

INSPECTION REPORT

ROACH VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Roach Vale, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114823

Headteacher: Mrs Serena Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr Dennis Maxwell
8798

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 June 2002

Inspection number: 195272

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Roach Vale
Colchester
Essex

Postcode: CO4 3YN

Telephone number: 01206 861324

Fax number: 01206 869751

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Colleen Brown

Date of previous inspection: 9 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography Physical education Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20003	Susan Metcalfe	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education Foundation Stage	

20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology History Educational inclusion, including race equality. English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
-------	---------------	----------------	--	--

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Roach Vale is a community primary school for pupils aged five to eleven years. It is situated within a small private housing estate and adjacent to two large council housing estates from which it draws some 80 per cent of the pupils. It is of average size in comparison with other primary schools, with 205 pupils on roll. At the time of the inspection four children under five were in the reception class. Very few children come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The socio-economic background of the community serving the school is less favourable than that found nationally. There is a wide range of ability amongst the children but, overall, their attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is close to the national average and one pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school has experienced considerable difficulty in recruiting temporary teachers to cover for long-term absence - this is a cause for concern by parents. The school has received four awards for high quality work in 2002: the Schools Curriculum Award 2002, the Investors in People, the Effective Early Learning Project and the Healthy Schools Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful and continually improving school that provides a good standard of education. Teachers plan imaginative and worthwhile activities that capture pupils' interests very well so that they work happily and try hard to do well. The quality of teaching is good overall and has a focus on learning skills as well as opening the children's minds, although the depth of explanation is not fully consistent. The pupils' personal development through the school is very good, as are the relationships between all staff and pupils. Teachers encourage all pupils to work hard so that by Year 6 they achieve above what would be expected in English, mathematics and science, and all forms of achievement are valued and recognised. Standards overall, however, including for English and mathematics, are below average since pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The management of special educational needs is very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership with the senior management team. School developments are managed very well by the senior staff and governing body working together. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children get a flying start to school in the reception class.
- Children's personal development and their attitudes to work are very good, while behaviour across the school is usually good. Pupils enjoy working together.
- The quality of teaching is good overall so that by Years 2 and 6 pupils have made better progress than usual.
- The curriculum is planned well to include all children in the tasks, which are mostly presented in a lively and challenging way. Arrangements for children with special educational needs are good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted so that by Year 6 they are well prepared to face the challenges of secondary education. Links with the nearby secondary school are very constructive.
- The school has a good community spirit and sense of care for the children.
- There is excellent leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy and senior staff.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics are below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997 and has made good improvement overall since then. It has made good progress on the key issues for action identified at that time and further good progress on matters identified recently by the headteacher's good monitoring procedures. The planning and delivery of science and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and led to higher

standards. The higher attaining pupils are identified carefully and are usually given challenging work. The quality of teaching has improved and there is a whole-school curriculum plan, with relevant schemes of work for all subjects. The headteacher and governors have good procedures to evaluate the work of the school. The arrangements to assess and monitor pupils' work are very good. The school has a good capacity for further improvements.

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	C	A	D	E
Mathematics	B	C	D	E
Science	C	B	C	C

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

Standards in the work seen during the inspection are below average in English and mathematics by Years 2 and 6, and average in science. Work in most other subjects meets nationally expected standards by Years 2 and 6, including in ICT, although pupils' written work in geography and history is below average in Year 2. Standards have improved in science, history and ICT since the last inspection, as required, and have generally been maintained in other subjects. The table above presents the results of national tests in 2001. Fewer pupils gained the higher Level 5 than average in 2001, and this had a lowering effect on the overall standard. The trend in results from 1997 to 2001 was in line with the nationally improving trend. The school met its targets in English and mathematics for the percentage of pupils expected to gain Level 4 or above in 2001. It has set suitably challenging targets for 2002 and 2003 in English and mathematics based on internal assessments of the pupils, and they are likely to meet them. Overall, pupils achieve better than expected from entry to the school through to Year 6, as do those with special educational needs. The school has agreed individual targets for all pupils in English and mathematics and this procedure is helping to raise standards. Standards in the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds were at the national average in writing, below average in reading, and well below average in mathematics. Standards in comparison with similar schools matched the national comparisons.

The unpublished results for 2002 indicate further good progress in English, mathematics and science: the proportions of pupils gaining Level 4 or above is close to the 2001 national average in English and science and above in mathematics. The 2002 results also indicate that the school has made particularly good improvements in the proportions of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in each subject, underlining the strong focus on high standards linked to high quality education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils enjoy the tasks and persevere well so that they usually make good progress. There is an atmosphere of busy work through the school. A few pupils have not yet learnt to concentrate well and they receive helpful support.
Behaviour, in and out of	Good. Pupils are helped to think about their behaviour through positive example, class discussion and support. Most pupils have good personal

classrooms	discipline and good manners.
------------	------------------------------

Personal development and relationships	This is a strength of the school. Relationships are very good amongst the children and between pupils and adults. Children are sensitive to the backgrounds and personal feelings of others. Their good personal development has a strong link with their good progress and learning.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are good. There are good procedures to monitor and encourage regular attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teachers establish the children's interest and attention with relevant and well-chosen activities. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and good learning takes place as a result. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, and the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught carefully to give pupils increasing confidence through the school. Lesson planning is good and aims to meet the needs of all pupils, drawing upon national guidance but also allowing for individual teachers' flair and interests. No teaching was less than satisfactory and a higher proportion than usual was very good or excellent, demonstrating the overall strength of teaching. The teaching of ICT and science is generally good, with opportunities for investigational work, such as in Year 6 when pupils constructed a simple electro-magnet to pick up pins. Most pupils work hard during lessons but find the discipline of writing difficult to sustain. Several pupils in Year 6 write expressive poetry but the school's good emphasis on writing in English has not yet transferred to pupils writing confidently in other subjects. Daily assessment is satisfactory. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and discuss with them how to improve but there are too few written comments to confirm where further work is needed. The good teaching helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve well in relation to their learning targets. Pupils are gaining skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and usually apply them well in other subjects. There is a good learning ethos which all staff promote so that, for example, the skills required to add toner to the photocopier are taken on in a spirit of challenge.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has put considerable effort into planning a well-structured curriculum that takes good account of the pupils' learning needs. Tasks are chosen very well to provide interest and challenge. The planned curriculum meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The co-ordinator provides effective management and support. All staff have a high level of commitment, to the benefit of the children. Pupils are given sensitive support so that they make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school ensures there is good support for pupils when it is required.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual,	Very good and has a significant impact on the quality of relationships and ethos. The school promotes positive images and experience across

moral, social and cultural development	all aspects of school life, including assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A high level of care helps children to gain in self-confidence and feel secure. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good and are used effectively to inform further planning.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works hard to build and maintain good relationships with parents. Parents value the care and quality of education provided. Parents also have high expectations of what the school should provide, which sometimes places extra demands on the teachers.

The school has excellent procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The vision and work of the headteacher and senior staff are a major influence on the quality of education in the school. School improvements, such as assessment arrangements, are tackled well as a whole-staff exercise.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have good procedures for focused visits which enable them to form their own judgements about strengths and weaknesses in the school. They understand their responsibilities and fulfil them very well. They contribute effectively to improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There is a healthy self-evaluation process where strengths are valued and weaknesses are remedied. The procedures for performance management are excellent.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers are deployed well to class and subject responsibilities for the greatest benefit of the pupils. The building and learning resources are used effectively, although there is inadequate storage space, making easy access and organisation difficult.

The staffing, accommodation and learning resources are sufficient for the planned tasks. The school has a very good approach to obtaining good value for spending decisions, although these decisions are not linked clearly enough to improving standards within the development plan and governing body discussions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, work hard and make good progress. • Behaviour is good and children are helped to become responsible. • Teaching is good. • Parents think the school is managed well and they feel comfortable about mentioning problems. 	<p>Several parents do not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think their children get the right amount of homework. • Feel well informed about how their child is getting on. • Feel the school works closely with them. • Think the school provides a suitable range of activities outside lessons.

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive opinions. They find that the approach to setting homework is appropriate although it is not always consistent, particularly when there are temporary teachers. The overall quality of information to parents is good, particularly the prospectus and governors' report. The end-of-year reports on each child are mostly written well and there are two timetabled

evenings during the year to discuss progress - this is similar to most schools. The inspectors find arrangements to meet parents to be good overall and teachers are easily available after school. The range of activities outside lessons is similar to most schools' and, appropriately, most of these are for older children since the school recognises that younger children are tired by the end of a school day.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school's initial assessments of children as they enter the reception class indicate that attainment on entry is well below average, and this is supported by inspection evidence. Children make good progress in the reception year in gaining a range of skills but their attainment in language and mathematical skills particularly is below the expected standards of the Early Learning Goals for young children by the end of the year. The children's progress in Years 1 and 2 is good. Progress is also good from Years 3 to 6: older pupils have made more than the expected gains in skill over the four years. Overall, pupils are achieving better than expected in the infant and junior classes through the impact of good teaching and very well chosen tasks, supported by school systems for the curriculum and the monitoring procedures established by the headteacher. There has been some difficulty in recruitment of staff to the school recently which has adversely affected learning. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils of different groups or background.
2. Standards overall in the work seen are below average by Years 2 and 6. Standards are below average in English and mathematics, while in science standards are broadly in line with the national average by both Years 2 and 6. This represents a lowering of standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection but an improvement in science. The unreported results of the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 2 show good progress from reception to Year 2.
3. Standards in the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 2 were at the national average in writing, below average in reading, and well below average in mathematics. The school achieved the same standards as similar schools in these tests. The performance of boys and girls in 2001 and during 2002 was similar, except that boys were on average around one term behind the girls in their attainment. The trends in reading and writing have been upward over the past three years, with the trend in writing above the national trend. The trend in mathematics is below the national trend; this is at least partly explained by the increasing numbers of pupils with below average attainment entering the school in reception. The school is aware of this and is concentrating on early language and mathematical skills in the infant classes with additional literacy support in the junior classes.
4. Standards in the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6 were below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. In comparison with similar schools standards were well below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. The performance of boys and girls was close to the boys' and girls' national averages over the past three years, except that boys performed rather better in science. Fewer pupils than usual in 2001 gained the higher Level 5 in each subject which depressed the reporting of overall standards. These results relate to the profile of pupils' attainments on entry to the school but more pupils have gained the higher levels in 2001 than expected.
5. The unpublished results for 2002 indicate further good progress in English, mathematics and science; the proportions of pupils gaining Level 4 or above is close to the 2001 national average in English and science and above in mathematics. The 2002 results also indicate that the school has made particularly good improvements in the proportions of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in each subject, underlining the strong focus on high standards linked to high quality education. The trend in standards has been broadly in line with the upward national trend over the past four years. This indicates that the school is making generally good provision in teaching and learning through the teachers' good choice of tasks, so that the impact of the school's work is raising standards.

6. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in most other subjects meet national expectations, only in geography and history at Year 2 falling below those normally expected, mainly caused by pupils' difficulty in writing and recording their work. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has set very challenging targets for English and mathematics, based on good internal assessments of the pupils, by Year 6 in 2002 and is likely to meet them because of the commitment of staff and the personal development of the pupils. The school met the targets for English and mathematics in year 2001. The well-planned activities across all subjects and the generally good teaching are having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets through the good support, as do those identified as gifted or talented. The school has focused clearly on creating a well-planned curriculum, combined with high expectations that include all children and generally challenging tasks, and these are effective in raising standards.
7. The school has identified an above average number of children as having special educational needs (SEN). Several classes have around one third of pupils on the SEN register, who require concentrated support to make progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The majority of the pupils have very good attitudes to their school. This is a strength of the school and an improvement even upon the positive judgement of the last inspection. During lessons, in and around the school and at break times their interest and involvement, in whatever they are doing, are very good. They show an infectious enthusiasm to get on with the task in hand and natural curiosity. This was evident from a Year 1 personal, social and health education lesson where the children had discussed personal worries. After much thought, two boys still could not decide whether to talk about their very old grand-dads or the English football team! Also, during an afternoon break, a group of girls from Years 1 and 2 went into great detail as to why this was the best school in the area.
9. Behaviour at the school is still good. Within lessons, where the teaching is stimulating and discipline effective, behaviour is often very good and occasionally excellent. However where teaching is more mundane, of too slow a pace, and less effective control is shown over the pupils, they tend to become bored and more disruptive. Around the school the pupils conduct themselves in a very orderly fashion. After assemblies or playtimes they march off in silence. They open the doors for visitors, stand back and ask if directions are needed. During the inspection no evidence of vandalism or graffiti was seen around the school. The pupils are proud of their smart school and its good name and they want it to stay that way. There have been no exclusions within the past year.
10. The absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism and racism is another strength of the school. The pupils are very well aware that the way that they treat others is the way that they themselves wish to be treated. They show a lot of respect for each other. Boys and girls mix very well both in class and at play. It is evident that the children realise that not everyone has necessarily been brought up in the same way or has similar values in life. The fact that they appreciate this so clearly results in a very friendly and harmonious school.
11. The personal development of the pupils and relationships within the school are very good and a definite strength. The School Council includes all ages. During the inspection they discussed such varying subjects as the need for salt and pepper on the lunch table to rubbish bins on the playing field. The governors are so impressed with the council that they have now allocated them an annual grant and have met their request for a governor to be at subsequent meetings. All classes have responsible monitors and the playtime buddy stop allows shy children to be allocated a friend. Relationships with the staff are very good. During the council meeting, the head teacher, as chairwoman, and a classroom assistant joining in, exemplified the liaison between them and the children. During all of the lessons seen, and at play and lunchtimes, only cheerful camaraderie was witnessed among children and children and staff. During an afternoon play break when one Year 1 boy slipped and hurt his arm, support staff were overwhelmed by other boys and girls running to ask to help.

12. Attendance at the school is still good. Figures for the most recent reporting year are above national averages for this type of school and unauthorised absences are below. There is no unaccounted for long-term absence. The majority of pupils come to school and into classes on time and most lessons commence promptly.
13. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils help considerably toward the success of their learning and equip them admirably for entry to secondary education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good overall and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, indicating a good improvement since the last inspection, and is good overall in Years 1 to 2, and in Years 3 to 6. The good teaching has a positive effect on standards as pupils gain new skills from the imaginatively presented activities and extend their understanding. Children learn well in most lessons and make good progress as a result. The quality of teaching shows a good improvement since the last inspection as a direct result of the headteacher's clear vision and management of improvements, including monitoring.
15. Imaginative and perceptive teaching focused on providing many rich experiences for the children in the Foundation Stage is followed by interesting, challenging and generally well-presented tasks in Years 1 and 2, so that the children's learning builds on a good foundation. The good teaching in Years 3 to 6 places increasing emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for their learning so that they make good progress. The few unsatisfactory elements of teaching are caused mainly by weaknesses in subject knowledge, insufficient direct exposition and discussion to probe deeper interpretation, brief lesson planning without a clearly specified approach, and some lack of challenge.
16. Nearly half the teaching observed was very good or excellent, and over three-quarters was good or better, indicating many strengths in the quality and skills of teachers across the school. Teaching in all the lessons observed was at least satisfactory. Examples of good or better teaching were noted in most subjects and year groups, showing that the school's procedures for curriculum planning, monitoring and guidance are effective. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, and the effective implementation of national guidance for literacy and numeracy is supporting thorough teaching and having a positive effect on raising standards. Teachers are careful to include the recommended elements of the literacy strategy. The school gives a particular focus to writing which has resulted in standards improving at a faster rate than the national trend. There is suitable attention to the basic skills of reading and handwriting.
17. The teachers make thoughtful observations of the pupils' oral and written work and use the information gained to make good on-going assessments during lessons. These are brought to bear well through further discussion with pupils which help them to improve the quality of their work. Marking is mostly up to date, and includes occasional comment and praise, although there is very little direct written advice on how pupils may improve. In general within classes, teachers' daily assessments are perceptive and children are confident in answering since they know that incorrect answers or ideas will be handled tactfully. Procedures for assessing the core subjects are well established and the school has introduced effective methods for keeping useful records in a few foundation subjects, such as history.
18. Lesson planning is good and based on well-designed medium-term planning. The daily planning is clearly set out, with clear learning intentions that provide a good focus for learning new skills. The plans usually give suitable attention to challenging the higher attaining pupils through extension tasks. Teachers provide well on most occasions for pupils of differing attainment, although the planning seldom sets out the teaching approaches to be used. The focus on providing direct first-hand experiences for the pupils is a strength of many lessons - for example, in making an electro-magnet in Year 6 or composing rainstorm music in Year 2. There are exceptions, however, and on a few occasions the over-direction by the teacher limits the opportunities for pupils to experiment and gain worthwhile experience of their own. Many lessons have a good pace and are productive, although time allocations for different parts of lessons occasionally do not allow time for pupils to

do a written task or complete the main activity.

19. Most teachers give lively and well-presented introductions to lessons, using their good subject knowledge. Their explanations and discussions help to capture the pupils' interest and promote good learning. The teachers give good attention to the teaching of a wide range of basic skills, including literacy, mental calculations, ICT, and science investigation. The focused group work usually offers worthwhile consolidation and extensions to pupils' learning. Most pupils sustain their effort and learning well, although on occasions a few are not fully involved in the tasks through some teachers' lack of clear strategies for managing behaviour. Teachers have a good sense of personal care for the pupils, particularly in the reception class, which promotes pupils' personal development well so that they are ready to learn. By Year 6, this whole-school approach has the effect of supporting good levels of personal interest and concentration in the pupils so that their learning is effective.
20. Resources are used well in most lessons and they are generally matched to pupils' needs. Most class discussion sessions at the end of lessons are used carefully to reinforce pupils' understanding, although a few of these are too brief to be of real value. Teachers provide suitable homework for pupils to consolidate their learning.
21. Teachers' good relationships with the children and their high expectations for behaviour are effective in most lessons and help to maintain a good working atmosphere. Teachers encourage self-discipline in the pupils as the best way to raise achievement, using positive reinforcement of good behaviour. The learning support assistants are effective, frequently showing perceptive understanding of the children in their handling of them. This encourages the pupils to concentrate and take a good part in the tasks. The learning support assistant provides very capable and appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers make good arrangement for pupils with special educational needs. In class, activities are carefully adapted to provide more focused work that enables pupils to progress in smaller steps. Parents are involved in the review of pupils' needs and contribute to pupils' targets. When pupils are withdrawn to work on specific skills to address gaps in knowledge or skills, this is an appropriate use of focused teaching for a short series of sessions.

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

22. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. All subjects have an appropriate allocation of time. Good use of resources from within and outside the school enriches the curriculum. Priority is given to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills but opportunities to use and develop these skills in subjects other than English and mathematics are not yet consistently identified. Teachers do not, for example, consistently expect pupils to pay enough attention to handwriting, spelling and use of interesting vocabulary in other subjects. The school has already identified the need to increase provision for extended writing across the curriculum. There is a detailed programme of personal, social and health education that provides well for sex education and teaches awareness of the misuse of drugs. The school has forged very good curricular links with the secondary school to which most of its pupils transfer. There is a strong emphasis on developing independence so that pupils are very well prepared academically and socially for the next stage of their education. The very good links with the community also give strong support to the curriculum. The physical education curriculum, for example, is strengthened through links with Colchester United Football Club and Essex Cricket Club.
23. Curriculum planning is good, and weaknesses noted in the last inspection like, for example, planning in science, have been fully and successfully addressed. The school is now increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their investigation skills in the subject further. Policies and schemes of work in all subjects now guide planning and provide continuity in pupils' learning. Provision in English and mathematics has been strengthened by the official frameworks of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, both of which the school has implemented

successfully. All classes have a lesson each day in literacy and numeracy. Provision for information and communication technology has been developed in line with recent official guidance, and meets the revised national expectations. Pupils increasingly apply their ICT skills across the curriculum. Religious education is firmly based on the locally agreed syllabus.

24. Staff have used the schemes of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to help them plan the curriculum in science, information and communication technology, history, geography and design and technology. The school has developed its own schemes of work or published schemes to support teaching and learning in music, art and physical education. A good example of how well the school evaluates its curriculum is the way it has identified the need to introduce a newly purchased scheme to support the teaching of design and technology. Teachers are successful in identifying links between subjects. Although subjects such as history, design and technology, art and music, for example, are taught discretely, links between these and other subjects are well used to allow pupils to apply their skills in meaningful ways. A particular strength of the school is the way teachers present the curriculum through a wide range of well planned activities to engage pupils' interest and to inspire them to learn. The homework policy clearly sets out a programme to support the curriculum and to develop pupils' independent learning skills further.
25. The school has a good and popular programme of extra-curricular activities which encourage active participation beyond the school day. They also help to develop social and wider learning skills. These include art, drama, country dancing, gardening, football, netball and a book club. Some parents indicated that they felt that the school did not provide enough activities outside lessons, but inspection findings are that the provision is good overall. The curriculum is further supported through the school's programme of educational trips. Visits to places such as the National Gallery, Colchester Castle, a local farm park and a stately home, enrich the curriculum and increase pupils' experiences. The curriculum for pupils in Year 6 is further strengthened through the annual residential visit. Displays and schemes of work show that the school pays particular attention to developing pupils' understanding of a range of cultures and global perspective.
26. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion. All pupils are afforded full and equal access to the curriculum. The high quality support given to pupils with special educational and physical needs allows them full and equal access to all aspects of school life. In most lessons, teachers are successful in challenging pupils at appropriate levels so that all learn as well as they can. The governing body's curriculum committee is well informed and is involved in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the curriculum.
27. The provision for pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
28. Collective worship and assemblies play a very important role in developing pupils' spirituality. Themes such as 'caring' and 'prayer' offer pupils opportunities to think about themselves and the world around them. In one assembly, for example, children took on several positions for someone praying, while each was discussed sensitively. Care is taken with the setting within what could be a stark school hall or mobile classroom. Focus pictures and poems provide an atmosphere of respect and the hymns, prayers and stories encourage pupils to reflect and think, developing their own spirituality further. Within classrooms opportunities are arranged for pupils to gather together to share, and to support and encourage each other. The rooms themselves are bright with examples of pupils' work carefully mounted to demonstrate the worth and value teachers place upon pupils' efforts. Religious education, science, music and English are just some of the curriculum areas that provide opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of the intangible. During the inspection the reverence with which younger pupils examined the Christening robe from their teacher's family, realising the age, the texture and the special nature of the artefact, took them beyond it just being a pretty dress. The use of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" at the end of assembly sent pupils back to class in a calm, thoughtful and careful manner while poetry and stories, including "Waves" by Eleanor Farjeon in a music lesson gave pupils the opportunity to explore instruments to paint a 'sounds' picture.

