

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Collier Row

LEA area: LB Havering

Unique reference number: 102331

Headteacher: Mrs Jeannie Vincent

Reporting inspector: Michael Buckley
30517

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th July 2002

Inspection number: 195210

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lowshoe Lane Collier Row Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM5 2AP
Telephone number:	(01708) 745655
Fax number:	(01708) 731696
E-mail address:	schooloffice@st-patricks.havering.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M O'Regan
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
30517	Michael Buckley	Registered inspector	History Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1165	Peter Dannheisser	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Information and communication technology Equality of opportunity and inclusion	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing
18703	Christine Canniff	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Art Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered? Accommodation
23056	Teresa Manzi	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography Foundation Stage	Assessment Resources for learning

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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33 Kingsway
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's is a mixed, voluntary-aided, Catholic primary school for four to eleven-year-olds. It is located in Collier Row, Romford, within the Diocese of Brentwood. It is larger than average for a school of this type, with 315 pupils on roll. There is a good balance between boys and girls, with numbers fairly evenly distributed within each year group. Over 50 parents have chosen not to disclose information about their ethnic background and only five pupils are known to be from a minority ethnic heritage. However, the actual proportion from minority ethnic groups is likely to be around three per cent or less. That is low by national standards and very low for an outer London borough. Only one pupil is learning English as an additional language and the school has no pupils from refugee or asylum-seeking families. Although the catchment area is socio-economically mixed, only 15 pupils (five per cent) claim free school meals. This is below the national average. Fifty-seven pupils (18 per cent) have special educational needs – about the national average – with seven (two per cent) having statements identifying the nature of additional outside help they require. Both of these figures are close to the national average. The largest proportion of the more serious needs involve moderate learning difficulties and there are three autistic pupils. Attainment on entry is slightly above the expected level. The school has been recognised by Investors in People and has been given an award by the Department for Education and Skills for school improvement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a more than usually effective school where the very good leadership of the headteacher, very good teaching, good management and a good curriculum are producing high and steadily improving standards in English, mathematics and science. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and she is ably supported by the senior staff and governors in managing the school well.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are high and steadily rising.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- There is good provision for the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils behave very well and relationships are very good at all levels in the school.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development promotes high standards of behaviour and very positive attitudes.
- Relationships with parents and with the local community are very strong and make significant contributions to pupils' education.

What could be improved

- The taught week is shorter than the national recommendation, particularly in Years 3 to 6; there is too little time allocated to subjects other than English, mathematics, science and religious education and some teaching periods are too long.
- Teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress is not consistent and is not always used to match work to their needs and abilities.
- The school's systems for tracking the progress of individuals and groups are not yet sufficiently developed to provide consistent support for setting relevant and challenging targets.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in June 1997, the school has made satisfactory improvements. There have been good improvements in the quality of teaching, standards have been raised across the school in English, mathematics and science and significant proportions of pupils are beginning to achieve higher levels in the standard tests at the ends of Years 2 and 6. Aspects of personal development have also improved. However, although subject co-ordinators now have clear job descriptions, they do not have enough time to monitor standards of teaching or attainment, school-wide systems of assessment are not yet fully implemented and attainment in information and communication technology is still below the nationally expected levels.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The table shows that the results in the 2001 tests for Year 6 were above the national averages for English and science and close to the national average for mathematics. They have been above the national average in English for the last three years and there has been a general improvement in mathematics and science, despite a slight drop in 2001. When compared with the results of schools achieving similar results in the 1997 tests for Year 2, the Year 6 results were very high in science, close to the average in English and below average in mathematics. They were close to the average for schools with a similar proportion of free school meals in English and science, but below the average for this group in mathematics. The results of the Year 2 tests in 2001 were well above the national average in reading and writing and close to the average in mathematics and they have shown a general improvement over the last three years. In reading and writing, results were close to the average for schools with a similar proportion of free school meals, but they were below average in mathematics. The unconfirmed results for 2002 show further improvements, particularly in the proportions of pupils in both year groups reaching the higher levels. Work in English is well above the nationally expected levels across the school. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and most reach the nationally recognised learning outcomes for under-fives. The infants make satisfactory progress and, in Year 2, standards are in line with those expected nationally, except in geography and information and communication technology, where they are lower. Progress is good in the junior section of the school. In Year 6, pupils are working at higher levels than expected nationally in mathematics and science, but are not covering all of the required curriculum in art, design and technology and information and communication technology. Standards in the other subjects are in line with the national expectations. The school's carefully set targets have been met this year and pupils are on track to achieve predicted levels in 2003. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very positive. Pupils are keen to be involved and enjoy all the activities offered. They like school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is very good in class and in the playgrounds. Pupils show consideration and respect for other children and adults.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Pupils show independence and take responsibility for themselves and for others, particularly in Year 6. House captains enjoy helping the younger pupils.
Attendance	Satisfactory and close to the national average.

Staff and pupils are being trained to set up a school council.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very good

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

Teaching is very good overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and teaching was good or better in more than four lessons in every five. Teaching is very good in English and consistently good in mathematics and science. Literacy is well taught and numeracy is taught satisfactorily across the curriculum. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects, very high expectations and very high standards of teaching basic skills. They manage pupils and use time, resources and support staff very well. They have very good relationships with their pupils and encourage them to try very hard and make significant intellectual and physical efforts. They plan and prepare well, explain their learning objectives clearly and are very well organised. They are good at asking challenging questions and work is well marked. Pupils generally learn very well. They concentrate very hard, persist with their tasks and produce a significant amount of written work, often showing a great deal of initiative and independence in doing so. There is very good, close teamwork between the class teachers and support assistants. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and fully integrated into all activities. Although they make strenuous efforts to meet the needs of all pupils, teachers do not always successfully match the work set to individual needs and abilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good overall, although there are weaknesses in the length and organisation of the taught week that affect standards in several subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very good. National guidance is closely followed, pupils are well monitored and parents are fully consulted. Pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision overall, particularly for social and moral development. Pupils are made to feel secure and confident. They have very good opportunities to join in and mix socially and to take on additional responsibilities. There is good provision for spiritual and cultural development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for securing pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good and there are very effective systems for promoting good behaviour and eliminating all forms of bullying. Arrangements for tracking the academic progress of individual pupils are not fully developed or implemented, although pupils' personal development is well monitored.
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Some aspects of the National Curriculum are not being covered in information and communication technology and design and technology. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and works very hard to enable all pupils to participate in its activities. Provision for potentially gifted or talented pupils is developing well, but is not yet fully in place. Relationships with parents are generally very good and parents play an important part in the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good educational leadership. The senior management team and the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and special educational needs carry out their responsibilities well but the other subject co-ordinators do not have enough time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide good support and challenge to the school's management. They are very well informed and play an important part in the school's development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is well done. The priorities in the school improvement plan are well chosen through a fully consultative process. The governors' School Improvement Committee is a particularly effective means of monitoring progress towards the school's targets and involving a broad cross-section of staff in the process.
The strategic use of resources	The support staff are very well deployed and make a very effective contribution to the education provided. Specific grants are well used for their proper purposes.

The school's aims and values are very clearly reflected in its work and all staff and governors have a strong commitment to the school's continuing success. Financial planning and management are very good and the principles of best value are closely observed. There is a good match of staff to the demands of the curriculum offered and accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school is good. • Teaching is good. • The school has high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. • Pupils are being helped to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • Pupils like school and make good progress. • The school encourages good relationships with parents and keeps them generally well informed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents feel that the amount of homework set is not appropriate. • Some parents would not feel confident approaching the school with questions or problems. • There are not enough extra-curricular activities.

Parents' views were unanimous about the points that pleased them most and inspectors agree with their positive views. Inspectors judge that arrangements for homework are generally appropriate and that the school provides a good range of well-run extra-curricular activities. The staff are open and welcoming to parents and there are many opportunities for informal discussion, as well as for more formal meetings.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2001 tests, pupils in Year 2 did very well in reading and writing, surpassing the national averages at all levels and their average point scores in these areas were well above the national averages. In mathematics, however, although the percentage reaching the threshold level was above the national average, comparatively few pupils went on to reach higher levels. Teachers' assessments in science were well below the national average, with investigative work being a particular weakness. A similar pattern emerges when results are compared with those of other schools having a similar proportion of pupils claiming free school meals, although the average point scores are close to the average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. This reflects the higher standards generally reached by schools with a very low percentage of pupils claiming free school meals.
2. Over the past five years, the results of Year 2 pupils in reading and writing have been above the national averages. They show an improving trend that is above the national one in reading and close to that seen nationally in writing. On average, over the past three years, boys and girls have done better than the national averages for boys and girls respectively in reading and writing. While boys have shown a significant improvement in reading, girls do very much better in writing. The trend in mathematics is not clear, although it is close to the national picture and results have improved slightly in the past two years. The most recent analysis produced by the local education authority shows that progress from Year 2 to Year 6 is close to the average for the area.
3. Pupils in Year 6 did very well in the 2001 tests. The percentages reaching the expected levels were very high in science, compared with the national average, well above the national average in English and above the national average in mathematics. However, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels did not compare so well. They were above the national average in science and close to the national average in English, but below the national average in mathematics. Consequently, the school's average point scores were above the national averages for English and science and close to the national average in science. When the results are compared with those of other schools claiming a similar proportion of free school meals, they remain very high in science and are above average in English but they are below average in mathematics. As with the results for Year 2, the comparatively lower attainments in English and mathematics can be largely explained by the higher standards generally reached by schools in this category.
4. A comparison between the attainment of the Year 6 pupils in 2001 and that of pupils in other schools where they achieved similar results in 1997, at the end of Year 2, gives a good indication of the progress made through the junior school. The proportions reaching the expected levels were very high in science and close to the average in English, but below average in mathematics. The proportions reaching the higher levels were lower than average. Overall, therefore, while the school is doing comparatively well in achieving the expected levels, it is not supporting attainment at the higher levels as well as these comparable schools. Results in English have been above the national averages for the past five years. Apart from a dramatic dip in 1998, the overall trend has been above that seen nationally and improving at a faster rate. Over the same period, results in mathematics and science showed a very steep upward trend until 2000, when they dropped to fractionally above the national average. Boys have been doing significantly better than girls against the gender-related national averages.
5. The provisional results for 2002 show further real improvement. In Year 2, the percentages reaching the national threshold levels in reading and writing are close to last year's figures while the percentage reaching the higher levels has increased by over 50 per cent to levels well above last year's national averages. In mathematics, the proportion reaching the expected level is lower than last year, but the percentage reaching higher levels has improved by about fifty per cent and

