, were evident in a physical development lesson in the hall. Children changed quickly and entered the hall in a very orderly way and were immediately ready to learn. The warm-up and the singing of two appropriate songs provided very good links with children's creative work and the children were then challenged well to move around the hall in the manner of several characters from the story they were reading. Actions were suggested and demonstrated enthusiastically by the teacher and the children were engrossed as they copied and experimented with their own movements. Teachers' planning is full and detailed, and shows how all activities are related to work within the recommended areas of learning. A further strength of teaching is the good relationship evident between teachers and learning support assistants, which helps children learn quickly in a very supportive atmosphere.

17. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers show a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach, and all make lessons interesting so that pupils enjoy learning. Their direct teaching works well, and promotes pupils' learning of new skills effectively. Teachers use the summing up session at the end of lessons well to consolidate pupils' learning and assess their progress. This was illustrated well in a Year 2 science lesson using a light box to view objects. The teacher had planned carefully the questions she would use, and by asking, "Can you see the shape? How much

light do you need?" the teacher was able to see that pupils had understood the work, and corrected misconceptions at the same time.

18. In Years 1 and 2, literacy and numeracy lessons have a very good structure, thus ensuring that pupils gain a sound grasp of basic reading and number skills. The quality of teaching is good in science, music and religious education, and satisfactory in all other subjects. No information and communication technology lessons were seen, and it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching.

19. In the Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is good, with some excellent teaching in Years 3 and 6 where the pace of lessons is often breathtaking. Lessons are always well planned, and give pupils a good mixture of direct teaching to provide them with new skills, challenging activities which stretch all groups of pupils and time at the end for the teacher to assess pupils' progress. The teaching of pupils in mixed age classes generally works well, but sometimes, as in geography, teachers do not always plan sufficiently challenging work for the older pupils.

20. The teaching of literacy is good, and teachers provide lots of practice for pupils to develop their speaking and reading skills. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, but teachers do not always place enough emphasis on the importance of pupils planning, drafting, evaluating and adjusting their work before writing the final version. This explains why nearly all pupils attain national standards in English by Year 6, but few move on to exceeding these expectations.

21. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning of numeracy is very good, and pupils attain high standards by Year 6 in the national tests as a result. Teachers are confident in teaching the three-part lesson, and this gives pupils very good basic skills, and lots of opportunities to use them in practical work. The pace of these lessons is very brisk, and this enables pupils to enjoy mathematics and learn new skills quickly.

22. Otherwise, the quality of teaching is good in science, music and religious education and satisfactory in all other subjects. As in Years 1 and 2, no information and communication technology lessons were seen.

23. Most of the teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is undertaken in ordinary class lessons, and is good. In most lessons, especially mathematics and English, teachers provide work that is more appropriately directed towards those pupils with special educational needs, and often the teacher works with them. Overall, classroom assistants give satisfactory support to pupils, although not all teachers provide sufficient direction for them. Consequently, while some assistants sit at the back, or prepare resources for the first half of the lesson, others are encouraged to sit amongst pupils, and this enables them to take a full part in the lesson. In the lessons when pupils are withdrawn for extra help in literacy, there is often a time when they all read together, which means that some pupils avoid reading at all. This does little to further their reading skills but, when they take it in turns to read, they learn more. In general, these extra lessons, taken in small groups, are good and enable pupils to make rapid progress.

24. The few pupils with English as an additional language require no specialist support, but teachers plan appropriate work which helps them develop their use and understanding of English.

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

25. At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum was broad and relevant across the school. However, subject guidance for planning was not always efficiently used, and was not satisfactorily in

place in some subjects, so that it was difficult for teachers to teach effectively. Schemes of work, some incorporating nationally recommended guidelines, are now fully in place. These enable teachers to plan their work within a whole school framework and build on pupils' previous learning. There is a two-year rolling programme in many subjects so that pupils do not unnecessarily repeat work, but work for pupils in the mixed age classes is often at a similar level and does not always meet the needs of the older or higher attaining pupils

26. The school continues to provide a varied and interesting curriculum that promotes its aims well. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, statutory requirements are not fully met as there are weaknesses in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6. Provision for music is a strength of the curriculum, and pupils are provided with a rich variety of musical experiences including opportunities to play in a brass band, and take part in the school choir, recorder groups and instrumental tuition. In Years 1 and 2, the total teaching time is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum but for older pupils it is more than an hour below the recommended minimum.

27. The curriculum has an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established in the school so that teachers are confident with the structure of the literacy hour and teach it effectively. This has had a significant impact on the improvement in reading standards since the previous inspection. The additional literacy programme is very successful in meeting the needs of less able pupils in Year 3. The development of writing skills has been targeted as a priority in the school improvement plan.

28. The school's numeracy provision is very good, and explains why standards in mathematics are higher than in other subjects. Teachers are skilled at teaching mathematics lessons that develop pupils' basic skills very well, and benefit considerably from the expertise of the numeracy co-ordinator.

29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very well organised and managed. Planning is detailed and thorough. Termly plans include an overview of each area of learning and topics are organised to ensure an appropriate coverage of specific learning goals. There are more detailed weekly plans which are also based around the recommended areas of learning. Work in literacy and numeracy follows schemes recommended by the local education authority, and is a good introduction to later work in the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy.

30. The school has very effective links with the local community. For example, local businesses set art competitions and present prizes annually. The school participates successfully in local music festivals and sports tournaments, mathematical quizzes and writing competitions. The band performs regularly at local shopping centres. Pupils take part in national poetry and book days. The Mayor and Mayoress attend assemblies. The community police officer visits all classes regularly and other members of the police force visit the school for the 'Citizenship Roadshow'. The school nurse makes regular visits to Years 4 and 6 as part of the personal, social and health education programme. This provision is good as a result of this support, and the good planning of a structured range of activities by the school. A good number of organisations use the school for sports and other activities. Pupils have taken part in a large number of fund-raising activities and have raised considerable sums for charity. There is a good range of visits for pupils and of visitors to the school, including theatre and music groups. Peripatetic music teachers make a considerable contribution. Students from the local college of further education and teacher training students regularly work in the school.

31. Links with local secondary schools are good, and areas such as information and communication technology, drama and art are being developed further. Pastoral and academic information is transferred to ensure continuity of provision between the schools. Strong links have also been made

through music. There are good links with local playgroups. The mathematics co-ordinator is a leading mathematics teacher, and teachers from other schools visit Gidea Park to observe lessons. These links help to improve standards.

32. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is good, and they are fully integrated into all aspects of the school. Learning support assistants work satisfactorily with pupils who need the extra help. There is a good commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion for all pupils who have special educational needs, and class teachers provide targets for their individual education plans. These are reviewed every term. Those pupils who are withdrawn from their classes for extra help do well, and maintain full access to the curriculum.

33. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and personal development of its pupils, as it did at the last inspection. Provision for social development is very good. There is a daily act of worship, which includes a short time of prayer and reflection. A structured plan lists themes and the act of worship complies with statutory requirements.

34. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils visit local churches and synagogues, and clergy from local churches take services in the school. In religious education lessons, pupils are taught to consider aspects of their own lives in increasing depth as they grow older. Through studies of the major world religions, pupils are taught to understand that people may have values and beliefs that are different from their own. Very good displays of the major religions help pupils to understand how other faiths celebrate their festivals. Pupils have compiled their own prayers, including such thoughtful phrases as, "Dear God, thank you for happiness and laughter" and "Thank you for families". The school starts early with pupils' spiritual development, organising activities such as 'Weddings' and 'Christenings' in the Reception class when children dress up to enact the ceremonies.

35. Provision for personal and moral development is good. There are good expectations of behaviour. The difference between right and wrong are clearly taught. The school has an effective behaviour policy, which is consistently applied.

36. The school's provision for social development is very good. Pupils are given many responsibilities, and the high expectations of staff help them to work well together in groups. Musical performance and participation in extracurricular activities are important features of pupils' social development. The programmes for personal, social and health education and 'circle time' make good contributions.

