

INSPECTION REPORT

LESSNESS HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bexley, Kent.

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101424

Headteacher: Dr D. Macdougall

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Huard
27290

Dates of inspection: 20th - 24th May 2002

Inspection number: 194889

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Erith Road, Bexleyheath, Kent.
Postcode:	DA17 6HB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Pressland
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27290	Mrs Christine Huard	Registered inspector	History, Religious education, Special educational needs.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught?
9391	Dr Norma Ball	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20948	Mr John Linstead	Team inspector	Science,	How well is the school led and managed?
31421	Ms Sue Rogers	Team Inspector	English, physical education, English as an additional language.	
23674	Mrs Wendy Simmons	Team inspector	Art, design and technology.	
30244	Mr Roger Tapley	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20506	Mr John Tyler	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, Information and communication technology, music.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lessness Heath is a large primary school with 590 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven. Forty-nine children attend part time in the nursery. The school is situated in Belvedere, near Bexley and most pupils attending the school live in the immediate area. This is slightly below average in social and economic terms. Children are admitted to the reception classes during the autumn and spring terms of the academic year in which they are five. There are slightly more boys than girls attending the school; this is most evident in Years 3 and 6 where there are significantly more boys than girls. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average at 18 per cent. Most of the pupils are of a white ethnic background although pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups attend the school. Twenty pupils are at an early stage of learning English. At four per cent per cent, this is above average. One hundred and sixty three pupils (twenty eight per cent) are identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly average. Of these, nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs, (two per cent) which is slightly above average. When children first enter the school their levels of attainment are below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lessness Heath is an improving school that provides a sound level of education. The headteacher has successfully established a school with a positive learning atmosphere, and a high level of commitment to improvement from the staff. He has been working closely with the local authority in order to improve teaching and so enable standards to rise. During the inspection the teaching observed was sound overall, nevertheless, it is clear that over time this has not always been the case. Although standards of attainment are below those expected nationally, there is evidence that improving teaching means that achievement is better and is now satisfactory. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly when they are withdrawn from class, and very good arrangements have been made for pupils for whom English is an additional language. However, appropriately challenging tasks not often provided for higher attaining pupils. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in class contribute positively to the progress they make. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils learn to behave well and get on with each other.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and that for pupils with English as an additional language is very good.
- Pupils have a positive approach to learning and good attitudes towards their work.
- Relationships between pupils and between the pupils and adults are strong.
- The provision for pupils' personal, and health education is good.
- The provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and science are below average overall, and those in information and communications technology are below average for the older pupils.
- The tasks set for higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenging.
- Assessment is not being used effectively to help plan adequately the next steps in pupils' learning.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator has not been defined clearly enough which means all aspects of their subjects are not managed effectively.
- Systems for the induction and development of staff are not fully effective and there is insufficient monitoring of their progress to ensure maximum efficiency.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made sound progress since it was last inspected five years ago and, with continued support from the local education authority has the commitment and capacity to improve further. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved due to the provision of a good quality computer suite, and better teaching. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has been reviewed and revised and is now good, particularly when pupils are withdrawn from class. Assessment procedures have been put in place, but these are not used consistently across the school and the information is not used effectively enough, particularly when planning for the needs of higher attaining pupils. It has taken the school a long time to address the considerable weaknesses in some of its teaching, which led to standards falling, particularly in English, mathematics and science. It is only recently that

real progress with this issue has been made. The teaching observed during the inspection was nearly all of a satisfactory or better standard, although improvements are only just beginning make a positive impact on standards.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	D	E	D	Well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	D	C	
Science	E	E	E	D	

The performance of pupils in the Year 6 national tests has been below or well below average since 1999. Fewer pupils have achieved the higher grades that might have been expected. The overall scores have improved at a slower rate than that seen nationally. It is clear that in the past pupils have made unsatisfactory progress, because older pupils still display a lack of basic skills. This is because of unsatisfactory teaching and the high turnover of staff. Standards have started to rise because of improvements in teaching and most pupils are now making sound progress and achieving satisfactorily. However, higher-attaining pupils are not always achieving as well as they could and assessment is not always being used effectively to identify their specific needs. The school missed the targets set for English and mathematics in 2000. The targets for 2002 are challenging but achievable in both subjects.

When pupils enter the foundation stage in the nursery they are provided with a wide range of opportunities which enable them to make good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. However, when pupils entered Year 1 in September 2001 standards were still below average. Those children in the foundation stage this year are likely to achieve the early learning goals in all areas except physical development. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2, in 2001, were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. In science the teacher assessments were below average. Inspection evidence showed that pupils' reading has improved, although there is evidence of a lack of opportunities for independent writing across Years 1 and 2, with basic skills, particularly of punctuation, being inconsistently taught.

The work seen during the inspection was better than the test results would indicate. Standards of attainment in English by pupils in Year 6 are below average overall. Their attainment is average in speaking, listening and reading. Writing is improving but there is inconsistency in the quality of written work across the school. It is below average overall because many pupils' lack the basic skills and wide vocabulary needed to express themselves at this level. Standards in reading have improved and pupils have opportunities to practise and extend their basic reading skills. In mathematics good teaching is helping to raise standards, and attainment is generally average except in investigative activities where pupils have too few opportunities to solve problems. Pupils are making good progress in developing their numeracy skills and standards are average. In science standards are below average. Although teaching has improved, the knowledge, understanding and basic skills of many pupils are below the expected levels. Standards in art, design and technology, geography, history, and physical education are all in line with requirements throughout the school. Standards in ICT at the end of Year 2 are in line with expectations, but below those expected at the end of Year 6. This is because the pupils in Year 6 have not acquired basic skills earlier in their school careers. Attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress particularly when taught in small groups out of class. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress and work is well planned so that they can take a full part in all school activities. There was little difference in the attainment of boys and girls noted during the inspection either in lessons or the work examined. There is scope for improvement in the school's overall attainment levels, particularly with regard to higher attaining pupils. However, taking account of the level of attainment when they start at the school, pupils' current achievements are satisfactory overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes in class are good. They are enthusiastic, concentrate well and want to do their best.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour overall is good and pupils in all year groups respond well to the school's clear moral and social ethos. Behaviour is very good in class but is sometimes only satisfactory in assemblies when pupils can become restless and fidgety.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are good. Pupils of all ages undertake responsibilities, in class and around the school, which they fulfil confidently and enthusiastically. The school council plays a positive role in determining how some aspects of the school develop.
Attendance	This is satisfactory, although below the national average overall. There is very little unauthorised absence. Punctuality is generally good although a few families disregard the school's requirement that pupils should be present right at the start of the school day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching was satisfactory. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection and some examples of very good teaching were observed in Key Stage 2. Although teaching has improved since the last inspection, pupils' work shows that teaching in the recent past has not always been sound, consequently pupils' learning has not been as good as it could be. In the best lessons observed, teachers matched work appropriately to the needs of pupils and there was a good balance of well-planned activities. This ensured that pupils' pace of learning was maintained throughout the lesson. In most lessons, teachers introduced topics in a lively manner, which captured pupils' interest. The good relationships teachers have with nearly all pupils, combined with effective techniques for managing classes, ensure that most pupils work hard. Pupils are now benefiting from consistently better teaching but they make sound rather than good progress in their learning. This is because poor teaching in the past means that they have not acquired good basic skills earlier in their school careers.

The overall teaching of mathematics is sound for younger pupils in Years 1 and 2, and good for those in Years 3 to 6, as is the development of numeracy skills. However pupils have too few opportunities to develop their problem solving skills. In English, basic skills are not so effectively taught and the quality of teaching is not so consistent across the school. The school has some new, overseas teachers who are not familiar with the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and they have not received sufficient support in teaching these. Pupils are taught in groups according to ability in mathematics which counteracts some of these difficulties, because teachers do not have to plan for such a wide ability range and tasks are more closely matched to pupils' attainment. This means the effects are not as strongly felt as in English. Pupils apply and develop their numeracy and literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. Assessments are not thorough enough which means that tasks set for higher attaining pupils are not always matched closely enough to their individual needs.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some strengths and provides a sound foundation for future learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good especially when pupils are withdrawn from class, although in class there is not always enough support available for them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive well-structured help which enables them to play a full part in school activities. Overall, the school is meeting the needs of its pupils and they make satisfactory gains in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a suitable range of subjects with an emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is enriched by some activities outside school hours, and a range of visits and visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good, particularly when pupils are withdrawn from class and work as part of small group. Their individual education plans identify what they need to learn to

	overcome their difficulties and how this is to be achieved.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The teacher has prepared a wide range of useful materials to ensure that support is appropriate and pupils are included in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. The good provision for social and moral development is particularly effective in helping pupils to play and work together constructively. Pupils are taught right from wrong and to be aware of issues affecting the lives of others. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good and shows improvement since the last inspection. Spiritual development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for monitoring the personal development of its pupils and cares for them effectively Pupils academic progress is regularly assessed but the information gained is not used effectively enough to plan for the needs of higher attaining pupils.

Parents have maintained a good view of the school. The school works effectively with them, particularly those of pupils with special educational needs, in order that they may participate usefully as part of the school community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides clear direction and has successfully established a strong, caring ethos within the school. There are some weaknesses in management, particularly in the development of the subject co-ordinators role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are keen and enthusiastic and supportive of their school. They fulfil their statutory duties. However, they do not carry out their monitoring role rigorously enough as yet.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses its results, teaching and curriculum. However, until recently it has not used the data effectively enough to plan improvements in order to raise standards. This has improved recently and the school is becoming more effective.
The strategic use of resources	Educational and financial decisions are carefully considered and funds are directed to priority areas. Their use is controlled and monitored appropriately.

The management of the school takes appropriate measures to ensure best value in its spending decisions by questioning what it does and ensuring that funds are spent wisely. The school has encountered considerable staffing difficulties over the past few years. These are being resolved. The accommodation is good and is very well cared for. Resources are satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy and enjoy attending school. • The children make good progress academically and socially. • The behaviour is good and anti-social behaviour is effectively dealt with. • The teaching is good. • The staff and headteacher are very approachable and always willing to discuss any concerns. • The school has high expectations. • The school helps their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents felt there was not a broad enough range of activities for pupils outside of lessons.

