

INSPECTION REPORT

**HIGHWOODS COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114846

Headteacher: Mrs K. Dowsett

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. Browning
1510

Dates of inspection: 22 - 25 April 2002

Inspection number: 196061

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Husk
Date of previous inspection:	9 June 1997

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9619	Robert Miller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	English Music Equal Opportunities	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are
4430	Richard Eaton	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Design and technology	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision
7148	Graham Hall	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education	
17995	Roger Purdom	Team inspector	Geography History Information and communication technology	
21685	Jenny Catlin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Highwoods Community Primary School, with 284 boys and girls aged 4+ to 11, is close to the average size for primary schools nationally. The majority of pupils come from the local area. The full range of attainment is represented on entry to the school although a significant majority are of lower than average attainment. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, at 18.9 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need, one per cent, is below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 12 per cent, is in line with the national average. There are several pupils from ethnic minority groups. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The full range of socio-economic backgrounds is represented. There are considerable movements of pupils in and out of the school and less than half of the pupils in Year 6 were in the school in Year 2.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a happy, friendly and effective school where children are well cared for and feel valued. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have done a great deal to improve standards, behaviour, the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving although still well below the national average for pupils aged 11 years. Standards are above expected levels in design and technology for pupils aged seven and in information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, music, religious education and in aspects of art for pupils aged 11. The leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are strong. Teaching and learning is good overall and very good in the Foundation Stage. Provision by the school for all children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a significant strength of the school. Pupils show very good attitudes and good behaviour. They develop very good relationships and enjoy learning. The care and support provided for pupils is a significant strength. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Generally higher-attaining pupils are suitably challenged. The school is well focused on raising standards, and improving teaching and learning. Parents are strongly supportive of the school. It provides good value for money overall and its strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.

What the school does well

- Standards are above the level expected for pupils aged seven in design and technology and for pupils aged 11 in information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, music, religious education and in aspects of art.
- Overall, teaching and learning are good and very good for the under fives.
- Pupils' attitudes and relationships are very good. Behaviour is good. Pupils are very well cared for and supported.
- The curriculum is broad and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for all children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress.
- Overall opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.
- Under the determined leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body, there is a clear commitment to improve standards

What could be improved

- Standards are not yet high enough in science for pupils aged seven and in English and mathematics for pupils aged 11. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is not high enough.
- Assessment is not always used consistently throughout the school.
- Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. The junior library is small and under resourced. Some classrooms are cramped and in some the acoustics are poor. Ventilation in the information and communication technology suite is inadequate.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved considerably since it was last inspected in June 1997. It has addressed the key issues in the last report well. The school has undergone some significant staffing difficulties and pupil movement continues to be high. This instability has impeded pupils' previous progress. Standards are improving overall in English, mathematics and science, although school results in the 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds are well below national averages. Overall, pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably. Curriculum planning has improved and all subjects have clear schemes of work. Good data analysis is available and effective assessment practices are in place but, as yet, these are not consistently used throughout the school. Strategic planning is secure and covers a longer time scale. There has been a marked improvement in all aspects of physical education. The inspection team judged that the school has a very good capacity to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	D	E	D
Mathematics	E	C	E	D
Science	E	D	E	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table above shows the average points score achieved by pupils and includes those who gained the expected Level 4 or above in National Curriculum assessments and those achieving the higher Level 5. Results for pupils aged 11 are affected significantly by high pupil turnover and a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The performance of seven-year-olds was well below national averages in reading and below for writing and mathematics. The performance data shows that those who remain with the school make good progress.

Inspection findings are that a significant minority of children, by the time they enter Year 1, do not meet the Early Learning Goals in literacy and communication and mathematics. This is because they are not in the Reception class long enough to benefit from the very good teaching offered. Many enter Year 1 with attainment below that expected for children of this age.

Standards have fluctuated since the last inspection. Inspection findings indicate that standards are below the level expected for pupils aged 11 in English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings for seven-year-olds show improvement in English and mathematics but standards are not yet high enough in science. This is partly as a result of many earlier disruptions to their learning of basic skills and curriculum coverage and significant pupil mobility and staffing difficulties. Pupils are now achieving closer to the national average and are making good gains on their prior attainment. Progress in literacy and numeracy is good. Higher-attaining pupils are usually sufficiently challenged. Standards are higher than expected for pupils by the end of Year 2 in design and technology and for pupils by the end of Year 6 in information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, music, religious education and in aspects of art. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. The school has set suitably challenging targets for raising standards and on the whole these have been met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are eager to learn. They apply themselves well to work set by teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are well behaved and very considerate of the needs of others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Personal development is a strength and is well supported by opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance continues to be good since the previous inspection. At around 95 per cent it is above the national average.

Pupils involve themselves well in lessons. They like coming to school and are developing positive attitudes towards themselves. Older pupils care for younger ones and they are developing a good awareness of how their actions affect others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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 quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good for children under five. Teaching is good and sometimes very good in English, mathematics and science. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is developing appropriately. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language well. Higher attaining pupils are usually well challenged. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are good. The management of pupils including those who are challenging is very good. Teaching assistants positively enhance pupils' learning. Resources are used well. Lesson planning is considerably improved. Good practices are seen in the use of ongoing assessment. As yet, these are not consistently implemented. Pupils want to learn, they are interested, concentrate and work hard. They acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding. They understand how well they are achieving and what more they need to do to improve further. Pupils make good progress overall. Those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It encompasses the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good and provides children with a wide range of learning experiences There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are of a good quality.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It is one of its strengths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe and looked after well. Pupils are provided with a caring, happy and supportive learning environment.

The additional provision in literacy and numeracy is helping to raise standards. There are many opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. The school is fully inclusive and the curriculum is available equally to all pupils. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Parents are strongly supportive of the school. The school has an open door approach and parents and carers feel welcome. Parents are kept well informed and receive a good range of information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors. They have a clear educational vision, shared by staff. Effective action has been taken to raise standards, improve the quality of teaching, learning, the curriculum and the behaviour of pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities. They have a clear understanding of the improvements needed and how to plan these. They are well informed. Their understanding of budget and curriculum matters is secure.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's priorities for development are good. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are good. Considerable developments have been made in the monitoring of standards, teaching, learning and the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is good.

The previous staffing difficulties and high pupil mobility have impacted on the work of the school. The number and qualifications of staff meet the needs of the National Curriculum. Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are well focused on educational improvement. The school applies the principles of best value carefully.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• Staff are easily approached with questions or a problem.• Well led and managed.• The teaching is good.• Children make progress.• Expect children to work hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work more closely with parents.• The right amount of homework.