is above last year's national average. All pupils reached the expected level in science, but nobody achieved a higher level. In Year 6, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels in English is the same as last year, the percentage for mathematics has improved, but results for science have dropped slightly. The results are all clearly above last year's national averages. The percentage of higher levels has improved significantly in English and science, to levels well above last year's national averages. Results at the higher levels in mathematics have also improved and they are close to last year's national average. On the basis of these figures, the school is successfully meeting its target of improving the numbers who achieve the higher levels in these three subjects.

6. The attainment of most children when they enter the reception classes is above the expected levels. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and, by the end of the year, they have achieved and generally exceeded all six of the nationally agreed learning outcomes for the early years. Standards of work seen in the infant and junior sections of the school are not quite as high as those achieved in the national tests. To a large extent, this reflects the high degree of preparation and successful coaching for the tests and the fact that the inspection took place in the last full week of the school year, when the work seen was not always very challenging.
7. Progress is satisfactory through Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 2 are working at well above the expected level in English while standards are close to those expected nationally in mathematics and science. Attainment is also close to the national expectations in all the other subjects, except for geography and information and communication technology, where it is lower. In the junior section of the school, pupils make good progress in most subjects. In Year 6, standards are well above the expected levels in English and above the expected levels in mathematics and science. Pupils are working at the nationally expected levels in geography, history, physical education and music, but standards are below national expectations in art, design and technology and information and communication technology. Where standards are below the national expectations, it is largely because insufficient time has been allowed in the school year for pupils to complete all the required elements of the programmes of study for these subjects.
8. The school is becoming more accurate in setting challenging targets for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Early indications are that the targets for 2002 have been met or passed and pupils in the current Years 1 and 5 are on track to meet their targets next year. All pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans and the targets set for their learning are clear and precise. In-class support is good, enabling these pupils to make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive – as they were during the previous inspection. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is apparent in what they say about the school and in the interest they show in lessons and activities. Above all, they say that they are very happy to come to school.
10. Children in the reception classes have very good relationships with their teachers and other adults. As a result, they are happy, confident and ready and able to learn. They behave very well and are developing high levels of independence. They share, take turns and act with self-restraint, but also clearly enjoy themselves. They are already able to work quietly in small groups and they show a very well developed ability to collaborate in pairs. They understand their class routines well and know what is expected of them. Year 6 pupils, approaching the end of their final year in this school, look back with pleasure at their time. They say that, when they have left the school, they will remember their lessons, their teachers and helpers. One pupil said he loved the school and that everyone made him happy. Another said that the booster classes really helped provide confidence.
11. Pupils are clear about what they have to do and know the learning objectives of their lessons. They are eager to take part, work hard and include each other in all the activities. In about two-thirds of the lessons seen, attitudes and behaviour were very good and they were good in almost all the others. They were never less than satisfactory. In a mathematics lesson in the split age

class for Years 5 and 6, pupils behaved well as they discussed how they would cope with coins of unusual denominations. In a science lesson, Year 3 pupils worked very well together, sharing resources and exploring how their muscles worked. Such very good behaviour is a direct product of pupils' attitudes and the pace, challenge and fun generated by the teaching. Pupils are encouraged to participate and they want to learn. Consequently, they settle quickly, listen attentively and do as they are told without fuss.

12. Good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they too have very positive attitudes to learning. They respond well to the extra help given by teachers, classroom assistants and support staff. As a result, they play a full part in lessons and are just as keen as other pupils to get on and do well. Good provision is made to ensure that pupils with physical difficulties are fully included in all lessons. Those who have special needs related to behavioural difficulties are helped to play a full part in lessons and they respond by following instructions.
13. Although one pupil was permanently excluded in the current year, this was a very unusual case. The decision was taken only after the school and governors had given serious consideration to the needs of that pupil and the school. Behaviour is good around the school and it is very good in the playground where pupils mix across the year groups and enjoy each other's company. They help each other if there has been a playground accident or when they need physical support. Behaviour in the hall at lunch times is very good, despite the rather long-drawn-out queuing system, which might try their patience. Pupils display high levels of respect and understanding for others' feelings and values and there is a marked absence of any form of oppressive behaviour.
14. Pupils' personal development is good. They are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for themselves, for others and for their school. There are plenty of roles for pupils in Year 6. House captains are elected by the juniors each term and they very much enjoy helping the younger pupils. The school captains, selected by the headteacher, are respected by the others. Many jobs are shared out in classrooms but there is scope for younger pupils to share more responsibilities around the school. The school is training staff and pupils to set up a school council, but initially this will be for juniors only.
15. Levels of attendance are slightly above the national average and similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. The amount of absence without satisfactory explanation is well below national levels. This is as a result of the good relationship between home and school and parents who know the importance of keeping in touch with the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in the junior section of the school and good in the infant section. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and teaching was good or better in more than four lessons in every five. The great majority of lessons seen were in English, where teaching is very good, and in mathematics and science, where teaching is consistently good. The school has very successfully tackled the key issue identified after the last inspection of improving teaching, particularly in these three subjects. The limited evidence available indicates that teaching in art, geography, history, information and communication technology and physical education is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate teaching in music. No lessons were seen in design and technology, but discussions with staff and pupils and a scrutiny of finished work indicate that some important elements of the curriculum are not being taught.
17. Particular strengths in teaching include teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, the very high standards of teaching basic skills, teachers' very high expectations, their management of pupils and their use of time, resources and support staff. Teachers are particularly good at setting the tone and pace of lessons from the start. They create a calm, secure, but purposeful, atmosphere that gives pupils the confidence to experiment and use their imaginations without worrying about making mistakes. Very good relationships and a selective use of humour underpin the management of their classes and encourage pupils to try very hard and make significant intellectual and physical efforts. Teachers plan and prepare well and explain their

learning objectives clearly in simple language. They are very well organised so that they can conduct lessons at a good pace that maintains momentum and pupils' interest, even when lessons go on for a long time. In most lessons, teachers circulate between groups of pupils, challenging, supporting and encouraging. They are good at asking open-ended questions that require pupils to think before answering, not merely recall facts. Pupils' work is well marked with supportive comments and clear suggestions for improvement.

18. Pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic. They generally learn very well, particularly in the junior section of the school and they acquire knowledge and understanding at a good rate. They concentrate very hard, persist with their tasks and produce a significant amount of written work, often showing a great deal of initiative and independence in doing so. In some lessons, teachers create a sense of fun and enjoyment that encourages pupils to build on their previous learning by forming hypotheses and brainstorming ideas. This is best achieved where the teachers have made very clear assessments of how far pupils have gone in their learning and use this information to generate further challenges. However, this good practice is not seen in all classes and teachers do not always match the work to individual needs and abilities. This is particularly evident where lower-attaining or higher-attaining pupils are given the same work as others in the class. These pupils generally receive more support but the tasks are not always adapted to their strengths or to their favoured learning patterns.
19. Nevertheless, there is very good, close teamwork between the class teachers and support assistants, particularly in the reception classes and in work with special educational needs, where records of pupils' progress are carefully maintained. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and fully integrated into all activities. They are mostly based in the main class, but, when they are withdrawn from the classroom, the work is well matched to their individual learning plans. Support assistants give good support to their individual charges and to others who may be experiencing difficulties and teachers successfully create a productive atmosphere of trust and encouragement.