The inspection team supports many of the parents' views. However, although pupils are making sound progress this has not always been the case, because, until recently, teaching has not been as good as it should be. The inspection team agrees with parents that, for a school of this size, there is a limited number of extra-curricular activities for its pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery having experienced a wide range of pre-school experiences. Most join the class with speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, which are below average. Mathematical skills are also below those expected of other three and four-year-olds. During their time in the nursery and reception classes, children have made sound progress, although most do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in the six areas prescribed by the time they enter Year 1.
2. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001, results in reading were well below average and in writing and mathematics below average when compared with schools nationally. When compared with pupils in similar schools results were below average in reading and close to the average in writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 attained results that were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics, when compared with schools nationally. When compared with schools of a similar kind the results achieved were below average in English and science and average in mathematics. It is irrelevant to compare the results achieved in Year 6, with those obtained by the same year group when they were in Year 2, as there is only a comparatively small percentage of the original pupils still attending the school.
3. Test results for pupils aged 7 have dropped steadily since 1998, with a recovery shown in 2001 in mathematics and science. Standards are improving because of better teaching in mathematics and science, although basic skills are still not taught as well as they should be in English. Test results for pupils aged 11 show that after a decline in 1998, results have slowly improved, in mathematics and science, although not as fast as the trend nationally. The improvement in test results in mathematics has been most pronounced. The school has been working closely with the local authority to address weaknesses in teaching. At the time of the inspection these had largely been resolved, although a number of staff were comparatively new to the school or the classes they were teaching. Because of this the impact of better teaching has not yet had sufficient time to make a marked impact on overall standards.
4. Test results show that over time boys and girls have fluctuated but performed similarly overall. Although in the tests of 2001 boys generally attained better results, inspection evidence showed that there was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The school did not meet its targets for 2001 in both English and mathematics. It has predicted targets for 2002 in English and mathematics, which are more likely to be met by the current Year 6. These are based on a more accurate assessment of the pupils' abilities.
5. Inspection evidence shows generally that standards in mathematics and English are higher than test results would indicate. Standards in English are below average throughout the school although pupils achieve satisfactorily. An appropriate focus is given to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and satisfactory improvement is shown overall. In reading, pupils make sound, but inconsistent, progress in Year 2 and too few pupils obtain the higher levels in the tests. By Year 6 pupils have made good progress in their reading and most pupils achieve average standards. In writing, pupils make sound progress overall, although spelling and punctuation skills require further work. The school has already

identified the need to develop these skills in writing and also the need to develop the pupils' understanding of a wider vocabulary in reading.

6. In mathematics, pupils are achieving standards which are average in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. The numeracy strategy has been effectively introduced but some younger pupils have difficulty in understanding basic number concepts and can not always apply what they have learned. In Years 3 to 6 pupils show more understanding of the subject. However, throughout the school pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply what they have learned through problem solving and investigation. Pupils' attainment in science is average at age 7, and pupils make good progress. At age 11 attainment is below average because in the relatively recent past pupils have not had enough scientific experiences, or good enough teaching, particularly in Year 5. This has had a negative impact on overall standards. Although this situation has been resolved, pupils now have to cover work which should have been learned earlier, particularly with regard to experimentation and fair testing.
7. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly when they are withdrawn from class for specific support in small groups. However, higher attaining pupils do not make such good progress because, although slightly different tasks are devised for them they are not sufficiently challenging and consequently pupils do not have the opportunities to extend their thinking. At the time of the inspection there were 13 pupils on the register of pupils requiring support with English as an additional language. Those pupils withdrawn for this support make very good progress. They are carefully assessed and are taught a very useful programme focusing on their vocabulary needs at school. It begins with words to support the organisation of the school day and moves onto words they will need to do topic work. This method ensures that they cover the same work as the others in their class as soon as possible.
8. There is evidence that standards, particularly in Year 5, have been adversely affected in the recent past by poor teaching. There is also some lack consistency in the quality of teaching across some year groups, which leads to variations in the level of progress being made. This is partly because the school has some overseas teachers who are unfamiliar with the literacy and numeracy strategies and they have not had enough support in learning how to implement these. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education all meet current requirements. Standards in ICT are consistent with those required for the younger pupils, however pupils in Key Stage 2 are not yet meeting the standards required because they have had too few opportunities in the past. Standards attained by pupils in religious education meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' positive attitudes to school and good behaviour have been maintained since the last inspection. Parents are very appreciative of the good standards of behaviour in the school.
10. Overall behaviour is good and pupils in all year groups respond well to the school's clear moral and social ethos, and to their teachers' calm and encouraging management of their behaviour. Time and care are given to younger pupils to help them understand the standards of behaviour expected. By the time they reach Year 3 pupils know what the rules are, and are happy to comply with them. In classrooms the behaviour of the majority of pupils is good. They listen to the teacher and follow instructions well. They show a good awareness of the needs of others, and of how their behaviour can affect other people. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies, the dining room and playground is satisfactory but less consistent than in classes. At play, pupils are lively and exuberant and some can be careless when engaged in energetic games. A number of pupils report to the first aid base at these times with cuts and bruises from falling or bumping into others at playtime. Pupils seem less aware of the need to show care to others when they are out of the classroom.

11. There is little evidence of oppressive behaviour and bullying overall. However, at leisure pupils can sometimes behave in an aggressive and sometimes hurtful way to others. Pupils know to report such behaviour and the staff deal quickly and sensitively with any incidents which do occur. Any incidents of aggressive behaviour or racism are fully investigated. In the last school year there were four fixed period exclusions from the school, and one in the current year.
12. Pupils like and feel a pride in their school. In class they show good enthusiasm for learning and want to do their best. They are keen to answer questions and join in discussions. The majority listens attentively to their teacher and to each other. They show respect for the ideas and feelings that other pupils express and this is especially well promoted in personal, social and health education (PSHE). For example, Year 2 pupils considered what respect meant and how they could put the notion into practice. Their attitudes and attentiveness in the majority of classes make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. Overall, pupils are interested and involved in their work. They enjoy their tasks and consistently show high levels of concentration. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were consolidating their understanding of angles. Higher attaining pupils remained very attentive and well behaved although they were not sufficiently challenged by the tasks set for them. The vast majority of pupils share resources well, and their behaviour and co-operation with others are good. For example in games in Year 1 pupils worked well in pairs to develop their skills with bat and ball. A few pupils can be inattentive in lessons and need firm management to ensure that they concentrate on their work. Their behaviour is sensitively and well managed by staff, and does not affect the learning of other members of the class.
13. Pupils' with special educational needs behave well in class, as a result of being well supported and their needs being met through appropriate planning by their teachers. They carry out their work in the classroom and in withdrawal groups. In both they concentrate well. They are able to discuss their work sensibly with each other and adults and are pleased with their achievements. In one Year 6 class, pupils with special educational needs were able to give a clear explanation of the process they were using to solve problems concerned with co-ordinates and reflective symmetry. They spoke thoughtfully and confidently and gave accurate answers.
14. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good, and are underpinned by the emphasis the school places on encouraging their social and moral development. The class rules are agreed in each by pupils and they know they have a responsibility to show respect for others. Through the carefully devised PSHE programme the ideals of good citizenship also help reinforce the school's social and moral code and there is a good sense of inclusion of all pupils within the school. Pupils of all ages are keen to be given responsibilities, both in class and around the school. They very willingly undertake a range of tasks, which they carry out with confidence and enthusiasm. This is especially true of the Year 6 prefects who respond to their duties with dignity and commitment. The School Council provides a good opportunity for pupils to take an active part in how their school develops and they take their responsibilities seriously and put forward very sensible ideas for discussion.
15. Attendance is satisfactory overall although some elements of attendance and punctuality are less sound. Attendance is below the national average and has remained in the region of 92% since the last inspection. However, there is very little unauthorised absence. Punctuality to school is satisfactory but a few families show a determined disregard of the school's requirement to be present at the start of the school day. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in punctuality during the school day and less time is lost. The start of the afternoon session for younger pupils, however, is sometimes delayed because it takes too long for pupils to move from the infant playground into the classrooms. In part the difficulty arises from the restricted path space leading from the playground which causes congestion and delays as lines of pupils move towards the main building.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching observed ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Seventy-seven lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality across all three areas of the school was satisfactory. Eight per cent of teaching was very good, forty one per cent good, forty five per cent satisfactory and six per cent unsatisfactory. There was evidence of good lessons in all year groups but all the very good lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6.
17. Teachers' subject knowledge in general is sound. Nearly all the unsatisfactory teaching was by overseas teachers. They were not familiar with the literacy and numeracy strategies and had not had enough support to enable them to teach confidently the various aspects of each lesson. For example, the mental starter in a mathematics lesson for older pupils was unsuitable and little more than a written mathematics test. However, for the most part the National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented with most teachers displaying confidence and a high level of understanding of its requirements. This has enabled pupils to learn effectively and the school's results in national tests, particularly at the end of Year 6, have improved significantly over the last few years. In addition the school has chosen to teach pupils according to their ability in mathematics in the upper part of the school. This has enabled teachers to provide tasks which are more closely matched to pupils' needs than those seen in literacy. The use of small 'booster group' teaching for those pupils who are performing close to or just below the level required has also had a positive impact on their learning and enabled them to achieve particularly well. The school has not been so successful in its implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The quality of teaching here is very uneven across the school and basic skills such as grammar and punctuation have been woefully neglected in some classes in the past. Although teaching has now improved and good teaching is evident in Year 6, enabling pupils to make much better progress, there is too much to catch up on to enable pupils to reach average standards.
18. In very good lessons the teaching was motivating, the lessons well planned to ensure that it met pupils' needs and teachers' expectations were high as shown by the tasks which challenged all ability groups. The pupils responded correspondingly and learned effectively because they were interested, enthusiastic and worked extremely hard. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, the teacher used questions skilfully to ascertain how much pupils had remembered and understood from the previous lesson. The quality of discussion with and amongst the pupils was high and the challenging questions put by the teacher led to thoughtful, considered responses. These showed that pupils remembered that careful editing of a piece of text enabled a writer to present an argument in the terms that he wanted, in order to make a case. When the teacher moved on to a more complex text it became apparent that some pupils had more difficulty in distinguishing between fact and opinion. However, clear explanations and re-inforcement, backed up by carefully planned written tasks, which met the needs of all pupils, ensured that very good progress was made over all. All pupils could distinguish between fact and fiction and the higher attaining could manipulate text themselves in order to argue a specific case.
19. This good matching of task to pupils' prior attainment is not apparent in all lessons. Although nearly all teachers planned work for lower, average and higher attaining pupils, this did not always enable sufficient progress to be made, particularly by higher attaining pupils. In some cases the task for these pupils was 'more of the same'. For example, in a literacy lesson for older pupils, average attaining pupils had to complete eight comprehension questions, whilst the higher attaining pupils had to complete twelve. The opportunity was missed to present these pupils with a more challenging text with correspondingly complex questions to extend their thinking.
20. Although pupils made at least sound progress overall in the lessons observed during the inspection and the teaching was sound overall, there is evidence in pupils' written work during the year of some highly unsatisfactory teaching. Particularly poor progress has been made in Year 5, with pupils having had little experience of some subjects. This is particularly true of science. In one class no science was tackled for a term and, when it was taught, the work completed was poorly marked, with work frequently being marked as correct when in fact it was not.