The inspection team agrees with all of the parents' positive views but not with all of the parents' other views. The school tries hard to work more closely with parents and links with parents and carers are generally good. Although homework is set there are some inconsistencies. The school may wish to review the balance and regularity and inform parents about this.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the reception class is below that expected for children of this age with many having weak personal and social skills. Also many have limited language and mathematical skills. From this starting point the majority of children including those with special educational needs, make at least good, and often very good, progress. However, a significant number of children, by the time they enter Year 1, do not meet the Early Learning Goals in many areas of their learning. This is because they are not in the reception class long enough to benefit from the very good teaching offered. Many enter Key Stage 1 with attainment below that expected for children of this age. Attainment in language development is below expectations. The last inspection did not report separately on this age group. It was stated they were making satisfactory progress. Since then, progress for these children has improved considerably and they achieve well.
2. National Curriculum average points scores in 2001 tests show that pupils aged seven attained below national standards in writing and mathematics and well below average standards in reading. In comparison with similar schools, results in writing were below average and in reading and mathematics they were well below. Standards in science in 2001 attained by pupils by age seven, on the basis of teacher assessment, were below the national average and those of similar schools. There were very few pupils who achieved the higher levels (Level 3 and above) in these tests. Results were well below the national average for reading, mathematics and science and below in writing. Since the last inspection, results indicate that standards have fluctuated in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Inspection findings indicate that standards have improved and pupils are attaining nearer to the national average but standards overall in reading, mathematics and science are not yet high enough.
3. Attainments in National Curriculum tests in 2001, for pupils aged 11, were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science and in the lowest ten per cent of schools. When compared with similar schools, results were below. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher levels (Levels 5 and above) was below the national average in mathematics and science and well below in English. Since the last inspection standardised test results indicate that standards have fluctuated in English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings indicate that although standards are improving they are not yet sufficiently high. Standards in science are now much closer to the national average. The school has very high numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school during the school year. This affects the performance data. Factors that will have undoubtedly affected performance for both key stages are the inconsistent teaching in the past, frequent staff changes and high pupil movement. The 2001 group of pupils at the end of Year 6 contained many pupils who found the work especially difficult. This particular group of pupils had over 25 per cent eligible for free school meals and over 25 per cent of pupils with special educational needs. Some 57 per cent of these pupils joined the school after the reception year. It also contained many pupils who had not been in the school for the full seven years of their primary school life and some who had left the school to rejoin it later. This was unsettling and affected results adversely. Those that stay with the school make good progress

4. In 2001 results of boys and girls overall were not significantly different for pupils aged seven and eleven. Girls aged seven outperformed the boys in reading and writing and boys outperformed girls in mathematics reflecting their attainment on entry. Girls aged 11 outperformed the boys in English and science and the boys slightly outperformed the girls in mathematics. The rate of improvement over the past five years, in all of the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) for pupils aged 11 was below that nationally. During the inspection nothing was observed to suggest that there is any significant difference or disparity in the achievements of boys and girls.
5. School analysis of attainment recognises that the results reflect underachievement by pupils aged seven and eleven when measured against national and similar schools comparisons. The school is beginning to address the attainment of pupils effectively through the implementation of the national strategies, improved teaching and learning and improved curriculum and behaviour. The school has used specific grants to provide additional teachers and booster classes. The school's targets for 2002 are expected to be met based on the ongoing analysis of data this will be an improvement of 15 per cent.
6. Standards seen during the inspection reflect improvement on the results shown above. Inspection evidence found that most pupils aged seven are achieving at the expected level in writing and speaking and listening. Reading skills overall are not as well established. Pupils do not always take account of punctuation and experience difficulty retelling a story or describing the characters in a story. In English the overall attainment of 11-year-old pupils is below the level expected. The school's focus on writing is having a positive impact, although there is limited evidence of extended writing. Pupils are showing progress with their reading but the overall standard is below the expected level.
7. Inspection evidence found that by the age of seven pupils are making satisfactory progress in all aspects of mathematics and are achieving at the expected level. This improvement is due to the much higher number of pupils currently working at the higher Level 3. By the age of 11 standards are below the level expected in mathematics. The current Year 6 achieved well below average results in the Key Stage 1 national tests and in addition a significant proportion of these pupils have not attended the school throughout their primary school career. The numeracy strategy has been successfully introduced.
8. Inspection findings show that standards in science are improving and pupils of seven and eleven years are attaining standards nearer to expected levels. More pupils are reaching the higher levels although still not enough. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected for the locally agreed syllabus for seven-year-olds but are above for 11-year-olds. Standards are above those expected for seven-year-olds in design and technology; in all other subjects they are as expected for pupils of this age. Standards are above those expected for 11-year-olds in design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography, music and aspects of art and design. Since the last inspection improvements are seen in science, design and technology, history, geography, religious education and physical education for seven-year-olds. Standards in science and information communication technology, for seven year-olds show a slight decline. Standards in English, and mathematics show a decline for 11-year-olds since the last inspection. In terms of inclusion, the school is very aware of the individual needs of different groups of pupils and continues to address them well.

9. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented appropriately in literacy lessons. Generally, pupils transfer their literacy skills to other subjects. They express themselves well and are confident when speaking to a larger audience. Pupils listen carefully and in class discussion in many subjects they are given good opportunities to express their views. In art and music they usefully evaluate each other's work. Generally, pupils have limited opportunities for extended writing, research and note taking in other subjects. In the work sample pupils have not always taken care with the presentation of their written work and their handwriting. This is directly related to the expectations of teachers. The Early Reading Research programme is having a positive impact and there are signs of improvement.
10. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented appropriately. The use of the mental starter meets the needs of pupils appropriately and the plenary sessions are used effectively to consolidate learning. Numeracy is used appropriately across the curriculum in subjects such as science, design and technology, history, geography and music. For example, in science pupils produce graphs and surveys to record investigations; in design and technology, pupils use measurement; and in history, pupils have a good understanding of time lines. In geography, pupils make simple measurements of the weather, for example, rainfall and temperature. Pupils illustrate 3-dimensional shapes using information and communication technology and art. In music, they are aware of and count the different beats in rhythmic patterns.
11. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. They make good progress towards their targets in literacy and numeracy skills. The emphasis on reading means that these skills develop well and enable pupils to take a full part in lessons across the curriculum. Those pupils with statements for emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress because of the structured support they receive and the involvement of parents. There are a few gifted and talented pupils identified by the school. Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated into the school and they make good progress because of the additional support and management of their provision.
12. Higher-attaining pupils make appropriate progress overall. They are usually challenged and are given suitable tasks and resources. In English, some good examples of extended writing were seen. Pupils have a clear understanding of the use of speech marks. Their work contains good descriptive phrases, and they use imaginative vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils read well. Older pupils read independently and with expression. In mathematics, some pupils in Year 6 are undertaking work well above the expected levels in aspects of fractions and decimal calculations and have a good understanding of formulae for calculating the area and circumference of circles. Older pupils understand that using percentages is useful when making comparisons and recording progress. They also use mental strategies when calculating percentages. Teachers have good expectations of pupils' understanding and their capabilities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and this is a continuous improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils are keen to come to school and are co-operative throughout the school day.
14. In most lessons pupils listen attentively and undertake written and practical tasks conscientiously. Where lessons lack challenge or, as in some information and communication technology lessons in the computer suite, where the atmosphere is sometimes stifling, pupils do not listen carefully enough and take time to settle to