29. Pupils' moral development is very well promoted. In all aspects of their school life, pupils are taught right from wrong. They benefit from moral teaching in assembly, their texts in literacy include traditional stories such as Cinderella and in such subjects as science they learn how to look after and care for plants and show good understanding of what happens when they are neglected. Pupils behave well in and around the school because they are clearly aware of established routines such as holding doors, taking turns and helping move resources for their teachers from one room to the next. Clear systems are in place to ensure that behaviour is monitored and that pupils are well supported.
30. Provision for social development is also very good. The caring ethos that pervades all areas of the school successfully promotes pupils' awareness of their responsibility for helping others. This goes beyond the boundaries of the school into links with the wider community and fundraising for charities working in different countries. There are very good opportunities for pupils to contribute to making life in the school easier for all. Older pupils show their initiative and independence in a variety of ways. They set out the hall for assemblies, ensuring that staff chairs, benches for older pupils and the piano and overhead projector are in place ready for use. They support staff at breaks and lunchtimes especially when the weather is wet, playing games and reading with small groups in different classes. They are encouraged to care for younger pupils in the playground and ensure that they get safely back to classes at the end of the break. They operate a playground 'buddy' system to help sort out problems and ensure that nobody feels lonely and generally act as librarians, monitors and messengers about the school. Younger pupils are also helped to contribute well to the smooth running of the school. All classrooms have a rota of tasks for pupils - for instance, during the inspection, in Year 2, pupils in Red group were the 'Wombles of the Week' and children proudly explained how they kept the room tidy and safe for others to use.
31. All pupils except those in the reception class have to choose representatives for the School Council. Reception children are not left out: a member of the support staff represents them. The school's personal and health education work encourages pupils to explore their own feelings and attitudes, especially towards substance and alcohol abuse. The work in personal development and 'circle time' sessions guides pupils to consider how they can keep themselves fit, healthy and safe. There are many examples of pupils working together, sharing resources and helping each other from the earliest year upwards. Pupils are encouraged to work in pairs and small groups, negotiating with each other in practical sessions. Social development is also encouraged by membership of school teams and as representatives of the school on visits to places of interest such as museums and galleries.
32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good, with visits made to museums, galleries and other places of interest within the local area. Although there are not many pupils from different ethnic backgrounds the school prepares pupils for life after school in a multi-cultural society. Pupils work hard to support charities helping people from other countries who are less fortunate than they are. They are developing their awareness of these cultures and customs in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Over the Jubilee period, for instance, each class investigated a different country of the Commonwealth that has the Queen as head of state. Good use was made of this to support, enhance and enrich the curriculum. Thus reception children looked at Kenya – houses, homes, artefacts, celebrations, customs and dance - while Year 6 pupils researched Malawi, raising funds at the same time to help provide clean water and education. British history is taught appropriately in that pupils learn of peoples such as the Romans, Vikings and Tudors, especially the local heroine Boudicca who sacked the Roman fortress of Colchester with her Iceni tribe. The Victorians link with different peoples of the world is studied, including India and Asia, and the respect given to the work of such figures as Mary Seacole. In religious education pupils learn about celebrations and festivals from other faiths but links with the different faith communities in the local area are limited. Pupils enjoy listening to music, study the work of artists and appreciate literature and learn something of the lives of composers, artists and writers, including those from the different countries and cultures that make up multi-cultural Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school has excellent procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of its pupils. This is a very significant strength of the school and has improved upon the existing high standard witnessed at the previous inspection.
34. The headteacher is the named and well-trained person for child protection. She has ensured that all teachers have also received relevant training and all support staff are regularly briefed on their relevant responsibilities. The school has a detailed written policy and there is very good liaison with the local social services. All documentation is well recorded and securely locked away.
35. The headteacher is also the named health and safety person. The school has an up-to-date policy and all risk assessments are current and effective. All portable electrical, fire and physical education equipment are tested regularly and fire exercises are held every term. Escape routes from the school are well marked and accessible. The school maintains an effective and caring accident routine and medicines are administered at the discretion of and with written permission from parents. Very good use is made of outside professional help, such as the school doctor and nurse, physiotherapist and the educational psychologist. The local police come in regularly and talk about stranger danger and the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Nourishing school meals are cooked, served and consumed in hygienic conditions.
36. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and another of the school's many strengths. These account directly for the school's improving figures year upon year. Registers are well maintained and scrutinised regularly by the office staff. All parents are made well aware of their relevant responsibilities by the use of a range of absence and holiday letters. If a child is unaccountably absent the office staff try and contact parents by 9.30 on the morning of relevant day. The school has a very tight lateness routine and very good use is made of the educational welfare officer.
37. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating that of an oppressive nature are both very good and strengths of the school. A very detailed policy for both, with realistic rewards and sanctions is well utilised by the school. Pupils are well aware of the rules and also make up their own within classes. Problems are discussed in assemblies, at circle time and frequently by the School Council. Within personal, social and health lessons the pupils are given the confidence to report any sign of bullying and staff are quick to notice any potential incidence before they escalate. If an incident becomes serious those involved are interviewed by the headteacher and parents informed.
38. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development. The very good personal, social and health education programme encourages the children to look after themselves and become responsible citizens. This was most evident recently when the school had important visitors. The headteacher was not available and volunteers from Year 6 took over the responsibility of showing the visitors around. The pupils' progress is recorded in their personal files and they are continually encouraged to bring in certificates of personal achievement. During the inspection five boys brought in their cups and commendation awards from winning the local five-a-side football competition.
39. The caring and confident way in which the school looks after its pupils plays a very large part in their development and helps very considerably towards the success of their learning.

Assessment

40. The school has a very clear and comprehensive assessment policy which gives very good guidance to staff. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance is very good overall. The procedures in place for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are particularly effective and are helping to raise standards. Very good progress has been made in this area since the last inspection. This is mainly due to enthusiastic

and well-informed leadership of this area of the school's work. There is now a clear understanding of the purpose and use of assessment. Teachers' plans make clear that they will assess learning in respect of the learning objectives they have set. At the beginning of lessons teachers use an effective system which makes clear to pupils what they are to learn and what teachers are looking for. This helps teachers evaluate the work at the end of lessons and gives pupils a good understanding of their own learning. Although there is a clear marking policy in place and work is regularly marked by teachers, written comments do not always indicate to pupils how they might improve their work.

41. In English and mathematics work is assessed and outcomes recorded to show the knowledge, understanding and skills pupils have acquired. Teachers work with individual pupils to set challenging yet realistic targets. An indication of the effectiveness of the school's system for tracking the progress of each pupil and the use of assessment to support learning, is that over 90 per cent of pupils achieve their targets each year. The challenging statutory targets set for pupils in Year 6 are met, or results are close, each year. Standardised and optional tests are well used in setting these long-term targets for individuals as well as for each year group.
42. The school's very good use of assessment data to guide planning underpins many of the improvements made since the last inspection. Assessment data are analysed to plot the fluctuations in attainment from year to year. This enables the senior management team to identify clearly any areas for improvement. For example, analysis showed that writing was an area for development, so the school is now considering ways of allowing more time for writing, both within daily literacy lessons and across the curriculum.
43. The school is currently preparing to computerise data to enable it to collect and analyse information more easily. The assessment co-ordinator, as well as subject co-ordinators, closely monitors assessment procedures and the use of assessment information by teachers. This is effective in gaining consistency across the school. Writing progress books are well used to judge the quality of each pupil's learning. The English co-ordinator now plans to moderate this work with individual teachers so as to standardise teachers' judgements on attainment. The school is now working towards developing a consistent school system for all other subjects linked to recent national guidance.
44. There are very good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and learning support assistants are fully aware of the different needs of these pupils and, as a result, help them to meet the targets set in their individual education plans and statements. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' Statements of Educational Needs. As well as the well-maintained register of special educational needs, the school has also drawn up a register of more able pupils. Teachers are aware of the specific needs of these pupils and most are successful in providing for them through challenging teaching at all stages of lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. From talking to parents at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection and from replies received on the returned questionnaires, it is clear that the majority of parents think that this is a good school. Many parents have specifically chosen this school above others locally although they live out of the catchment area. In particular, parents say that their child likes the school, the teaching is good, their child is making good progress and the school expects children to work hard and achieve of their best. A significant minority deny that their child gets enough homework, the school works closely with parents, they are kept well informed about their child's progress or there are sufficient activities outside of school. Whilst the inspection agrees with the positive views it cannot, on evidence gathered, corroborate the negative opinions.
46. The quality of information that the school provides for its parents is very good and a strength of the school. Each parent receives a very comprehensible yearly pupil report, a prospectus and the annual governors' report. All documents comply fully with statutory requirements. In addition parents receive: regular, informative newsletters, a home/school agreement and copies of the

homework and behaviour policies. There are two, very well attended meet-the-teacher evening each year and an open-door policy for meeting all staff. Regular curriculum evenings have been held for mathematics and ICT. In September there are separate key stage meetings for parents to discuss the next year's work. Child/parent induction meetings and the facility for parents to sit in with new children to the school are popular with parents and provide evidence of the school's care for pupils.

47. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning is good and well appreciated by the school. During the inspection several parents were in classes helping with reading, art and computer work, and aiding visits out of school. At home parents like receiving the home/school reading book in which they can receive information and respond. Where they can, at home, many parents help their children with mathematics, reading, spelling and particular projects and topics. The school particularly appreciates the high percentage of parents who become involved in their children's individual educational plans and attend reviews.
48. The impact overall of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. At Christmas time and for other shows many mothers work very hard by making costumes for the drama club. Also, the school's very energetic parent/teachers association has raised considerable funds by arranging fetes, fairs and other social and sponsored events. Financial help has gone towards play equipment, the library, a television, digital cameras and a video. Recently the association has sponsored millennium coins and a Jubilee gazebo.
49. The school now has effective links with its parents. These links have improved since the last inspection to a point where they contribute directly to the benefit of the children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher has excellent leadership and personal skills which she uses to give the school a clear sense of direction. Through her open style of discussion, purposeful teamwork and evaluation she has a very perceptive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. She uses this very effectively to bring coherence to the improvements that are thereby identified. The school's vision is based clearly on providing a rich learning environment with high expectations and challenge. There is a very good sense of community throughout the school, supported by the staff, the many visitors and the governors, who share this clear vision for the school. The staff work co-operatively in most respects to make good provision for the pupils. The procedures for performance management are excellent and are used constructively to direct further improvements. This, together with the procedures for monitoring and evaluation, is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching and hence on standards. The headteacher has a good working relationship with the governing body which ensures that they are closely involved in the work of the school.
51. The headteacher and senior staff give excellent leadership for school developments. Their decisions, in co-operation with the governing body, are having a clear, positive impact on the quality of work and standards in the school. The school has made good improvements in the issues identified at the last inspection. For example, the science curriculum is now well structured. Assessment procedures are very good and inform further planning and teaching. The school received a Schools Curriculum Award in 2002, recognising many strengths, and in particular that teachers have assembled their own schemes of work for several subjects, as an expression of individual quality. There are good arrangements to include all groups of pupils in the life and work of the school.
52. The governing body has a very good understanding of its responsibilities and fulfils them very well. They visit the school both by formal visits and informally so that they are active and informed in fulfilling their role. In this way they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this effectively in agreeing priorities. They are committed to and capable of giving a good lead for the direction of the school and take an active part in making decisions. The governors have good procedures to monitor financial planning and evaluate the effects of their spending decisions conscientiously for example, how the ICT facilities are used or the contribution to the Year 6 quiet room to children's learning. The identified priorities are thoroughly

costed and the school's financial planning is effective, although the priorities are not linked directly enough to intended improvements in standards. This is also the case for the school's development plan. The governors' finance committee takes careful account of all forms of need and sets a balanced budget based on priorities. The school secretary and cluster group bursar work very well with the headteacher and governors to ensure that there is good oversight of the finances and budget. Funding from specific grants is used effectively for its designated purpose. The governors look appropriately for the benefit to pupils' learning in their spending decisions but are less clear in expressing direct links with raising standards. There are good procedures to enable all members of staff and the governors to contribute to forward planning.