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

20. The curriculum is broad, providing a good range of relevant learning experiences, but it lacks balance, mainly because of the strong priority that is given to English, mathematics, science and religious education. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and religious education, with its integrated programme of personal education, is strongly represented, in keeping with the schools' mission statement. There is satisfactory emphasis on the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in English, mathematics and science, ensuring that most work undertaken by pupils builds on their previous learning.
21. However, there are some key areas for improvement. The total number of teaching hours per week for Years 3 to 6 is low - two-and-a-quarter hours less than that recommended nationally. In addition, the percentage of teaching time allocated to geography, history, art, design and technology, music and physical education is below average and the actual time allocated to these subjects is well below that found in most schools. This prevents pupils learning these subjects in enough depth and limits the progress that they could otherwise make. Consequently, standards in art, design and technology and information and communication technology are below national expectations, with few pupils achieving the higher levels. The shortage of teaching time also means that the school lacks the flexibility for targeting priority areas, such as information and communication technology. In addition, the way in which subjects are timetabled within the school day does not make for the most effective use of time and some literacy and numeracy lessons are overlong, particularly in Years 1 and 2, reducing time for other subjects even further.
22. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the reception classes are good and take full account of the curriculum recommended for their age. Carefully planned and structured experiences give them a good start to their education. However, the lack of a suitable area for outdoor activities and of resources, such as bicycles and climbing frames, limits planning for their physical development. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented

successfully and consistently, contributing to the rising standards. The organisation of Year 6 pupils into ability sets for mathematics during part of the year, the extra support provided and the booster classes in English and mathematics are all having a positive impact on learning. Pupils' literacy skills are well developed and skills in numeracy are satisfactorily developed in other subjects, but skills in information and communication technology are not well planned across the curriculum. Although most strands of the curriculum for this subject are currently being taught, the present provision does not fully meet statutory requirements.

23. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its curricular planning to ensure a greater consistency of approach in Years 3 to 6 so that learning is systematically extended from year to year. There is a clear curricular framework, outlining a two-year cycle of topics tailored to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. Schemes of work are based on national guidance, except in music, where a detailed commercial scheme has been purchased. The schemes show what pupils will be taught in each year group. Teachers plan together across two year groups so that they cover the same work.
24. The school very successfully ensures that all pupils have full access to the curriculum, regardless of ability, gender or background. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants in lessons, so that they are fully involved in all areas of the curriculum. They also receive specific guidance from the special needs co-ordinator and learning support staff to help them achieve the targets set out in their individual learning plans. The special needs co-ordinator carefully monitors pupils' progress towards these targets so that pupils continue to make good progress. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very well organised and managed and the school meets statutory requirements and follows the guidance in the Code of Practice most effectively. The school recognises other needs, also, and runs separate sessions to boost boys' self-confidence as well as girls' self-esteem and makes special provision for lower-attaining boys. Pupils enjoy attending these groups, which have a positive impact on their personal development.
25. The school offers a good range of activities outside lessons. Some of these provide pupils with experiences beyond the immediate curriculum, whilst others appropriately extend and enrich the curriculum offered. Pupils enjoy the clubs and the uptake is good. They range from sporting activities, such as cricket, netball, football and athletics, to country dancing and drama. The school organises its own choir and orchestra for older pupils and offers an art club for pupils in Year 2. In Year 6, a residential visit provides pupils with good opportunities to take part in outdoor activities, such as canoeing, surfing and abseiling. A variety of educational visits to places of interest and visitors to the school support different curriculum areas, such as science, history and drama and make effective contributions to pupils' personal and social development.
26. The school has good links with local organisations, institutions and individuals that make positive contributions to pupils' learning. For example, during book week, the police liaison officer, headteachers of local secondary schools and parents read stories to pupils. There is strong involvement with the parish and pupils take part in different activities related to the church calendar. Links with other schools are good. Pupils take part in sporting fixtures with other primary schools and students from the local community college contribute by providing support for information and communication technology. Teachers from the local secondary schools meet Year 6 pupils to help ensure a smooth transition to their new school.
27. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The ethos of mutual respect and concern for others, combined with a strong framework of values in a Christian context, makes a good impact on pupils' learning. The school's philosophy, as set out in its mission statement, is fully expressed through its aims and practices. The range of experiences and activities offered effectively promotes the caring relationships evident at all levels in the school community.
28. The provision for pupils' spiritual understanding is good. School assemblies provide good opportunities for personal reflection, spiritual thought and prayer. For example, in an assembly on the theme of 'neighbours', some younger pupils confidently rôle-played a scuffle in order to illustrate how conflict can be resolved. Assemblies are also used well to promote a sense of

community and shared values. The spiritual dimension of religious education and other subjects, such as art, music and science, is explored in some lessons, although there is a potential to extend this. One very good example was noted when a pupil, commenting on his own artwork, said, 'I like my painting because it makes me feel warm!' Stories and talks in lessons are interesting and effectively relate to pupils' everyday experiences, stressing the importance of 'celebrations' or 'working hard'.

29. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school effectively teaches values that distinguish right from wrong. Due attention is given to the reinforcement of codes of behaviour and the sharing of positive values. The pupils respond positively, enjoying their work and showing care and respect for the school. They are well disciplined and understand what makes for an orderly school. Moral values are well taught through stories and discussions. Pupils are rewarded for standards of work, for effort and for good deeds in the assemblies. Teaching and support staff provide very good role-models and encourage pupils to relate well to each other and to behave courteously. The well-established code of conduct is displayed around the school, helping to establish a good understanding of moral values and responsibilities. Pupils work on behalf of a number of charities supported by the school. The daily act of worship provides a firm Christian basis to guide pupils in their personal conduct. The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education reinforces these principles.
30. Very good provision is made for pupils' social development through the school's daily life and routines, its curriculum and the programme of educational visits. The school provides a secure environment where pupils are encouraged to relate well to each other and to work and play together harmoniously. Relationships amongst pupils and between adults and pupils are very good. When provided with appropriate opportunities, pupils carry out responsibilities with confidence. Year 6 pupils are allocated responsibilities at the beginning of the school year for different duties at break times, tidying up books or looking after younger pupils. All pupils are encouraged to show responsibility for their own environment. They are awarded house points for effort, good work and good behaviour. Social interaction is also achieved through promoting equal opportunities within the school. The after-school clubs offer good opportunities for pupils to develop socially.
31. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Most pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and practices, acquired through assemblies and through the celebrations of Christian festivals and regular visits to the local church. Since the last inspection, there have been notable improvements in the provision to promote understanding of other cultures through topics in religious education. Pupils learn about the festivals of other major world religions, such as Divali, Ramadan and the Jewish Passover. In geography, pupils have completed an in-depth study of an Indian village. There are good multicultural resources and interactive displays about Indian culture in Years 3 and 4. However, the school has not fully explored the potential to promote multicultural activities in art, dance, drama and music. This would enable pupils to appreciate other people's ways of life and develop their understanding of the different faiths represented in the culturally diverse British society. The greater involvement of parents and visitors from the local faith communities would add to this provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The quality of care and support pupils receive in school has remained very good since the previous inspection. Regular training and briefing for all staff ensure that the school is fully aware of child protection issues and procedures. Arrangements for first-aid and for dealing with sick children are very good. Equally, good procedures are established for ensuring the care and progress of those pupils who do not live with their families. Two members of staff are fully trained to give first aid and many others have had basic training.
33. Health and safety procedures are well established and inform the rolling programme of repairs and maintenance of the school building and grounds. Professional checks are made of electrical, fire

fighting and physical education equipment. A recently commissioned professional risk assessment has helped the school identify priorities. Although the staff and governors inspect the buildings and grounds, their audit is not guided by a formal procedure nor recorded. Recommendations are not routinely followed up. Nevertheless the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Pupils have a well-developed awareness of health and safety issues and their attitudes and relationships to others are fostered through personal and social education, which is often part of religious education lessons. Pupils value the visits by the school nurse and by the police schools liaison officer. These visitors help pupils in a memorable and enjoyable way to learn how to cope with a variety of health and safety challenges and give the school valuable advice and assistance when called upon to do so.

34. The school monitors and promotes attendance and punctuality well. As a result, attendance has been maintained at a satisfactory level since the time of the last inspection. Good attendance is encouraged through a weekly class prize and punctuality is very good. It is well monitored and latecomers are noted. The school receives support from the educational welfare officer, who visits termly. Good behaviour is successfully promoted through the ethos of the school and through the application of a policy, which pupils know about and respect. Success is recorded and rewarded and pupils and their families participate in the weekly achievement assemblies. Even good lunchtime behaviour is publicly acknowledged and rewarded.
35. Teachers throughout the school manage behaviour very well. They have a positive approach and set good examples to pupils through their own behaviour and relationships. Their standards are clear and consistent, so that pupils know what to expect. Rewards and sanctions are fair and pupils understand the systems. Teachers monitor and assess pupils' personal development well and those pupils with difficulties are well supported and tracked. Pupils are sometimes required to keep a monitoring record and their progress is shared with their families as the form goes home each day. A small group of pupils who have found conforming to the rules particularly difficult meet the deputy headteacher regularly to talk over their problems and to set targets for the future. Pupils are well looked after at lunch times by a well-informed and co-ordinated team of midday supervisors.
36. The school has very good systems for identifying and assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Good use is made of outside agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are accurately diagnosed and met. Systems for monitoring pupils' day-to-day progress are well established and enable judgements to be sharply focused. The school has worked very hard to address the key issue in the last report, developing systems for recording and assessment that are manageable and using the information to plan the next steps to learning. Most teachers now modify their plans in light of pupils' attainment in lessons. Recording and assessment have been time-consuming activities as they have been done manually. As of the next academic year, the results of the baseline tests, undertaken soon after children start school, and all other tests will be monitored through computer-based programmes.
37. These new systems have been trialled, but it is too soon for them to have made a significant impact across the school. Nevertheless, they have successfully enabled teachers to raise standards in English and science. Teachers know their pupils well and generally match work to their needs. Test results are used to group pupils in class so that lessons are well planned to meet their needs. A few teachers set targets for individual pupils so that they know when they have done well and where they need to improve. However, most teachers set class targets for English and these are not always appropriate for every pupil, as they may be too difficult for some and too easy for others. The pupils with special educational needs have clear individual educational plans, but these do not identify targets for mathematics, an area where the school is less successful than in English or science.
38. Until the new system is introduced, the results of baseline assessments are not being fully taken into account and so pupils' progress cannot yet be tracked from when they start school. Consequently, the results of pupils leaving the school in Year 6 are used as a basis for planning for the incoming Year 6. This may not be relevant as the new cohort may have different strengths and weaknesses which can best be identified by tracking them from when they started school.