21. Teachers use appropriate teaching methods and time is generally used effectively in lessons. The best lessons were pacy and challenging, yet allowed pupils time to reflect and consider how to approach their work or how it could be improved. In a few lessons, teachers did not manage time effectively and too long was spent on the introduction, which left too little time to complete written activities.
22. Teachers manage their classes very well. In all classes relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. There is a mutual respect and this allows teachers to use humour frequently to enliven and enhance a session knowing that pupils will not take advantage of a more light-hearted approach to lose concentration. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good and they want to learn, this had a positive impact on the standards reached during the lessons observed.
23. Teachers use questions effectively during lessons to assess how well pupils are learning and also to reinforce and provide additional explanations as necessary. However, the quality of marking is highly variable and ranges from good to unsatisfactory. The best marking is constructive and invites responses from pupils. For example, A Year 6 pupil was asked in his religious education work to label and give reasons for his choices of features in his symbolic picture. This additional work was completed conscientiously and to a good standard. Some marking is contradictory and in a very few cases teachers' spelling is incorrect. Homework is set on a regular basis. Pupils know what is set and it is consistently set in all classes. It supports class work appropriately.
24. The use of resources is generally satisfactory. Books from the library are readily available in classes to aid research, particularly in subjects such as history. However, there is little evidence of pupils having the opportunity of going to select these books for themselves. Although the computer suite is well used for lessons, computers in classrooms were frequently not used as much as they could be to support learning in other subjects.
25. Work for pupils with special educational needs is planned carefully. They are taught well in small withdrawal groups and the aim is to enable these pupils to be able to cope with working individually or within a group situation in the classroom. This is invariably achieved. However, there are few support assistants in the classrooms to help these pupils. Where help is available, teachers and assistants work together well, setting similar expectations within each lesson and asking questions which focus on the same learning objectives. The teacher of English as an additional language is exceptionally well prepared. She is innovative and uses a wide variety of teaching methods that involve music and playing games. In this way she ensures that pupils are motivated and have a number of strategies to help them recall the words they need to know.

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

26. The curriculum provision for children at the Foundation Stage is sound, and is planned to fully cover the early learning goals. Children are provided with an effective and well planned range of learning opportunities that allow them to develop their skills appropriately in both the nursery and reception classes.
27. The school provides a sound range of relevant and worthwhile learning experiences for its pupils. The curriculum is broad, covering all subjects in the National Curriculum and the Bexley Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This has been updated satisfactorily since the last inspection in line with national guidelines. The planning of teaching activities has improved. An adequate amount of time is now allocated to each subject and the imbalance in time allocated to mathematics has been appropriately addressed since the last inspection. There is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. In the first and second year classes 'Snack - show and tell' sessions add fun to the day and are a good feature, providing sound opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills.

History and geography are taught in alternate terms to ensure adequate time is spent in a focused way. The amount and quality of recorded work show this to be an effective use of time.

28. At the time of the last inspection, weaknesses were found in the system of curriculum planning. Exactly what pupils were to learn was not made clear. The school has been partially successful in addressing this issue. Planning for mathematics and English throughout the year has improved. It closely follows the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The basic skills of numeracy are well planned and taught in most of the lessons. However the planning and teaching of literacy skills is not as good. In science and the foundation subjects, much work has gone into establishing national guidelines as schemes of work and these are being used effectively for planning purposes. However, many subject policy documents are out of date and are in need of urgent review. They do not reflect the way in which subjects are to be taught and implemented. The curriculum statement emphasises the importance of finding and using links between the subjects of the curriculum but the practice of this at present is inconsistent.
29. The school tries to ensure that all pupils have an equal access to the curriculum. However, the pupils with the potential to reach the higher levels of attainment are not making the progress they should or doing as well as they should. This is because assessment is not being used to plan work at the appropriate level, and tasks set are not appropriately challenging. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported appropriately in the classroom by teachers. Pupils receive more specific tuition individually or in small groups as required. Individual education plans are drawn up by the special needs co-ordinator and, for the most part, targets are well focused, clear and achievable in the short term. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are making very good progress because the activities planned for them are highly appropriate for their levels of understanding. The programme of work is very carefully designed to ensure that pupils cover the same work as their classmates as quickly as possible.
30. The school's provision for health, sex education and citizenship is good. In the school corridor displays entitled Sport Keeps Us Healthy, by a Year 1 class depict colourful pictures and models of athletes and gymnasts and show a good understanding of the concept of healthy living. A display in the dinner hall by another Year 1 class advises, 'eat five pieces of fruit every day'. There is an extensive and constructive programme throughout the year. Classes in Year 6 have taken part in the drug education 'ideals' project. In March the 'no smoking day' was used as a focus for art and science activities and pupils designed T-shirts with anti-smoking logos. The school has held the Bexley Healthy School Award for some considerable time.
31. Posters and notices are commonly seen in every classroom and around the corridors emphasising politeness and courtesy. A Year 6 class starts the day with a school declaration-'peace in our day' and the teacher reminds the class to talk to their buddy during the morning break. Promoting citizenship is a strong feature of the school. Pupils in every year are involved in working to create a better society. They are elected to represent their classes' views at a school council. This is held every term and is usefully used to discuss whole school issues. As a result new equipment for use during wet lunch times has been purchased. Pupils can see that meetings can produce results. The school's statement on citizenship written in October is fully practised. The teaching staff are good role models and find many opportunities during the lessons of recognising the citizenship work that is being carried out every day.
32. The school continues to make good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a strength of the school. The daily school assemblies comply with legal requirements and offer pupils opportunities to reflect on life changes. An awareness of the beliefs of others is fostered in religious education and especially in an annual Black History month. Merit assemblies encourage self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to challenge ideas that do not make sense of their own values. In this way the school makes satisfactory provision for spiritual development. Opportunities are provided for reflection in class lessons but these are not taken as often as they could

be. For example in science, a group of pupils in Year 6 did not have sufficient time to reflect on why some creatures have the features and habitats they do.

33. Provision for moral development is good. Morals are implicit in the school aims and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to show care and respect for others. They are given a very clear understanding of the principles that separate right from wrong. All adults in the school model good behaviour and have high expectations that pupils will develop a sense of moral responsibility. Opportunities are taken to reinforce moral values in personal, social and health education, in religious education and in daily assemblies.
34. Another strong feature of the school is the good provision for social development. Independence is fostered in many ways. A large number of school responsibilities are established in the form of monitors from all classes who carry out a number of jobs around the school including clearing away of lunch boxes and collecting registers. There is, additionally, a prefect system for older pupils who have more responsible jobs such as caring for physical education equipment. In lessons pupils are good at working independently in the sense that they are quiet and on task. They are less good at taking initiative when they need equipment or do not fully understand what to do. The School Council, consisting of representatives from each class, meets regularly. It debates relevant issues and as a result encourages the organisation and playing of playground games. It is active in supporting charities. The school has won an award for the quality of its links with the local community.
35. Provision for cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils' awareness of the multicultural world is enhanced through displays throughout the school, such as the Hindu puja display and clothes in Year 2. Visitors to the school, for example, a prominent Sikh, are encouraged to talk about their beliefs and background. African-Caribbean music was playing in assembly to demonstrate the school's use of music from other cultures. Displays in the classrooms addressed the culture of Britain itself, with Celtic patterns, for example, as well as that of other countries. In addition the school makes visits to art galleries, to the theatre and to museums such as the Victoria and Albert. Multi-cultural resources round the building also help to raise awareness for everyone in the school. Black history month, held each February enables pupils to become more aware of the contribution made to their own and international society of figures such as Martin Luther King and Mary Secole.
36. The school makes provision for a satisfactory though somewhat limited range of extra curricular activities. A number of parents expressed some concern about the range of extra curricular clubs and the inspection supported their views. The range of activities offered after school is less extensive than in the past. Of the eleven clubs run after school, the netball, art and quiz clubs offer pupils a chance to enjoy fun activities. The remainder are supportive of classroom work or extend language skills with booster reading or extension work in maths and English. Two clubs are socially supportive of pupils. The majority of clubs are restricted to junior pupils. There is insufficient provision of extra curricular opportunities for younger pupils.
37. A range of visits out of school enhances the curriculum. Especially good are the opportunities for pupils in year 5 and 6 to spend a weekend in Paris and a week on the Isle of Wight. Local visits to shops and the park help younger pupils to explore and know their local area. For older pupils trips to places of cultural, historical or aesthetic interest also support classroom studies. Visitors too add a sound dimension to the work of the school.
38. Constructive relationships with other schools and institutions are limited but valuable. The attractive external mural outside the year 2 classrooms was completed with the help of local secondary school pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school provides a caring environment. All pupils are valued and their confidence and self-esteem are well promoted. The good relationships that teachers and support staff have with pupils contribute significantly to the level of care provided in the school. The recognition of the value of the individual, and awareness of individual needs, is a strong part of the social and moral code of the school. First aid provision is good overall and four staff hold full first aid qualifications. Many pupils report to the first aid area in the main school, particularly at lunchtimes, with a variety of problems, most arising from bumps and falls in the playground. Such numbers can cause stress for staff on duty although they try to ensure that pupils receive the appropriate treatment. There are regular fire drills and health and safety checks on the school premises and equipment. The school's arrangements for child protection are sound and follows local guidelines. However, the two designated people for this area of responsibility have not undertaken recent training to update their knowledge.
40. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are sound. There are regular reminders to parents and carers in school newsletters about the need for regular and prompt attendance at school. Good use is made of certificates to reward good attendance both for individual pupils and for classes. Registers are taken efficiently at the start of each session and a computerised registration system allows for efficient access to accurate statistical information. However, absences from school are not always followed up quickly enough and there is some overlap in terms of where responsibility lies for reviewing and following up on individual attendance and punctuality issues. Attendance information is reported clearly to parents. The school works diligently to encourage prompt attendance but meets with casual indifference from a minority of parents. Late arrival at school is an area where the school has worked with commitment to make improvements. There is a very strict policy for recording late arrival and the majority of pupils arrive at school on time. The school has a good relationship with the education welfare officer.
41. The school monitors pupils' behaviour well. Records are kept of any inappropriate behaviour and sanctions imposed. The behaviour policy is clear, and is consistently applied. It is well linked to the school's promotion of social and moral values, and reflects the school's ethos of valuing and respecting others. A suitable variety of strategies are employed to support pupils with difficult behaviour, and these depend upon the needs of the individual child. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good. Staff ensure that pupils are fully aware that bullying and oppressive behaviour are unacceptable, and that pupils know to report any worries to staff. A good initiative has been the introduction of the "I am worried" notes that pupils can write if they have any anxieties.
42. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring the personal development of pupils. The headteacher has a very good knowledge of pupils in the school and assigns a high priority to the promotion of good personal development. Although there have been a number of staff changes the longer serving members of staff also have good knowledge of the pupils and monitoring of personal development, although largely informal, is nevertheless sound. All staff share information and concerns about pupils on a regular basis and work well as a team to support pupils and promote their personal development.
43. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the development of assessment procedures, which formed one of the key issues for action. The school has introduced new assessment systems for almost all subjects. However, many of the assessment systems have not yet become fully embedded in the workings of the school. This is especially true of science and ICT.
44. The use of assessment is currently unsatisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff are now appropriately using a computerised system to record and track pupils' progress from year to year. These procedures are sound. Teachers use the information effectively to identify and support the learning of pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language. However, they are not using the information sufficiently well when planning programmes of work or lessons to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. This weakness was identified at the time of the last inspection. The gathering and use of on-going assessment information lacks rigour and consistency from class to

class. Where it is best, in Years 3 and 6, teachers have focused directly on finding out what pupils do not understand and have then altered their planning to help pupils make progress. However, methods of assessment are not always consistent across all classes in a year group, which means that some pupils have better opportunities than others.