37. The school continues to make good provision for cultural development. There are good displays of handicrafts from other cultures. Pupils have very good opportunities to perform and listen to music. Instruments in music include many from other cultures. The French club helps to broaden pupils' horizons. The religious education syllabus introduces children to a wide variety of customs and cultures from other parts of the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has a strong caring ethos, and it looks after its pupils very well. Health and safety procedures are very good. Governors with professional experience help with health and safety. The school has responded systematically to a recent risk assessment, and the issues it raised. As an urgent priority, it replaced old windows in the hall and the classrooms with securely fitted double glazed windows. However, the condition of the demountable huts gives cause for concern. Pupils get very hot in summer, and cold in winter. Only two of the four huts have toilets for the pupils. The schoolkeeper checks the buildings each day. He keeps his eyes open for items needing attention, and corrects defects himself when possible. He and his cleaner work hard to keep the school bright and

clean. The school has well-established procedures for child protection. The headteacher is the designated teacher. She ensures that teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of the requirements. A high proportion of staff, including non-teaching staff, have had recent first aid training.

39. Provision for the care and welfare of children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Close relationships exist between teachers, learning support assistants and children's parents and any welfare issues are dealt with promptly and parents informed. Assessment procedures are good. Effective systems are in place to ensure that the progress that children make through the Early Learning Goals is assessed and recorded each term. Records for the current group are still in the process of being completed. Good use is made of the data from the assessment on entry to the school procedure and information from parents' own evaluation of their children's skills when they enter the school. This information enables the school to provide children with individual targets for their likely achievement in Year 1. This provides helpful information to teachers and parents and encourages high standards. There are good procedures in each class to enable teachers to make regular comments on the progress that children are making.

40. Monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development is good. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in the procedures for assessment and the analysis of data. These good assessments give teachers a clear view of pupils' skills, and enable them to plan work at an appropriate level. The school conducts assessments of pupils in Years 3, 4, and 5, and uses the results well to group them by their levels of attainment. In order to address pupils' weaknesses in writing, the school sets targets for their written work, and keeps detailed records to illustrate the amount of progress in each class.

41. The results of all tests are very carefully analysed and monitored. They are used to set targets for future learning and to forecast expected levels. The progress of individual pupils is tracked carefully in English, mathematics and science. However, there is insufficient assessment in practical subjects such as physical education, art and music. The data collected for English, mathematics and science provide the school with useful information to direct further teaching, and this is helping to raise standards. These assessment procedures are used especially well when there are mixed ages in a class; they give a clear picture of the attainment and progress of individual pupils, and show which areas of the curriculum need to be revisited.

42. The school does much to promote regular attendance. Teachers take the registers promptly. The school secretary makes effective use of the computerised system. If a pupil's attendance falls below 85 per cent, this shows on a printout. Attendance has improved by over a percentage point in the first half of the autumn term. The school improves punctuality by keeping a 'late book' and contacting parents where necessary. The education welfare officer comes in once a month and provides good support.

43. A key issue in the previous report required the school to ensure consistent standards in classroom discipline. The school has responded effectively, overall, although occasional lessons are still interrupted by pupils calling out. Following discussion with staff, parents and pupils, the school developed a very good assertive discipline policy. This has clear rules, gives rewards when pupils keep to the rules and applies sanctions consistently if pupils break them. The 'Golden Rules' are on display in every classroom. Within the discipline policy, the school has very good procedures to resolve the very rare instances of bullying firmly and fairly. The house system, whereby pupils win points for good work, attitudes and behaviour, catches their imagination. House captains and vice-captains come to the front of assembly each Friday. The headteacher reads out the totals in reverse order. When she announces the house with the most points for that week, the winning captain and vice-captain proudly tie their house colours round the cup.

44. The school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. Teachers know their pupils well. The learning support assistants and the midday assistants have established very

good relationships with pupils in their care. For every pupil, the school keeps a written profile, updated twice a year. All staff help in the tracking of progress in attitudes and behaviour, as well as in academic subjects. Teachers use this information in the annual reports to parents on their child's personal development.

45. In response to the questionnaires, 98 per cent of parents agreed that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Children in the Reception class start with tasks in their classroom. Opportunities to take responsibility grow as pupils move through the school. There is a 'friendship bus-stop' seat in the infant playground. Older pupils look out for any child who is feeling lonely and find other children to play with them. They also help them with lunch in the hall. Each class elects two representatives to the school council, which meets once a month. Last year, the council decided how to spend a budget of £245 on playground equipment. The four house captains and four vice-captains play an important part in the life of the school. In Year 6, 20 pupils win positions as prefects by mature behaviour in the first half of the autumn term. Pupils build up their teamwork in competitive sports. They collect keenly for a wide range of charities. For example, in the week before the inspection, the brass band raised over £260 for Children in Need by performing in Romford Shopping Centre. The school gives all its pupils the chance to take their place confidently in the wider world.

46. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Targets, which are included in individual education plans, are appropriate and measurable. Where necessary, outside help is used appropriately for more advice. There are reviews of individual targets held every term. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all school activities, and are fully integrated into the life of the school. Class teachers generally carry out assessment, and the school's assessment procedures fully include pupils who have special educational needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parents at the meeting and in response to the questionnaire were very supportive of the school and all that it does for their children. Nearly all felt that their children liked school and made good progress. They felt that behaviour was good and that their children were encouraged to become mature and responsible. Parents are comfortable about approaching the school with problems.

48. The school has very effective links with parents. The information provided for them is good. The prospectus is helpful and complies with requirements, as does the governors' Annual Report to parents. Newsletters are comprehensive and attractively presented. Good information is provided each term on the curriculum to allow parents to help with their children's learning. The induction pack for new parents is good and includes helpful advice on homework. All parents have signed the home/school agreement. Home/school diaries act as a good form of dialogue between home and school. Reports are detailed, and parents find them helpful. There is a good range of consultation meetings and workshops. Parents feel free to consult informally with teachers. Parents are regularly invited to attend assemblies and the annual prize day.

49. The school does much to involve parents in the work of the Foundation Stage. New children visit the school before their admission and the staggered intake arrangements help to provide a smooth transition between Nursery and school. Parents are encouraged to hear their children read or to reinforce the learning of their targeted words. Parents are given appropriate opportunities, at the end of each day and through regular consultation times, to visit the school to discuss any issues concerning their child.

50. Many parents help regularly in school, assisting in extracurricular activities and accompanying pupils on trips. Parents feel that they are welcome in the school and that their efforts are appreciated.

51. The Parent Teacher Association organises a very good range of social and fund-raising activities. Substantial sums are raised. A scheme for purchasing musical instruments has been set up, and parents run the school shop.

52. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed well about the support given at school, and most of them attend annual reviews. Parents are aware of the school's targets for pupils who have special educational needs, and often they have specific targets with which they help at home. Many parents are delighted with the help and support given to these pupils by the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The quality of the school's leadership and management is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher and staff have addressed the main issues from the previous report well. The school's development plan now has clear and achievable targets which reflect its main priorities. The quality of teaching has improved significantly as a result of better lesson planning and rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and senior staff. All staff benefit from regular monitoring of their lessons, and they value the way the feedback helps them to teach more effectively. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of information for parents, and this is now good. New guidelines for art and design have raised standards significantly, and pupils' work is average. The school has put many measures in place to raise the standards achieved by higher attaining pupils, and they now achieve appropriately high standards in mathematics and science. In English, however, these pupils still do not achieve well enough, and the proportion attaining Level 5 in this year's tests was well below the national average.

54. The headteacher provides good leadership, and manages the staff well with high expectations of their work. A significant strength of the headteacher's leadership is the way the school has used expertise from the local education authority and from within the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this way, teachers have improved their expertise and are confident teaching all subjects. The headteacher, through rigorous monitoring, has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and has led the way in raising pupils' standards. Pupils' results in the national tests are analysed carefully to look for differences in the standards reached by boys and girls, and to see where pupils are not achieving well enough. This analysis identified weaknesses in mathematics, for example, and the measures put in place to improve pupils' data handling and problem-solving skills soon raised standards in the national tests for mathematics.

55. The headteacher works closely with the deputy headteacher, and they share a common vision for the improvement of the school. Both are good at looking critically at different aspects of the school to see how things could be done better. The headteacher and deputy have done much to develop consistent assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science. This has led to very good systems that teachers find easy to use, and that are helping to raise standards.