their work. This slows the rate at which they progress. Pupils are capable of sustaining their interest such as in a Year 2 personal, social and health education lesson. Pupils gave their full attention to a teacher who was explaining re-cycling methods and showing the different items that are capable of being reprocessed for further use. In the Foundation Stage classes, children's attitudes to learning are very good and in some cases excellent. They are keen to learn and parents agree that they like coming to school. Behaviour is very good and children play well together. They look after the classrooms, keeping them tidy and well organised.

15. Teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities across most ability ranges are good and in the case of the Foundation Stage very good. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to show initiative in lessons or take responsibilities around the school and this has a very positive impact on their independent learning skills.
16. Pupils are well behaved and very considerate of the needs of others. A significant majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agree. Behaviour observed in the dining hall, in assemblies and in the playground is often very good. There has been one pupil excluded on six separate occasions in the past academic year. Teachers manage pupils very well. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into lessons and participate fully. They are keen to learn and take a full part in all the lessons seen. Consequently, they value themselves and others and develop good self-esteem. Those few with emotional and behavioural difficulties respond well to the positive management strategies and behave well in lessons. Pupils who come from minority ethnic groups are fully integrated into the life and work of the school. The school is a racially harmonious community, where oppressive behaviour, including bullying, is rare and the inclusive ethos is a strength of the school.
17. Pupils' personal development, their social and health education are strengths of the school. Pupils' personal development is very good. All pupils are polite and friendly and follow instructions carefully. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions, when pupils socialise well within their age groups. Pupils respond very well when opportunities are provided for them to show initiative. In a Year 6 history lesson pupils worked very well together using newspapers from the 1950 period to present the details of an important event to the rest of the class. The development of class rules by pupils has enabled them to gain an understanding of the meaning of and reasons for rules and why rules change as the pupils mature and take responsibility for their own actions. Relationships are very good and a continuous improvement since the last inspection. There is a close bond between adults at the school and the pupils whom they know very well. Pupils show a great deal of respect and sensitivity towards each other.
18. Attendance continues to be good since the previous inspection. At around 95 per cent it is above the national average. The authorised absence is due in the main to sickness, medical reasons and family holidays being taken in term time. Punctuality is generally very good and lessons get off to a prompt start.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and it is very good in the under-fives. In nearly a third of lessons seen throughout the school, teaching and learning are very good and better. In just under three-quarters they are good and better. In the remaining lessons teaching and learning are satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teaching is strongest in the under-fives and in the juniors. In English, mathematics and science teaching and learning are good. Teaching

methods for developing literacy and numeracy skills are appropriate, although in other subjects teachers do not always help pupils to reinforce their literacy skills. Since the last inspection teaching and learning have improved significantly. It must also be noted that since the last inspection there has been high staff turnover. The improved teaching and learning is a result of the more rigorous approach to class observations and focus on developing training needs.

20. There are very few areas of relative weakness. Good practices are seen in the use of assessment although, as yet, these are not consistently applied throughout the school. Homework is usually set but there are some inconsistencies, a concern that parents share. Marking of work is generally good and where teachers make comments on the quality of work with helpful and informative comments on how to improve there is clear evidence that subsequent work is improved. However, this approach is inconsistent. Very occasionally learning objectives are not as clear in all lessons.
21. The teaching of under-fives is very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and the learning is stimulating and exciting. The learning intentions of the activities are clearly expressed in the planning and are shared with the children. Praise is used well to enhance the children's self-esteem and to encourage good attitudes to their learning. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and learning to which children respond. Teachers manage the children very well. Lessons are well-planned with good use of stimulating resources. There is good emphasis on teaching literacy and number. Children are assessed regularly in the recommended areas of learning and detailed records are kept. There is very effective use of well-trained adults to provide very good support to both the teacher and the children. The quality of teaching is having a positive impact on the children's attainment and enables them to make good, and often very good, progress.
22. Teachers' planning is informed by curriculum guidance 2000. Co-ordinators have oversight of planning across the school. Teachers share good practice and there is a climate of a collegiate approach. Planning is thorough and takes into account the needs of different abilities. It is usually detailed and comprehensive. Planning usually identifies learning objectives and these are shared with pupils and are reinforced throughout lessons. Tasks are challenging and teachers' subject knowledge is secure. The use of the literacy and numeracy strategies is helping to raise the teachers' expertise. Expectations are good.
23. Teaching methods are effective. They use clear explanations and challenging questions to extend and verify what pupils know. Teachers provide a good balance between intervention and explanation. Good examples of this were seen in mathematics. Teachers use a range of subject specific vocabulary. Plenary sessions, when used, provide good reinforcement of learning. Good use is made of practical demonstrations as in science when devising fair tests for finding out the hardness of rocks and in art when making stencils and creating collage. The lack of investigative work was a criticism of the last report. Pupils now do more experimental work, and understand why a test is fair. The use of the computer suite gives increased opportunity for developing skills in information and communication technology. Very good examples of using information and communication technology as a research tool were observed in history and in geography. Pupils used a Power Point presentation to illustrate their work when producing an information pack about Llandudno.