45. The headteacher and senior staff have not compared closely enough the standards pupils reach as they move through the school, with their previous attainment. For example, they have not identified the under-achievement of the higher-attaining pupils. However, there have been recent developments to improve this, which is good practice. For example, the headteacher is targeting pupils who show a drop in their achievement in any one year, so that this pattern does not occur two years running. Nevertheless, the tracking of pupils' progress is not always consistent within classes. Overall, the assessment and analysis of national test results by senior staff are beginning to be used more effectively to plan a programme for school improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents have a good opinion of the school. They are appreciative of the good standards of behaviour, that their children like school and that they are encouraged to become mature and responsible young people. Parents also feel happy to approach the school with queries and problems. The inspection supported these very positive views. Some parents expressed concern about homework but the inspection found that the use of homework through the school was satisfactory. Parents also felt that the school is well led and managed and that teaching is good. The inspection, however, revealed some weaknesses in these areas.
47. The school has maintained an effective partnership with parents, and has sound links with them. Each year they receive information about the work to be undertaken in classes. Newsletters keep them informed of routine matters, and are clear and helpful. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report for parents are combined into one useful and informative volume. Good links are established with parents when pupils join the school and they very much value the well organised induction process and home visits. Workshops for parents of children in the foundation stage are a good feature.
48. A small number of parents help in school on a regular or occasional basis. This is mainly with the younger pupils, and their contribution is greatly valued by the school. Parents run the school uniform shop and are also very helpful in assisting staff to supervise pupils on visits out of school, including residential trips for junior pupils. The Parents Association makes a helpful contribution to the school through regular social and fundraising activities. Overall, the impact of parents on the work of the school is sound. The parents also provide satisfactory support for their children's learning at home helping them with reading and other homework.
49. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The annual report is concise but nevertheless provides parents with a clear understanding of what their child has done during the year. Targets are set on pupils' annual reports and these targets and the reports can be discussed at the parents' meeting in the summer term. Parents have three opportunities a year to meet staff and discuss their children's progress and these meetings are generally well attended. Meetings to provide parents with more detailed information about areas of the curriculum have been held in the past but have not been a recent feature of the school's programme of keeping parents informed. The headteacher is in the playground at the beginning and end of every school day, and teaching staff are always available to parents, particularly at the end of the school. This is much appreciated by parents who fully appreciate all staff being available in this way.
50. Parents of pupils with special educational needs meet regularly with the special needs co-ordinator and pupils' individual education plans are updated termly. The way in which parents can support their

children at home is clearly identified on the plans which are sharply focused on how the pupils' needs can best be met.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher provides good leadership, and is an experienced and knowledgeable professional who has a very clear vision of the school's role in helping pupils to develop as individuals. He strongly believes in enabling pupils to become freethinking individuals capable of making informed choices. This belief is shared by the school staff and contributes to the caring and positive school environment. His good leadership steers staff and governors towards the realisation of the school's aims. He has been instrumental in leading the school through some difficult times in its efforts to improve. For example, there has been a high turnover of staff in recent years, which, among other things, has disrupted the continuity of professional development for teachers. With the help and support of the local authority this situation has been largely resolved and staff morale is now much improved. Throughout the school relationships are good, providing the caring ethos central to the fulfilment of the aims of the school. The commitment to improve is now shared by all staff and with continued help the school has the capacity to succeed in its aim to raise academic standards.
52. The headteacher receives good support from the deputy headteacher and the senior managers. This team has been strengthened by the recent addition of a new manager and responsibilities have been more equably delegated. There is now a strong team ethos and a growing understanding of what needs to be done to take the school forward. The impact of the high staff turnover at the school has had an adverse impact on the development of the subject co-ordinator's role as co-ordinators have been constantly changing. The school has made the strengthening of the role a priority. Co-ordinators are beginning to develop a clearer picture of what is happening in their subjects', as they are now responsible for carrying out an audit and drawing up appropriate action plans for improvement. The action plans are incorporated into the school development plan. However, at present they do not monitor the quality of plans, lessons, results and pupils' work rigorously enough to be sure they have identified the most important areas for development. Co-ordinators are responsible for their own budgets and ensuring sufficient resources are available.
53. The deputy headteacher successfully combines her role with that of special needs co-ordinator. She works diligently; co-ordinating the team of special needs teacher and support assistants. Very thorough individual education plans and reviews are undertaken and arranged by the special needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff. The teacher responsible for teaching pupils with English as an additional language manages her area very well. She provides good resources such as card matching games and ensures that her work has a high profile in the school. Dual language posters and labels are on display throughout the building, supporting language development for all the pupils. She offers useful advice to her colleagues. Because of this they are able to continue supporting language development in the classroom, often with the help of a teaching assistant. There is an appropriate budget and a considerable amount has been earmarked to supplement the stock of dual language books and posters already on display.
54. The headteacher and a few senior managers have carried out some observations of lessons. More recently this monitoring has been supplemented by the local education authority to good effect. For example, they have identified what contributes to 'good' teaching in the school and shared this with staff. Local authority staff have also been instrumental in helping the school identify where teaching has been unsatisfactory and helped the school take action to resolve the situation. However, the school has not been rigorous enough in its own monitoring. Several members of staff are new to the country and the school is heavily reliant on them. Insufficient support has been provided for them in ensuring they are familiar with the structure of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the National Curriculum. Although these teachers receive good informal support, and all teachers seek and get advice when they feel they need it, there is no established training programme or monitoring system to

evaluate the quality of lessons given by new members of staff. The lack of monitoring of lessons generally is making it difficult for the school to identify where it needs to improve. This is also evident in the inadequate provision for higher attaining pupils.

55. The professional development of teachers is appropriately supported by regular performance management interviews. These are also used to set new targets and identify training needs. However, staff absence and the frequent turnover of staff during the past two years have disrupted the school's provision of on-site and external training. This has made it difficult to devise a coherent programme of training based on priorities identified by the school development plan and through staff interviews.
56. The governing body fully supports the actions the headteacher is taking to move the school forward. It is fulfilling its statutory duties and playing its part in shaping the direction of the school. The governors have several new members but all are keen and have been very vocal – and successful – in obtaining support for the school. For example, they have persuaded the local authority to provide a necessary perimeter fence in order to combat vandalism. The expertise on the governing body is being used well. This includes providing support for the installation and use of new computers, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and in the observation of some literary and numeracy lessons.
57. Plans are well advanced for a more structured programme of focused visits by governors in order to improve the information they have about the work of the school and in the identification of strengths and areas for development. This programme will also help the governing body to become more effective in its role as a 'critical friend' and a trusted source of advice and honest criticism. At the moment it is over reliant on reports from senior managers and national comparative data. Governors scrutinise and comment on the plans made by staff to develop the school but they do not play a significant part in the identification of priorities on these plans or of how they are to be carried out. The governors' own strategic plans are appropriate. They ensure, for example, that renewals and refurbishment keep the school premises in a good state of repair. Governors' financial planning is good and they carefully consider how the school's budget can best be used to support the school's priorities. The school has good systems in place for ensuring the propriety of its financial transactions. Spending is well monitored through regular financial reports and meetings.
58. The school takes appropriate measures to obtain the best value in the purchase of resources and equipment. However, the governors do not always take into account all relevant factors when considering 'best value'. For example, the benefit gained from the installation of the computer suite in terms of pupils' learning is largely anecdotal. The assessment of how well the school is doing when compared to similar schools is carefully considered. However, this is not based on the criteria used to compile national statistics and is not therefore helping the school improve its performance.
59. There are sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to teach the curriculum. The high turnover of teachers in the past years has made it difficult to provide continuity in the leadership of curriculum subjects. This has been a contributory factor in the lack of development of their roles. However the recent appointment of curriculum leaders and further delegation of responsibilities have resulted in an improvement in the quality of subject management, although further improvement is still required. Learning support assistants play a good part in the learning of all pupils. However there are very few of these, particularly in the classes for younger pupils.
60. The school has good accommodation. The addition of new classrooms has enabled the school to carry out imaginative reorganisation of space to create a specialist computer suite and quiet small group rooms. The school benefits from two halls and extensive exterior play space, which includes a large field that is used well for recreation and games. The school keeper and his staff take a pride in the appearance of the school, which they keep immaculate. The mobile classroom awaiting refurbishment will also provide further accommodation for small group teaching.

61. Resources overall are satisfactory. There has been much recent investment in good quality resources, which fully support the topics being taught in each year group. Those in art are unsatisfactory although thought has been given as to how they may be improved. The provision of a useful computer suite has appropriately enhanced the provision for ICT, which was a weakness at the last inspection. There is an adequate stock of books, fiction and non-fiction although these are not always displayed attractively. They are generally stored in classrooms and the entrance hall as the school library was converted to provide the computer suite and small group rooms. This is a good use of space although insufficient thought has been given as to how and where the library books should be housed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. Lessness Heath provides a sound education for its pupils. In order to improve this further the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Raise standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, particularly in relation to higher attaining pupils, by:
 - ensuring that tasks set for higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenging,
 - improving the teaching of basic literacy skills,
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop independence in learning by making greater provision for investigative and experimental activities in mathematics and science.
 - Providing training and support for staff who have had not had experience in teaching the literacy and numeracy strategies.(See paragraphs: 5-8, 17, 19, 27, 28, 54, 63, 73-81, 90, 94, 100, 102, 103, 115, 119, 127.)
 - (2) Use assessment information more effectively and systematically across the school in order to identify and appropriately plan for the needs of all pupils.
(See paragraphs: 28, 43-45, 105, 110, 115, 119, 123, 129, 133.)
 - (3) Improve some aspects of management by:
 - developing effective systems for the induction and development of teachers and monitoring their progress to ensure maximum efficiency,

- further developing the role of the subject co-ordinators by enabling them to monitor and support teaching in order to raise standards
(See paragraphs: 52, 54, 55, 66, 86, 97, 105, 113, 120, 123.)

Minor issues.

In addition to the above the school should also consider:

- (4) Updating policy documents to ensure they accurately reflect what is being taught
(See paragraphs: 27, 84, 129, 143, 148)
- (5) Extending the range of extra-curricular activities.
(See paragraphs: 36, 140.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	32	34	5	0	0
Percentage	0	8	41	45	6	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	541
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	83

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	157

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.1	School data	0.4
National comparative data	5.6	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	43	34	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	35	38
	Girls	22	28	30
	Total	55	63	68
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (72)	82 (68)	88 (78)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	32	37
	Girls	24	25	30
	Total	57	57	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (71)	74 (67)	87 (73)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	40	41	81

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	26	32
	Girls	26	23	33
	Total	48	49	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (62)	60 (51)	80 (80)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	28	33
	Girls	27	25	31
	Total	51	53	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (65)	67 (53)	81 (78)
	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	3
Black – African heritage	12
Black – other	3
Indian	22
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	410
Any other minority ethnic group	8

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	3	1
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)	21.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	30.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	328

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30
Number of pupils per FTE adult	16.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1,222,835.
Total expenditure	1,206,148
Expenditure per pupil	2117
Balance brought forward from previous year	50585
Balance carried forward to next year	67272

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.5
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

590

Number of questionnaires returned

123

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	39	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	50	47	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	54	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	46	11	3	6
The teaching is good.	45	54	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	56	14	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	43	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	40	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	65	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	54	3	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	33	28	6	17

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents.