56. Other senior staff support the management of the school well. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have done much to establish the planning of their subjects, and the teaching shows a good level of consistency through the school. Other subject co-ordinators give good support to colleagues, and make good use of the time allocated for them to monitor standards.

57. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and is a member of the senior management team. She has ensured that issues concerning the Foundation Stage are known and promoted well throughout the school. The co-ordinator has reviewed progress made in the previous year and has identified appropriate developmental targets for the current year. She has also organised and delivered an effective in-service training day for all Foundation Stage staff. Staffing levels are appropriate and the learning

support assistants are used well. Resources are good. Both classes have a good range and number of learning resources. There are now good resources for outdoor play, but there is a lack of a separate area for the Foundation Stage children and a lack of climbing and clambering equipment.

58. The co-ordinator for special educational needs organises the care and support for these pupils well. All pupils on the special educational needs register have agreed targets and the class teachers provide them. The co-ordinator organises termly and annual reviews well, and all legal requirements are being met. Support assistants are deployed satisfactorily, although some are not given insufficient direction on how best to support pupils when the teacher is teaching. Outside agencies are called upon when needed, such as the educational psychologist, or help with pupils' specific needs, where the support is very good.

59. The governing body shows a good level of commitment to the raising of standards, and supports the school well. Their committees meet regularly, and governors visit the school often. They monitor standards well, using expertise from within the school. Weaknesses in writing, for example, were identified, and governors worked well with staff to produce a plan of action. Although, governors are good at being 'critical friends' they rely too heavily on the headteacher when planning future developments. Governors work hard to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements, and have a good plan to address the weakness in information and communication technology.

60. The finance committee works hard to keep the school's funds in good order. Its members analyse spending carefully, and are keen to achieve the best possible value for the school's money by comparing different sources for their purchases and evaluating the school's performance by comparing pupils' results with those in similar schools.

61. The school is very well supported by efficient administrative staff, who ensure that the needs of visitors, parents and staff are met efficiently. The secretary runs the school office very efficiently, and ensures that the finances are in good order. She keeps the governing body, headteacher and staff well-informed about the budget and makes effective use of the finance department of the local education authority.

62. The school is well staffed. Teachers' qualifications and experience provide good coverage across the National Curriculum. The previous report noted a bias towards history, science and music. The school has strengthened its skills in other subjects by recruiting staff with relevant expertise. It has arranged training in subjects where teachers were less confident. There are effective programmes in place for the support of newly qualified teachers, and for students on initial teacher training. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have professional development interviews. Training by the learning support assistants helps them to enable pupils to learn. Their care and understanding ensures that pupils with special educational needs work confidently, answer questions and take a full part in whole class lessons.

63. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Classrooms in the main building have a fresh paintwork and adequate space for learning. There are attractive displays of pupils' work. However, the library has very limited space. This restricts pupils' opportunities to choose books or use it for research. As the previous inspection reported, four classes work in separate demountable huts. Two huts are small for the size of class. All four huts have deteriorated since the previous inspection. Wood is rotting away from the exteriors and they are shabby. The school has redecorated the interiors of these classrooms. Even so, they are near the end of their useful life. In contrast, the outside areas are attractive and stimulating. There are two large playgrounds, well marked for games. At lunchtimes, the older pupils choose between an area dedicated to football or a wide range of equipment in the

other playground. The playing field has good space for football and other games. Local clubs and teams use the school's facilities in the evenings and at weekends.

64. Resources are good overall. They are very good in music and religious education, and good in English, mathematics, science and design and technology. However, the school does not have enough computers, and this lowers pupils' standards in information and communication technology. At present, the school has one computer for 20 pupils, compared with the national average of one computer for 11 pupils.

65. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue the school's good rate of improvement, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

Raise standards in writing by Year 6 by:

giving a higher priority to pupils planning, drafting and editing their work; having higher expectations of the quality and amount of pupils' writing in all subjects; and encouraging pupils to experiment more with language and use more imaginative vocabulary in their creative work. (paragraphs 1,6,20,59,76,77,82)

Raise standards in information and communication technology by:

increasing the number of computers to at least the national average; and ensuring that all elements of the National Curriculum are taught. (paragraphs 4, 5,26,59,64,103,129,133)

Improve the accommodation in the library and temporary classrooms.

(paragraphs 63,86)

Increase the amount of teaching time to the minimum recommended level in Years 3 to 6. (paragraph 26)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Ensure that the governing body is more effectively involved in the long-term strategic development of the school; (paragraph 59) and
- Develop useful assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science where they are already good. (paragraphs 103,115,120)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

66

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

55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	29	24	1	0	0
Percentage	3	15	44	36	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

326

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

10

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

5

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

37

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

8

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

16

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	20	26	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	19
	Girls	25	24	24
	Total	42	43	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (83)	93 (83)	93 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	22	23	20
	Total	40	42	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (83)	91 (93)	85 (89)
	National	84 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	24	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	23	19	24
	Total	36	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (71)	84 (67)	97 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	13
	Girls	22	20	21
	Total	30	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (71)	82 (67)	89 (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	256
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	208

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	648952
Total expenditure	659196
Expenditure per pupil	2066
Balance brought forward from previous year	32274

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Balance carried forward to next year	22030
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Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	325
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	52	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	47	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	44	10	0	2
The teaching is good.	46	52	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	44	8	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	40	1	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	42	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	38	5	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	38	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	45	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	43	4	4	2

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

Personal, social and emotional development

66. At the time of the inspection, 45 children were in the Foundation Stage. They are taught in two parallel classes. The older autumn and early spring born children are taught in one class and the younger spring and summer born children are taught in the other. On entry to the school, most children have had experience of Nursery schools but children entering school come from as many as ten different Nursery groups. When they enter the school, most children are attaining standards that are above those expected for their age, especially in their reading. This is confirmed by the school's analysis of the results of the local education authority's assessment on entry to the school programme.

67. In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress and are on course to achieve above average standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative and physical development. Achievement in children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are average. The good standards achieved and the sound progress that children make are the result of the good teaching and the well managed curriculum. Across the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and its impact on children's learning are good. Strengths in teaching are in the very positive way in which children are managed and the good range of interesting and challenging activities that are provided. Learning support assistants are knowledgeable and involved well and support the good standards that children achieve.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. The provision in this area is very good and this leads to the above average standards achieved. Teachers ensure that children feel safe and secure and are welcomed into their classrooms. This is evident in the way that teachers create attractive and stimulating classrooms and in the positive way that all adults in the Reception Year manage the children. Children are treated firmly but fairly and the adults' high expectations ensure that children are quickly introduced to school routines. Careful attention is given to this aspect of children's learning and the overall quality of teaching is very good. Planned activities, such as calling the register and distributing the fruit to eat at snack time, are important social occasions. During the 'fruit time', children wash their hands carefully, wait patiently for the fruit to be brought round, say thank you and eat with the other children and adults in the class. These all help to ensure that children make good progress in their social development. Each morning, children are greeted and welcomed and talk about areas of interest. Children have the responsibility of taking the register to the school office. They are interested, well challenged and motivated and all maintain their concentration well. They enjoy sitting and listening and learning before trying out new activities. The speed and willingness with which they move to their activity groups, start new tasks and work independently without requiring direct support from adults, are very impressive. Children share resources well when appropriate and willingly help to put them away at the end of the lesson. They behave well, and soon learn the rules that are consistently applied.