53. The provision for special educational needs is good and is supported through very effective management. Funding and specific grants for SEN are used well for the benefit of the children. The learning support assistant and the classroom assistants make a particularly good daily contribution to the children's learning so that they make good progress. The governors ensure that provision for special educational needs is fully in place.
54. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to provide for the pupils' learning, although the school has experienced considerable difficulty in recruiting teachers. The school secretaries provide a friendly first point of contact for parents with the school; they are efficient and reliable in their work for the school. The caretaker and cleaning staff are cheerful and hard-working in ensuring that the school is cleaned and maintained to a good standard. The accommodation is satisfactory, with several good features such as the Year 6 quiet area that has recently been re-designed. A central space is used effectively as a computer suite, which now provides suitable facilities and good opportunities to link as a resource for all subjects. The library is adequate but is not suitable for large groups working there. The level and condition of learning resources are satisfactory, and good overall in the Foundation Stage. A few artefacts from different cultures complement some displays in the school to promote understanding of cultural diversity.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Raise standards:

- a) in English, by
- providing more opportunities for writing across the curriculum;
 - and ensuring that in all subjects good presentation of pupils' written work, including handwriting, spelling and punctuation, receives consistent expectation by all staff. (Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 6, 75, 76, 81)
- b) in mathematics, by
- widening the opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum;
 - reconsidering the requirements of the National Curriculum for mathematics, giving due attention to each attainment target and the level descriptors;
 - applying numeracy skills across the wider mathematics curriculum. (Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 6, 87, 88, 89, 90)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	22	19	9	0	0	0
Percentage	4	42	37	17	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 around two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		39

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	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	19	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	26	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (81)	84 (84)	87 (87)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	9
	Girls	17	18	16
	Total	27	28	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (81)	90 (87)	81 (81)
	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	18	14	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	16
	Girls	11	10	14
	Total	22	21	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (81)	66 (77)	94 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	17
	Girls	11	10	14
	Total	21	21	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (90)	66 (84)	97 (87)
	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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	175
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)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	29.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	123

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	491314
Total expenditure	474628
Expenditure per pupil	2271
Balance brought forward from previous year	47329
Balance carried forward to next year	64015

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	205
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	45	3	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	41	10	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	59	7	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	47	19	1	4
The teaching is good.	45	44	7	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	45	22	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	41	5	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	42	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	37	37	18	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	34	53	8	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	48	10	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	37	22	8	5

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

55. The arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage of their education are good and a strength of the school. Children are given a very positive start in the reception class with the quality of learning very good as a result of very high quality teaching.
56. Nearly all of the children have nursery or pre-school playgroup experience in preparation for entry into formal education. Standards on entry to the reception class show a wide range of abilities but are mostly well below average in English and mathematics. This reflects the historical picture. Standards in previous years as seen in data from the local authority show children's communication and mathematical skills are generally below, or well below, the local average. Children make good progress in the reception class. By the time they enter Year 1 most children attain below the standards expected in language and mathematical skills; only a small number of children have begun tasks that are at a standard appropriate to Year 1. Children are excited by their work and have positive attitudes and good relationships with adults and each other.
57. The quality and range of the curriculum provided are very good. They are broad, balanced and a relevant foundation to support children's learning. The curriculum is drawn from the Foundation Stage six areas of learning. All adults working in the reception class monitor children's learning. Assessments of progress are made against the lesson objectives drawn from the 'Early Learning Goals'. These assessments enable the teacher to group children carefully to ensure that future tasks support and challenge learning. The national literacy and numeracy projects for reception classes have been adopted and offer good support to communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The work in the reception class is fully focused upon including all children in all activities. Children with special educational needs, including those with specific gifts and talents, are identified early and the programmes they follow are carefully matched to meet their specific needs. Progress for all children is thus very good.
58. The classroom is stimulating and safe with learning resources that are appropriate and used well. The space is carefully organised to provide a language-rich environment that supports each area of the Foundation Stage. Children see their work valued through careful displays, including, for example, their collage of animals and plants in the 'Kenyan Jungle'. Children have a good range of imaginatively and creatively planned spaces within the classroom. Areas to support learning include giving children the opportunity to 'work' in the home corner travel agency as well as with the play people house, adopting different roles and characters. Once children have completed adult-directed tasks their self-chosen activities include having computer access and extending their mathematical knowledge of capacity and weight with water and sand investigations. Children have the use of a 'quiet corner' to talk quietly with an adult, share a book or listen to music or a taped story. A technology and creative area with the opportunity to use paints, papers, and other collage materials is located within the room. In the immediate outside area children can practise counting pegs onto the washing line and use laundry equipment from the period of the teacher's grandmother to wash their dirty 'T- shirts'.
59. Resources for learning are good. There is access to an outdoor area specifically designed for the children with a shed that becomes a house and a range of bikes and other large play equipment. Grass, trees and wooden seating make it a favourite outdoor classroom for sharing a story, having a class discussion or drinks and snacks at playtime. Because the area is sited away from the reception room it is difficult to give children free interaction in this area. Use has to be carefully planned. Unfortunately, if the whole class uses the area at the same time space is tight and activities have to be rather static. Usually groups, with the support of an adult, use the area in turn for scientific type investigations. Reception children also have sessions in the school hall where they use a range of equipment to develop their co-ordination and physical skills.

60. The school day is well organised to support and develop basic skills. Each day reception children undertake activities linked to the literacy and numeracy projects as well as, for example, science work in their investigations of knowledge and understanding of the world. These activities are adult-directed and supported, though children also work independently and in small groups, managing their own pace of learning. Upon completion of these directed tasks children move into more informal activities, developing independent study skills through structured play. Creative art and design and music sessions, along with other elements of knowledge and understanding of the world such as information and communication technology, history and geography, also occur. Physical activities, including the opportunity to cut, stick, manipulate malleable materials and use small world construction equipment as well as more formal physical education sessions also take place.
61. The quality of teaching is very good overall with the teacher whose imaginative flair often generates an excitement and enthusiasm for learning that is excellent. This was particularly seen when she demonstrated how her grandmother did the weekly wash 70 years ago and also during African dancing. Staff have had training in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The teacher and supporting adults know the children very well and plan opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in each area of the curriculum. The teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for older pupils and ensures that all activities will support and give a good foundation for future work. Teaching is focused upon giving the children a full range of language and social skills, to enhance learning. No subject is taught in isolation; rather each session's focus supports and develops skills and understanding in other curriculum areas, especially developing speaking and listening skills. The teacher has very high expectations that children will behave well, and will think and listen as well as work hard at all they are asked to do.
62. Adults form a strong and supportive team. All ensure that children enjoy their tasks, concentrate and persevere. The management of children is very good. Generally children are encouraged to be independent while supported to develop confidence to be so. Sometimes, however, supporting adults do not challenge children as fully as they should; the pace within a group slows and children capable of working to a higher level of challenge are not extended to do so. Children are actively involved with their learning, especially learning from play activities designed to give them practice in working together. Each session starts with the teacher sharing what is to be learned and, as they complete their work, children have the opportunity to discuss it with an adult to check understanding. Children thus have good knowledge of their own learning, are making very good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide curriculum and put considerable effort into their work. When children are engaged on more practical activities adults track attitudes and progress and this information contributes to planning a broad and rich curriculum. As a result of this adult planning, monitoring and assessment, children with special educational needs are identified quickly and targeted support is planned to ensure learning for these children is good.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. From registration at the start of the day to the story at the end staff focus all activities on children's personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is very good and the children make good progress. As a result children are well on the way to achieving the levels expected for five-year-olds. Staff work very hard to provide an environment where respect, understanding and the recognition and appreciation that we are all different but have something to contribute lie beneath all the work. As a result the children settle quickly into class routines and develop a sense of belonging to the school community. The staff are good role models. Children see them relate to each other, to themselves and others and their parents with care, consideration and politeness. As a result children are developing positive self-images and learn that all are special.
64. Children are encouraged to listen to others' opinions and think things through for themselves. Children clearly enjoy their work and co-operate happily with each other and adults. Staff consistently reinforce good habits such as putting up hands to answer questions or make a comment, taking turns and making sure they tidy up after activities. Very rarely do they do

things for children though they will tidy with them to show good practice especially when the equipment is difficult to manage. Children are also encouraged to select free flow activities thoughtfully and work with care and consideration for others. Independence is encouraged as children change for physical education, put on paint aprons, help each other do up fastenings, hang up coats and bags and put lunch boxes correctly on the trolleys and collect them again at home time.

Communication, language and literacy

65. The development of communication, language and literacy skills is good. Because of the high quality of teaching most children make good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage, although most will still be below expected levels in reading and writing, a small number will reach the standards expected for children of this age in speaking and listening and will be ready for the transition to Key Stage 1 work. Children follow the National Literacy Strategy for younger children in formal English lessons. They know that pictures and printed words have meaning, that books have an order and that the words can be a story, a poem or give information. Children learn a range of words used regularly as well as combining letters and sounds in their reading and their own writing. Children take a book to share with their parents at home and have a record book for parents to record reading experiences. Although some children are better at identifying letters and words in print than others, all the children are readers in that they frequently tell the story from the initial letter, the key vocabulary and the illustrations.
66. The teacher uses the literacy strategy well to meet the developing needs of these young readers and this effectively enhances their listening, speaking and reading skills. The formal teaching of phonics, with the sounding of the phonemes, the identification of syllables and the match of developing handwriting skills to their phonic work, encourages children to develop their early writing skills. The teacher tries to use precise and clear diction to assist children to hear fully each part of a word and encourages them to reply in clear sentences. Some children in their own writing use the skill of breaking a word down into small sound patterns. A few children are attempting to start their writing with a capital letter and end with a full stop. Children write for a number of purposes. They record their news and stories and experiments and observations in knowledge and understanding of the world as well as for grammar and handwriting practice. Although the timetable has specific literacy times, language development is very important regardless of the area. In the 'travel agency' children have to listen carefully to each other when 'buying holidays', 'reading' the brochures, and discussing the best times to travel and work out costs. The vocabulary of mathematics is reinforced, especially when counting the numbers in class during morning registration or into groups for activities. Where a topic has a specific and distinct vocabulary children are encouraged to listen to and use correctly the technical language. This was especially evident when children looked at laundry equipment.