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

63. Children get a good start to their education. In the Nursery, children take part in a wide range of activities and achieve well. When they move on to Reception classes they are joined by children who have had a variety of pre-school experiences. In recent years children in the Reception classes have entered Year 1 having attained standards below those expected by the Early Learning Goals. However, the majority of children in the reception classes this year are attaining broadly in line with national expectations and the majority of children will achieve most of the nationally set goals for the six areas of learning for this age group. Overall, children make sound progress. Although most of the children achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry, higher attaining children are not always presented with sufficiently challenging tasks, which would allow them to achieve more. Many children do not always achieve as well as they could in learning to plan for themselves and to make informed decisions, for example, in selecting materials they need to complete a task. The older children have three terms in Reception and are noticeably ahead of those who only have two terms.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall and, in a significant number of lessons seen, teaching was judged to be good. Staff work well together, both during sessions and when planning jointly. Children are offered a wide range of enjoyable activities that help them to make links between the different areas of learning. The result is that they deepen their understanding and are often motivated well because the activities are relevant to their needs and interests. Activities are designed to reinforce and extend children's learning. Teachers and assistants give clear instructions and explanations so that children know what they are meant to be doing, and this helps them to concentrate well and persevere when tasks are not easy. Children learn especially well during activities that are led by adults, when they are helped by good questioning which results in a rapid pace of learning. When working independently, children's concentration sometimes wavers and they flit between activities and learn less than they could. They sometimes lack sufficient guidance in the form of clues to help remind them what the teacher planned they would learn. For example, in some activities, the resources are set out well so that they give children ideas about what to do, but in other cases, the resources alone are not enough to achieve this.
65. The curriculum is sound. There is a new system for assessing children's progress that is precise and simple to maintain. However, it has not yet had time to be of practical use. The new co-ordinator has a clear vision for developing the Foundation Stage but has not yet had time to evaluate standards and provision in detail. The result of this is that some issues have not been dealt with as effectively as they could. For example, in the Foundation Stage as in some other classes across the school, the induction of some temporary staff has not been sufficiently helpful and this has led to some weaknesses in teaching.
66. A number of parents are able to help in school and provide valuable support. Without parent help, some activities could not be planned, because the number of teaching assistants is too small for the needs of the curriculum. Occasionally, parents are not given enough guidance to supervise activities that would be better led by a trained assistant. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although some rooms are small and cramped. The outside areas have been developed since the last inspection, but there is still scope for some improvement.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children make good progress in most aspects of their personal, social and emotional development. They learn to be attentive, to concentrate on activities and to build positive relationships with each other and adults. In one lesson, Reception children fetched resources sensibly without disturbing others, and

discussed how to set about their task. They then concentrated hard and achieved success in writing a list of foods for a pretend party. Children respond well to adult guidance and praise. They follow routines well, for example for lining up and going to and from the hall 'as quietly as mice'. Nursery children are quick to settle down in a circle ready to hear a story. However, children are not given sufficient opportunities to plan their independent play and sometimes this leads to concentration and perseverance waning.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Most of the children starting at the school have below-average language skills. By the end of the Reception year, attainment is likely to be broadly average although many children retain weaknesses in the structure and vocabulary used in speaking. Children often ask or answer questions or explain things in very short or partial sentences. This does not affect their early writing because they are at a stage when their writing is expected to be at a simple level. However, this could have a negative affect on their future development in writing. Children are given many opportunities to enjoy listening to stories, share books and read them independently. They recognise their own names and some of them read simple, familiar text well. Almost all children write their names accurately, but many muddle capital and lower-case letters. In some sessions, children played at writing in the role-play area. Some children, for example, used an appointment diary in an area set up as a dentist's surgery and also role-played appropriate telephone conversations. Such opportunities for using different forms of communication are valuable in developing children's skills and imagination.

Mathematical development

68. Opportunities for mathematical development are generally planned well and children make good progress. The majority of pupils are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. Children name shapes correctly, count the number of sides and use them in puzzles to gain experience in using space. Some children match a number of objects to a given numeral, take away a small number and then count how many remain. Even in the Nursery, many children count to ten, use the language of position and compare lengths. In the class shop, some children exchanged fruit for money, with the shopkeeper taking care to count the number of coins given in change. Older children, playing in a role-play area set up as a doctor's surgery, counted as they pretended to take a patient's temperature and blood pressure. In one session, Reception children used mathematical skills well to build up a chart that recorded an investigation of the taste and smell of a range of jellies. Some opportunities are missed to reinforce mathematical development during independent play. For instance, a table set out with beads and strings lacked visual clues such as cards showing a number of objects or possible colour patterns.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Children gain a solid understanding of the world around them through the varied activities on offer and should achieve the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. They successfully learn very early scientific ideas. For example, Nursery children learned about caterpillars and butterflies, and showed wonderment as they described how the one transformed into the other. Reception children learned about food and thought about their likes and dislikes. Children observe things carefully when asked to and then show extended interest. After helping their teacher to plant flowers some carried on a conversation about how rain would help the plants to grow. Most children use computers confidently and handle the mouse well to control actions on screen. A program about dinosaurs was especially popular with some pupils, who remarked on the varying sizes and shapes of the beasts portrayed. By the end of Reception, children have some understanding of the passage of time and talk about themselves growing up. They recognise and value similarities and differences in people, especially those in their own class.

Physical development

70. Children's physical development is sound, and they are provided with an appropriate range of activities to enable their co-ordination to improve. In one lesson in the school hall, children worked together well to control the movement of a parachute and play games that required co-operation, co-ordination and agility. In other sessions, children were seen playing with balls, riding wheeled vehicles and using climbing apparatus. Opportunities also abounded for them to use scissors and glue, play with small construction apparatus and manipulate small items such as when stringing beads. In some activities, children are not sufficiently encouraged to repeat actions in order to make further improvements. Nursery children, for instance, had no particular incentive to repeat and improve their skills on the climbing apparatus. Some of them found a part of it difficult and so moved to another activity. Had they had some specific objective, such as collecting clues from a marked trail, it might have encouraged them to try again. Some opportunities to further develop aspects of outside play are missed. For example, children do not have a defined course to follow when riding wheeled vehicles.

Creative development.

71. Children make good progress with their creative development and are likely to meet expected standards by the end of the year. Children's creative development is catered for through adult-led activities and independent play. Some children sketching in the garden chose their colours carefully and tried a variety of media. The teacher set a good balance between allowing children to express their own ideas freely and helping them to learn skills that enabled more accurate representations. Some Nursery children painted fruits beautifully, often with considerable detail and care in choosing colours. Children are successfully encouraged to use their imaginations in role-play and this is especially useful in developing learning in other areas as well. Although little singing was heard during the inspection, children know a suitable range of number and nursery rhymes.

ENGLISH

72. Standards of attainment in English at the end of Years 2 and 6 were well below average in the 2001 national tests. Pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved better results in writing than in reading. Results in both key stages have been steadily declining over the last few years when compared to national trends.
73. Inspection findings, based on an examination of work in pupils' books and lesson observations, indicate a pattern of improvement, due to improved teaching. Improvements are particularly evident over the last term and are especially noticeable in Years 3 to 6. Overall attainment in English in both key stages is still below national expectations, but it is better than it has been in past years. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average ability in reading and writing. Achievement is therefore satisfactory overall as pupils leave Year 2 and then Year 6 with below average skills and understanding.
74. Speaking and listening is in line with national averages throughout the school. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average speaking and listening skills and so make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 pupils can speak confidently and are at ease talking to adults or with their friends. For example, Year 2 pupils confidently practised individual presentations to the whole class. By the end of Year 6 pupils are very confident in whole class interaction. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils' speaking skills were being very well developed as they role-played scenes from a book, "The Tulip Touch" and added thought prompts as well. Pupils' range of vocabulary is not so well developed and technical vocabulary is not always well supported by teachers. For example in a design and technology lesson one Year 5 pupil said "Pass me the red thingy", this was not corrected by the teacher present.
75. There are insufficient planned opportunities in both key stages, for pupils to talk and discuss with each other. In some classes, pupils have to listen to teachers for long stretches of time and explanation and thinking skills are not improved. Listening skills throughout the school are good, as teachers' lessons are usually lively and teachers have high and appropriate expectations that pupils will listen.

76. Standards in reading improve steadily through the school. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are below average and make overall satisfactory progress in the infant classes. By the end of Year 2 the higher attaining pupils read well and with expression, and most others are gaining in fluency. For example, Year 2 pupils were observed reading nonsense poems aloud with great relish and enthusiasm. Pupils were very positive that they enjoyed reading and could talk about their favourite authors, such as Roald Dahl. They could discuss book format and retell the plot of a story. However, they were not good at attempting to sound out new words. They are not taught this skill well enough in whole class or guided reading sessions. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to read, in groups or with the teacher, for them to make good progress. There is only a limited range of books for them to read and are often confined to only reading books from the school scheme. As a result many cannot give examples of any non-fiction reading when questioned.
77. Progress made in reading by pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been inconsistent because teaching has been better in some classes than in others. However, by the end of Year 6, standards overall are in line with national expectations and pupils have achieved well. Again, for some pupils, the range of reading has been limited. Pupils tend to read the books in use in class at home, and some find it hard to talk about other authors and styles of writing. Most have generally good comprehension. They read fluently and are able to discuss books enthusiastically identifying events which particularly interest and appeal to them. However, not all are sufficiently competent at using books for research purposes and some have little understanding of the Dewey system, even though this is used to classify books in the school library.
78. Overall, standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are still well below average. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write independently at any length and use of punctuation is particularly weak. Standards in the current Year 1 are comparatively better, but these pupils had better skills when they entered the school and have received more consistently good teaching. Spelling is taught well to younger pupils. Lessons are lively and are interesting because they usually relate to the text being used. Year 2 pupils were seen, for example, learning 'ow' words that they picked out from a poem they were reading. As a result of the good teaching standards of spelling are in line with those required and pupils make good progress.
79. Standards in writing at the end of Year 6 are below average. However, pupils have experienced writing in a range of styles and can compose stories that have satisfactory plot and structure. They understand dialogue and are good at interpreting character, as was well demonstrated in the Year 6 series of lessons where skilful teaching gave pupils a real insight into what characters in 'The Demon Headmaster', were thinking. Punctuation is still a weakness and some pupils show little understanding or use of basic rules. Standards of spelling in Year 6 are well below average mainly because they have been poorly taught in the past. A large number of pupils struggle to spell common words correctly and confuse, for example, 'hear' and 'here'.
80. Presentation is satisfactory overall but varies between good and unsatisfactory. Consistent rules have not been applied and joined handwriting is not introduced until Year 2. It is well taught in the designated lessons but the learning is not reinforced in other lessons. Because of this pupils do not apply or practice their skills sufficiently to be able to achieve standards that are above average in handwriting.
81. Higher attaining pupils are often insufficiently challenged. Children were grouped by ability in most classes, but higher attainers were usually asked to do more work rather than work which would extend their skills or their knowledge. For example, In a Year 6 lesson pupils were asked to add 1, 2 or 3 speech bubbles to a piece of writing, depending on their perceived ability in English. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in English and are withdrawn from class for specialist small group teaching in order that they may be able to deal more competently with all areas of class work as quickly as possible. Individual education plans outline a programme of learning for each pupil based on a published scheme. This is well used by support staff and pupils learn systematically. Each stage is carefully assessed in order that teachers can be sure that pupils understand what they have learned. In class pupils are set appropriate tasks which build well on the skills they have been learning in their

groups. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive very good support. This is provided by a specialist teacher who uses a range of strategies, including games and music, to ensure pupils learn the language they need to fully participate in class lessons as quickly as possible.