Communication, language and literacy

69. In the Foundation Stage, children are on course to achieve above average standards in their communication, language and literacy. Teachers and support assistants ensure that the children are challenged well with a rich literacy environment where conversation, talking and listening and sharing

stories are highly valued. From the outset, the importance of careful listening and clear speaking is encouraged very well and, as a result, this aspect of children's development is very good. Children express their ideas and feelings confidently and most listen to adults in the class and to each other with impressive concentration and enjoyment. They enjoy listening to stories, follow instructions well and support each other with helpful comments and suggestions. Use of their role-play area, ~~which is~~ currently a doctor's surgery, provides good opportunity for them to improvise their speaking in different situations. Most children are confident with the sounds associated with the letters of the alphabet. This work is carefully organised on an individual basis and progress through each child's understanding of different letters is recorded in their 'sounds book'. Parents of almost all children give good support in this aspect of their child's learning. Letter sounds are carefully reinforced during whole class introductions to literacy lessons. Most children are able to recognise individual key words and are attaining good standards overall in their reading. Many are already reading books which use a range of familiar and common words in simple sentences. A few children read confidently and expressively, and show a keen enjoyment of stories and reading. They are already achieving well, and are working within the National Curriculum. A few children struggle to recognise many words at all, but enjoy reading their books by telling the stories from the pictures. Children's writing is developed well, and all begin to write in a simple form. They are all very pleased to talk about their early writing efforts, which are displayed in the 'doctor's surgery'. Most copy teacher's script with reasonable accuracy. A few children are already writing in sentences, for a variety of purposes, with good attention to capital letters and full stops. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning in this area are good.

Mathematical development

70. The careful planning of the curriculum and very good class management ensure that children are given opportunities to take part in practical activities to develop and reinforce their mathematical understanding. This was seen well in a numeracy lesson. The children were given real coins to hold and to talk about their different values. In the whole class lesson, the teacher then put different amounts of money into a purse and children guessed how much each contained, before the whole group counted it together. This exercise was valuable and maintained children's interest and enjoyment well. Further practical activities, such as making patterns on a peg-board, making numbers with play-dough and making their own number line, all successfully reinforced children's understanding of numbers. As a result of this lesson, most of them developed a good appreciation of the numbers up to ten and dealt with them confidently. Children know the names and properties of common shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles. Their interest in shapes is encouraged well as they arrange different shapes together to create pictures of 'Robbie Rectangle' and 'Cyril Circle' which are displayed prominently in the classroom. The mathematical curriculum is well organised. The children are taught along the lines of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is appropriate for these children and prepares them well for their work in Year 1. The quality of teaching and children's learning in this aspect of their development is good.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. By the time they are five, most children are on course to achieve average standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world. As children talk about what they did yesterday and what they will do tomorrow, they develop an appreciation of the passing of time. They make regular observations of the day's weather and this encourages them to be aware of their own environment. Children are made aware of the importance of religious festivals as they think about the Hindu festival of Divali, receive Divali cards and draw Rangoli patterns. During the inspection, children were introduced to the importance of the christening ceremony. Children have access to computers and appropriate software. They demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the use of information and communication technology for their age and show sound control of the computer mouse. Children have

satisfactory opportunities to investigate the properties of different materials as they fill and refill differently sized containers with water or sand and as they construct hiding places for the strawberry in their 'Hungry Bear' story, using a range of construction materials. Children's introduction to the features of autumn and their appreciation of the school's environment are developed as they undertake, and then discuss, a walk around the school grounds. The quality of teaching for this aspect of learning is satisfactory.

Physical development

72. In the Foundation Stage, children are on course to achieve above average standards in their physical development. As they complete jigsaws, build construction towers and make models, they demonstrate a confident ability to handle small objects and equipment safely and purposefully. Several strengths in the provision for this area of learning were seen in an effective physical education lesson in the school hall. The lesson was well integrated into other areas of learning. The way that the children were encouraged to change and to enter the hall prepared them well for their lesson and also added significantly to their personal, social and emotional development. The lesson began with an appropriately vigorous warm-up, and the importance of exercise and being healthy was explained. Children were reminded about finding their own space and demonstrated confidence in moving around the hall in a variety of ways. The lesson was cleverly based on the story 'The Hungry Bear' and the children moved around the hall in the manner of several of the characters of the story. They demonstrated their ability to move creatively and with good expression. This activity developed their literacy skills by adding to their appreciation of the story and their creative development as they moved expressively. Children also have regular access to an outdoor activity area. They have good opportunity to develop their large physical skills as they ride, push and pull a variety of wheeled vehicles. Opportunities for climbing and clambering are less well developed, mainly because there is no separate outdoor play area. This is used for whole-school play times and sometimes has to be shared with other classes. This limits the extent to which climbing and clambering equipment can be made available and used regularly. The quality of teaching and learning in this area are good.

Creative development

73. In the Foundation Stage, children are on course to reach above average standards in their creative development. They have good opportunity to express themselves creatively in a variety of different contexts. They read stories and listen to pre-prepared stories and talk about what they have done. The role-play area provides opportunities for imaginative play. As they draw and paint pictures of the Hungry Bear to illustrate the story they are reading, children show confidence and attention to detail. Their enjoyment, which is evident in their work, and their perseverance and concentration, are important reasons why most achieve well in their creative development. The attractively displayed artwork in their classrooms and shared areas indicates a good range of both opportunities and achievement. For example, colourful pictures and patterns have been devised to illustrate the festival of Divali, interesting collage work has been used to illustrate the importance of Poppy Day and paint has been carefully mixed to produce an effect representing the coat of hedgehogs. Other techniques used in work on display included the use of cardboard tubes to make number rockets, caterpillar shapes painted with primary colours and patterns made with children's own handprints. Children sing and take part in action songs confidently and with enjoyment. During the inspection, children from the Foundation Stage made important contributions to the quality of singing in the infant assemblies. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good.

ENGLISH

74. In all aspects of English, standards are above average in Year 2, which is the same as the results of the latest national tests. In Year 6, overall standards are above average but writing is the weaker element and standards there are similar to those in the 2001 national tests when pupils reached average levels in English. In the previous inspection, good standards were found in speaking and listening but reading and writing were average throughout the school. This good improvement has been brought about by the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, meticulous analysis of test results to identify and address weaknesses, and focusing on specific aspects of the curriculum. The school comfortably exceeded its target of 80 per cent of its pupils to achieve Level 4 and above in the 2001 national tests but the target of 88 per cent of the current Year 6 to achieve that level is realistic in view of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs in that group. Pupils enter Year 1 at above average levels and achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. The eight pupils with English as an additional language are fluent speakers of English, and attain similar standards to others in their class. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, compared with their earlier attainment, because they receive well directed support in class, and the additional literacy programme meets the needs of Year 3 pupils well. There is good inclusion of all pupils in the subject and no variations in attainment between boys and girls were noted during the inspection.

75. The school has worked hard to raise the standards achieved by higher attaining pupils, albeit with limited success. Pupils have been taught in sets in Year 5 and Year 6, there are 'more able groups' in Years 2, 3 and 4 and pupils have joined the Havering Very Able Pupil programme.

76. Raising standards in writing across the school also has a high priority in the school improvement plan. However, the school does not place enough emphasis on the importance of pupils planning, drafting, evaluating and adjusting their work before writing the final version. This shortcoming undermines achievement in writing, particularly in the case of older pupils, and was also a finding of the previous inspection. There is also little evidence that pupils discuss and appraise their own and others' writing. Teachers do not give clear guidelines to pupils, either in their marking or in class, about what they must do to achieve the next level. The school has a strong focus on improving pupils' comprehension skills because of weaknesses identified in the last national tests, but there are insufficient opportunities for older pupils to experiment with language and content and not enough encouragement for them to use bolder and more imaginative vocabulary in their creative work. As a result, higher attaining pupils in particular do not have the chance to develop their talents to the full.

77. In both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are above average although listening is weaker in the case of some pupils. Teachers do not consistently reinforce to pupils the importance of good listening skills to promote their learning so that a few find it difficult to listen to others and take turns in speaking. In Year 2, many pupils are confident, clear communicators who enjoy using interesting words and sounds. They like listening to stories, rhymes and poems and readily contribute to class discussions. In the Year 1 and 2 class, many pupils gave thoughtful replies when the teacher asked which ending they preferred in different versions of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* and whether the Piper was right to take the children away. However, a few pupils did not develop their ideas in any detail in spite of the teacher's encouragement.

78. In Year 6, pupils continue to give their views sensibly, draw appropriately on a wider range of vocabulary and discuss feelings with increasing maturity. Pupils speak confidently and are aware of different viewpoints. In a Year 3/4 lesson, for example, where some pupils were reading *I want to be an Angel*, they were able to empathise with Effie's feelings when the social worker arrived and realised that people could appear angry when they were really very upset.