The present analyses of test results are presented in a form that is difficult for subject co-ordinators to understand and co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in analysing results and deciding the best way to raise standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. At the time of the previous inspection, parents had positive views of the school and felt that it did a good job for their children. Parents' views are now even more positive. All those who responded to the questionnaire said that the school was helping their children become mature and responsible and that their children made good progress because the teaching was good. Almost all felt that their children liked school and that the school was well led and managed. Inspection findings support these very positive views, held strongly by the great majority of parents.
40. Parents think that the school provides them with enough information about how well their children are doing. Inspection findings are that the quality of information provided by the school is very good. Governors ensure that the prospectus is of very good quality and provides plenty of useful information regarding school routines. The weekly newsletter is informative and useful, whilst remaining friendly and accessible. Teachers provide parents with information about the topics their children will be covering during the term, giving a clear starting point to those who want to help their children at home. Pupils' reading cards are a good means of communication between parents and teachers and they are used very well. Parents often write comments in them and they receive responses from staff. The termly 'surgeries' about pupils' progress are appreciated and well attended. Reports to parents on their children's progress generally provide very good information regarding progress made in all subjects, although it is not made clear how well pupils are doing compared with national expectations.
41. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept very well informed of the targets in individual education plans and the steps being taken to support these pupils. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are invited to the termly reviews of pupils' progress and there are termly surgeries, held by the special needs co-ordinator, for parents who wish to discuss how their children are getting on.
42. Parents' contributions to the work of the school and to their children's education are very effective and willingly given. One parent said that he was grateful for the opportunity to help the school and thought that most other parents felt the same. A large number of parents regularly take part in a wide variety of activities on trips and in class, helping with a wide range of learning, from reading to cooking. The Parents and Friends Association has a large and very active committee that includes staff members. It arranges several successful well-supported events throughout the year. These help to bring the community together and furnish useful funds for additional resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher provides the school with very good educational leadership. For example, since the last inspection, she has established and implemented effective measures for school improvement based on the key issues identified in the report and on her own evaluation of the school's needs. Good practice has been encouraged in areas such as planning, lesson observations and assessment and there has been a successful focus on raising standards in writing, English and science. The academic, social and spiritual aims of the school are very clearly reflected in its daily life and work. They are characterised by the high standards of behaviour, the care and concern for others and the very good relationships, as well as by the commitment to working hard and doing their best that are demonstrated by the pupils and adults alike.
44. Delegated responsibilities are carried out satisfactorily. The senior management team plays an effective part in the school's management, helping to formulate and implement policy and setting a good professional example to the staff. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics and for the Foundation Stage manage their areas well, monitoring standards and planning and occasionally

observing teaching. Teaching is monitored in a thorough and systematic way by the headteacher and lesson observations are recorded and shared with the teachers concerned. The management and organisation of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, although there is little time available for the special needs co-ordinator to carry out the necessary administration. All individual education plans are up-to-date and there are well kept records of the steps taken to support these pupils. The support strategies for pupils with statements of special educational needs are well organised and the school provides very good support that covers the range of needs very well and good use is made of outside agencies. The provision of special needs assistants is good and their efficient deployment makes a positive impact on the learning of these pupils. Co-ordinators for the other subjects are generally keen and knowledgeable, but have little or no time to monitor their areas effectively.

45. Governors carry out their responsibilities well. They ensure that the school meets statutory requirements in all major respects and they provide the school's leadership with support and challenge. They are very well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses through their own close and frequent contacts and their visits to lessons, as well as by the headteacher's detailed reports and the presentations given by teachers. Most governors have responsibility for liaising with an area of the curriculum or for an aspect of the school's work. They have been influential in shaping the school's recent development in a number of crucial ways, such as rethinking the policy for teaching mathematics, upgrading and refurbishing the accommodation and providing the new library and the computer suite. They are closely involved in developmental planning and they monitor the school's progress towards its targets very closely. The twice-termly meetings of the School Improvement Committee are open to all staff and are generally very well attended. This helps to ensure that everyone is concerned in helping the school to meet its targets and promotes a strongly shared commitment to the school's success.
46. The school development plan is drawn up in consultation with all the staff and governors and parents are invited to contribute their views through an annual questionnaire sent out by the headteacher. The plan itself is well presented and identifies appropriate targets, based on careful evaluation of the school's educational priorities. It indicates time deadlines, responsible persons and costings whenever relevant and possible, as well as arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. Financial planning is very securely based on the educational priorities set out in the development plan. Arrangements for financial monitoring are very thorough and the principles of 'best value' are carefully observed. Specific grants are used effectively for their proper purposes. The headteacher and the finance officer conduct regular checks, reporting at least twice a term to the governors' Finance Committee, and they are well supported in this work by an officer from the local education authority. The last independent audit report expressed no significant concerns about the school's financial affairs and concluded that they were well conducted.
47. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the requirements of the National Curriculum and to the school's own provision, including the Foundation Stage. Teachers are well qualified by training and experience for the age groups they teach. There is a good balance of experienced and more recently qualified teaching staff and teachers are well deployed. Support staff for pupils with special educational needs are suitably qualified and give invaluable help to teachers and pupils. The school has very good policies for the induction of newly qualified teachers, teachers new to the school, and learning support assistants. Newly qualified teachers are given very good support by their mentor and receive appropriate in-service training throughout their first year. Good arrangements for staff development are based on the school improvement plan and on the school's well-established and effective policy for performance management. The school has been recognised by 'Investors in People', which has had a significant impact on the training of all staff. Teaching and learning are well supported by the administrative and kitchen staff, midday supervisors and the site manager. All contribute well to the smooth and efficient running of the school.
48. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. The classrooms in the main building and the mobile classrooms are of a reasonable size. Since the last inspection, the school has made numerous changes and improvements, including the construction of a very well equipped computer suite, a library and a medical room. A storeroom has been built for dining tables and chairs, so

that these no longer restrict the floor-space in the hall. There are two playgrounds, but the junior playground is rather crowded, limiting more energetic or creative play. The playgrounds have very few markings to stimulate creative play and no places for pupils to climb or to sit. There is no dedicated outdoor area for pupils in the reception classes and this affects the curriculum they are offered and, therefore, progress in aspects of their physical development.

49. There are adequate resources to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Teachers organise themselves well, ensuring that resources are put to the best use. For instance, they plan to teach the same topics at different times, so that there are sufficient resources for all. Resources are unsatisfactory in two areas. The lack of outdoor provision for the reception classes was noted during the last inspection and, whilst there are plans to remedy the situation, they have not yet been implemented. The school is fortunate in having a library that is accessible to all. However, many reference books are out-of-date and they are mostly displayed on the upper shelves, where the youngest, smallest pupils cannot see them easily. Classes are not often timetabled to visit the library. A very good feature is the new computer suite, due to be put in service in September 2002. All pupils, including those in the reception classes, will be timetabled to work in this room, where there are seventeen computers. A large financial investment has been made in order to raise standards in information and communication technology. At the time of the inspection, the school was making satisfactory use of this technology and it has plans to increase its use further in order to make several administrative systems more efficient.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to maintain the improvements in standards in English, mathematics and science and to raise standards in the other subjects, the school's senior management and governors need to:

- review the length of the taught week, the time allocated to subjects other than English, mathematics, science and religious education, and the structure and organisation of the school day (paragraphs 20, 21);
- ensure that the good practice seen in some classes is adopted across the school, so that teachers' day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress are thorough and consistent and are used to match work accurately to pupils' needs and abilities (paragraphs 18, 74, 94, 97, 101, 107, 111, 113);
- consolidate and fully implement the school's systems for tracking the progress of individuals and groups, so that they can be set relevant and challenging targets (paragraphs 37 and 38).