24. Teachers know their pupils and treat them with respect. Teachers manage the lessons well and the behaviour management strategies are quickly and consistently applied so there is minimal time wasted. Classroom management is unobtrusive and effective. In physical education, teachers have good control of pupils and this encourages high levels of concentration and activity. Pupils are eager to learn and in some of the best lessons, praise is used continuously, rewarding good effort and promoting self-confidence. Particularly good examples of this were seen in Years 3 and 6.
25. Most lessons are brisk and purposeful with routines well established, providing a clear working atmosphere with pupils' attention immediately engaged. Teaching assistants help pupils to meet their learning objectives and provide valuable support, contributing positively to pupils' learning and standards achieved. Resources are well used overall. Assessments of attainment on entry to the school are made and are used effectively to help teachers plan work. Teachers have a good range of information about pupils' prior attainment and are building on this. Whilst practice is developing systematically there are some inconsistencies in the use of assessment throughout the school. Inspectors acknowledge that much has already been achieved in this area and it is developing appropriately.
26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Recently the co-ordinator left the school and was immediately replaced by another existing member of staff already much involved with these pupils. This ensured good continuity. In class, teaching assistants provide good support consequently enabling them to learn successfully alongside all the other pupils.
27. Overall, pupils make good progress. They acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding and are developing appropriate intellectual, physical and creative skills. Pupils are really interested in learning and they concentrate hard and work well independently. They enjoy answering questions and interacting with each other. Pupils work well in pairs, in groups or individually. They enjoy taking some responsibility for their own learning. In music, pupils have good opportunities to explore different sounds and they enjoy this. In science, pupils are particularly keen to experiment and they work rapidly and discuss experiments excitedly. Although they are working quite hard, the work scrutiny of individual pupils showed that there was insufficient recording of some work, and the quality was not always good. This is no doubt related to the impact of previous staffing difficulties and pupil movement. Consequently, pupils' output and rate of progress was previously lower than expected for pupils of their age. Pupils understand how well they are achieving and what more they need to do to improve further. Older pupils are very clear about their personal targets. Pupils use information and communication technology to research and enhance the quality of their work well.

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

28. The curriculum for infant and juniors is good. It is broad and relevant and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the agreed Essex syllabus for religious education. The curriculum offered for all children under five is very good and is a significant strength of the school. This is a notable improvement since the last inspection. Children are admitted, part-time initially, in the term before their fifth birthday. The school provides them with a very secure and caring environment, with daily routines firmly established. The programme of activities is very well planned on the basis of the recommended areas of learning for this age and fully supports the children's intellectual, physical and social development. More formal work, linked to

the literacy and numeracy strategies, is phased in as the children attend full-time. The curriculum is very well cross-referenced to the early levels of the National Curriculum and, as a result, enables teachers to extend the learning experiences of more able children.

29. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are securely in place and planning is based on the official frameworks. Older pupils are taught in ability groups for mathematics. Art and design and design and technology, history and geography are taught in rotation. Curriculum planning has improved since the previous inspection. All the foundation subjects now have clear schemes of work. In the majority of subjects the school has adopted the curriculum authority's suggested programmes of study. These, combined with the school's own revised schemes of work, are contributing well to pupils' progress and attainment. Literacy is not well supported in the teaching of other subjects.
30. Highwoods is a fully inclusive school. Pupils are well supported to cater for their needs regardless of gender, ethnicity or disability. The school has access for the disabled and is all on one level. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and good quality individual plans ensure that pupils make good progress. These plans are shared with the teaching assistants who provide good support within lessons. There is a good programme of group and individual work. Pupils with special educational needs take full part in all lessons and in the extra-curricular activities. Pupils' Individual Education Plans have appropriate specific and more general medium term targets. Class teachers help to write these plans. The school is aware that it needs to develop further its use of assessment in curriculum planning, and plans to increase the feed into IEPs from assessment. In a recent report by the local education authority, examining the provision for pupils with special educational needs, the school was praised for its good use of external agencies and pupils' involvement in the review process.
31. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported. The school receives a small amount of additional funding to support these pupils. However, the school does use the services of the local authority. In addition to this the school employs a specialist to assess pupils and who also advises strategies and approaches for class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils have full access to the curriculum, most of the support being in the classroom. However, there is some withdrawal for specific support, for example, the early reading recovery and literacy phonics development.
32. The provision for pupils' social and health education is very good and a strength of the school. The co-ordinator for personal, social and health education is very experienced and has ensured that this aspect has a high profile in the school by giving support and guidance to staff. The school is part of the healthy schools initiative and, is using the Health for Life programme. Good guidance is provided for pupils to encourage healthy living. Issues of concern are raised in well-planned class discussions during circle time where pupils are encouraged to be good citizens. An example of this is the 'special child' where younger pupils are given extra responsibilities for each day. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within the school such as prefects, looking after younger pupils and answering the telephone in the reception during the dinner break. Staff have been trained to teach a drugs awareness programme and relevant health issues. Drugs awareness is additionally supported in workshops in links with the local secondary school. Provision includes sex education for older pupils with the assistance of the visiting school nurse.

33. A significant minority of parents who returned the questionnaire expressed their dissatisfaction with the amount of extra curricular activities available in the school. Inspectors do not support this view. Their judgement is that the provision is very good. The school provides a wide range of activities to include athletics during the summer period; football; drama and recorder clubs. Several pupils are learning to play woodwind and percussion instruments. An art and textile club, and country-dance sessions are also offered. The school also employs specialists from the Premier Sports Organisation to coach pupils in sports activities. There are booster classes for English and mathematics. There is also a daily 'Kids' Club' after school where pupils have the opportunities to pursue a range of activities in an organised structure. There has not been a residential visit in recent years for older pupils due to lack of support. However, support has increased and a residential visit to Somerset is planned for Year 6 pupils towards the end of the summer term.
34. Pupils are offered a wide range of visits to local places of interest to develop social skills and support their learning. These include visits to museums and the local library for younger pupils and concerts, the British Museum and Colchester Museum for older pupils. There are good contacts with the local secondary beacon school with curriculum links for science, drama, and dance. Pupils have the opportunity to visit their chosen secondary school. Sessions in information and communication technology at the local secondary school for Year 6 pupils not only offer the facilities, and the benefit of specialist teaching but also a positive link to ease the tension of transfer. Links with local playgroups provide and ensure a smooth transition to their next stage of education.
35. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It is one of its strengths. It has improved very considerably since the time of the previous inspection. The daily acts of worship are good. A deity is recognised and there is time for reflection. During the inspection week the theme was 'Precious Things'. A lively junior assembly led pupils to think about 'magic books': books drawn from four religions that give codes for living. The important point gradually emerged as pupils read from these and the teacher read from 'ordinary' books. An infant assembly engaged pupils' interest well using the story of King Midas to show what things really are precious. Pupils had interesting ideas to offer. The 'Celebration Assemblies' make happy times of sharing with one another and create a positive attitude to work and to school and contribute to pupils' social and moral development. Although opportunities for spiritual development are covered appropriately in personal social education, teachers do not always take opportunities for spiritual development in other areas quite so well. There are, however, good examples in religious education and drama. Circle time also provides opportunities for pupils to discuss important issues. One such session showed pupils sharing problems and helping one another to find solutions.
36. The school provides substantial opportunity for pupils to learn about moral and social issues. It leads pupils to a clear understanding of right and wrong. The school links well the idea of citizenship to the personal and social education programme. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their social awareness and skills and sense of responsibility. Year 1 pupils have substantial folders of work about 'My Peaceful Place', 'Sad Feelings', and 'Making things better at playtime'. All are rich in social and moral experiences. Year 6 pupils answer the telephone at lunchtime, being aware of what they need to do for any given kind of call. They are responsible for the lunch boxes for the whole school in a clearly well organised system. The good variety of extra-curricular activities also offers opportunity for team work and doing one's best with others. The Golden Rules on display in every classroom are