79. Pupils' reading skills are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils' enthusiasm for books is a strength of their learning. "I like it a million times!" exclaimed one Year 2 pupil happily. Higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 confidently tackle relatively difficult words and read expressively with few hesitations. Most pupils have a good grasp of phonic skills and a basic sight vocabulary but a few have weak strategies and have to guess what the word might be. Pupils' evident enjoyment in the sound and expression of vivid language was seen in Year 2's clear and confident reading of *After the Storm* where they responded well to the punctuation in the text by varying the tone and volume of their voices.

80. In Year 6, pupils are independent and reflective readers. They are very keen to read with good expression and are well aware of how the voice can create suspense and tension. A significant number of higher attaining pupils refer to the text to illustrate their views, and predict how the story may develop. Most pupils read books with accuracy, fluency and confidence and are fascinated by the twists and turns of plot and the fate of characters. Although less able pupils read simple texts competently, they lack the confidence and understanding to draw conclusions and recount events. Teachers develop pupils' research and reference skills satisfactorily.

81. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. In Year 2, pupils show a developing awareness of the structure of a story and write simple poems and instructions. Higher attaining pupils use language imaginatively to add interest and excitement to their stories. In a flight of fancy, some Year 1/2 pupils entered the 'beautiful world' of the Pied Piper and saw 'a magical horse with wings on it', 'a rainbow getting lighter and lighter' and 'a butterfly and a green lion'. Generally, pupils use simple sentences and phrases but words are not always spelt correctly. Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of full stops and capital letters, and handwriting is usually clearly shaped and consistent.

82. Year 6 pupils tackle a range of styles with reasonable skill. A few higher attaining pupils have a good command of expression, and their writing reflects the influence of books and styles. Most pupils develop and sustain ideas in interesting ways but the work of some pupils lacks attention to detail, they use a narrow range of vocabulary and fewer complex sentences. Most pupils have a sound grasp of spelling rules and grammatical constructions although punctuation is more variable. Handwriting is well established, fluent and mainly neat and legible.

83. Standards in literacy are the same as those found in English and literacy skills are satisfactorily developed across the curriculum. In history, pupils write letters from evacuees and higher attaining pupils write interesting diaries about the Great Fire of London. In religious education, pupils re enact the story of Abraham and Sarah but in geography, there are too many worksheets which limit the scope of pupils' writing. Information and communication technology is used occasionally to improve pupils' editing skills although, with so few computers, opportunities for pupils to practise editing are limited. Drama is insufficiently developed across the curriculum.

84. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection when half of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 was unsatisfactory and two fifths unsatisfactory in the lower junior classes. Teachers build up a warm and supportive environment in the classroom where issues are carefully managed and mistakes often used sensitively as teaching points. "You are very good detectives!" encouraged the Year 1 teacher when pupils were looking for word clues. As a result, pupils have the confidence to try out new ideas without fear of failure. There is also very good emphasis on pupils being very specific in their answers and supporting their ideas with evidence from the text. Such a good level of challenge means that pupils apply greater effort and think for themselves. Teachers' generally good subject knowledge means that they introduce new learning in a clear and systematic way. In a lesson to older pupils, the teacher gave a very informative

presentation of how character can be investigated through dialogue, description and action so that pupils' reading of the passage was very expressive and they used appropriate exaggeration to underline the character depicted. Teachers also introduce a note of humour very effectively to refocus or promote learning.

85. However, the modest expectations of work set by some teachers often undermine the progress of pupils of all abilities. In one Year 5/6 set, the teacher gave equal acceptance to one word, wrongly spelt answers as to well-constructed and original sentences. Although teachers generally have sound questioning techniques, they do not always have effective strategies for ensuring that all pupils are included. Sometimes, more articulate and confident pupils dominate a discussion while others become passive and detached. In a Year 3/4 lesson, some pupils were distracted during a lesson about speech marks when the teacher did not pitch questions to allow them to contribute. Most pupils are well-motivated, eager learners but, where management skills are weaker, or the pace of the lesson is too leisurely, there is an underlying restlessness, pupils take too long to settle and the teacher has to waste valuable time re establishing control. A clear sense of purpose and a demanding pace were key features of a very good Year 5/6 lesson about newspaper reports which illustrated the strengths of teaching and learning in English across the school.

86. The co-ordinator has played an important role in identifying and addressing the weaknesses in the subject through very good assessment procedures and a thorough analysis of national tests results. Targets for development are appropriate and the school has a good supply of resources. Library facilities are poor. The library is small and is not an interesting or exciting environment to develop pupils' skills and encourage them to browse and enjoy books. The subject is enhanced by drama club, poetry days, book weeks, visits from poets and theatre groups, National Book Day and the Christmas production. English makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they empathise with characters and discuss issues in their reading, consider how to adapt a book for a younger audience and write poetry 'I was afraid when...'. Interesting and prominent displays such as Year 5's instructions on how to pull out crocodile's teeth, Year 1 and 2 pupils' work on 'My Mum says' and big books of poems for National Poetry Week show that pupils' work is valued and help to raise the profile of the subject in the school.

MATHEMATICS

87. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is well above average, and the provision for mathematics is a strength of the school. Significant improvements in the planning of lessons, and more effective teaching of problem solving skills account for the higher standards of teaching and learning since the school's previous inspection. Year 6 pupils' numeracy skills are very well developed. They have a quick recall of number facts, and use these skills very well to solve complex problems. A further strength of pupils' work is in their use of data, because teachers provide a very good structure to this work, and relate the tasks to other subjects. This helps pupils make sense of data, as was seen in their work finding the mean, mode and median of temperature readings in different countries, and creating very good graphs of their results.

88. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good and, as a consequence, the attainment of pupils by Year 2 is above average. Pupils use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20, and order numbers correctly up to 100 and beyond. As with older pupils, they are good at solving problems because of the regular practice they have to, for example, work out the number of cars in a car park and sort complex patterns on T-shirts. Teachers are well organised with resources ready for use, and support staff aware of what they are required to do. They maintain good control of the pupils with a friendly but firm approach, and this ensures that pupils learn at a good pace.

89. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The ability sets in Years 3 to 6 work very well because they enable teachers to plan and teach work that is matched closely to pupils' levels of attainment. Teachers are confident in teaching the three-part lesson, and this gives pupils very good basic skills, and lots of opportunities to use them in practical work. The planning for the end part of the lesson is very effective, because it shows clearly how the teacher will assess pupils' progress by probing questions. The pace of lessons is very brisk, and this enables pupils to enjoy mathematics and learn new skills quickly. Throughout the school, teachers set homework appropriately, and this reinforces work done in class.

90. The co-ordinator's management and monitoring of mathematics are excellent. The support for teachers is of a high quality, and accounts for the consistency of mathematics teaching across the school. The co-ordinator's skills have been recognised by the local education authority, who uses her skills as a leading mathematics teacher to train other teachers. A further strength in the management of the subject is the careful analysis of national test results to see where teachers need to provide more work to raise standards. This has led to the improvement of pupils' problem and data handling skills. Mathematics is used well across the curriculum, and is successfully supported by work on computers when pupils have access to them. For example, graphs and measurement are used in science and geography, and spreadsheets are used to organise data in information and communication technology.

91. The school has very good systems for the assessment of pupils' progress that combine regular testing with useful assessments at the end of topics.

SCIENCE

92. In Year 6, standards of attainment are above average and pupils are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those few with English as an additional language benefit from appropriate support, and make similarly good progress. This is an improvement when the national tests in 2001 are compared with the findings of the inspection, and maintains the standards found in the last OFSTED report. These improvements, for both younger and older pupils, are the result of very detailed and careful analysis of the outcomes of the tests and assessments, and much more focused work being planned to address pupils' weaknesses.

93. In Year 2, standards are average and pupils make sound progress. These findings show that standards in attainment are not as good as those reported at the last inspection, but that the general level of progress has been maintained. However, it is an improvement on the standards reported from the teachers' assessment in science at the time of the 2001 national curriculum tests.

94. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good, with some that is very good. Most teachers are confident in their knowledge and understanding of the subject, and plan well to include investigative work that enables pupils to conduct experiments to test their theories. For example, Year 2 pupils were seen in two separate classes using light boxes. They looked into the boxes, which contained various small objects like toys, and switched on the torches to see what was there. This led to some good descriptions of size and colour and enabled them to understand the importance of light. In one class, there were very good gains in observational techniques, with the teacher leading with some very well focused questions, such as, "Why can't you see anything now?" Younger pupils in Year 1 had prepared for this by drawing houses seen in daylight and houses at night, and some had already had experience of the light boxes. This enabled them to understand the difference the sun makes at dawn and at dusk, and to develop a good knowledge of light, and the effect that clouds have on shadows.

95. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make lessons interesting by providing good opportunities for pupils to conduct their own experiments. This helps pupils to enjoy science, and this was evident by the excitement caused with the light boxes in Year 1, and the enthusiasm shown as they carried out the experiments. Teachers emphasise the importance of recording carefully, and this provides a good structure to pupils' learning. Good teaching enables pupils in these classes to gain a clear understanding of how plants grow and how simple electrical circuits work.

96. The good quality of teaching and learning ensures that pupils attain above average standards by Year 6. They have a good understanding of the functions of organs of the human body, how materials have special properties and how forces act upon each other. Teachers lead good discussions about the work and the experiments, and these, in turn, lead to good gains in learning about how to investigate a hypothesis. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils conducted experiments with a tank of water, predicting which objects would float and which would sink. Then they recorded their findings and there was a full discussion afterwards that consolidated all the learning that had gone before. They talked about the shapes of the objects, the density, how much air was trapped inside, and discovered that the material of the object was less important than some of these other features. By the end of the lesson, they understood clearly how the up-thrust from the water counters the force of gravity.

97. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and standards of work, and they share the learning objectives well with pupils at the start of the lesson. They prepare their lessons very well, and this was exemplified in a Year 5 class when all pupils had a laminated sheet with the required scientific vocabulary written on it, such as 'density'. Since they were using water for the experiment the laminating was a very good strategy, and made the sheet useable throughout the time. The experiment was followed by a full discussion, which led pupils to talk about displacement and understand more about opposing forces.

98. A standard format for recording the findings of experiments is used throughout Years 3 to 6, and this is helping to form good scientific habits as pupils predict what will happen, conduct the experiment and record their findings. Relationships with teachers are good, and there is an air of 'young scientists' about some of the older classes, with all showing a good deal of interest, knowledge and partnership with the teacher in the investigation.

99. The subject is very well managed. The analysis of the school's results in science, and the subsequent work to address the areas for improvement, are helping to drive up standards. There is a good focus on improvement, and the co-ordinator works closely with teachers, producing a bulletin about the school's science for them several times through the year. This is good practice, and enables the school to plan more work on areas where pupils are struggling. Resources are good, and teachers use them well. This has a positive impact on pupils' standards.

ART AND DESIGN

100. In Years 2 and 6, pupils attain average standards. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average, and shows the value of better curricular planning. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make steady progress, and attain similar standards to other pupils. Achievement is satisfactory.

101. Across the school, pupils are introduced to a satisfactory range of tools, techniques and media. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils make careful observational drawings in pencil, illustrate book covers using pencil crayons and use paint to produce colourful pictures of daffodils and other flowers. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make leaf print patterns using autumn colours and use materials with different

textures for an attractive collage display entitled 'Autumn Days'. They use pencils competently to sketch self-portraits and make colourful paintings of a bowl of fruit, showing evidence of careful mixing of paints to achieve accurate colour matching.

102. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to have been unsatisfactory. Across the school, features of good teaching, which encourage good learning, are in lessons where pupils are managed well, the learning intended in the lesson is identified in teachers' planning and shared with the pupils, and where pupils are shown clearly how they might improve their work. Several other features of good teaching were seen in a lesson to older pupils, who were considering still-life pictures by other artists before attempting their own compositions. The teacher drew the pupils' attention well to important elements of the artists' work, and explained clearly what their intention might have been. She then asked clever, perceptive questions to extend pupils' understanding and appreciation of each different element. This approach encouraged the pupils' commitment to the activity, increased their understanding of composition and helped them to improve the quality of their own work.

103. The subject is managed well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has worked closely with staff to improve art and design in the school, and produces helpful bulletins to keep staff abreast of changes and current issues in art. The scheme of work is based on the one that is recommended nationally and the subject is taught in units which alternate with those in design and technology. Interest in the subject has been encouraged recently through the work of the local education authority's art consultant who visited the school and provided interesting and challenging workshops for the pupils. These were based on the work of other artists and each class produced their own work in a similar style. The results were attractively displayed in a whole school art exhibition. Interest around the school is also promoted well by an effective display of pictures by a range of artists. The standard of display work is good in the public places around the school, but too variable in individual classes. Sketchbooks are used throughout the school. However, work in them does not show a clear progression in drawing skills across the school. Although individual pupils use art programs on the computer to support their work, for example, on patterns, this aspect of the subject is not sufficiently developed. Systems to assess and record the progress pupils make through the elements required in the National Curriculum are also insufficiently developed. Opportunity in the subject is extended well by the after school Art Club for older pupils, and through the 'Photo-art club' for younger pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. Pupils' standards are average in Year 2 and in Year 6, and their achievement is satisfactory, including those who have special educational needs.

105. In Year 2, pupils work carefully and join a range of materials with average skill. Their simple designs are accurate, and helpful when it comes to making their models. Pupils use construction kits confidently, and make good models of vehicles from cartons collected for the purpose. Year 2 pupils used a computer with reasonable skill to generate a template pattern when making a coat, and evaluated it by asking what could be better.

106. In Year 6, pupils' designs are comprehensive, and show clearly how the model will be constructed stage by stage. Their models are sturdy, and some show that pupils have thought carefully about how axles will work and joints will operate. Year 3 pupils have designed and made attractive purses which are fastened in a variety of ways. Their useful evaluations identify 'three good things about it' and 'three things that are not so good'.

107. From the evidence available, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although in the two lessons seen it was good. The pupils in these lessons, in Years 5 and 6, were either planning to make, or were making, a musical instrument. The teacher in Year 6 encouraged pupils to think clearly about their construction, having first produced designs. Pupils learned well from this, and were well supported by the teacher as they solved construction and decoration problems to create a wood-grain effect for the instruments. They discovered that paint does not cover adhesive tape very well, and so used tissue paper to cover it before painting. Pupils review their work carefully, and make good suggestions about how it could have been improved.

108. In the Year 5/6 lesson, pupils were choosing and designing their instruments, and building up their understanding of joining materials by discussing gluing, stapling, using tape or sewing. In this way, the teacher helped pupils to improve their planning by focusing their attention to the joining problems, and this led to good progress.

109. There are good links between design and technology and other subjects. The large model of a Roman village, with a temple and houses, was constructed with good attention to detail, and enhanced pupils' learning in history as well as design and technology. Pottery was designed and made in art, and pupils made jointed skeletons for use in science.

110. The subject is well led, and the co-ordinator has made some good efforts to maintain pupils' interest by providing a range of experiences for them. The co-ordinator has developed a standard format followed by all teachers, involving design, use of materials, tools, joining agents, and some evaluation of the work. This works well, because all pupils are given the same layout, and this means that they develop their skills systematically as they move through the school. Resources and materials are good and help pupils' progress in designing and making. The evaluation of their work is a good improvement since the last report.

GEOGRAPHY

111. In Years 2 and 6, pupils attain average standards. This was also the judgement of the previous inspection. Those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make steady progress to attain similar standards to other pupils. Achievement in this subject is satisfactory.

112. In Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the main features of the local area. They know where they live and how they get to school. They are beginning to make clear judgements about the quality of their environment as they consider, 'Why I like to live in Romford'. They are made aware of more distant places as they talk about and record where they went on their summer holidays. Year 1/2 pupils make detailed comparisons between Romford and the Island of Struay, using criteria such as transport, shopping and recreational facilities.

113. In Year 6, pupils achieve a sound understanding and appreciation of aspects of the work they are studying. They are aware of the geographical names of parts of a river system, such as source, tributary and meander. This work has been supplemented well by a field study visit to a river near the school. Here, pupils collected some useful data relating to the flow of the river and, during the inspection, were analysing their results. However, the teachers have missed opportunities in the river topic to develop further pupils' appreciation of rivers across the world. Younger pupils achieve a sound understanding of their local area as they undertake a traffic survey on the nearby Main Road, and identify, and consider the effects of, different sounds in the local environment.