Mathematical development

67. Children's mathematical development is good through very good teaching and the range of activities to support learning. All but a few children are achieving levels below the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are consolidating and developing their number skills through very effective teaching. The use of the national numeracy project is supported by number reinforcement across the curriculum.
68. Children count objects into groups for activities that build up a sense of number. They use positional order to identify those who will hold doors open, carry resources and help others. Most children identify the two numbers that make up a double-digit number such as 12. Nearly all children have the skills to count up to 20 and back from 10; a third can do so from 20 in two's with ease. Over half of the children identify a number position in a number line by the shape of the number up to 10 while over three-quarters can find a missing number by counting up to it. Children are aware of number operations such as adding one more and most subtract by taking one off. Children name two-dimensional shapes such as squares and circles as well as three-dimensional dice and cones. Children are becoming aware of capacity and measure in the water and sand trays. The travel agency reinforces work on money, with children working out the cost

of holidays.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Most children are on course to meet the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching is very good and adults provide many exciting activities to promote this area of development. The children explore the natural and man-made world in the development of their scientific skills. The joy of jumping in a muddy puddle and seeing how the 'hole' disappears after a few seconds occupied one group while another used water to 'paint' a picture on a paving slab and see what happened when the sun shone on it. When a third group were comparing a balloon filled with helium gas to a football filled with air, most had the opportunity to use bubble mixture to blow huge bubbles and to look at the shape the bubble became and the colours within the bubble. All these and many other activities not only encouraged them to ask questions about the world they live in but also gave the children a sense of wonderment at the world around them.
70. Using the text "Mrs Wishy Washy" the teacher taught the children how to use observation to make comparisons between then and now, the home life of her grandmother and that of their parents today. Using a range of laundry equipment made by her husband, the teacher demonstrated how wash day was hard work in the days before electric washing machines, spin dryers and modern soap powders. The area immediately outside the room then became the laundry for small groups to wash 'dirty' T-shirts brought in from home. Children develop their design and making skills well through building, for instance, using interlocking plastic bricks and other construction toys. They use the computer with confidence and independence and handle the mouse with increasing dexterity to select items on the screen. They know the way round the school through their use of the hall for physical education and lunch as well as taking the register to the office in the morning and before afternoon school starts. Children know and discuss relationships within families, knowing that their parents have parents who are older and that they are younger than their parents are. They know that to keep healthy they must clean their teeth, wash their hands after visits to the toilet and before meals, change their clothes regularly and brush their hair.

Physical development

71. Children's physical development is good and most will reach the goals set for this area of learning. Teaching is good. All adults ensure that children have access to and use skilfully and accurately a wide range of tools such as pencils, crayons, scissors and glue to write, and make pictures and models. Children develop their physical skills indoors as well as during outdoor activities and are well co-ordinated and agile. They are able to use a range of construction equipment, for example, fitting blocks together to make buildings, a car and furniture. Children move round the classroom carefully and without bumping into each other or knocking things over. In physical education work they are developing the eye/hand co-ordination necessary for team games work further up the school through using balls, beanbags and hoops.
72. Children work on larger equipment outside, using the space available to ride their bikes and trikes with control, being very aware of their safety and that of others. In dance children enjoy the movements and music of Africa linked to their work on Kenya, and during the Jubilee celebrations converted one of their outdoor cars into a Safari jeep to lead the 'dance troupe' out of the hall after the assembly. They share such resources very well and there is no problem when changing over from one piece to another. Children manipulate the mouse and keyboard of a computer carefully to control programs, clicking the cursor on icons to produce a range of effects and carrying items from one part of the screen to another, dropping it into place. Children manipulate brushes, printing materials and work in two- and three-dimensions, using a range of papers and other materials creatively.

Creative development

73. Children's creative development is good because the quality of teaching is good. Children have a wide range of materials and develop well the physical skills to enable them to produce pictures and models. Children sing, draw, paint and crayon; they cut, stick and make models and collage in both big and small scale. They use model figures and construction toys imaginatively, with small figures, dolls and puppets acting out their stories. Most children are likely to achieve the expectations for this area by the time they begin Year 1.
74. Children hold brushes correctly and apply paint to paper with confidence, accuracy and with good awareness of shape, pattern and colour. They are able to mix a range of colours and use these to make print pictures. Collages are made using a range of papers, cards and plastics and different joins with glues and tapes. In role-play they imagine that they are in a travel agency, while in carpet sessions and in literacy work they appreciate rhymes, poems and imaginative stories, especially well-known tales such as 'Mrs Wishy Washy' and well-known counting songs and nursery rhymes.

ENGLISH

75. Standards in English in the work seen are below what is expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are below average for pupils currently in Year 2. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are in line with those expected for pupils in Year 6 but are below average in writing. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Baseline assessment shows that many children enter the reception class with levels of attainment in communication and literacy that are low for their age. Despite their very good learning, many still have well below average attainment when they enter compulsory education. Given their attainment on entry, pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Although standards are not as good as those reported at the time of the last inspection because the number of pupils with special educational needs has increased, the quality of teaching and learning is better than it was. The school now analyses its results closely to identify areas for improvement and has successfully implemented the National Literacy and the Additional Literacy Strategies. The subject co-ordinator effectively monitors teaching and the quality of planning. These initiatives, including much improved assessment procedures, are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching pupils are receiving. There are appropriate plans in place to raise the profile of writing. The school is now well placed to meet its very challenging targets for pupils at the end of Year 6.
76. The results of the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 2, show that standards in reading and writing were below the national average although the percentage of pupils attaining standards above those expected was close to the national average. Unconfirmed results for 2002 show an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining expected standards. The school attributes this to the effectiveness of the Additional Literacy Strategy, which is helping to raise the attainment of pupils who are achieving just below the national expectation. The unpublished results for 2002 indicate a significant increase in the proportion of pupils attaining standards above those expected compared with last year. In the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6, standards achieved by pupils were below the national average. Sixty nine per cent of pupils attained the national expectation or above compared to 84 per cent nationally. These standards were well below the average for similar schools. Taking the three years 1999 to 2001 together, the performance of pupils in English was in line with the national average. The school explains that the decline in standards last year was caused by the higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs in that year group.
77. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good overall. There was little difference between teaching in Years 1 and 2 and that in Years 3 to 6. In six whole-class lessons seen, teaching was excellent in one, very good in two, good in one and satisfactory in two. Another lesson was seen in Year 6 where pupils with special educational needs were receiving specific support. The high quality of this support ensured that these pupils made good progress in their learning. All evidence indicates that pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support which ensures that they make progress similar to that of their peers. Particular strengths of the teaching are teachers' planning and their knowledge and understanding

of the subject. Other strengths of the good and better teaching are teachers' high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and good pupil management, achieved through a good range of teaching strategies. In lessons which are otherwise satisfactory, teachers do not continue to teach and challenge pupils rigorously at appropriate levels as they work on group tasks. As a result, the amount and quality of pupils' work are not as good as they should be and they do not learn as much as they could. Learning support assistants are well organised and are confident in their work.

78. Across the school, pupils learn to listen carefully to their teachers and to follow instructions. Teachers are generally successful in engaging the interest of pupils of all abilities during whole-class sessions. Pupils readily join in discussing the shared text, and teachers give good encouragement by listening carefully and appreciating the quality of answers. As a result, most pupils try hard to explain their answers clearly. Their growing confidence in speaking in class and at assemblies is a direct result of the strong relationships established in the school. Teachers speak clearly so that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are fully included and involved. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson where boys and girls of all abilities were confidently reading their poems to the rest of the class knowing that their efforts would be appreciated and applauded. Across the curriculum subject specific language is taught, enriching pupils' vocabulary.
79. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and this supports their learning. Reading development is supported by progressively graded reading materials and by careful monitoring of pupils' learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are systematically taught the relationships between letters and sounds so as to develop their reading skills. Because of this emphasis on teaching basic skills, most pupils, by the end of Year 2, employ this knowledge well to enhance meaning and to read unfamiliar words. About 60 per cent of pupils in Year 2 read simple passages of writing with accuracy and understanding. They express opinions of poems and stories by identifying their favourite aspects. Teachers and learning support assistants focus clearly on understanding the meaning of the text in guided reading sessions so that pupils learn to read with expression and understanding. The whole-class reading session at the beginning of lessons is well used to motivate pupils' interest in reading. Story times at the end of the school day are also effectively used to give pupils a love of books and to develop their listening skills.
80. By the end of Year 6, most pupils read longer texts with concentration and understanding. Higher attaining pupils show good understanding of a variety of texts, identifying crucial features, themes and characters, as for example, in Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by materials carefully graded to meet their needs. Reading surveys show that many of the pupils in the school are members of the local library and take part in the library scheme to read a certain number of books each year. The great majority of pupils throughout the school continue to develop their reading at home, supported by their parents. Very good home-school links are maintained through up-to-date reading records. Good opportunities for independent research support pupils' independent reading skills.
81. Standards of handwriting are below average throughout the school, reflecting a lack of a consistent policy in the past. Pupils in all year groups now have regular practice and are learning to write in a joined style. Standards in spelling are also weak but these are also improving through good teaching of spelling skills and the setting of regular spelling tests. In a very good Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were learning to spell words such as *helicopter*, *computer* and *material* using their new knowledge of syllables. Analysis of pupils' work shows that the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school. It needs to be more focused on improving writing, spelling and presentation across the curriculum.
82. By the end of Year 2, guided by good teaching, about 50 per cent of pupils write clearly and give sufficient detail in their writing to engage the reader. They are given good opportunities to write for a variety of purposes as, for example, they describe in some detail how to play football, or write a character description of the Worst Witch in response to the class text. Growing understanding of the use of punctuation is shown in the use of capital letters and full stops to punctuate correctly structured sentences. Handwriting, although not joined, shows accurate and consistent letter formation. Less able pupils, particularly those supported by the Additional Literacy Strategy, learn to communicate meaning beyond a simple statement. Individual ideas are developed in short sections and pupils are learning to use punctuation to demarcate units of meaning. Individual targets are well used to help pupils remember to write neatly, to start a sentence with a capital letter and to end with a full stop, and to check their spellings. Increasing use is being made of other subjects to improve pupils' writing. Written work on Florence Nightingale in history, and reporting their work on electricity in science, are good examples of this.

83. Evidence from lessons and the analysis of pupils' work, shows that there is a good emphasis on giving pupils in Years 3 to 6 an increasingly wide range of purposes and audiences for writing. Some very good examples of stories, plays, character studies, poetry and persuasive writing were seen. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils write well, using paragraphs effectively to develop their ideas interestingly. They use punctuation, including exclamation marks, speech marks and commas, correctly and use strategies such as personification, metaphors and repeating patterns to create suspense. Expressions such as 'Burning red hot eyes, staring out heavy hearted', and 'A deadly hurricane screamed at me', show how deeply pupils think about their writing, and how well they are taught to use words for effect to enhance their work. Pupils' work shows that this insistence on using interesting vocabulary is consistent. The Year 3 teacher, for example, challenged a pupil to 'use the Thesaurus to find a better word.' Pupils of average attainment in Year 6 are also learning to develop their ideas in an interesting way and are choosing words adventurously for effect. This is helping to improve the quality of their work.
84. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to make progress in learning, as, for example, when they are engaged in the phonological awareness training programme which is designed to improve their reading and spelling. Pupils' personal targets e.g. 'to improve use of paragraphs', show that teachers use these well to show pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Work on display in history, for example, shows the increasing opportunities for writing in other subjects. Year 6 pupils write diaries of 'My journey with Drake', and give extended descriptions of 'Life on board the Mary Rose'
85. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve standards. There is a good range of books and resources to support teaching and learning. The limited library areas are well organised and attractive. Homework is well used to support pupils' learning. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development as they consider emotions in their poetry writing and issues such as the care of the environment in their persuasive writing. A very good example of this was seen when a Year 6 pupil wrote in her poem on the theme 'Happy Family':
- 'Who breaks through walls of silence?
Who connects hope to hope?
Who lightens the world?
Brother Laughter
86. English also makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development as they are provided with opportunities to study a range of literature from their own and other cultures.