In addition to the above key issues, the school should seek ways of providing children in the Foundation Stage with facilities for outdoor learning and should thoroughly review and update the library stocks so that the library can become a central resource for research and independent learning (paragraphs 22, 48, 49, 51, 63).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	28	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	21	60	19	0	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	315
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	23	22	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	23
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	43	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (96)	98 (89)	98 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	19
	Girls	21	22	19
	Total	41	44	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (85)	98 (91)	84 (89)
	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	20	22	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	20
	Girls	20	14	22
	Total	38	33	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (83)	79 (83)	100 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	16	16	14
	Total	35	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (78)	83 (80)	81 (93)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	239
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	775,993
Total expenditure	755,079
Expenditure per pupil	2,389
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,134
Balance carried forward to next year	43,048

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	315
Number of questionnaires returned	90

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	32	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	28	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	46	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	32	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	21	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	37	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	27	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	28	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	42	11	0	3

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

50. Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to school life. They start school when they are four years old and work in one of two reception classes for a year with a teacher, a teaching assistant and several parent helpers who regularly visit the school. These classes are small and great care is taken so that both classes have a good balance of boys and girls and of children who have special educational needs. This gives each child an equal chance to benefit from the very good teaching provided. Most children attend the local playgroup before entering the reception classes and they all have opportunities to visit the school before they start. Consequently, they are familiar with their teachers and other adults. Parents are also invited to these sessions and, as a result, they are committed to the school and well placed to help their children at home.
51. When children start school, they follow the nationally recommended curriculum for the early years, covering six broad areas of learning. Initial assessments show that, when they enter the reception classes, most children have knowledge and skills in literacy and number that are slightly above those expected of four-year-olds and they have good social skills. They make good progress during their first year at school and they generally go beyond achieving the recognised desirable learning outcomes in all the areas of learning. There is no dedicated outdoor play area, limiting opportunities for developing social and physical skills or knowledge and understanding of the world.
52. Overall, the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was good. All eight lessons observed, covering the six areas of learning, were good or very good. The two teachers plan together with good regard for the agreed curriculum and they share their planning with the classroom assistants who work very well as part of the team. All adults have very good relationships with the children and encourage them to do well. As a result, children try their best and follow their teachers' example, showing politeness and care for each other. The adults keep good records of the children's successes and note areas for improvement, so that they set work to meet their children's needs.
53. Children with special educational needs are supported well, but are also given good opportunities to be independent. Teachers use time and resources very well and classes are well organised. They keep track of the children's choice of free activities to make sure that they take part in a good range. The school timetables all English and mathematics lessons into two over-long sessions every morning. However, teachers sustain children's interest well by providing a range of activities within these lessons and they successfully link together several different areas of the curriculum. Provision for the Foundation Stage is well managed.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Children enjoy the activities offered and become very involved in them. For example, they pretend to be shop assistants in the role-play area and they move confidently from one area to another, sharing equipment and packing up activities willingly and effectively, and they can maintain good concentration. When the occasion demands, they sit still and occupy themselves constructively. For instance, they choose books and read them while they are waiting for others to change for physical education. Children show enthusiasm for learning. In a music lesson, everyone volunteered to act the parts of the characters in the song. However, those not chosen happily accepted the teacher's decision, as they knew that their chance would come the following week. They change and dress themselves with increasing speed and ability. They line up and move around the school in a sensible manner. They are given regular opportunities to develop their social and independent skills by choosing their own activities.

55. Children's relationships with one another and with adults are very good. Classroom routines are well established and children are helped to know the difference between right and wrong, so that behaviour is well managed in class and around the school. As a result, the children are confident, friendly and happy at school. Those with special educational needs are welcomed and treated as equals by their classmates.

Communication, language and literacy

56. Skills in language are well developed. Most children speak clearly and confidently to the whole class, communicating in sequences of sentences and teachers challenge them to start their sentences in different ways. They sustain their listening in large and small groups and respond appropriately to what they have heard. Teachers listen carefully to the children's responses and build on them. Although the time allocated to language lessons is too long, the teachers provide a range of varied activities to sustain the children's interest and ensure that they make good progress.
57. Higher-attaining children read simple stories aloud fluently and they correct their mistakes on their own. They explain difficult words in their own way. For instance ... '*Glowed* means that it shined.' Most children are building a good repertoire of frequently used words and can use the known sounds from these words to help them read new ones. They frequently read at home with their parents and these sessions, together with the work done with their teachers and teaching assistants, ensure that children enjoy books and read well. The children's good vocabulary helps them to talk about the stories.
58. Most children are beginning to compose their own simple written sentences, using their knowledge of words and sounds. They make good progress throughout the year and teachers modify their plans to meet the needs of children who are beginning to work at higher levels. Work is well presented and the teachers' marking clearly identifies ways of improving. Letters are mostly correctly formed and most children understand the use of capital letters and full stops.

Mathematical development

59. Children experience a good range of mathematical activities, involving number work and counting. Their number skills are good and they make good progress throughout the year. Most children can count to one hundred in tens, count and match numbers to up to twenty and add and subtract numbers within the same range. They can name simple two and three-dimensional shapes and have a good understanding of basic mathematical language, such as 'smaller' and 'bigger', 'least' and 'most', or 'tallest' and 'shortest', through practical activities such as gathering data and making graphs of their favourite food.
60. Very good links are made with other subjects. For example, children sort fruit and vegetables, making links with science, and language skills are developed by the teacher extending the children's vocabulary to include the names of exotic fruits. Teachers challenge their children to think. One child, for example, suggested that grapes could not be described as a favourite food as 'they are not on the graph.'

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Children learn about the world around them through role-play and through afternoon sessions that concentrate upon a good variety of freely chosen activities. Good use is made of the school's grounds, where children plant broad beans and other plants. They check to decide if the plants need watering and measure how much they have grown. However, as this area is not fenced or covered, the children have to be accompanied by an adult and can go outdoors only in fine weather. During a walk around the school grounds, the children learned about a variety of 'mini-beasts' and where they lived. When they drew or painted them, they made sure that they gave

spiders the correct number of legs. Most children know the life-cycle of a frog and know that they should return them to their proper habitat once they have grown from tadpoles.

62. Children use construction toys to build models and use computers confidently to write and illustrate their work. They can use the mouse, arrow keys and space bar to make selections when painting pictures or writing stories. Good support from parents means that activities are generally well supervised by adults who question and encourage the children. For example, a group of children made their own seed packets with the help of a mother. They joined them together with glue, sticky tape or staples, making the choice themselves. They tested them to make sure that no seeds would fall out and decided that, if they used staples, they needed to fold the paper over, improving their work. Good progress is made in this area of the curriculum.

Physical development

63. The development of children's physical skills is mainly confined to the classroom or the school hall, as there are few opportunities to work outside, and the school does not possess wheeled toys to help the children develop their co-ordination. Despite this, the teachers make every effort to compensate and the children make satisfactory progress. Their physical skills match those expected for their age. In the school hall, they can control a ball, bouncing it with two hands inside a hoop. Outside, in fine weather, the children keep their space and change direction when running. They become more adept at bouncing and catching a ball. Their manipulative skills are developed through the use of pens, brushes, modeling materials and a range of tools. Good control of pencils means that their handwriting is generally neat. They roll and shape playdough when making their own mini-beasts, selecting the correct colour.

Creative development

64. The children's work is satisfactory overall and their musical skills are good. In one music lesson, most children held their percussion instruments correctly and kept a steady beat. They soon learned the words of the song and enjoyed performing it. This was because the teacher had carefully selected the song, fairly distributed the instruments and roles to be acted and she made the lesson fun. There are good opportunities for creative activities every afternoon. Children enjoy painting and are pleased to demonstrate that, if you add white to blue, 'it gets lighter.' The rôle-play areas, such as the home corner and the garden centre, promote imaginative play and encourage children to play different parts. Writing materials are available in these areas so that children can write down notes and orders for the shop. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in this area of the curriculum.

ENGLISH

65. Most pupils enter school with above average attainment in communication, language and literacy. Standards at the ages of seven and eleven have improved since the last inspection and are well above the national average, representing good achievement for all over their time in school. Most teachers are skilful in planning and teaching the basic skills in English and they have very high expectations of all pupils. As a result, most pupils including those with special educational needs, make good progress across the school.
66. Speaking and listening skills are above the nationally expected levels in all age groups. In Year 2, small group work provides opportunities for adults to provide examples of the good use of language, encouraging pupils to express themselves clearly. A clear focus on specific language structures is a key feature of this work. Pupils' vocabulary is extended and they begin to use complex and grammatically accurate sentences. Their own reading and the teachers' use of good subject-related vocabulary in discussions play important parts in this development. Most pupils express their opinions and ideas about stories in interesting ways, but there are too few opportunities, especially for the higher-attaining pupils, to speak at length, using a variety of expression and vocabulary.