based on good social and moral principles. There is a school council with members' names shown on a wall display. In lessons pupils co-operate well together and group work, in science, art and design technology, for example, gives opportunity for pupils to plan together and share resources.

37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' cultural development including some excellent examples of multi-cultural awareness. In design and technology Year 1 pupils have made woven designs based on an example from Borneo. One class marks the register in one of four different languages each day. The school celebrated the Chinese New Year. It also recently held a Multi-Cultural Week during which an Indian Dancer performed, and pupils experienced Japanese origami and Asian cooking.
38. Around the building are many small examples of how alert the school is to the importance of all these aspects of pupils' development from the small wall display 'What happens if I'm jealous?' to the 'Friendship Week' display.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. There are good procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe and looked after well. Child protection arrangements are securely in place. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are good. The school makes good use of its own and external expertise in the teaching of healthy living.
40. Pupils are provided with a caring, happy and supportive learning environment. Parents are pleased with this and say that their children like school. Teachers know their pupils very well and provide safe and secure conditions in which they can learn. Pupils are well supervised at all times and procedures for child protection meet requirements. Teachers have undertaken training to ensure they are aware of the issues. Mid-day supervisors are appropriately briefed when there may be concerns about a child. Links with outside agencies are sound. The school has recently begun a system of pupil interviews so that pupils can contribute to the information in their individual education plan.
41. The procedures for monitoring health and safety are satisfactory and an improvement on the previous inspection. Risk assessments are now carried out in an appropriate manner and there are regular safety inspections where any necessary action is taken. Effective first aid arrangements are in place for dealing with accidents and illness and there is a consistently good standard of pastoral care.
42. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Unexplained absences are followed up and the benefits of regular and punctual attendance are reinforced with parents and pupils alike. Overall registers are kept well but daily totals are sometimes missing. Very good arrangements for promoting high standards of behaviour, including measures to prevent bullying, have been developed after consultation with parents, staff and the pupils. There are simple rules for the pupils, rewards for good behaviour and appropriate sanctions for dealing with misbehaviour. Staff apply these consistently and act as good role models for the pupils and this ensures that the expectations of good behaviour remain high.

43. The school has good procedures for tracking pupils' personal and social development. The personal support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are dealt with sensitively and practically. There are high levels of awareness among teachers and teaching assistants of the differing needs of these pupils. Other pupils give them constructive and appropriate support to help them feel valued members of the community. The school takes care to ensure that the welfare of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well catered for. Consequently, these pupils feel confident and secure knowing that they can approach any member of staff should they have any concerns.
44. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. In the reception class, baseline assessment is used well to identify children's strengths and weaknesses and to set targets for their improvement by the time they enter Year 1. Statutory and non-statutory tests provide information about pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science and records are maintained well. The test results are analysed and used effectively to set school targets and to identify any differences in attainment between boys and girls. However, teachers are not always effective in ensuring that these targets are incorporated into lesson plans. This limits the effectiveness of assessment in the drive to raise standards.
45. Pupils with special educational needs have individual educational plans that are reviewed regularly. They have appropriate specific and more general medium term targets. Class teachers help to write these plans. The school acknowledges the need to develop further its use of assessment in curriculum planning and intends to provide more detailed information into IEPs from assessment, which at present is insufficient. Provision for pupils with a statement of special educational needs matches well the identified needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents believe Highwoods to be a good school. They are happy with what the school provides and achieves. Most parents feel their children make good progress, reach acceptable standards and behave well. They value highly the inclusive ethos of the school. A significant minority of parents consider homework to be inconsistent and the inspection confirms their concerns. A similar number of parents do not think the school works closely with parents but the inspection findings do not support this view.
47. The school has put a great deal of time and effort into developing stronger links with parents and now enjoys a good and effective relationship. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Around three-quarters of all parents are fully involved in the education of their children. At home they listen to their child reading and a number come into school to assist with reading and information and communication technology, as well as help generally in the Foundation Stage. The induction procedures when children start school are very good and help to ensure that children make a pleasant start to their educational lives. There is an active parent school association that raises funds through organising events. The money raised has helped purchase resources and outside play equipment. The school contacts all parents of pupils on the special needs register although, disappointingly for the school, only a few take up the offer to attend reviews. Parents of statemented children are involved.