MATHEMATICS

87. Children's standards in mathematics on entry to the reception class vary widely but most are well below those of similar schools. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6; however, pupils make good progress and achieve well overall. The results of the 2001 national tests were well below average in comparison with similar schools, mainly because of the lower percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. However, the unpublished results of the national tests for 2002 indicate a significant increase in the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and this matches the evidence of the inspection about the school's efforts towards higher standards. Attainment in lessons seen during the inspection across the school shows the majority of pupils achieving in line with national expectations in work linked to the national numeracy strategy. This indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. However, work related to other areas of the mathematics curriculum, including shape and measure, was below the standards expected overall.
88. By the end of Year 2 standards are below average. Younger pupils identified patterns in addition and subtraction sums and used these skills to predict the next answer in a series of sums. By the end of the session they knew that addition and subtraction are related operations. They are developing the skills of identifying the sum in an investigation or written problem and working out

the answer using number patterns. Pupils in Year 2 recognise odd and even numbers, add 2-digit numbers using the 100 square and use a 'bingo' card game to identify and cover numbers that match a variety of descriptions. This game reinforced pupils' knowledge and understanding of correct mathematical vocabulary effectively as well as their listening skills. Pupils in Year 2 count to, recognise and read numbers into the hundreds as well as counting on in 10's and 5's to 50. Most pupils count back in 10's from 50 and 5's from 20 and higher attaining pupils do so in two's.

89. Attainment in shape and measure is below the expected level overall. Most pupils name two-dimensional shapes and know their common properties but are less secure with three-dimensional ones. Pupils have used common measures to identify the weight and size of a range of classroom items such as books, boxes and other regular shapes and, having collected information using tally and tick charts, sort and display their answers using Carroll and Venn diagrams. Mathematics is used well to support other areas of the curriculum; for instance, pupils weighed out the ingredients for cookies in food technology and ate them in an evaluation of flavour, recording their findings in a block graph.
90. Pupils continue to make good progress across Years 3 to 5 so that by Year 6, although standards are still below the national average, learning is good overall. During the inspection pupils in Year 6 were expected to combine a range of mathematical skills to measure the height of a tree. Scrutiny of their books shows that pupils have worked on common shapes such as triangles, have measured angles using a protractor and have worked out how to record lengths using 1cm: 1m scales. However, when required to put all these skills together, pupils reacted as though each area was being introduced for the first time. The teacher had to go back to basics for each of the above before pupils were able to go out into the grounds to make their measurements.
91. Across the school the strategies for teaching numeracy skills are good. The use of the Numeracy Strategy format of mental recall at the beginning of each session linked to the main teaching focus helps pupils make good progress in their learning. It is followed by a range of practice activities appropriate for groups of pupils of different abilities followed by a consolidation session. This was well demonstrated in Year 3 when in the mental recall session using a games format groups rapidly added three numbers together and tried to get "three correct answers in a row" to win. This linked into the main teaching focus - looking for number bonds to help with adding three and four numbers together - and into a range of activities appropriate for pupils of different abilities. In this session pupils with particular talents in mathematics moved from regular numbers to looking for bonds with decimal numbers. The lesson ended with an opportunity for pupils to consolidate their learning by problem solving, including adding sums of money.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, securing good progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with a talent in the subject. The mental sessions are lively and challenging, convey a sense of urgency and fully involve all pupils. Teachers have been well trained in delivering the National Numeracy Strategy and have very clear knowledge and understanding of how to teach basic skills and measure the progress and achievement of pupils. Planning is well drawn from the strategy documentation and teachers use a range of resources to support their work. Although worksheets are used, they do not dominate the work, but are chosen to enable pupils to practise previously taught skills and confirm accuracy of learning. Teachers have very high expectations that pupils will behave well, that they will put considerable effort into work and work productively, concentrating to acquire new skills and knowledge and develop understanding and interest in mathematics.
93. Teachers use homework to reinforce class work, encouraging pupils to learn core information such as their tables and number bonds that can become tools for more advanced work. Pupils respond very positively to such very good teaching. They are very interested and involved in all activities, especially during practical work such as measuring the height of a tree or playing number reinforcement games. Relationships with teachers and supporting adults as well as with others in their classes are very good; in the majority, pupils try to help each other's understanding of mathematical concepts and happily share resources, collaborating willingly in group activities.

Within older classes there is a healthy spirit of competition, though pupils are well aware of the boundaries, and there is general acceptance that they have personal responsibility for their actions.

94. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. He is able to monitor lessons to identify good practice as well as areas for improvement. If teachers have a need he can arrange to teach alongside them in their own class, or arrange time for them to watch him give a demonstration lesson with his own class. He ensured that all teaching staff received training in the National Numeracy Strategy and that resources to implement the strategy fully are available, especially for the mental start to lessons. The school is beginning to use ICT to support mathematics, making useful links and providing opportunities for both reinforcement as well as new ideas. While the curriculum is firmly focused on the Numeracy Strategy, there are too few opportunities to develop pupils' skills further in other curriculum areas - for example, in shapes, measures and data handling - to raise standards to match those in number and the Numeracy Strategy.

SCIENCE

95. Standards of the work seen in Year 2 are broadly average. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. In the teacher assessments for 2001, standards were well below both the national average and the average in similar schools.
96. Standards of the work seen in Year 6 are also broadly average. This, too, is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when standards were below average. In the national tests for science in summer 2001, standards overall were average. More pupils gained the expected Level 4, and fewer gained the higher Level 5 than average. However, the unreported results of the national tests for 2002 indicate a significant increase in the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5, reflecting the school's efforts to raise standards. When compared with similar schools, standards in 2001 were average. The trend in results for science from 1997 to 2001 shows that the overall school's performance was just above the national trend. The performances of boys and girls were close to the boys' and girls' national averages, with the boys some one term ahead of the girls in their progress.
97. Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory knowledge of the body, building on work from Year 1. They know the main parts and some internal organs, such as heart and lungs. Through their physical education they know that exercise helps to keep the body healthy, and that the heart beats faster and we breathe faster during exercise to bring more air, or oxygen, to our muscles. In a very well presented lesson that captured pupils' interest very well, the teacher showed photographs of herself and her sister when younger, inviting the children to notice and explain differences between them. The children showed a high level of respect as well as interest and affection as they described features that were the same or different. This led into a task to classify each child according to criteria of eye and hair colour. The children demonstrated good understanding of the positions on the Venn diagram, with only a few uncertain. Previous work shows that pupils have a broadly satisfactory knowledge of different materials and properties such as stretching or twisting. They have the skills to make simple records - for example, of how a car goes down a ramp at differing heights. 'I think it goes frister and frister', explained one child, clearly understanding the basic principle. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of forces, and have experimented with surfaces to find out which are the best to travel on. They understand the effects of pushing and pulling, and when we might use these.
98. Pupils also know the importance of keeping fit and having a healthy diet, listing such foods as dairy produce, fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, and breads. Pupils have good experience of simple investigations - for example, looking at how ice melts in contrasting places - and are beginning to understand the need to control their experiments and to record results carefully. They have also studied mini-beasts, such as a caterpillar, and know many appliances that use electricity. Overall, pupils' work indicates average understanding and skills, based on good first-hand experience and discussion, although several have difficulty in recording their work.
99. Within Years 3 to 6 teachers build on the good practical basis of the infant years. In Year 3, for example, a well-planned lesson with clear learning objectives encouraged pupils to experiment with light, and which materials would form a shadow. The good emphasis on correct language, such as 'opaque' and 'translucent', helped pupils to observe and describe. The teacher placed

greater expectations on the higher attaining pupils to write and explain more of their findings. While most pupils reached sensible conclusions few approached the task in a controlled and methodical way. In Year 4, the teacher's clear emphasis on the conditions animals need for their habitat helped reinforce pupils' understanding of safety, food and shelter as characteristics. The teacher made very good use of the school grounds by arranging for groups of pupils to look for animals in a chosen habitat, and they returned excitedly to share their findings. In Year 5, the lesson built well on the morning physical education session when pupils had energetic exercise to raise their pulse, measuring these at intervals. The pupils described their feeling tired, hot, out of breath and even light-headed - all of which were related well by the class teacher to their body's need for more oxygen, although with little elaboration and reinforcement to raise pupils' understanding. The pupils demonstrated good attitudes as they worked, and a satisfactory understanding of the effects of exercise as they interpreted the pulse rates.