114. Across the school, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory. Because of the way in which the timetable is organised, it was not possible to see any teaching in Years 1 and 2, but judgements have been made following conversations with pupils and teachers, a scrutiny of pupils' previous work and school documentation, and from observations of lessons in the junior classes. Teachers introduce pupils to an appropriate range and depth of topics. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' planning is detailed and makes clear reference to the learning intended in the lesson and to appropriate activities to be followed. Teachers introduce activities clearly, reminding pupils well of previous work, and this helps consolidate their learning. Where teaching is good, for example, in a Year 6 lesson where the class were analysing and presenting data collected during the recent visit to the local river, the teacher challenged the pupils well to consider how they might best display the data they had collected. They were given lots of encouragement to investigate several different possibilities, such as posters, leaflets and booklets, and to consider the different requirements for each type of information. This worked well, and pupils learned much about how to collect and display data.

115. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory, and a sound policy statement supports teachers. Planning follows the nationally recommended scheme of work which has been thoughtfully supplemented by work devised by the school. Planning follows an overall curriculum plan for the whole school. A shortcoming in planning is that the needs of the pupils in the mixed age classes, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are not being fully met because planning does not show sufficiently clearly how work is matched to the needs of pupils of different ages. This makes it harder for the school to ensure that topics are being developed to a sufficient depth and pupils of different ages are being extended as far as possible. Resources for the subject are sound. A minor shortcoming is that several of the globes and the display maps that the school owns are stored in the resource trays and are not sufficiently displayed around the school. The school and its environment, the local park and nearby river and local maps and aerial photographs support pupils' local studies work well. Assessment is weak, as there are no procedures for recording the progress made by pupils that are matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum.

HISTORY

116. As in the previous inspection, standards in history are average in Year 2 and Year 6. No history lessons were observed in Years 5 and 6 so the judgement of this inspection takes into account the lessons observed in other groups, the analysis of work, scrutiny of planning, displays and collections of the work of higher attaining pupils and discussions with teachers and pupils. Achievement in history is satisfactory as pupils move through the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils with English as an additional language.

117. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, teachers effectively channel the natural enthusiasm and curiosity of younger pupils so that they develop a thoughtful response about aspects of their own lives and life in the past. Pupils place the Great Fire of London on a historical timeline, sequence the events of the fire, know what an eye witness is and recognise the part played by artists and Samuel Pepys in recording what happened in London at that time. A workshop based on the Great Fire of London brought history to life for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 as the actress successfully built on their previous learning. She created a sense of fun and enjoyment which promoted learning well as the pupils chanted rhythmically, "In 1666, London burned like rotten sticks!" They caught the air of excitement well as the chant started quietly and rose to a dramatic crescendo. After a time of reflection, Pudding Lane came to life as pupils took on the roles of its inhabitants such as bakers and water sellers. When the actress read from Pepys' diary, they crowded around her in their enthusiasm for the event had captured their imaginations and provided a rich learning experience. Throughout the session, pupils behaved very well and their self-discipline led to the success of the workshop.

118. A strength of pupils' learning in history is their obvious enjoyment in being 'time detectives' and using historical evidence to help them draw conclusions about the past. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, for example, discovered how the Ancient Egyptians were dependent on the riches of the Nile valley for survival as a result of careful preparation and organisation by teachers, and imaginative use of objects from the past to develop observational and analytical skills. Teachers place a strong emphasis on historical language and pupils use terms like hieroglyphics, scarab, pharaoh and papyrus with complete confidence. The previous inspection found that pupils had insufficient opportunities to ask historical questions but now key questions are displayed prominently to enable pupils to develop skills as young researchers. Their close examination of pictures of Ancient Egyptian artefacts drew their attention to specific beliefs about the after life and the worship of the gods. However, a flagging pace and failure to vary teaching styles in some lessons meant that some pupils' concentration began to wane.

119. In general, there is a good balance between teachers giving pupils information and allowing them to become active enquirers in history. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils showed a sound insight into the Blitz and its aftermath and the plight of evacuees as they studied artefacts such as newspapers, identity cards and ration books. They examined the advantages and disadvantages of different shelters for air raid protection and contrasted their own food and wartime meals. This is the result of confident, knowledgeable teaching and sound attention to developing pupils' historical skills. However, pupils' ability to identify and explain different interpretations is a weaker aspect. Pupils' learning about World War II also came alive for them with a visit to the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon. There was a great feeling of excitement as staff and helpers, dressed in military uniform or as nurses and land girls, and children as evacuees, set off on their journey back into war torn Britain.

120. The subject is satisfactorily led and has adequate resources. The co-ordinator monitors planning and displays but there are no classroom observations of teaching and learning. Curricular planning is being evaluated and adapted to the school's needs. Targets are appropriate, with the development of information and communication technology as an important priority. Assessment is unsatisfactory and relies on the recording methods of individual teachers. The quality of marking is variable, but it is generally not evaluative enough to show pupils how to improve their work. Colourful and lively displays such as Year 5 and Year 6's 'Staying Safe in World War II' and Year 3 and Year 4's 'The Ancient Egyptians' are good focal points. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they consider how different societies were organised in the past, discuss moral issues and work together in researching information. A good range of visits such as Kentwell Hall, Hever Castle, A Victorian day at the Ragged school and a 'VE Day Party', to which grandparents are invited, allow pupils to experience history at first hand.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology are below average throughout the school because of the shortage of equipment, including computers. This means that, despite teachers' best efforts, it may be one or two weeks before pupils have the opportunity to put into practice the skills they learn in lessons. Consequently, in Year 2, pupils are slow on the keyboard and struggle to locate the shift and return keys. They understand how their actions on the keyboard have an effect on the screen, but few are confident in using the computer mouse and much of their work is based upon trial and error. Pupils' progress is slow. Even in Year 6, pupils work slowly, and their word processing skills writing up their design and technology projects are little better in Year 6 than in Year 2. Many find it difficult to navigate through menus to load a program. Some of their best work has focused around writing plays in literacy lessons, using coloured text for different characters. The

school has only recently bought equipment for monitoring changes in materials, and pupils have not had the chance to research the Internet or use email.

122. It was not possible to observe any information and communication technology lessons taking place during the inspection, but the analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers try hard to use the single computer in each class to support learning in other subjects. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use simple word processing programs to practise spelling and punctuate text. In Years 3 and 4, pupils redraft their stories with reasonable skill, and use an art program to write their names in hieroglyphs. Pupils develop their writing skills in Years 5 and 6 by producing an editor's view of Humpty Dumpty's accident, and enhance their spiritual development when writing moving prayers for those who died in the World Wars

123. The co-ordinator has been in the post for two terms, and has put together a good plan of action for the subject. This involves securing funding for more computers, and developing the school's use of the Internet. The school has adapted national guidelines for its scheme of work, and this is helping teachers to provide a reasonably broad curriculum. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, and track pupils' progress systematically as they move through the school. A useful initiative by the co-ordinator is the building of a collection of pupils' work at different National Curriculum levels, and this gives teachers a good idea of how pupils' skills should progress.

MUSIC

124. In both Years 2 and 6, standards in music are above average. This was also the finding of the previous inspection. There is a strong tradition of music in the school, which starts early with the youngest pupils. Achievement in music is good across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language reach good standards, compared with their earlier attainment, and take a full part in all musical activities and experiences. As no music lessons were seen in Years 5 and 6, judgements in this inspection are also based on assemblies, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils.