48. Parents are kept well informed about school events through regular school and class newsletters. Consultation meetings with the class teacher, about progress, take place in the spring term and are supported by written reports mid-term in the autumn and spring. The school also holds a 'meet the teacher' evening when teachers share with parents the work that the pupils will be undertaking and their individual approaches to teaching. In addition there is a formal written end-of-year academic report that now contains clear targets for pupils to achieve; this is an improvement on the previous inspection. The home-school reading record is well used as a dialogue between parents and school. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are both informative, comprehensive and meet statutory requirements.
49. There is a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere in the school and teachers are readily available for informal discussion, which parents welcome. Class teachers meet regularly with parents who have children with special educational needs. They discuss issues of mutual interest, as well as formally reviewing individual educational plans and setting targets for individual children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The overall leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The headteacher has a clear vision, commitment and high expectations and is very clear about priorities and this is fully shared by staff. The headteacher has analysed strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance, and has improved the quality of strategic planning. The school improvement plan places a good emphasis on raising standards for all pupils. It is an effective, cohesive and detailed working document. All staff and governors are enabled and involved in the decision making process.
51. The headteacher has secured systems and processes that enable staff to work effectively together to raise standards and improve teaching and learning. Since the last inspection the school has undergone significant staffing changes and it continues to have high pupil movement. The school's new aims, energised by pupils, staff and governors successfully underpin the work of the school. School documentation is of a very good standard. Significant improvements are seen in standards, teaching, learning, behaviour and the curriculum.
52. Delegation of work to staff with management responsibilities and the process of change have been slowed down by previous staffing difficulties. During this time, the headteacher absorbed considerable responsibilities in addition to her own responsibilities. Now staffing is more stable and co-ordinators are in post for all subjects some of whom are part-time teachers. Management responsibilities are clearly defined and teachers are aware they are accountable. The senior management team has also been expanded to include two Key Stage co-ordinators. Both are new posts and it is too soon to evaluate the impact of these. Some teachers are less experienced as co-ordinators whilst others are well established in their role. They are all aware of the need to raise standards. The role of the co-ordinator observing their subject is part of a rolling programme. They have audited resources, drawn up schemes of work, and collated planning to inform coverage of their subjects. Most have identified, evaluated and are acting upon the priorities within their subjects. Others have plans to do so. The headteacher has introduced good arrangements for personal development of staff, contributing both to the development of their careers and to the needs of the school. There are suitable arrangements to link training to performance management. Teachers joining the school, newly qualified or part-time teachers, are given good support from colleagues

and senior managers. These arrangements contribute to the strong sense of teamwork among the staff.

53. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors have a good working relationship with the headteacher, and a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Overall, their contribution to management is good and in their role as critical friends to the school. Governors are linked to different curriculum areas and undertake monitoring reviews and they have kept abreast of training. Governors' involvement in shaping the direction of the school is good. They are responsive to change. The headteacher and governors monitor finance closely. The school is allocating funds effectively to meet its priorities. The Chair of Governors discharges his role with purpose and enthusiasm. Performance management of the headteacher is well established.
54. The school has a strong commitment towards its pupils with special educational needs and it is inclusive. It ensures that pupils' individual needs are well met. All teachers contribute to individual education plans (IEPs). The governing body is fully informed of the policy for special needs. The governor appointed to monitor the provision of special educational needs liaises with the special educational needs co-ordinator and ensures that all of the requirements of the Code of Practice are maintained efficiently. The SENCO is aware of the needs of special needs pupils and informal discussion leads to initial formal assessment. The SENCO is part time. With the high mobility factor in the school this is an important and a time consuming job. The school plans that, in the near future, her teaching role will be at least partly restored. Currently, the SENCO spends no time with withdrawal groups but this will re-start in the near future. Adequate resources are available, including ten teaching assistants, although none of these is full time. Records and documentation comply with legal requirements. Targets for IEPs are a good mixture of the specific and the longer term more general. The current files are new and refer to the requirements of the new Code of Practice. Funding is carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the extra provision and adult help that is required.
55. Significant progress has been made in the monitoring of standards, and development of teaching, learning and the curriculum. This has been undertaken by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, co-ordinators and external advisory support. A regular cycle of lesson observations is ongoing. Outcomes are reported back to staff and co-ordinators also report to the governing body.
56. The school has a commitment to policies and practices that promote educational inclusion of all pupils in the opportunities that it provides. Equality of opportunity is reflected centrally in the school's aims, its objectives, its curriculum and its compliance with relevant legislation. Good procedures are in place to identify gifted and talented and higher attaining pupils.
57. The headteacher has given specific attention to the key issues of the last inspection. A far more rigorous and planned approach to class observations is in place. Training issues are identified and staff work on identified areas for development. The teaching and learning policy has also reinforced good practices. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly as a result. The range and quality of the curriculum are improved. The school uses curriculum guidance 2000 and supplementary schemes of work and some subjects are blocked rather than taught weekly. Assessment is used more systematically and marking guidance is in place. The school is now rightly focusing on the consistency of these practices. Strategic planning is considerably improved and is longer-term. Provision for physical

education is improved, schemes of work are developing and opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work are more advanced. Dance, although improved, is recognised still as an area for further development by the school. These are all improvements since the last inspection.

58. The school is well focused on school improvement and self-review. The action taken to meet the school's targets is very good. National and local performance data is analysed, collated and evaluated by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and it is shared with staff and governors. Targets have been set and this collated information provides a good basis for informing teaching, learning and for raising standards. Led by the headteacher and governing body, management is targeting effective and practical methods to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. The shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed further is very good.
59. The number of teaching staff, including several part-time teachers, is appropriate. Their qualifications and experience enable them to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The number of teaching assistants and administrative staff is good. They are well deployed and are highly valued by the school. Their work makes a positive impact on pupils' learning. Administrative staff ensures that the day-to-day organisation of the school runs smoothly and efficiently. Previously, staffing difficulties led the headteacher to take on greater responsibilities because there were insufficient suitably qualified, and experienced staff to undertake all the required responsibilities. The headteacher has tried hard to appoint expertise; sometimes from a limited field of applicants. Although the situation is now changing with several staff quite new in post this has inevitably impacted on the school's work. As yet, not all co-ordinators have had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning first hand although a rolling programme is in place. Good opportunities for training are provided to every member of staff at the school. Teaching is observed, professional development and training needs are identified, and training is offered. An appropriate programme of support for teachers new to the school is in place. Staff work extremely effectively together and there is a shared commitment to improve and to support pupils in all aspects of their development.
60. The accommodation is adequate to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum although some aspects of it are unsatisfactory. The junior library is small and ventilation in the information and communication suite is not adequate. Some of the classrooms are cramped, for example, in Years 3 and 4. Some have poor acoustics making it difficult at times for pupils to hear teachers and each other. Noise and movement from adjoining classes remain a distraction. The school has good plans in hand to address this when the next building phase gets underway. The school has two halls/gymnasias/ store areas, group rooms, junior library and information and communication technology suite, school offices, a staff room and kitchen. Outside there is a well equipped and large grassed area and a smaller paved playground and environmental area. There is a very good ongoing programme of refurbishment and remodelling. The school is very well maintained and cleaned to a very good standard, with some excellent displays. The information and communication technology suite is accessible and is timetabled for use throughout the school. Accommodation for the under fives is very good and the outside area enhances learning. Modification of the building has improved current provision considerably. The school, with the help of parents, continues to improve the outside environmental area. Physical access for pupils who use wheelchairs is good.