100. In a lesson in Year 6, that entailed taking considerable risks as to the outcome, the class teacher set a very challenging task: to make a simple electro-magnet, using a few components such as wire and an iron nail, strong enough to pick up pins. She established attention and interest well, using her very good subject knowledge to recall and explain previous work on a magnetic field - which several pupils described accurately. The higher attaining pupils understood quickly from her demonstration with a battery and wire that an electric current forms a magnetic field since the iron filings formed a similar pattern of lines to the magnet. The pupils applied a good range of ideas to create the effect but depended on further demonstration by the teacher to understand how wrapping wire around the nail created the magnetic field. The higher attaining pupils showed good understanding and skill, taking on the task well. Overall, the pupils understood the basic idea of an electro-magnet, and that with more coils there was a stronger field. The pupils' enthusiasm for a practical task, coupled with the very good teaching, resulted in the pupils making good progress. The practical conditions, and having only four sets of equipment to some thirty children, tended to limit the practical experience, as did the adults' too early demonstration of wrapping a wire around the nail instead of posing questions. Previous work shows satisfactory coverage of the science curriculum, with a good emphasis on practical work, recording the results and interpretation.
101. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good, with a few examples of very good teaching, notably in Years 2 and 6. Teachers use questions effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and to probe their understanding. They have good relationships with the children that motivate them well to learn so that they have good interest and attitudes. The teachers set clear objectives and manage the pupils well, with quietly spoken correction when needed. They create a good atmosphere for learning so that pupils' efforts and findings are recognised. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge through their explanations and their probing questioning, which enables them to elicit ideas and good answers from the pupils. The pace is usually good and the pupils work well together, which has a good effect on their learning. By undertaking a fair test, pupils are beginning to understand the need to control conditions, and to repeat an experiment. The very good teaching matches the work and expectations closely to pupils' needs and ensures they all make good progress. The teachers give good attention to the skills of speaking by inviting pupils to talk to the class about their observations. A few pupils are very articulate and explain well. Numeracy skills were used in several lessons where pupils drew charts and made tables of results of their investigations. There is very good support in science for pupils with special educational needs, who are integrated well into the lessons.
102. The subject is managed well, and the school has made good progress in improving the quality of experience and standards since the last inspection. There is an agreed policy for the subject and a nationally published scheme of work is used effectively. Resources are satisfactory and should be extended as funds allow. The marking of work is up to date, although few comments indicate and confirm discussions about how pupils may improve. The procedures for assessment are good and monitoring arrangements for the subject are in place.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards of attainment in art and design match the national expectation for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Despite the recent emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics, standards have been successfully maintained since the last inspection.
104. The quality of teaching of art and design is good overall. Of the four lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was very good in one, good in two, and satisfactory in one. Teaching in the art club is of high quality and this does much to enhance pupils' learning and their sense of achievement. The expertise of a very confident learning support assistant is effectively used to support learning during this activity. Work seen in lessons and on display shows that pupils are given good opportunities to work with a range of media, materials and techniques, with satisfactory outcomes overall. Lessons are well planned and resourced with a good emphasis on teaching the correct skills and techniques. As a result of this focus on the teaching of skills and of teachers' secure knowledge of the subject, pupils make good progress in learning to apply different skills and techniques in their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well included in all lessons, and the support they receive ensures that they, too, make good progress in their learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so that all know the purpose of the lesson.
105. Although art and design is taught as a discrete subject, teachers give pupils opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects such as history and music. Pupils in Year 6, for example, are taught sewing skills, and apply these well to enhance their work on Victorian-style pictures. Pupils in Year 1 apply their skills of observational drawing when drawing houses in the local area in their work in geography and history. In a good lesson following on from this activity, the class teacher challenged pupils to design tiles for a house and to produce these using clay. The lesson was well organised and skills were progressively developed because the teacher, teaching assistant and parent volunteer were effectively involved in teaching as pupils worked. Parental help and expertise is very effectively used in art lessons throughout the school, and many examples of this were seen during the inspection. Completed work shows that skills and techniques continue to be developed in Year 2 so that, by the time they enter Year 3, most pupils design and make images and artefacts using a range of materials and processes.
106. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their art lessons and most work with deep concentration so as to produce the best work they can. This is particularly true when teachers continue to quietly teach, challenge, and encourage pupils as they work on individual tasks. A good example of this was seen where Year 6 pupils were working in the style of Kandinsky. As a result of active teacher intervention, pupils concentrated well to produce good work representing emotions such as love, peace and hope. In this respect, and in many others, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson were inspired to learn and worked very well to produce simple press prints of mini-beasts linked to their work in science.
107. Completed work and the school's planning show that teachers challenge pupils to consider differences and similarities in the work of artists and craftspeople from different times and cultures. Art from periods studied in history, and from different Commonwealth countries, is well represented in displays round the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils explore ideas, collecting both visual and other information to assist them in developing work. They share ideas and meaning through their knowledge of materials and processes. A particular strength is the way pupils are taught to modify and improve their work to meet their intentions.
108. The subject is very well managed by the headteacher, who acts as a valuable source of information and support for teachers. The scheme of work focuses well on the skills to be developed as well as leaving room for pupils to make independent decisions in their work. Assessment is mostly by outcome but teachers collect and display pupils' work so that they have a good understanding of what different pupils can do. There is a sufficient range of resources to support teaching and learning, although the cramped accommodation makes storage difficult. Good use is made of visits to the National Gallery to support pupils' learning and their cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Due to the school's time-tabling arrangements, only three lessons were observed during the inspection. However, evidence was obtained in discussion with teachers and pupils and by looking at completed work on display and teachers' plans.
110. Pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These standards have been well maintained since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in the three lessons seen was invariably good. These lessons, together with other evidence, indicate that the quality of teaching supports good progress in pupils' learning and has improved since the last inspection. National guidance for the subject has been introduced and this is helping teachers accurately to identify the skills to be taught. The knowledgeable co-ordinator is introducing a new scheme of work, which will continue to identify the skills to be taught, as well as giving better support to teachers in planning their lessons. Where teaching assistants or parents have particular expertise in the subject, such as in food technology, this is well used by class teachers.
111. Teachers are successful in planning tasks that offer interest and challenge at the right level. Analysis of teachers' plans, discussions, work on display and photographic evidence, show that teachers place appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' designing, making and evaluating skills, as, for example, when Year 2 pupils designed and made toys with moving parts. Pupils are expected to evaluate their work as it develops, identifying possible improvements. Food technology is appropriately represented in the school's planning. Pupils bake cakes and biscuits from recipes and design healthy diets linked to their work in science.
112. Although design and technology is taught as a discrete subject, teachers effectively identify links between this and other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 designed and made houses as they were in Love Lane before the Great Fire of London, and Year 5 pupils designed and made a rainforest village linked to their work in geography. Pupils in Year 6 were challenged to use their knowledge of electrical circuits to design and make their own moving vehicles and fairground rides. A fine example of the interesting range of learning experiences provided for pupils was seen in Year 6 during the inspection. Pupils were challenged to design and make a fleet of vehicles for the Mexican Tourist Board, to be used to take small groups of tourists on a trip to see ancient Mexican sites. Through effective questioning the class teacher motivated pupils to consider their designs in light of their intentions and to discuss their work with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils produced good designs, identifying materials, tools and components to be used.
113. Lessons and completed work show that boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in lessons and have full and equal access to the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard to produce good quality work. Their good behaviour and their ability to work constructively together make a strong contribution to their learning. Completed work is generally imaginative and takes account of aesthetic considerations.
114. There is an adequate range of resources to support teaching and learning. These are well managed and are readily available to teachers. The training teachers are receiving in information and communication technology leaves the school well placed to make greater use of this to support pupils' learning in design and technology. The co-ordinator has identified the need for assessment procedures, linked to the new scheme of work, to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively developed year on year. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as teachers ensure that they teach the correct vocabulary and expect pupils to measure and assemble precisely.

GEOGRAPHY

115. Standards in the work seen are below the expectation in Year 2, caused mainly by the difficulty pupils experience in writing and recording their work. Standards meet the expectation by Year 6,

maintaining the position found at the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall and supports good learning by the pupils: because teachers provide good opportunities to investigate the subject and teach through a well-chosen range of activities. The school draws upon national guidance to support teachers' planning, and extends this to adapt the work to the interests and needs of the children. This means that pupils' skills and knowledge are progressively developed through the school.

116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. In Year 1 the class teacher introduced the need for safety as part of their study of the locality, emphasising well the types of safe crossing to use. Most pupils knew the zebra crossing and several explained about the green or red man, but few knew of other ways by name. By Year 2 pupils understand simple plan or side views of features such as a play park. They know the co-ordinate system to locate spaces such as a tree in position D2, or how towns may be identified on a co-ordinate map. A particularly worthwhile study evolved from Barnaby Bear's travels, where he went sight-seeing in Dublin. Parents take photos of Barnaby and send postcards from different countries. These rich opportunities provide strong links with pupils' work in school and contribute well to their wider knowledge of the world. Barnaby's boarding pass is stamped appropriately and children take great pleasure in seeing him in different countries. The school also makes good use of its immediate surroundings. As a result, pupils can express their opinions about the effects of litter and pollution on the land. A good example of a link between geography and design and technology in Year 1 occurred when pupils observed features of streets and houses close to the school and then used them well in their own house designs. Overall, pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of geographical features, and have the early skills to locate places or features on a map, although their recorded work is below the expectation.
117. Within the junior classes pupils have a satisfactory understanding of features and the uses of a river through their study of the River Severn in Year 5. They know about irrigation, how bridging points led to settlements, the significance of rivers for transport and the more recent use for drinking water through treatment works. A lesson brought out some dangers related to rivers, such as flooding, pollution or during recreation, although the quality of discussion led by the teacher was only satisfactory since there was little direct teaching to establish understanding. Pupils in Year 6 studied the ideas of plate tectonics in a very well presented lesson where the teacher's good subject knowledge held pupils interests well and challenged them to explain the macro-movements of the land. Her good use of the overhead projector was shown by her superposition of the fault lines onto a world map outline, demonstrating where mountain ranges coincided. The majority of pupils understood the idea of convection currents within the molten earth as causing movements. They took part well in the lesson, showing good interest and application in support of their learning of new ideas and skills. They have carried out a search on the Internet to research for information, showing suitable skills. The higher attaining pupils make well-informed judgements, express clear views and are able to use their enquiries to form opinions and to hypothesise. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well so that they make similar progress to their peers in the subject. Overall, by Year 6 pupils' previous work indicates that they have gained the skills and understanding across the geography curriculum required to meet the national expectation.
118. There is no subject co-ordinator for geography at present. The subject is supported by the headteacher, and all classes have a suitable programme to cover the elements of the subject progressively through the school. Resources are satisfactory, with atlases and globes available centrally.

HISTORY

119. Due the school's time-tabling arrangements only one history lesson was seen during the inspection. However a second lesson, linked to literacy, was also observed. Evidence from these lessons, from discussions and from analysis of pupils' work in their books and on display, indicates that standards attained by pupils are below those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Year 6. Standards for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are impeded by their below average levels of English, but they make good progress in their learning because teachers are aware of their particular needs. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress in their learning because teachers provide them with good opportunities to research the subject, and teach history through an interesting range of activities. The quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved since the last inspection.
120. The quality of teaching in the history lesson observed was good and resulted in good learning.

Teaching in the literacy lesson, linked to pupils' visit to Colchester Castle, was excellent and resulted in pupils writing precise accounts of their visit. The class teacher had written an account herself, which she challenged pupils to read and to evaluate. This resulted in a high level of interest, and pupils were able to identify parts of the account that were not relevant, such as describing in detail the time spent in the souvenir shop! As a result of this inspired strategy, pupils learnt the importance of selecting correct and precise information to be used in an historical account. Teachers make good use of such visits to support pupils' learning and to capture their interest. Pupils in Year 6, for example, visit Southchurch Hall when studying the Tudors, and pupils in Year 4 visit Maldon when studying the Anglo-Saxons.

121. A particular strength of the teaching is the importance teachers place on pupils' enquiry skills which are so important to the subject. In the Year 2 lesson observed, for example, the class teacher had provided pupils with a good selection of pictures and photographs for them to identify and discuss changes they recognised. This led to good group discussions and, by the end of the lesson, pupils' answers showed that they could compare simple differences between seaside holidays 'long ago' and now. Displays in this class show that pupils use information and communication technology to support their learning, as, for example, when they used 'Colour Magic' for their Fire of London pictures. This topic also led to good extended writing of 'Our Fire of London Stories', and to pupils using their design and technology skills to design and build 'Love Lane' as it had been before the Fire. Their work is highly valued by the class teacher, and it is displayed with care and attention. This is a special feature in the school.
122. In both lessons seen, pupils behaved very well and showed very good attitudes to the subject. Staff and parents who accompanied the trip to Colchester Castle, reported that the pupils were very good ambassadors for their school. As a result of good teaching and pupils' own positive attitudes, pupils continue to make good progress through the school. By the end of Year 6, they select information from a variety of sources, information and communication technology included, and create organised work with appropriate use of terms. They develop a sound sense of chronology as they have been taught that the past is divided into different and distinctive periods of time in their studies of Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Romans and Victorians. Time lines are well used in this respect. Another example of the interesting range of teaching strategies used is the opportunity given to Year 6 pupils to use the digital camera to take pictures of each other. They then put these pictures onto the computer and manipulated them in 'painter' to turn themselves into Tudor ladies or gentlemen. This type of activity helps pupils to remember characteristics of past periods and societies.
123. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. History is given a suitably high profile in the school as may be seen from the quality of work on display. There are good links between history, English, design and technology and art. The school's own book supply is well supplemented by topic loans from the county library service. The subject and its enhancement through interesting activities enrich pupils' experiences and support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion and boys and girls of all abilities are given full and equal access to the curriculum and activities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards meet the expectations of the National Curriculum by Years 2 and 6, showing good improvement since the last inspection, although this is still a developing subject and pupils' skills are becoming established. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A few pupils have good understanding and skills, gained through a combination of home support, interest and increasingly good opportunities in the school. During most tasks pupils make good progress, and they are making satisfactory progress overall over time at this stage of ICT development in the school. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve in line with their peers. The school has taken several decisions recently to improve facilities and standards and this is beginning to have the desired effect. A central computer suite, with six computers, now offers good access and facilities so that a group may work together, although the accommodation is not big enough for a whole class. The subject co-ordinator is providing clear educational direction and the good arrangements

for staff training are leading to increased confidence. There are time-tabled arrangements for classes to ensure satisfactory subject coverage, and further group-work takes place on tasks that usually link to other subjects. A few teachers have good ICT knowledge, and this is shared readily amongst the staff.