82. Teaching of English in lessons observed was good overall. It was sound in Years 1 and 2 with only one unsatisfactory lesson being seen. All teaching in Years 3 to 6 was at least satisfactory, most was good and some lessons were very good. This shows how staffing has been strengthened and compares very well with evidence from books that shows that teaching in some classes in the recent past has been poor. Teachers are generally well organised and make their intentions clear with good explanations. They have good relationships with the pupils and as a result pupils' attitudes to English are good. In the best lessons the pace was brisk and tasks were well linked to the whole class learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 were able to produce their own poems in the style of Brian Patten after a lesson spent reading and writing examples together as a whole class group.
83. The quality of marking has been very inconsistent. However, there are signs of recent improvement. Teachers use consistent methods to highlight mistakes and some useful comments are made to help pupils develop their skills. Pupils have individual targets, but these are rarely referred to in marking so are not yet useful in supporting progress. Teachers have not assessed work on a regular basis to ascertain the levels at which pupils were performing although a number of annual tests are administered. The results of these give some indication of the progress pupils are making. However, because the results and charts are not analysed rigorously enough to find out where weaknesses exist, they cannot be used usefully when planning future lessons.
84. The national literacy strategy has been appropriately adapted for use in the school, although it is not mentioned in the English policy. Good links are made with literacy in some subjects such history. Year 4 pupils, for example, had written letters home as evacuees during the Second World War. However, there are few links made in other subjects. Information technology is used well when pupils use computers to draft work and word processing skills are used appropriately.
85. The school possesses some attractive big books and an adequate stock of reading books stored in classrooms and in the entrance hall. Despite this some of the resources used during the inspection were uninspiring and occasionally hard to read. Books are not well displayed in the classrooms.
86. Since the last inspection, the role of co-ordinator has been undertaken by several different staff. Two teachers are now being inducted into the role who are keen and enthusiastic. They have already begun a plan of action and are committed to continue the recent improvements. The high staff turnover and lack of guidance has meant that English has not been well managed in the past. There has been little release time to observe lessons and there has been little consistent monitoring and improvement strategy until the intervention of the local authority. The staff have done well to establish the current improvement in standards considering the recent problems they have encountered.

MATHEMATICS

87. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have fallen since the last inspection. In 2001 the results were below average in comparison with the national average. When compared to similar schools the results are broadly average. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 have also fallen since the last inspection. In 2001 the results were below average in comparison with the national average, but when compared to similar schools the results were close to average.
88. The trend of improvement over time has been below that shown nationally. Standards dropped dramatically in 1999 and the school has been slow to recover from this. The school is now working closely with the local education authority to raise standards. At the end of Year 2 there was a slight

improvement of performance in 2000 but greater gains were made in 2001. At the end of Year 6, although improvement was made, it was less marked.

89. The standards of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6, based on lesson observations and an examination of pupils' work, are average overall and pupils achieve well. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils in Year 1 are given a sound start to their learning. They make satisfactory progress to gain a secure knowledge of basic number, for example by beginning to learn number bonds to ten. Most pupils in Year 2 recognise and order numbers up to 100. They understand tens and units and can use coins to add money, and subtract amounts from a pound. They recognise patterns in number sequences such as odd and even, and carry out simple number investigations. They learn how to use co-ordinates in two quadrants by playing simple games such as battleships, which are not only enjoyable but re-inforce learning well. Pupils can identify features of simple two-dimensional shapes. Pupils collect data and are beginning to use it appropriately to construct and interpret pictograms where each unit represents two or more items. Pupils make sound progress as they pass from Year 1 to Year 2.
90. By the end of Year 6 pupils multiply and divide numbers with decimals. They can calculate equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils solve money problems, working out discounts on articles for sale. They can identify different types of triangles, such as isosceles and scalene. Most can plot co-ordinates using all four quadrants. Pupils' mental mathematical skills are improving through the use of good oral starters at the beginning of each lesson. For example, Year 5 pupils in the lower attaining set, revised their nine times table using a challenging, timed 'round the clock' strategy which they approached with enthusiasm. Overall, pupils make sound progress as they pass through each year group and achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply the skills they have learned through participating in problem solving and investigative activities.
91. The quality of teaching overall was sound with some strengths. Lesson planning is satisfactory throughout which is an improvement from the last inspection. The quality of teaching observed in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory overall. Teaching was mostly good or satisfactory, with just one unsatisfactory lesson observed. Successful lessons took place when teachers had sound mathematical knowledge enabling them to give clear explanations and ask effective questions. Some Year 2 pupils asked questions about their work on money and the teacher guided them by asking well-focused questions in return. This resulted in pupils finding their own solutions and learning effectively.
92. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by work that is set at the correct level, as are those for whom English is an additional language. Teachers use learning support assistants effectively to target the learning of specific groups of pupils. In a lesson dealing with the addition of tens and units, an assistant supported a pupil with special educational needs in the mental activities by whispering helpful questions and guidance, without providing answers. This gave him the confidence to answer questions correctly. Resources are usually well used and activities are generally matched to pupils' needs. A very few lessons lacked sufficient challenge and pupils were not fully involved in the activity because the correct resources had not been used and the pupils were confused as to how to tackle a problem.
93. The quality of teaching observed in Years 3 to 6 was good with some very good features. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. The very good lessons have clear learning objectives that are understood by the pupils. In a lesson dealing with division the teacher asked pupils to explain a division sum which has seven as the answer. This good questioning promoted independent thinking and learning. Successful lessons ensured pupils were actively involved with sorting out problems. A Year 6 teacher ended her lesson on plotting co-ordinates by directing pupils out of the classroom using co-ordinate references.
94. Throughout the school the pupils enjoy mathematics lessons and learn effectively. This is because they are confident and enthusiastic to answer questions. They listen to, and support each other. Behaviour is

good and most pupils work conscientiously. However, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and are not often given open-ended tasks to achieve. Therefore they miss opportunities to learn independently.

95. In all classes, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their mathematical skills and knowledge through the use of ICT in lessons. Pupils use mathematics to help learn in other subjects. For example, a Year 5 class analysed data and produced graphs as part of their project on settlements in a geography lesson.
96. Teachers use informal observations and regular mental tests each week to assess pupils' attainment. Each half term a more thorough assessment is made. The school uses statutory test materials and the results are used to track pupils' progress throughout the year. Pupils are set general targets for mathematics and there is a booklet explaining targets for parents of the younger pupils, which is helpful. However, targets are sometimes too vague and general to be used effectively to improve learning. The setting of homework is more regularly practised in the younger classes than the older where it is inconsistent.
97. There are two subject co-ordinators for mathematics. The co-ordinator for the older pupils is a temporary appointment. Both teachers work hard and have consulted with staff to provide appropriate resources for learning. They have had little opportunity to monitor provision and standards, as areas needing improvement have been dealt with mainly by the senior management team and local education authority advisers.

SCIENCE

98. In 2001 at the end of Year 2, the teacher assessments showed that standards were below the national standards but close to those of similar schools. The results in the tests taken in Year 6, were well below both the national results and those of similar schools. When results at the higher levels are compared, in Year 2 the pupils did better than those in other schools but in Year 6 they did much worse. The inspection showed that there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Over the past five years the school's results at the end of Year 6 show a steady improvement although at a lower rate than that made nationally.
99. Inspection findings show that pupils in Year 2 are reaching levels of attainment close to the national average. Pupils' factual knowledge about the topics they have covered is appropriate. For example, pupils in Year 2 have a good idea of what might constitute a healthy diet, of what materials many everyday objects are made of and of simple forces. Pupils carry out simple research, copy and illustrate 'facts' and complete worksheets. Their ability to investigate is also appropriately developed. Teachers devise many of their own worksheets, which are designed to guide rather than dictate the learning. For example pupils investigated how quickly ice melted in different parts of the classroom. Pupils were provided with writing frames for them to record their work. This helped them learn the methods of carrying out experiments and guided their recording of them.
100. Standards by Year 6 are below average. This is because pupils' investigative skills are poorly developed although they have a sound recall of facts and knowledge learned. However, many pupils do not understand the nature of scientific enquiry. For example, they do not understand how to hypothesise, make a reasoned prediction, draw conclusions or evaluate what they have found out. Some pupils have an understanding of what a fair test is but this is not consistent or firmly embedded. For example, one Year 5 pupil wrote, 'I will make this a fair test by letting my partner have a go.' The recording of work is inconsistent and sometimes poor and so hinders pupils' investigative and hypothesising skills. In much work seen there was no clear format for recording so pupils do not develop a scientific style of writing. Some pupils in Year 6 were surprisingly ignorant of insect and plant life round the school. A mosquito was thought to be a dragon fly and buttercups were confused with dandelions. Teachers do not plan for

pupils to make enough use of ICT which would help their learning, for example in producing graphs and charts clearly showing their findings and so help them draw conclusions. An examination of pupils' work shows that the full curriculum is being covered, and an extensive and well planned revision programme is undertaken in Year 6 which should ensure that many pupils will reach the required standards in this summer's tests.