67. In Years 5 and 6, teachers encourage pupils to be confident and effective communicators and many pupils are able to give lengthy explanations when asked a question. In one good lesson, the teacher used skilful questioning and technical competence to elicit fuller responses and clear explanations relating to an extract from *'Kensuka's Kingdom'*. Pupils in this lesson were well motivated and communicated their thoughts concisely and clearly. Many pupils, particularly those who are capable of attaining higher standards, show an impressive ability to use standard English in discussions. Most pupils explore ideas in stories enthusiastically, listen carefully and discuss the main characters and events with good understanding. They know how to raise their voices to make themselves audible to a larger audience. Some teachers consciously plan to improve and extend pupils' speaking skills and target those who are reluctant to interact and make active contributions to class discussions. However, most pupils would benefit from more regularly planned opportunities to speak at length, for example through debate and drama.
68. By the end of Year 2, pupils are reading at well above the expected levels for their age. Most pupils can read simple text fluently and their reading is usually accurate and often expressive. They are eager to answer questions about the text in order to improve their understanding. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching and learning of letter sounds and blends in Year 2. Most pupils make progress as the result of an effective combination of the direct teaching of phonics and strategies aimed at developing their vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1 have a good grasp of letter sounds to help them tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. Most pupils master new words with reasonable confidence. They begin to show preferences for certain types of books and most understand the key elements of stories.
69. The range of reading material is extended appropriately as pupils move through the school and more able readers are able to choose books freely. The books read by pupils in Years 3 to 6 are generally appropriate to their interests and are often selected by pupils themselves. However, these books are not always checked by teachers to match them with pupils' levels of attainment. Most pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy as they grow older and they are working at well above the nationally expected levels. They talk about their favourite authors, for example J K Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson, with discernment, and have critical appreciation of a range of books. Higher-attaining pupils enjoy more challenging texts, such as *'The Lord of the Rings'* and the *'Harry Potter'* books. While lower-attaining pupils still interpret their reading literally, most average and higher-attaining pupils show a growing understanding of more complex language, as well as being able to identify the underlying meanings and appreciate the subtleties of humour. Pupils make appropriate use of dictionaries in most classes. Those in Years 5 and 6 are developing skills of skimming and scanning and making notes.
70. Most pupils are developing satisfactory skills in the use of reference material. They understand how books are arranged in libraries and how 'contents' and 'indices' can point the way to specific information. Pupils are able to use non-fiction books to locate and retrieve information within the classroom, but skills in independent research and study are not fully developed, particularly in subjects such as science, history and geography. The school library is not timetabled for regular use by all classes. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in reading as they are identified early and embark on well-structured literacy programmes with realistic short-term targets. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make frequent references to reading at home. This is a well-established practice that has a positive effect on pupils' interest and attainment. Sessions of guided reading are well structured, with clear targets, helping pupils to make good progress. Teachers keep good reading records to identify weaknesses and to target pupils' learning appropriately.
71. Standards in writing are well above the nationally expected levels, indicating good achievement for the majority of pupils. In Year 1, all pupils are taught the skills of letter formation well as they begin to understand their sounds. Pupils in Year 2 are further extended to learn about letter combinations and common spelling patterns. The most able seven-year-olds write very well and make regular use of full stops, capital letters and speech marks in their work. Pupils regularly attend to letter formation and some learn to join up script and spell well. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have mastered these skills and are beginning to think about the overall structure of

their writing, such as the setting, characters and plot when writing stories. However, only a few consistently use joined-up script in their work.

72. In Years 3 to 6, the scope of writing is extended well. Pupils write for a range of purposes, for example using narrative or descriptive styles and writing letters or instructions. Competence in spelling and punctuation is now well established. By the age of eleven, pupils are introduced to the main features of specific genres, such as writing reports or autobiographies. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed a very good understanding of the characters, plot and emotions in the stories they were drafting. They use powerful language and well-chosen variations of vocabulary, such as *'flung'* and *'hurled'*. One pupil wrote, 'My heart is wrenched...', as the opening words in her poem about her emotions. Although a minority of pupils still struggle to express themselves clearly in writing, most are able to interpret poetry and comment sensibly on texts that they read. Pupils in Year 6 have produced some good examples of sustained story-writing, with good attention to characterisation and plot. Standards of handwriting are good. Most pupils write neatly in joined-up script and many develop their own personal style.
73. The teaching of English is very good overall, particularly in the junior classes. In the main, pupils' achievements parallel the quality of teaching. Teachers across the school have a very good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and how this links with what they have covered previously. The National Literacy Strategy has been incorporated into the scheme of work and teachers implement it effectively. Lessons are very well planned and organised with a good mix of whole-class, group and individual work. In Years 1 and 2, teachers successfully promote speaking and listening. They talk to pupils in an adult style, encouraging them to extend their vocabulary and to use more complex sentence structures. In a Year 4 guided reading session, the teacher acted as a very good role model by reading with good expression and using an appropriate dialect. The learning in this lesson was further enriched by the use of role-play, with pupils speaking in a cockney accent. This helped pupils make very convincing predictions related to the text in hand.
74. In the best lessons, teachers use a brisk pace and constantly challenge pupils through probing questions. As a result, pupils of all abilities are actively engaged and put in a lot of effort to meet the expectations of their teachers. Most teachers use suitable methods and strategies to develop good listening and to improve concentration and the pace of working. The management of pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. Consequently, pupils have very good attitudes towards the subject. Most are attentive and eager to answer questions and join in class discussions. They behave very well and concentrate well on their work. The majority work hard and apply themselves eagerly to the tasks in hand. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with adults and these contribute well to the good quality of their learning. In some lessons, however, tasks are not closely matched to different levels of attainment and this results in limited learning, particularly for lower-attaining pupils. This was noted in a Year 2 lesson, where some pupils found it very difficult to organise bits of information under different headings.
75. Most teachers maintain a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils receive effective, skilled support from the designated support staff and sometimes leave the classrooms for short intensive group sessions. Teachers know their pupils well and some make appropriate attempts to set clear targets of work for individuals and groups of pupils. They have very good relationships with them and encourage good manners and social skills. Literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily in English lessons and across the curriculum, such as when reading and writing about events of the past in history and explaining and recording the findings of scientific experiments. Computers are used in some lessons, mainly for word-processing.
76. The management of English is good. The literacy co-ordinator is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning throughout the school. The procedures for tracking and recording pupils' progress are satisfactory. The marking of pupils' work is generally helpful. In the best examples, teachers make constructive comments and give suitable guidance. Resources provide satisfactory support for effective teaching and there have been some useful additions to help teach the literacy strategy. The stock of fiction and non-fiction in the library is not

satisfactory, particularly for the younger readers in school. Some of the book stock is very old and out-of-date, particularly the reference books.

MATHEMATICS

77. Standards reached by the oldest pupils have risen since the last inspection and most pupils in the current Year 6 are working at above the nationally expected levels. Older pupils are achieving well, because good teaching develops their skills, knowledge and understanding systematically over time from what was a below average level for this group when they were in Year 3. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress. They achieve standards in line with those expected nationally and close to those reported at the last inspection. Each class has the help of a learning support assistant for mathematics. These assistants provide good support in lessons, because they give good guidance to individuals and groups and allow the full participation of pupils with special educational needs. They help pupils to understand what is being discussed and offer timely help when pupils are having difficulties. Pupils with special education needs do well as a result of this support.
78. In each lesson, teachers share learning targets with pupils, helping them to have a clearer understanding of what they have to do and learn. In order to boost the attainment of Year 6 pupils, they are taught in ability sets for part of the year. This enables the school to give them more support because they are working in smaller groups and their work is more carefully focused on their needs. Throughout the school, teachers take into account the different attainment groups within the class and match work to the needs of pupils. This is done particularly well in the mixed-age classes, where learning targets are appropriately focused to meet the requirements of each age group. However, some pupils, mainly those in the lower-attaining and the higher-attaining groups, do not achieve as well as they might. This is because teachers do not always make enough use of daily assessments to target the next steps in individual pupils' learning. This means that the work is often too difficult for the lower attainers while the higher attainers are not being challenged at the higher levels.
79. Year 2 pupils make steady progress in understanding number, shape, space and measures. Teachers place strong emphasis on developing basic numeracy skills and, by the end of Year 2, most pupils have a secure grasp of number. They understand the place value of three-digit numbers and accurately add and subtract two-digit numbers. Most can use their number skills to solve simple problems. They add and subtract coin values correctly when totalling shopping bills and finding change, but are not yet using decimals to record the answers. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking and the processes used to solve problems. In a Year 1 lesson, one pupil explained his understanding of the relationship between addition and subtraction, saying, 'I know that ten plus four equals fourteen, so fourteen minus four equals ten'. However, higher-attaining pupils have not been introduced to informal pencil and paper methods that build on existing mental strategies. Pupils sort and represent data on simple block graphs and pictograms. Teachers help pupils develop their understanding of the use of graphs by asking good questions, such as, 'What other information does this pictograph give us?', and 'What does it not tell us?'. Pupils reinforce their understanding of symmetry by looking at examples in nature and by creating symmetrical patterns, using information and communication technology.
80. Year 6 pupils calculate confidently and, for the most part, accurately with whole numbers and decimals, using standard written methods. They have a sound grasp of algebraic formulae and of how to solve simple equations and they can apply this knowledge to calculating the area of rectangles. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems and puzzles, which they explain orally and in written number sequences. For instance, when investigating how they would pay for an item costing thirty-one new pence, higher-attaining pupils confidently used brackets to show the order of the operations as, for example, $(5p \times 5) + (3p \times 2)$. Lower-attaining pupils also find solutions with the guidance of learning support assistants, although their numerical statements are not always so clear. Pupils understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and use this understanding to calculate proportions, such as twenty per cent, of whole number quantities. Pupils record and interpret data represented on an appropriate range of graphs. For example, they can construct graphs to convert pounds to

rands or to calculate equivalents between metric and imperial units of measure. They can find the mean and the median of a set of data, but do not know how to prepare a computer data-base or use these facilities to solve problems or compare and contrast the presentation of data in different graphs or charts.