61. The school is adequately resourced overall. Resources are used well and contribute to pupils' learning. In religious education, physical education, music and history they are good. For information and communication technology resources some of the computers are old but the school has a rolling programme for replacement. Teachers make good use of 'everyday' as well as specialist materials in design and technology. Resources are well managed, well stored and accessible. The school has good support materials to help teachers and teaching assistants meet pupils' needs. Resources in the junior library have been reviewed but the school recognises the need to replenish stock. The school makes appropriate use of outside resources, for example, the local places of worship and the local area, visitors and parents.
62. The school's procedures for monitoring its finances are good; this is an improvement on the previous inspection. The governors and the headteacher work well together to prepare financial plans and financial management is good. Identified educational priorities are funded appropriately and the school has been successful in its application for additional grants. The recommendations made in the most recent audit report 2001 have been carried out. The administrative officer provides good support to the headteacher and governors and monitors expenditure carefully. The day-to-day administration and control of the school's budget are managed well. The school's budget is well monitored by the governing body as part of a longer-term plan and this is an improvement on the previous inspection. Projected numbers for the school roll are often unreliable and given the significant movement of pupils this somewhat constrains budget management. The school applies the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services and the headteacher is effective in the way that she assesses the impact of spending on standards. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology for financial management and administration.
63. Taking into account the low standards achieved in 2001, the overall good teaching and learning, the good quality curriculum, good behaviour of pupils and very good leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the good structures and systems, the school currently provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and senior managers should:

(1) Improve the achievement and rate of progress for pupils aged seven in science and for pupils aged 11 in English and mathematics by:

- building on good lesson planning, good practices and teacher skills;
- building on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and ensuring progression in all lessons and in all subjects;
- building on the existing good systems and practices for marking and assessment across all year groups;
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 19, 20, 25, 44, 57, 75, 79, 83, 85, 94, 95, 96, 123, 133)

(2) Raise standards throughout the school by:

- refining the planning so that work appropriately matches the needs of individual pupils in order to challenge them sufficiently;
- using assessment consistently to inform teachers' planning.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 8, 20, 25, 44, 57, 96, 100)

In addition the governors should address the following minor weaknesses:

Improve the provision and stock in the junior library; address the acoustics in classrooms affected by noise interference; improve the ventilation in the information and communication technology suite. (Paragraphs 60, 61, 80, 133).

Review and update the homework policy and inform parents of changes.
(Paragraphs 20, 46)

The school has already identified the above key issues and has good strategies in place that are already beginning to impact on and address the concerns raised.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	17	32	19	0	0	0
Percentage	7	23	44	26	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	278
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	45
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	16	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18 (10)	17 (10)	19 (15)
	Girls	13 (16)	21 (16)	15 (17)
	Total	31 (26)	32 (26)	34 (32)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (76)	86 (62)	92 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17 (13)	16 (18)	18 (14)
	Girls	15 (17)	13 (16)	15 (18)
	Total	32 (30)	29 (34)	33 (32)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (71)	78 (81)	89 (76)
	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	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10 (18)	14 (23)	14 (24)
	Girls	14 (15)	10 (15)	14 (17)
	Total	24 (32)	24 (38)	28 (41)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (62)	60 (72)	70 (77)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13 (19)	15 (23)	14 (23)
	Girls	14 (19)	15 (15)	15 (15)
	Total	27 (38)	30 (38)	29 (38)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (72)	75 (72)	73 (72)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	73 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	238
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.0:1
Average class size	23.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	236

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	652061
Total expenditure	642630
Expenditure per pupil	2135
Balance brought forward from previous year	22302
Balance carried forward to next year	31733

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	284
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	56	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	68	10	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	54	15	4	3
The teaching is good.	46	47	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	49	11	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	41	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	37	11	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	49	18	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	32	62	4	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	42	9	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	46	10	4	9

Other issues raised by parents

Six written returns were received. The great majority of these were most supportive of the school, its standards, quality of leadership, teaching and curriculum offered. A few parents were concerned about behavioural problems and the quality of support given to gifted children.

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

65. Provision by the school for all children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a significant strength of the school. This is a notable improvement since the last inspection. Children are admitted full time in the term they reach five years of age. Spring term rising-fives attend part-time from September and summer term rising-fives attend part-time from January. A very effective programme of meetings and home visits prior to starting school ensures they have a confident, happy start to their school life. At the time of the inspection, there were a total of 31 children in the two reception classes. The school provides them with a very secure and caring environment, with daily routines firmly established. The programme of activities is very well planned on the basis of the recommended areas of learning for this age and fully supports the children's intellectual, physical and social development. More formal work, linked to the literacy and numeracy strategies, is phased in as the children attend full-time. The curriculum is very well cross-referenced to the early levels of the National Curriculum and, as a result, enables teachers to extend the learning experiences of more able children.
66. Children are regularly assessed in the recommended areas of learning and detailed records are kept. Teachers complete some tests on entry to the class, namely in language and number, and children are re-tested before the end of this first year. Baseline assessment is completed during the first few weeks of entry into the reception classes. These tests are used very effectively to identify individual needs. Attainment on entry to the reception classes is below that expected for children of this age with many having weak personal and social skills. Also, many have limited language and mathematical skills. From this starting point, the majority of children, including those with special educational needs, make at least good, and often very good, progress. However, a significant minority of children, by the time they enter Year 1, do not meet what are known as the Early Learning Goals in many areas of their learning. This is because they are not in the reception classes long enough to benefit from the very good teaching offered to these children. Therefore, many enter Year 1 with attainment below that expected for children of this age. In language development, attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is below expectations. At the time of the last inspection there was no separate section for reporting on the provision for these young children, although it was stated that they were making satisfactory progress. Since then, progress for these children has improved considerably and they achieve well. Attainment on entry to the reception classes remains similar to that reported at the last inspection.
67. The school has very good procedures for involving parents in the life of the school through home visits before their children enter the school. There are also very good opportunities for pre-school children to visit the school for weekly Toddler Story sessions. These are open to all children, not just those who will eventually enter the school, and make a very positive contribution to the school's links with the community.
68. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. This has a positive impact on the children's attainment and enables them to make the good, and often very good, progress already stated. The teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the children's needs and they know their children very well. The planning of work is thorough and effective. The learning intentions of the activities