101. The standard of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. In the lessons observed, teachers engaged the interest and concentration of pupils with stimulating practical activities which developed their investigative skills. For example in Year 2 pupils were given a number of different electrical 'circuits' which might or might not successfully light a bulb. They were required to predict, test and record what happened and then account for it. This was good practice in carrying out an experiment to test a hypothesis. In the subsequent sharing of ideas at the end of the lesson, the teacher skilfully led the pupils in drawing conclusions and to generalise about what was always required to complete a circuit. In Year 1 pupils tried to find out what plants needed to grow. This was the culmination of a lot of investigative work done previously. Pupils predicted and recorded what would happen when plants were denied light, water or air. When actually presented with plants denied light, pupils discussed the possible causes of the plants' colour. Through careful questioning and handling of pupils' responses, they were helped to use what they had discovered to make a generalisation that could be tested.
102. In Years 3 to 6, the standard of teaching seen was sound, although the scrutiny of work clearly shows some classes were poorly taught earlier in their school careers. This has resulted in gaps in pupils' knowledge, especially in their research skills. However, teaching is now confident with teachers showing sound subject knowledge and confidence. For example, pupils in Year 5 were given clear instructions and the purpose of the investigation they were about to undertake was clearly defined. This motivated the pupils well and enabled them to maintain their concentration. Teachers' planning is better than that reported in the previous inspection. This follows the adoption of a scheme based on national guidance. Lesson aims are clear and teachers make appropriate use of final sessions in lessons to judge how far these have been met.
103. However, in a few lessons teachers' own knowledge and understanding was not so secure. This means some are over-reliant on worksheets and do not adapt the work appropriately for different abilities. Higher attaining pupils in particular are insufficiently challenged and do not receive enough open-ended tasks to develop independent thinking. The previous inspection identified weaknesses in the teaching of research skills. Again, this has improved although there is inconsistency in the use of investigations to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. While much of the work of the younger pupils is based on practical work this decreases as pupils move through the school to the older classes. Pupils in Year 6 learn the 'facts' about the different topics they look at. For example, they have recorded facts about the movement of the earth around the sun but not carried out any practical work in measuring shadows cast by the sun.
104. Pupils speak enthusiastically about, and clearly enjoy, science. In the lessons observed in both key stages, pupils show a lot of interest in their work when given stimulating things to do. For example in Year 2, pupils sustained their interest throughout the lesson when constructing electrical circuits. In the final session they were very keen to tell what they had learned. In Year 4 pupils enjoyed some simple games designed to help them understand 'food chains' and then persevered when given some challenging texts to use for further research. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their own initiative and independence through taking responsibility for their own learning, for example, in the designing of experiments to test ideas.
105. The co-ordinator is new to the post but in a short time has quickly identified ways to develop the subject further. For example, an analysis of results in last year's national tests has revealed areas of weakness in pupils' knowledge which can now be addressed. All classes now have good resources and there are plans to improve these still further. Closer monitoring of pupils' work has begun and all teachers now use the same assessment-recording sheet. This has helped improve the quality of assessment, which

was identified as a weakness in the last inspection. Teachers assess pupils through observation, questioning and marking. However this is not always systematic enough, or based on agreed criteria in order to help plan work more suitable to different abilities. The co-ordinator has had too few opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation.

ART AND DESIGN

106. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those required. Girls and boys achieve similar standards. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is as an additional language make sound progress and are appropriately supported. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards overall, but the pupils with the potential to reach the highest standards are not being given enough opportunities to do so.
107. Improvement since the last inspection was very slow until recently when the rate of progress has increased due to the vision of the current co-ordinator. The curriculum has been appropriately modified to meet the needs of the mixed year classes in Key Stage 2. Since 1997, the school has introduced sketchbooks, although there is limited use of these. The best examples are in recent Year 6 work, where pupils have sketched people in action, before drawing larger pictures, but this type of work is limited across the school as a whole.
108. Pupils learn about the work of a few famous artists. Pupils in Year 2 studied the work of Turner before attempting their own landscape pictures. However, some pupils in Year 6 struggled to remember that Van Gogh painted sunflowers. Throughout the school, there is little work on display that enriches pupils' cultural knowledge of classical and contemporary artists. Art is not used widely to help pupils to learn about different cultures. However, there are some examples of good practice in Year 3, where pupils have looked at the line patterns of Bridget Riley and developed their own ideas. In Year 6, pupils have explored Islamic patterns and created their own. Some Year 5 pupils have looked at Celtic patterns but this work lacks imagination and flair, because pupils use photocopied sheets to colour in.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all year groups. It was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection. However, the school supplied samples of pupils' work and discussions were held with pupils about their learning. Overall, teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject. They follow the planned curriculum and teach skills to a sound standard, showing satisfactory expectations; although planning shows insufficient attention to the needs of the more able. Pupils learn at a steady pace, acquiring satisfactory knowledge and skills as well as experiencing opportunities to develop creative skills. However, there is a tendency for teachers to over-direct tasks, which results in more limited individual and imaginative work. For example, the lighthouse collages in Year 2 are all very similar. Some skills such as colour mixing are not taught effectively enough. This was evident in the tree paintings in Year 3 where very similar tones of green and brown predominated. Pupils enjoy the subject and work well sensibly and enthusiastically. They share the limited resources well and have positive attitudes to learning.
110. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop satisfactory assessment procedures, but there is inconsistency between teachers in how these are used. The best example is in the use of pupils' own assessment sheets. This is because these help pupils to understand what they have learnt and consider how they might improve their work. Overall, assessment systems do not always help teachers to identify which pupils are achieving average standards and those that could be achieving higher standards.
111. Although there has been some recent improvement in resources, the current range of materials and the storage of these are unsatisfactory and this is hampering opportunities for pupils to be really challenged and exhibit high standards of independence and creativity.

112. The curriculum is appropriate overall, with some effective links to design and technology, including work in three dimensions when making Tudor houses in different sizes. However there are few links with other subjects. There is limited discussion work linked to English to help pupils to express their feelings and responses to pieces of art, and ICT is not used to support learning effectively enough. About forty Year 3 pupils benefit from attending an after school art club.
113. The quality of leadership and management is sound. The current co-ordinator has made quick recent improvements, but until recently she was not given clear guidance about her responsibilities and role. Nevertheless, she has developed a good improvement plan. Monitoring of teaching and learning are not yet developed enough to further raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are in line with those required. Girls and boys attain similar standards, although boys show greater confidence in generating individual design ideas, using construction materials, than girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make sound progress and are well supported.
115. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior ability, but more able pupils have limited opportunities to work on more challenging skills and designs, which was also identified at the time of the last inspection. This is because teachers generally plan whole class activities at a broadly average level and are not assessing pupils' understanding rigorously enough. However, good assessment in Year 6 has resulted in modification of the curriculum to help boys and girls to learn more effectively. Overall, the inclusion of all pupils in learning is satisfactory.
116. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has modified the curriculum appropriately to allow for the mixed aged classes. Standards have been maintained at average and there has been some development in the use of information and control technology to support pupils' learning. However, it is still rather limited and this has been recognised by the school in the current improvement plan.
117. It was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection, one of which was good and the other was very good. However, samples of work and discussions with pupils show that teaching and learning are sound across the school as a whole.
118. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally sound and learning is supported by an appropriate curriculum in which pupils have suitable opportunities to develop a range of skills in designing. However, skills in making do not develop as systematically. For example, In Year 1, pupils worked on making a playground, which showed good skills of cutting, joining and supporting working swings and simple slides. However, pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 class had limited opportunity to go beyond making simple joins when they made their box model sculptures. From the sample of work seen, good teaching methods allow pupils to show their imagination and develop creative ideas. In Year 2, pupils have made a range of puppets using a variety of methods. Some were simple stick puppets, others used felt and a third variety used card and split pins. Here the links with art and multicultural work are good, as pupils have learnt about Indonesian puppets. In Year 6, pupils have designed and evaluated a wide range of fun hats. For example, a burger hat with a working ketchup bottle, required several modifications before it was finished.
119. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, but it often does not make provision for supporting the higher attaining pupils. Although new assessment procedures are in place they are not yet being used effectively to guide teaching to enhance pupils' learning. When learning is really effective, pupils use their imaginations and exhibit concentration when working. This was a feature in the one very good

lesson seen where pupils used construction apparatus to make working models using gears, cogs and levers. They worked in pairs showing great effort to overcome problems and modify their designs. Pupils of all abilities were well challenged because the teacher assessed what pupils understood and knew and helped them, through discussion, to experiment and modify and improve their designs. Very good questioning resulted in pupils thinking and learning for themselves. In this lesson higher attaining pupils were challenged and they designed a 'stomach churning' fairground ride using a system of cogs to produce a spinning effect. The resources are good overall, but pupils have insufficient opportunities to make independent decisions about their materials.

120. The management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator is well qualified and keen to support her colleagues. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning. An action plan has been drawn up and the school has identified appropriate priorities for development. Links with other subjects are satisfactory. Strengths include the links with health education. Here, pupils have designed T-shirts highlighting the dangers of smoking. In science, they have designed posters to support their revision of factual information for tests.

GEOGRAPHY

121. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards in the work seen were in line with national expectations. This is a similar judgement to that at the last inspection and the school has made sound improvement since then. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. Although recording was limited pupils were able to talk about their learning in discussion. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class showed some knowledge of the different types of food eaten in France when compared to England. Pupils in a Year 2 class had a good understanding of the similarities and differences between a town and a seaside resort. Pupils are beginning to appreciate the importance of maps in representing the relative location of different features. The pupils are developing appropriate skills to enable them to compare and contrast views about different localities. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 were studying weather conditions in a range of localities and selecting the most appropriate for a summer holiday. A Year 5 class carried out a comprehensive street survey of Nuxley Village with an aim of making improvements to the location. The teacher took the opportunity to extend this activity highly effectively. For example, during a drama lesson pupils took the part of the residents of the village; in literacy they wrote letters to the Mayor giving their views on the proposed development. These effective cross-curricular links produced high quality work.
122. In the four lessons observed the teaching was sound overall and ranged from good to satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding. Lessons are planned well and based on clear objectives. In the good lessons effective questioning and clear instructions by the teacher resulted in pupils confidently completing tasks and making good progress. Praise, encouragement and a sense of humour are used well in lessons. For example, one teacher suffering from a cold was advised to bring her coat with tissues if she went to the beach. The pupils' ability to use information and communications technology to develop their geographical knowledge is developing. Travel information booklets were made by a Year 6 class from information gathered from the Internet.
123. Management of the subject is sound. However, although an action plan has been drawn up for improvements in the subject, the co-ordinator has had no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in teachers' long, medium and short term planning and appropriate links are being established with other areas of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has improved the quality and quantity of resources for teaching the subject. Although there is a system of assessment for recording pupils' progress this is inconsistently used across the classes, which limits its usefulness.