125. Children in the infant classes are making satisfactory progress and gaining new skills through the choice of relevant tasks. They have used programs to improve the skill of controlling the mouse and pupils have satisfactory skill. They are also gaining suitable keyboard skills, though most pupils are still searching for keys and do not have a fluent key-stroke. By Year 2 pupils have satisfactory skills in simple word-processing and they know how to enter information and save their work. The children respond well to the challenge and interest of their tasks, supported by the teachers and classroom assistants. The access to the computer suite, which complements the computers in classrooms, is improving the quality of work and is helping to raise standards. The technology is beginning to be a natural part of pupils' learning.
126. The school has extended the range of programs well to provide experience across subjects. In Year 3 for example, after a careful discussion with the class teacher on previous work, pupils explained how to use a music program to compose music. They understood the use of icons to build a beginning, middle and end, with a repeating phrase if they wanted. The teacher's good demonstration showed clear use of the features of the program. The pupils who used it displayed satisfactory knowledge and skill, dragging icons into position to create a sequence of rain, storm, wind to represent the weather. Work in science was followed up well in Year 4 as pupils were helped to enter their findings into a data package. The pupils entered the information about the creature, numbers of legs, wings etc. and where each was found, showing satisfactory skill. Most pupils understood how to form a graph or pie chart using the mouse to click on icons, although with only a few pupils in the group they recognised that the patterns of data did not mean much.
127. In Year 6, the teacher's very good introduction to control using a control box linked to a clown face provided pupils with high levels of interest and experience. Careful reinforcement ensured that most pupils recalled the effects of turning switches on: to light the eyes, put on the buzzer or spin his tie. The teacher's good emphasis on how to enter commands, and to build a program, or change it to correct an error, prepared pupils well to write their own programs. She extended the task very well by relating the need for control lights, the pupils recognising that street lights could be controlled in this way. This was illustrated clearly by pupils masking a light sensor to simulate night time. The higher attaining pupils showed good understanding through their application of the control box to simulating a lighthouse, responding very well to the further challenge of making the light flash in morse code. This high attaining group of pupils made rapid progress, demonstrating good understanding and generally good keyboard, editing and mouse skills. Several pupils tend to poke the keys, rather than use a good key-stroke style. Pupils access the Internet to find information, and have satisfactory skill in searching for the information, demonstrating the skills to print the outcome for use in their investigations. By the end of Year 6 children's understanding and skills meet the national expectation. The teachers' knowledge and confidence are enabling the pupils to tackle worthwhile tasks and to extend their skills.
128. The school is beginning to link computer use to other subjects so that children see a relevance and purpose to their ICT work in other subjects. This application of skills was shown, for example, when pupils logged onto the Internet to collect information. The school is successful in extending the work of higher attaining children in the junior classes. Children also have some access to other equipment such as a camera and tape recorder to support work in other subjects.
129. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator, who works hard to support colleagues and to improve the use of ICT facilities. This, and the training, have helped to improve teachers' subject knowledge considerably since the last inspection and applications are found across the curriculum. The school meets statutory requirements for the subject, including good opportunities for control, and continues to extend the equipment and resources. The assessment procedures for ICT are good and manageable.

MUSIC

130. Standards in music are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. In spite of strategies such as the national literacy and numeracy projects affecting curriculum time and staff training, the school has been able to maintain standards and skills in music. Pupils are still provided with a range of opportunities to develop their musical skills across a wide front. Pupils' singing skills are good; they all sing with care, attempt to be accurately in tune and maintain the rhythm and tempo. Because at least two teachers are pianists, singing practices have a spontaneity that gives pupils a wide range of songs to sing from memory and also develops control of breathing, dynamics, pitch and rhythm. Pupils have the opportunity to focus on specific parts of a song, working on particular bars to improve performance. This enhances the quality of, for instance, the annual Christmas musical production.
131. Music, however, is not just singing. Pupils explore a range of different instrumental and vocal sounds to create special effects. Year 2 in particular composed a seascape, writing a simple graphic score to enable others to reproduce the music based on a 'Waves' poem by Eleanor Farjeon. To do this the pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of a range of instruments, how they are played and the sounds they are capable of making. Year 6 pupils are on a musical history tour, looking at styles of and listening to a range of music down the years from classical composers such as Handel and Haydn through to Glen Miller, William Walton and the Beatles. During the inspection pupils were learning to clap off the beat, understanding the meaning of syncopation and relating this to "swing" music. Pupils have made good progress in their learning about notation, considering standard notation and note values, counting beats in a bar and following a score when clapping and singing music of different structures.
132. Because the quality of teaching and learning is very good, pupil's response to lessons is also very good. Teachers have an enthusiasm for music. They chose lessons from the scheme of work that will challenge pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding, provide a high quality range of resources, maintain a good pace and demonstrate very good personal performance skills. Pupils respond with high levels of self-control and discipline. In group activities they work well in teams and carefully evaluate their own and others' work, making constructive comments and positive improvements.
133. Music is well led by an experienced and skilled musical practitioner. She has implemented a scheme of work that covers all areas of the music curriculum, but this is not followed slavishly; rather, teachers are encouraged to use their knowledge of the pupils' needs and experiences, through assessment of their abilities, to select appropriate lessons to guide learning further. For instance, a weaker area has been developing pupils' compositional skills. Using the guidance of the co-ordinator, teachers have introduced extra experiences to reinforce this area, using sessions suggested in the scheme of work as confirmation and assessment of the effectiveness of their efforts. The co-ordinator sees music as a series of practical developments that are to be shared. Pupils are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities such as the annual musical production, singing with the choir in community events, and playing in assemblies and local competitions. A small number of pupils have lessons from the peripatetic music service in violin and guitar and these pupils are encouraged to share their skills with others in the school. Musicians are also invited into the school to perform to pupils.
134. Among the many resources for music are programs for the computer to enable pupils to create their own music. The school is fortunate in having a demountable building as the music studio. This ensures that pupils have the space to experiment with sound without disturbing nearby classes. The school is also able to display the resources available for ease of access by teachers and pupils alike and enable instrumentalists to have their lessons in peace and practice for special events as necessary. Although staff training in music has not had a high focus in the school development plan, the co-ordinator keeps staff aware of training provided in the local area and encourages them to develop their skills further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. It was only possible to observe two lessons in physical education, one of which was a cricket coaching session in Year 6 taken by a member of the Essex County Cricket Club. An overall judgement on standards is reserved, therefore, although pupils' development of physical skills met the expectation in these lessons in Years 3 and 6. In the reception class, it was noted that children's physical development is good and most children are expected to reach the goals set for this area of learning. These young children are developing the eye/hand co-ordination necessary for team games through using balls, beanbags and hoops. During dance sessions they enjoy the movements and music of Africa linked to their work on Kenya. This good development of physical skills continues through the infant years since pupils were seen to run fluently and play with a ball and other apparatus with suitable skill and confidence, although outside the context of a formal lesson.
136. Pupils' specific ball skills were put to the test during a lesson in Year 3 when, after a good warm-up session, they worked in pairs with a bat and ball. The teacher's good discipline and relationships with the children encouraged them to try hard and to improve their control in both throwing the ball and in hitting it cleanly in return. These ball skills are satisfactory. Pupils threw the ball with reasonable control for aim, speed and style although not many pupils hit the ball directly with the bat by return because they did not anticipate the bounce of the ball or move the bat in a good hold to connect with the ball cleanly. The Year 6 cricket coaching session showed the pupils to have matured in their physical skills, although the session did not reach the point of connecting bat with ball. Most pupils held the bat correctly, or adjusted their hold after direct instruction. They also moved their feet and swung the bat with some style, the boys and girls demonstrating equal skill and enjoyment as they responded to the clear and very positive approach of the cricket coach. By Year 6, pupils' physical skills meet the standard expected, within the limited evidence observed. Pupils are keen to take part in physical activity and co-operate well with partners, which promotes their learning and reinforcement of skills. The good teaching is effective in including all pupils so that they have good opportunities to enjoy and develop basic control and co-ordination.
137. The planned activities meet the requirements for the subject. The different aspects are planned through the year sensibly to give variety and to take account of the seasons. The programme allows for development year by year, and dance is an integral part of the experience, as is a programme of swimming, where most pupils reach the expected standard. The subject is led and managed appropriately; the headteacher is currently giving a lead in the absence of the co-ordinator. There is a suitable selection of equipment for the planned tasks. The hall and outside facilities provide generally good working conditions and space to support the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Years 2 and 6, maintaining those found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are making good progress and enjoy their work. They are building a good base of knowledge and understanding of the stories that form the foundations of the teaching of the world's major faiths. Younger pupils especially like listening to stories such as about Jesus and told by Him, the Buddha, Moses and Joseph. They consider themes such as prayer, friendship and being good and bad, happy and sad events and good characters in stories such as 'The Seven Dwarfs' and 'The Three Bears and 'The Wolf and Cinderella's Wicked Step-Sisters'. During the inspection pupils in Year 2 had an excellent experience that contributed superbly to their spiritual development. Learning that a church is a very special place of worship for Christians they were thinking about the christening ceremony. As well as acting out the service, taking on the role of the different participants, the teacher brought in her family christening robe. The history of its creation, the previous wearers and the texture of the dress brought home to all the class the special nature of the event to the family.
139. Older pupils think carefully about people from different faiths and how religious beliefs affect lives.

During a discussion on foods and feasts - for example, the Jewish Shabbat - pupils had good recall of the Passover story from the Old Testament in the Bible, knowing that the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt was effected by following clear instructions from their God. Pupils also know that different faiths have places of worship, sacred texts, special clothes, sacred days and festivals. As well as knowing that Judaism was the oldest and Islam the newest, pupils know that all faiths have rules and values that followers of that faith live by. Religious education contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral and social education.

140. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and examples of very good teaching were seen during the inspection. Teachers are well prepared, know what they are going to teach and have good management and delivery strategies, matching work to pupils' abilities and maturity. Teachers carefully plan work that is beyond just giving factual knowledge but also progressively develops understanding. They encourage pupils to be actively involved in their own learning, to ask questions, listen to each other, consider, discuss and think. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will be able to make the connection between themselves and their experiences and new information to reinforce learning. Pupils respond positively to the work planned for them. They listen with respect to teachers and each other, try hard, behave well, take turns in making their contributions and thoughtfully contribute to the learning within their lessons.
141. The school has adapted well the locally agreed syllabus as the scheme of work for older pupils and has purchased another specifically aimed at younger pupils for Years 1 and 2. An appropriate range of resources is matched to the themes and units of work. Good links are made to national strategies such as the National Literacy project through texts and stories, though little use is made of information and communication technology at present. Parents and the local community also support religious education by lending artefacts such as the baptism shawl owned by a class assistant. Unfortunately, the curriculum is not supported by the opportunity to visit places of worship of different faith communities. Pupils do have the chance to talk to representatives and speakers from the different faiths in multi-cultural Britain through a member of the community who lived in India and will support work on Hinduism and a representative from the local synagogue. The school does have links with the local church and the vicar comes into the school to take lessons and also shows pupils round his church.
142. The management of religious education is satisfactory. There is a member of staff with oversight of developments in the subject. Although the headteacher and co-ordinator see teachers' medium-term plans there is no monitoring of teaching or learning within classes, no identification of particular areas for improvement or development or identification of good practice that could extend teachers' expertise further. The school does not have a portfolio of pupils work linked to the descriptors in the agreed syllabus so it is difficult for individual teachers to know what exactly has been covered and the quality and depth of previous work apart from following the scheme of work.