125. As in the last inspection, pupils' performing skills are a strength of the school. The brass band plays in Romford shopping centre and at other schools, there are 60 members of the school choir and opportunities for pupils to take part in recorder groups. Pupils' confidence and skills are boosted by taking part in musical assemblies every term, an evening of music to celebrate Arts week, local musical festivals and singing at Nightingale House and the traditional carol service at St Michael's Church.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Pupils are given a rich variety of musical experiences at a very early age so that many pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 sing with good control of pitch, make expressive use of dynamics and recognise repetition and changes within pieces of music. This was evident in an infant assembly when pupils sang tunefully and with lively enjoyment. All teachers work hard to motivate pupils and give positive responses to their efforts to promote confidence. In a good Year 1/2 lesson, pupils explored and organised sounds to create their own version of 'London Bridge is falling down' which they recorded on paper using a key to identify their chosen symbols. The teacher encouraged the groups of pupils to think for themselves about the techniques they were using and the patterns they were creating. The sense of fun and energy in the lesson promoted learning well and pupils made good gains in their understanding of early notation and pitch.

127. In a good Year 3/4 lesson, pupils distinguished between rhythm and beat and the teacher used the song, *My Baby loves me*, well to reinforce their understanding. By constant praise and

encouragement – “You’re Superstars!”- she motivated them to try their hardest. They sang *What shall we do with the drunken sailor?* with gusto and bounced their hands in response to the beat. The energetic pace to the lesson and the teacher’s calm, efficient management meant that pupils enjoyed recognising a strong beat in a range of music and more able pupils could clap on the off beat. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 identify different speeds of pulse by clapping and playing, know different rhythmic patterns and perform these confidently. They speak of their enjoyment of music as teachers cover all the musical elements in interesting and practical ways. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good opportunities to listen to a range of music at the beginning and end of assemblies, and the many pupils who receive specialist tuition are confident in using musical notation and terms.

128. Strengths in the teaching and learning of music are the well-managed classes, extracurricular activities, competent organisation of large classes and resources and a purposeful approach. Weaknesses include ready acceptance of poor listening skills, insufficient emphasis on pupils’ improving the quality of their work and over direction by the teacher so that pupils’ creativity is stifled.

129. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator monitors teachers’ planning and carries out classroom observations. The school’s scheme of work provides teachers with good support to develop pupils’ skills in a structured way as they move through the school. There is no formal assessment, and it relies too much on the practice of individual teachers. Priorities in the action plan, such as improving the confidence of staff, are appropriate. Resources are very good and there are plenty of brass, percussion and ethnic instruments and listening music to enable pupils to broaden their skills in musical appreciation. Information and communication technology is not used enough to enhance teaching and learning. Pupils have opportunities to receive musical tuition from peripatetic staff in brass, violin and cello and currently 15 pupils are receiving percussion instrumental tuition from a sponsorship scheme. Music makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they reflect upon music, polish their performance and play a wide range of ethnic instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. In Years 2 and 6, pupils attain average standards. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. The school’s records show that, by the time they leave, nearly all pupils reach the required standard in swimming.

131. Evidence from the lessons observed during the inspection indicate that in Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve satisfactorily in most elements of the subject. In Year 2, pupils move confidently around the hall and demonstrate interesting ways of moving forwards and backwards across the floor mats showing appropriate control and consideration for others. Other pupils devise sequences of movements, some of which involve apparatus of different heights. Relative weaknesses in pupils’ achievement are that several are unable to hold a balance for long enough and most are insufficiently aware of the effect of exercise on the body and the purpose of warm-up. In Year 6, pupils achieve a sound understanding of rules and tactics in small games and they enjoy interpreting the rhythms and sequences of some North American Indian dances. Weaknesses in achievement are where pupils are too self-conscious and do not treat their dance lesson with appropriate seriousness and commitment.

132. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and the quality of pupils’ learning are satisfactory. Teachers’ planning is good, and structures pupils’ learning well. Pupils are taught to warm-up appropriately, and teachers are careful to teach pupils the correct terms for movements. For example, in a gymnastics lesson in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher made a point of speaking about ‘sequence’, ‘performance’, ‘finish’ and ‘balance’, and this helped pupils to understand the language of physical education. Teachers explain activities clearly. This ensures that pupils know what is expected of them. Across the school, pupils are encouraged to show others what they can do and teachers use

this effectively to emphasis good technique. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and that of others, and this helps them to refine their own skills. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers have insufficient knowledge of their subject, lack confidence and are too reliant on their lesson notes. As a result, activities are not explained clearly, pupils are not told sufficiently how to improve their work and learn little.

133. Teachers are supported by a brief policy that has to be updated to take account of the revised curricular requirements. The co-ordinator has devised a useful long-term curriculum plan which shows when elements of the subject are to be taught to each year group. The school uses schemes of work provided by the local education authority that are supplemented by aspects of the nationally recommended scheme. The co-ordinator has attended some useful training on dance and on the use of specific games equipment. However, this has not had a positive impact on pupils' games skills. The co-ordinator has had insufficient opportunities to work alongside teachers or to monitor teaching and learning across the school. Assessment is weak, as there are no whole school procedures for assessing and recording the progress that pupils make through the elements of the National Curriculum. There is an agreed scheme of work for swimming, and instructors assess pupils regularly to monitor their progress. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in adventurous activities as they attend a local outdoor activity centre. The subject is enhanced well by several extracurricular sports clubs. During the year, clubs are organised for netball, football, athletics, rounders and, during the inspection, an interesting and enjoyable infant games club was observed. The school ensures that pupils of both genders and all abilities have opportunities of attending the clubs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. The good standards recorded in the last report have been maintained. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 meet the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus, whilst in Year 6 pupils attain above the expected levels.

135. Few religious education lessons were available for observation due to the organisation of the timetable, and the findings of this inspection are based upon these observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning and records such as photographs. In addition, there is a very good collection of pupils' work to show the levels of attainment in different classes. Collective worship and visits to local churches, together with visiting speakers, enhance the subject well.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the range of pupils' ages. Many lessons are used as a story time, and pupils sit round together listening to, and discussing, stories from various religious traditions. In the lessons seen, the subject for Years 3 and 4 was the promise to Abraham. Pupils showed a good knowledge of the stories, and understood the underlying themes about trust and obedience. They used their speaking and listening skills well in these lessons, particularly when the teachers had the pupils enacting scenes from the stories, and this helped pupils to understand their meanings.

137. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well when they record their likes and dislikes as they study what makes humans unique in the world, and Year 1 pupils show a good understanding of the meaning of prayers when they write their own. Teachers are good at re-telling Bible stories, about Noah, Jacob and Esau, for example, and these give pupils a good understanding of the stories' meanings. Teachers enhance pupils' understanding further by including good cross-curricular work, such as the multi-coloured coat made in design and technology to go with the story of Joseph and his coat.

138. Pupils have a sound understanding of other traditions around the world, such as the Khalsa, and the Amrit ceremony in Sikhism, and the Torah and special books from Judaism. A very good

enhancement of the work in religious education was when teachers arranged a visit from two parents who came to talk about Hindu and Sikh customs and celebrations. They have met all pupils in Years 1 and 2 and talked to them about Divali and Raksha Bandham, the brothers' and sisters' festival. Two pupils were dressed in festival clothes, and exchanged the appropriate wristlets and sweets. Pupils were enthralled and sat very still, listening, watching and learning.

139. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 have a good understanding of the Bible as a 'library', and have followed the sequence of the Christmas stories carefully. Teachers use imaginative methods for re-visiting these well-known stories. For example, pupils were asked to draw up a list of questions for the characters in the Christmas story. Plenty of imagination was brought into this work, and the pupils gained great understanding and empathy for the characters.

140. Year 6 pupils achieve well as they show a good understanding of how religion can give people rules by which they live their lives, and how it tries to answer some of life's "big questions" about death, and an after life. Teachers plan well, and this extends pupils' knowledge and understanding. This was seen to good effect when pupils delved into the story of the Flood from the Bible in some depth, and made good comparisons with a similar deluge in Sumerian legends.

141. The subject is well led, and the co-ordinator keeps a good record of what the pupils have done. The co-ordinator supports teachers well by providing information about websites on the Internet, good advice on planning lessons, visits to local churches and arranging for visitors to speak to pupils. There is a collection of good photographs, including those about Ching Yang and Remembrance Day. Resources are now very good, and teachers use them well to further pupils' knowledge and understanding, encouraging them to see them first hand and handle them. The school has good resources about festivals from a wide variety of religious traditions, including Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, Advent and Sukkot. These are displayed imaginatively, and enable pupils to gain a good understanding of how different religions are celebrated.