HISTORY

124. Attainment in history is in line with the national expectation at the end of Years 2 and 6. There is no discernible difference in the standards of attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.
125. Pupils begin to acquire a sense of the past by the time they are seven. They appreciate that the lives of children in the past were different, and in some ways harder, than their own. For example, pupils in Year 1 have studied the development of tools and useful implements from the time of the caveman to the modern day. They have studied the development of specific tasks such as washing and usefully compared implements and methods used in Victorian times with those of today. Learning has been enhanced through the provision of resources, such as a range of irons, to enable them to make appropriate first hand comparisons. In Year 2 pupils study the lives of famous people. Useful links are established with literacy as they use a prescribed format to help them plan their writing about Florence Nightingale. They make good comparisons between the life and work of Florence Nightingale and that of Mary Secole. Stories about these two women are used well to illustrate the changes that resulted from their interventions and discoveries. The quality of work is sound and shows that pupils have achieved satisfactorily. However there is a limited amount of recording.
126. Pupils in Year 3 have considered the life and times in Ancient Egypt and made satisfactory gains in their knowledge. Pupils have made sensible comparisons between the lives of the rich and the poor and considered the importance of the River Nile and its flooding. They realise this would create fertile soil for the crops. They demonstrate sound knowledge of the pyramids as tombs and understanding of the Egyptians' belief of life after death. Older pupils in Year 6 have been carrying out research into ancient Greece using a range of resources. They have made useful comparisons between the lives of Spartan and Athenian children, and made decisions as to which Greek culture they would like to have been born into. They were unanimous in preferring the Athenian culture and provided convincing and sensible reasons for their choices. The school is establishing useful cross-curricular links in history. For example, in one history lesson pupils were researching into the origins of the ancient Olympic games. They show a good understanding that information may be recovered from a range of sources such as archaeological artefacts, books, and the Internet.
127. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Key Stage 2. Other evidence was obtained from the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with the co-ordinator. The quality of teaching in the lessons was good; teachers asked open questions and gave opportunities for discussion. The pupils' work and teachers' planning show that too often the same task is given to all pupils and work is judged on the quality of the outcome. Although this is occasionally appropriate, it means that tasks set are not always matched closely enough to the abilities of the pupils. However, in one lesson observed work was well matched to pupils' prior attainment and the higher attaining pupils were challenged to find their information independently without the clues provided for the rest of the class. They rose to the challenge and were focused and enthusiastic, providing work of a high quality and using reference material very effectively.
128. A good feature of the curriculum throughout the school has been the introduction of Black History month. This was a direct response to some incidents of racial vandalism at the school and is effective in preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural society. It takes place annually and enables pupils to appreciate and respect the contribution made by significant events and personalities from a range of cultures, to our lives today. The use of ICT in history is limited although pupils have used Internet resources for individual research.
129. The management of the subject is sound. The co-ordinator is aware of the areas where history requires further development; for example, the subject policy is in urgent need of review. Resources have improved since the last inspection, although these are still being developed. Assessment systems are

inconsistent and have not yet been formalised, with teachers deciding what should be assessed after each topic, making it difficult to make comparisons in the longer term.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and below expectations at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve similarly to the other pupils in their age group. Younger pupils use a computer mouse confidently and accurately, are quick to read instructions on screen and have a sound knowledge of how to achieve specific outcomes using menus and specific icons. The relatively new computer suite has played a major part in enabling pupils to reach appropriate standards, because skills are taught effectively to a whole class. Older pupils have not had the benefit of this improved equipment for so long, and thus have not reached the required standards. However, these older pupils do have sound knowledge and skills in word processing and can, for instance combine text and graphics well. However, their knowledge and experience is below that required in some areas. They have had insufficient experience in handling data and some pupils are unsure about how to access files.
131. Pupils are generally achieving less than they could. This is because many were not taught well enough when they were younger and their lack of basic knowledge hinders further progress. In addition, too little use is made of computers outside specific timetabled lessons in the computer suite. Pupils rarely use computers to support learning during literacy or numeracy sessions and ICT is not used sufficiently in all subjects across the curriculum.
132. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. Teachers gave clear explanations and backed these up with good questioning and guidance throughout the lessons. This often enabled pupils to find solutions for themselves, but when they were unable to do so help was swiftly given so that they could continue. Teachers' explanations were often accompanied by good demonstrations, but not all pupils were always able to see these, as the school does not yet have a large screen facility. In some lessons in the suite the organisation was such that some pupils had much longer at the computers than others and this directly affected the progress they made. Some teachers are careful to encourage pupils to sit directly facing the screen and to move the keyboard and mouse to comfortable positions. This not only helps them during the lesson but also teaches pupils good habits for healthy use of ICT.
133. The scheme of work enables teachers to plan lessons effectively and leads to knowledge and skills being taught systematically. The systems for assessing pupils' progress are not used consistently and this is unsatisfactory. The information gathered is not yet being used effectively to plan further work or to identify where the curriculum might be developed further. However, the new co-ordinator is setting a clear direction for the subject and providing colleagues with support that is greatly valued. The school's policy for the safe use of computers and the Internet is good.
134. The computer suite is adequately resourced, but the stools are of inappropriate design for pupils of very different sizes. The fan is not always effective in cooling the room to an appropriate working temperature. Classroom computers vary in age and usefulness, but the school's plans for upgrading over time are well thought out and suitably funded. The school has been successful in winning more funding for further improvements in resources. The employment of a part time technician is a very good investment as it keeps the amount of time when the computers are out of use to a minimum.
135. Although the school still has some way to go in raising standards, improvement since the last inspection has been sound. Positive features are the installation of the computer suite, adoption of a good scheme of work and continuing training of staff to improve their own skills and their knowledge of how to teach the subject effectively. A solid foundation has been laid on which further improvement can be based, especially in the upper part of the school.

MUSIC

136. It was not possible to see very much music in classes but on the basis of the available evidence, standards in music across the school are generally in line with expectations. Pupils with special educational and those for whom English is an additional language attain appropriate standards and achieve satisfactorily.
137. Pupils have some time to listen to and appreciate music. Pupils in Year 6 listened to Gustav Holst's 'Mars' as they entered class one morning and were asked to record how the music made them feel. Although this particular session was very short it did provide some time for appreciation and reflection. Pupils in Year 2 sang in two parts, which is at a higher level than is expected nationally, while others composed thoughtful pieces about the weather using a range of percussion instruments. In the singing assemblies, the quality of singing was good. In the lessons observed, pupils made sound progress because the teaching was appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Lessons were well planned so that pupils built on previous learning
138. Pupils were enthusiastic during the lessons seen and tried hard to do well. In one lesson, Year 3 pupils responded well to reminders to maintain a good posture and this helped them to sing with good volume and pitch. This was made easier because they were not sitting on the floor, as pupils were in some other lessons. In another lesson, Year 2 pupils behaved well when handling musical instruments. The teacher gave good clear instructions in how to play the instruments but also allowed time for pupils to explore the different sounds that untuned percussion instruments could make. The pupils showed a good understanding of the terminology such as dynamics and tempo, and could play their instruments appropriately to demonstrate this. Pupils behaved well and did not fiddle with the instruments during class discussions and so no time was wasted through interruptions. Not all teachers observed encouraged sufficient refinement of pupils' work. When pupils sang incorrectly, for instance, they were not always invited to try again or helped by demonstration and conducting.
139. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language were able to participate fully in the lessons observed and made sound progress.
140. The school has identified music as an area for development although improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school has recently begun to use a new, commercial scheme of work and have adapted this appropriately, with the result that teachers use it well. However, the use of ICT in music is limited. The subject is adequately resourced. The allocation of time in Key Stage 2 is considerably lower than in many primary schools and it is hard to see how the scheme of work can be adequately taught in the time available. Some pupils take advantage of the opportunity to receive private instrumental lessons during school time and this enriches their musical education. However, music does not feature in the range of extra-curricular activities and pupils who can play instruments have too few opportunities to perform in public.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. Time restrictions and a bout of bad weather meant that it was only possible to observe five physical education lessons during the inspection. Judgements made are based on these observations and on discussions with staff. Although the evidence is relatively limited, in the aspects of physical education observed standards are in line with those expected in gymnastics and games at the end of Years 2 and 6. The programme of study in the National Curriculum is covered by means of a scheme of work designed by the subject co-ordinator. Classes are taught one aspect of the curriculum for a prescribed number of weeks before moving on to another to ensure coverage of the curriculum. Those pupils in Year 6 who cannot swim are taken to the local swimming pool and have been making good progress in acquiring this important skill.

142. Year 6 pupils made good progress in one lesson observed. They built up groups of movements *to* form a sequence. The teacher used pupils well to demonstrate good techniques and made good use of the time to give useful feedback on methods of improvement to everyone. All lessons featured an appropriate pattern of warm up, demonstration and development of skills. Although sound, they were not quite so successful as the Year 6 lesson because the teaching points were not so specific. Year 3 pupils were seen learning bat and ball skills on the field. Here the size of the groups involved in some of the practice turned skills acquisition into a game that focused rather too much on winning and losing and so pupils had less time in which to consolidate their skills. Pupils learn effectively because they enjoy their lessons and participate with enthusiasm. They listen carefully and make sound progress because of clear explanations. Discipline is appropriate and pupils dress with good thought for health and safety.
143. The subject is managed effectively. School staff are appreciative of the work carried out by the co-ordinator and grateful for her support and guidance. The quality of teaching in physical education is improving, partly because staff have opportunities to attend training to improve their skills. There are useful assessment checklists for objectives in physical education. However, the use of these is variable. Some staff have kept evaluations up to date but the results are not yet used to plan future work. The policy is out of date and requires attention. There are no health and safety guidelines in the very brief document and it is important that this is amended as soon as possible.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. Very few lessons were observed during the inspection so judgements are also based on the examination of pupils' work and the evidence of work on display.
145. The school has made sound improvement since the last inspection. It uses the Bexley Agreed Syllabus and blends this effectively with materials from nationally approved guidelines. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have explored the significance of different celebrations and festivals across a range of cultures and religions. Much of the recording is in the form of annotated drawings and the standard of these is acceptable. In this way pupils have learned about Christmas and Easter in the Christian religions and Diwali in the Hindu. Pupils have also looked at very signs and symbols and learned the significance of these. For example, they understand that poppies stand for remembrance.
146. Because few lessons were observed an overall judgement of the standard of teaching cannot be made. However, it is clear from pupils' work throughout the school that teachers have at least sound subject knowledge and they teach in a way that takes the pupils logically and comprehensively through a topic. They use appropriate resources in order to help pupils understand more easily. In a lesson observed the teacher used a 'big book' to help explain how Hindus worship at home. A Puja plate was also prepared and the teacher took pupils through all the items of significance such as the bell and water. The pupils were clearly interested and showed good recall of previous learning. They could explain who Ganesh was and why he had the head of an elephant. One pupil says that elephant can move large obstacles out of the way and so could Ganesh. When the teacher asked for an example another pupil suggested that moving school was very difficult for some people and Ganesh could help you overcome the problem. Pupils show an appropriate respect for the religion, mainly because the class teacher was a very good role model and fostered this feeling.
147. Pupils in Year 6 have carried out a detailed study into the history of Buddhism and the life of Buddha. They have explored and described the differences between the rich and poor ways of life that he led. This work is considerably aided by the quality of marking which poses constructive questions which encourages pupils to develop and extend their thinking. The pupils have studied pictures of Buddha and

then drawn themselves using their own symbolism to exaggerate certain features and explain what they represent. For example, one pupil drew his friend with exaggerated ears, - 'to show that he is always willing to listen to me'.

148. The subject is managed very well. The co-ordinator is a recent appointee but has many good suggestions for improving and developing the subject. A good quality action plan has been drawn up with assessment as one of the major issues to be addressed. The policy is out of date and needs amendment. The quality of resources are sound, with an adequate range from a variety of religions. The subject makes a sound contribution to the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of the pupils. There was little evidence of the use of information technology to support the work in the subject.