81. The quality of teaching is good overall and some very good teaching was seen in the junior part of the school. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has provided a coherent approach for the whole school – an element that was judged to be lacking at the last inspection. The strategy also ensures that concepts are regularly revisited, so that learning is more frequently reinforced in the juniors than at the time of the last inspection. Lessons have a clear focus and are well organised. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and those requiring extra help or extension work are identified at the planning stage. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of planning because some teachers do not make clear what they want higher or lower attainers to learn from the lesson or what specific work they are to do.
82. Teachers explain the work effectively and involve pupils through questioning and by working out examples. This helps to strengthen pupils' understanding and most are able to settle confidently to independent working. In the oral part of the lesson, not all pupils are given the opportunity to answer questions and demonstrate what they know. Also, opportunities to extend the challenge for higher-attaining pupils in mental mathematics are sometimes missed. Teachers manage classes very well and they have good relationships with their pupils, who respond well and have positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils listen carefully to the teachers and most concentrate well on the tasks set. When tasks require pupils to work together, they get on well and are willing to help and learn from each other. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.
83. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject and she is keen to raise standards. She has gained a clear overview of the subject through monitoring lessons and sampling pupils' work. This information is used well to focus appropriate support systems, such as booster classes, and identify what is working well and where the areas for improvement lie. Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory and data from tests are analysed. The recently introduced system provides much clearer information about what pupils can and cannot do. However, data are not yet used to set personal improvement targets that reflect the needs of individual pupils and give them ownership of their learning. The quality of marking is variable. It is less effective in Years 1 and 2, where teachers do not always make clear to pupils what they have achieved and how they might improve further. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematics in real-life situations so that they can see the relevance of the subject to their daily lives.

SCIENCE

84. By the time that pupils reach the age of seven, the standard of their work matches that expected nationally. When they leave the school, at the end of Year 6, the standard of their work is above the nationally expected level. Particular strengths in science include the emphasis given to understanding ideas, not simply recalling facts, together with the very good quantity of neat work produced and the correct use of technical vocabulary. Standards of the older pupils' work have risen since the last inspection, when they were judged to be average, but those achieved by the younger pupils have declined. Boys and girls do equally well and pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. The school gives good support to these pupils and they make good progress.
85. In 2001, the results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average, with a particularly small proportion of pupils reaching higher levels. Overall, results were well below those for similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils at the end of Year 6 who achieved the expected level in the national tests was very high compared with the national average, although the percentage reaching higher levels was below average. Results were in line with those of similar schools. Although the results fluctuate from year to year, the overall rate of improvement has been good over the past five years. Results are now being systematically analysed in order to identify and remedy weaknesses. Consequently, test results have improved

significantly this year, with a significantly greater percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6.

86. Progress throughout the school is good. Pupils start Year 1 with knowledge and skills in science that are appropriate for their age and, by the end of Year 2, their skills, knowledge and understanding are at the nationally expected levels. Thus, they make satisfactory progress in these first two years when great emphasis is placed upon the development of skills in English. In the two lessons observed, however, the pupils made good progress in their work on animals. They had obviously enjoyed their visit to Colchester Zoo and had learned much. The teachers used their enthusiasm to teach them the names of groups of animals, such as reptiles and amphibians. The pupils used these names confidently and could correctly classify the animals as invertebrates or vertebrates.
87. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress over time and, in two of the lessons observed, they made very good progress. Good literacy skills help them to explain their findings and research topics. Pupils also work at home, using the Internet to find out about endangered species. Pupils learn from each other as they give good presentations to the whole class. They plan investigations very well and have a good understanding of fair tests, using predictions and coming to sensible conclusions. Teachers monitor progress regularly through written tasks at the ends of topics and by using the optional national tests. In addition, most teachers take care to register pupils' progress in lessons, modifying their plans appropriately and setting new challenges. Good support is given to pupils who have special educational needs, usually within the context of the lesson, so that they also make good progress. Throughout the school, pupils work very hard to produce good quantities of neat work.
88. The quality of teaching is good overall and it was very good in two of the eight lessons observed. Planning is comprehensive and teachers ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are usually met. The high quality of teaching is underpinned by a useful revised scheme of work that emphasises the importance of scientific investigation, a previously identified area of weakness. Science lessons capture pupils' attention by challenging them to find the answers to key questions. The scheme of work also links well with other subjects, such as English and mathematics, helping teachers to use time efficiently. Next year, the new geography and design and technology schemes will be adopted. These too will link closely with work in science. In the very good lessons, learning is made fun and the very good relationships developed between adults and pupils enable pupils to feel secure in discussing their ideas without worrying about being wrong. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and pupils listen to each other and learn from other pupils' ideas. Many volunteer to answer questions and give thoughtful answers as they know that their ideas will be respected. Generally, the pace of lessons is good and the tasks provided are interesting.
89. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and is very keen to improve standards. Test results have been analysed and steps have been taken to remedy relative weaknesses, such as the development of investigative and experimental science. This year, the oldest pupils have successfully met the school's target in the national tests, with the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels being well above last year's national average. The co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched by visits. However, she does not have enough time to monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school, although training has been provided. Although the co-ordinator scrutinises samples of work across the school there are still inconsistencies, for example in the timing of the pupils' first investigations.

ART AND DESIGN

90. No lessons could be seen during the inspection and judgements are based on work that the pupils had done previously, planning and discussions with teachers.
91. Infant pupils make satisfactory progress and attain what is broadly expected for their age by the end of Year 2. Teaching of these pupils is satisfactory. Pupils' progress dips in the upper school

and standards are below those expected for Year 6 pupils. This is because the overall time allocated to art and design is limited and because of the unbalanced timetabling of lessons within the school day. Although teachers plan for the systematic development of skills through a range of projects, these are not carried out in sufficient depth and breadth in Years 5 and 6 and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. However, the standards of work seen in Years 3 and 4 are in line with the national expectations for those year groups. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory, with a clear focus on developing pupils' skills and their knowledge of different styles of artwork.

92. Appropriate links are made between art and work in other subjects. For example, in science, infant pupils explore the behaviour of different kinds of paper as part of their work on materials. They experiment with the different effects produced by treating the paper in different ways, such as folding, crunching and pleating, using the outcomes to produce colourful, abstract collages. In mathematics, they explore symmetrical design by studying and painting butterflies and develop their understanding further by creating interesting symmetrical patterns on the computer, using a paint program. Their paintings of flowers show close observation and attention to detail.
93. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use what they have learned about traditional Indian patterns to create their own detailed and carefully drawn designs. For example, in producing patterns for wallpaper or fabric, they matched their colours carefully to produce effective pieces of artwork. Pupils have opportunities to practise and develop different techniques. For example, they explore the tones created by a variety of sketching pencils and apply these appropriately to their observational drawings. They make satisfactory progress in the development of their knowledge of art and artists by looking at and discussing works of art, identifying the type of painting and describing the subject and the positioning of figures. They express personal preferences, giving reasons for their choice. For example, one pupil said, 'I like my picture because it makes me feel warm.'
94. The co-ordinator for art has no clear view of how the programme of study is being followed across the school and this is not satisfactory. Procedures for assessment in art are not firmly established and there is no consistency of approach to this method of supporting learning across the school. The emphasis on English, mathematics and science and the amount of time allocated to these subjects and to religious education leave insufficient time for art. This has contributed to a decline in standards since the last inspection, when standards at the ends of Years 2 and 6 were in line with those expected nationally. Resources are adequate for the curriculum offered and most teachers now use computer-based programmes successfully to support artwork.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Owing to timetabling arrangements, no lessons in design and technology could be observed during the inspection. Judgments are based on samples of work and discussions with the subject co-ordinator.
96. Standards of work are close to the nationally expected level in Year 2, but below the national expectation in Year 6. As they move through the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress. Standards are below those reported after the last inspection. This is mainly because pupils spend too little time on this subject and do not cover the full design process. The few samples of work seen were of an appropriate standard, especially in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4, but pupils have too few opportunities to comment on the success of their work and suggest ways of improving it. In Years 1 and 2, pupils used pulleys and magnets to make moving pictures and models. In Years 3 and 4, pupils designed and made sandwiches, making notes of how they did it and writing clear instructions. However, although the fabric pictures planned and made in Years 5 and 6 are attractive, they do not show the expected levels of skill in cutting or sewing and there is no indication that the pupils research ways to improve them. Teachers have too little time to teach this subject well and the timetabling is inconsistently allocated across the school, so that pupils cannot build steadily on skills that they have learned before.

97. A suitable scheme of work, linked closely with topics in science, has recently been written to help the teachers plan. This sets out a two-year cycle of topics so that pupils in mixed age classes will not repeat the same work. Already, the two-year cycle is working well and teachers are being given the scope to block work so that projects may be completed. The subject co-ordinator is newly appointed and, so far, has had little time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in her subject. This, and the unsatisfactory arrangements for assessment, are additional factors contributing to the unsatisfactory standards.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

98. Only one geography lesson could be seen during the inspection and no history lessons were seen. Evidence was obtained through discussions with staff and pupils and by a scrutiny of written work. Standards in geography are below those expected nationally in Year 2, but in line with national expectations in Year 6. In history, standards are close to those expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6.
99. In geography, pupils in Year 6 give careful thought to the differences between their own home area and Stanton, a village location in the Peak District. They make intelligent comparisons between the shops and services and the employment opportunities available in the two areas and offer sensible explanations for the differences between them. They show a good understanding of how and why people live their lives differently and of the choices that are available to them. For example, they conducted a survey of the different ways children travelled to school and recorded their findings, using bar charts. They can map the route from Collier Row to Stanton and produce a useful key. The most recent topic in Year 2 is also based on a comparison between two contrasting localities – a Hebridean island and Collier Row – and much of the work follows the same pattern as in Year 6, drawing simple maps of the areas and charting means of transport. Pupils can recall only a limited amount of detail about life on the island and are not able to make any sensible comparisons with conditions in their own area.
100. In history, pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory recall of the different Greek and Roman gods and goddesses. They understand that Ancient Greece produced an early form of democracy and can produce a sensible definition of what that was. They have a basic understanding of the differences between the cultures of Athens and Sparta. Their written work shows an understanding of life in Victorian Britain and Tudor England, the Great Fire of London and the life of Florence Nightingale. Pupils in Year 2 remember some facts about the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and the subsequent jubilee celebrations, but they have a poorly developed historical sense. For example, they could not work out how old the Queen was when she was crowned or how long ago it was. They have only a sketchy knowledge or understanding of life at the seaside in Victorian times.
101. On the available evidence, the quality of teaching in both subjects is satisfactory and work is well marked. Teachers clearly have high expectations of the presentation of pupils' work and these standards are good. Planning for both subjects is satisfactory. It is based on nationally produced schemes of work that ensure that the basic requirements of the National Curriculum are covered. A two-year cycle of topics prevents pupils in the split-year classes having to do the same work twice. The school's timetabling arrangements mean that little time is allocated to these subjects and they are taught in blocks with sometimes significant intervals of time between them. This leads to pupils having only partial recall of what they have learned. The co-ordinators have opportunities for monitoring their colleagues' plans, but have no time to establish a reliable view of the quality of teaching and learning or of the standards achieved in their subjects and arrangements for assessment are not satisfactory. Consequently, the co-ordinators are not able to carry out their responsibilities fully.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Attainment is below the levels expected nationally for seven and eleven-year-olds. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection. The school has made significant efforts to construct and equip a new suite for information and communication technology, fitted with 17

computers, that will be ready for use at the beginning of the new academic year. This will enable the full programme of study to be followed and should greatly help to raise standards. The school has recently adopted the national guidance and the 'Smart Learning Scheme' as a joint basis for planning the curriculum, ensuring that specific skills are taught and built upon systematically. These are good improvements since the last inspection and the planned programme of work will begin in September, when the new computer suite is up and running.

103. Currently, pupils in each class work individually or in pairs when using the computers in their classrooms. Most classes have more than one computer, but they are not always fully used. The unreliability and the age of much of the classroom stock often pose difficulties and adversely affect pupils' progress. During the inspection, four lessons were observed, all linked to science topics. Additional evidence was gathered from the examination of teachers' planning, the work on display and discussions with staff and pupils about their work.
104. Generally pupils have not made sufficient progress by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is primarily because they have not had enough opportunities to develop their skills and understanding. Many younger pupils have only very limited knowledge of how to use a computer. They can use the keyboard correctly to write words, but they are not confident in saving and storing their work. In one lesson, pupils in the split Years 1 and 2 class learned to use the keyboard to record information on a given 'table' set up by the teacher. They had little idea of how to use the mouse to select objects or how to use the 'enter' key. In another lesson, two higher-attaining pupils confidently recorded a short account of their outing to Colchester Zoo. Pupils in most lessons are well guided and follow instructions carefully. For example, some pupils learnt to select and use tools in the 'Dazzle' program to create images. Some higher-attaining pupils and those with computers at home gain satisfactory knowledge about different ways of recording information. They show appropriate control of the mouse to manipulate images on the screen and can enter, save and retrieve work. Pupils create simple sentences, but most do not know how to amend or improve their work.
105. The use of information and communication technology is limited, both in dedicated lessons and where it might contribute to other subjects. There are very few examples of finished presentations on display around school. Pupils in Year 4 have used the 'Clipart' program with some success and pupils in Year 5 have experimented with graphical modelling. Work by pupils in Year 6, using bar charts to represent the heart rates of different members of the class, shows their developing confidence in the use of data-handling. In another lesson, Year 6 pupils watched their teacher demonstrate the use of the 'Power Point' programme to present information in a variety of forms and planned their own use of the program for presentations about threatened species. However, for the most part, pupils' skills are limited to simple word-processing and the majority are not able to use the full range of applications required by the National Curriculum.
106. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed is satisfactory overall. Teachers concentrate on the basic skills of communicating, controlling and handling information. Mastery of these skills is essential before pupils can effectively use information and communication technology across the curriculum. During the week of inspection, teachers were not making the most effective use of the computers in their rooms and most lack confidence in teaching the required skills. The school has well considered plans to improve teachers' competence in the subject. Pupils' attitudes towards information and communication technology are positive and they enjoy using computers. Most pupils successfully share the control of the program when working in pairs but this is not monitored carefully to ensure that all pupils have a proper turn. Pupils' show respect for each other and the equipment and their behaviour is consistently good.
107. The new subject co-ordinator has a clear awareness of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and suitable expertise to support standards and the development of teaching and learning. There are no agreed procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress with reference to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The role of co-ordinator will need to be fully developed, particularly with regard to monitoring teaching and the standards of pupils' work, in order to raise standards.

MUSIC

108. Standards in unison singing are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils sing in tune with clear diction and the singing of the school choir is above the standards expected nationally. Choir members sing with expression and successfully maintain two independent parts. Only two lessons were seen, one in the infants and the other in the juniors. Standards achieved by pupils in both these lessons were broadly in line with national expectations, but there was insufficient evidence available to judge standards in all aspects of the subject or to evaluate changes since the last inspection. It was not possible to form an overall judgement about the quality of teaching.
109. Teachers plan to provide an appropriate balance of singing, composing and listening activities. However, the time allocated for music is too short for pupils to practise and refine their skills. Although most classes have a regular weekly music lesson, the same provision is not extended to Year 6 pupils who have had few music lessons this term. This restricts the progress they might otherwise have made.
110. Pupils in Year 2 play a range of classroom percussion instruments and use them to explore ways in which sounds can be changed. They sing enthusiastically, matching their voices to the shape of the melody. They can keep in time with an audio-taped accompaniment and also, for the most part, with their own accompaniment on percussion instruments. In the junior lesson seen, pupils responded very well to music through dance. They demonstrated good listening skills as they matched their movement to the beat and phrases of the music, which was taken from Humperdinck's *'Hansel and Gretel'*. The lessons observed had a clear focus and effectively improved pupils' skills and understanding. In the junior class, the teacher had a good knowledge of the subject that enabled him to assess pupils' progress well and progressively build on their learning until they were able to perform a complete sequence of movements. Pupils' enjoyment of the lesson had a positive impact on their progress.
111. The management of the subject is satisfactory, although arrangements for monitoring standards of attainment and of teaching are not fully effective. Since the last inspection, a new commercial scheme has been introduced and a planning framework devised to support teaching and learning. Opportunities for Instrumental tuition and the school's choir and orchestra enrich the range of learning opportunities. Pupils take part in whole-school performances and the choir regularly sings for holy days. Pupils also take part in local schools' music festivals.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. It was possible to observe only three lessons during the inspection. Two extra-curricular clubs were also observed briefly, for cricket and netball. On the basis of this evidence, pupils in Years 2 and 6 are working at the nationally expected levels in gymnastics, hockey, cricket, netball and athletics. Pupils in Year 2 can catch tennis balls with satisfactory skill, provided they are close to them and most can throw accurately. Older pupils have a well developed sense of tactics in ball games and show good skills in passing, running off the ball and invasion tactics. Most of those in the cricket club can play satisfactory defensive shots with appropriately angled bats. The majority of pupils in Year 6 can swim twenty-five metres or more. Pupils in all three lessons showed a good awareness of safety factors and could explain the effects of exercise on the body.
113. Teaching is satisfactory and several teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and how to teach it. Lessons begin with good, sometimes imaginative, warm-ups, with teachers ensuring that pupils monitor what is happening to their bodies. The lessons seen were conducted at a good pace and pupils were fully engaged the whole time, trying hard to improve their performances. Control and management of pupils are good, even outside on the extensive playing fields and pupils respond well to their teachers. Teachers and pupils are generally well turned out, in appropriate clothing. Pupils are not allowed to participate in activities if they have forgotten their kit, but they are usefully engaged in the lessons. The curriculum is satisfactorily based on nationally produced schemes of work, ensuring that the National Curriculum's

programme of study is followed. Management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator is keen and knowledgeable, although she has few opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching or the standards of work. Resources are satisfactory and meet the demands of the teaching programmes.