are clearly expressed in the planning and are shared with the children; all tasks are purposeful and well organised. There are very high expectations, routines are well established and the management of the children is very good. Adults listen with interest to what the children have to say, and through skilful questioning, develop their knowledge and understanding. There is very effective use of well-trained adults to provide very good support to both the teachers and the children. They are involved in the planning for and delivery of some activities, alongside the teachers. The quality of day-to-day assessment is very good, involves all staff and informs the next stage of learning. The accommodation is bright and attractive and the space is used very well. Learning resources for both indoor and outdoor activities are good and are also used well.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Many children enter the school with limited speaking skills and poor verbal comprehension. The children are provided with a wide range of activities which support the development of language and literacy. From the start of their school life they begin to develop their personal and social skills alongside those for speaking and listening. Staff offer frequent opportunities for children to talk with an adult. For example, through participating in well-planned role-play situations, such as acting out the part of a visitor to the Country Park, staff encourage and extend the children's use of language to enable them to talk about insects and the life cycle of a butterfly. Children learn to listen attentively, follow instructions carefully and develop a growing vocabulary, enabling them to speak with increasing confidence in a variety of situations. Both teachers work effectively within the structure of the literacy hour and numeracy strategy. Many children soon develop an understanding that words and pictures carry meaning. They know how books are organised and, with support, read some familiar words in simple texts. Good use is made of the literacy strategy to introduce children to phonics, for example, identifying the 's' sound. The development of early reading skills is very good with many children using different strategies to recognise key words such as 'in', 'on' and 'log'. Many know initial letters and use early reading skills such as predicting what the next word is likely to be or getting clues from pictures. A few higher attaining children can recognise letter sounds at the beginning, middle or end of simple words. Most children are aware of the purpose of writing and can write their names. Children are introduced to an early cursive-style of writing from an early age. This is effective and some children, with support, quickly develop this style and attempt to write in short sentences using prompt cards for unknown words. They also use these early skills to record what they want for a snack at the café. The children make good progress overall and by the time they enter Year 1, some are likely to attain the expected standards in reading and writing. However, their skills in speaking and listening, although markedly improved, remain below those expected for children of this age. Higher attaining children are achieving particularly well and older children are likely to achieve the expected levels. Children achieve well in this area of their learning.

Mathematical development

70. Most children make good progress in their mathematical development although their attainment when they enter Year 1 is generally below that expected for children of this age. The children are provided with a good range of practical activities for the development of their mathematical skills and there is good quality direct teaching of mathematics. They gain a good foundation for future mathematics work through play in the cafe and with activities involving pattern making. They count and order the numbers to ten confidently but few can count beyond this. Most can record appropriately either five or ten spots on a picture of a ladybird. Higher attaining

children show an appropriate understanding of addition and subtraction when solving problems involving ten objects. Most develop an understanding of what is meant by 'one more' and 'one less' but the below average language skills of many hinder them in their explanations of what they have learned. Most are confident in recognising and naming simple shapes, such as square, triangle and circle. They work in pairs on the computer to differentiate between shapes and use their early mouse skills to click and drag on their chosen shape.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. Children's personal and social development is given a high priority, to very good effect. Children are happy and content to be in school. They play well together, share resources and take turns. Children work happily on their own and alongside others, as well as in groups. They are interested and responsive, taking part in all the activities provided for them with enjoyment. In whole-class sessions, most children listen with considerable interest and respond positively. Many work with concentration and persevere in their learning. Very good use is made of class discussions to develop the children's awareness of their own feelings and to acknowledge the strengths of others. Free play is planned very effectively and gives children very good opportunities to select and pursue an activity of their own choice. All staff act as very good role models for the children, helping them to form positive relationships and to care about others. Most children show independence in dressing and personal hygiene. Progress is good in this area of learning, children achieve well and most will attain the Early Learning Goal by the time they enter Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed very well through relevant topics such as mini beasts. They make good links between history and geography. Their progress is good overall and attainment, by the time they enter Year 1, will be as expected in most elements of their learning. In the scientific area of learning, they use their senses well to explore a variety of insects, observe them under the microscope and talk about their findings. This activity makes a very good contribution to children's personal, social and emotional development. They understand that they must look after these insects in their classroom carefully and understand that they need food and water in order to survive. They know the routine for the day and understand there are different times for daily events, such as making their own snack. They all enjoy making models using construction apparatus and use the computer confidently to practise new skills.

Physical development

73. The children's physical development is in line with that expected for children of this age. They make good progress and will achieve the Early Learning Goal by the time they enter Year 1. Manual dexterity is well developed, for example, their skill in spreading butter on their toast and cutting the slice in two is good. This activity linked very well to their early mathematical knowledge of fractions. Through their play with tabletop games and jigsaws, using modelling materials, pencils and brushes they show a growing ability to manage small items. Physical education is timetabled and planning shows a good range of gymnastic and games activities that promote the larger-scale movements of the children. Provision for frequent physical play is very good because there is excellent open access to their own designated play area with its wide variety of wheeled toys and climbing apparatus.

Creative development

74. Progress is good in all the creative areas of learning and attainment is average by the time these children enter Year 1. They are working well towards the designated Early Learning Goal for this area and are achieving well. They respond enthusiastically in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. Children experiment with cutting and joining skills to make models of mini beasts from a wide range of materials and as a result they cut and stick paper with some skill. They have the opportunity to express their own ideas through painting and enjoy using paint to produce lighter or darker hues of the same colour. As a result, they have produced good quality pictures of daffodils. They experience good, planned opportunities offered for role-play and spontaneously develop their own situations. This makes a good contribution to their under-developed speaking and listening skills. Most children enjoy singing, recognise familiar songs and number rhymes and sing with enthusiasm. Some can recognise and name a variety of percussion instruments.

ENGLISH

75. In the 2001 national tests the overall achievement of 11-years-old pupils was well below the national average and below when compared with similar schools. The 2001 results show a decline in achievement, although pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was similar to other schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well below when compared nationally. The well below results for 11-year-old pupils was partially due to high pupil mobility during the Key Stage and the frequent change of teachers. A significant proportion of these pupils have not attended the school throughout their primary school career. There was no significant difference in the attainment between boys and girls at both Key Stages.
76. In the 2001 national tests the achievement of seven-years-old pupils in reading was well below the national average and well below when compared with similar schools. Results in writing were below national averages and similar schools. In work seen during the inspection the standard of seven-year-old pupils' writing is at the level expected. The majority of pupils use joined writing that is well formed and their work is generally well presented. Pupils write short sentences that are in the correct sequence, using full stops, capital letters and commas to separate their ideas with understanding. Spelling is generally correct, pupils using their phonic knowledge to help with spellings. Words that are incorrectly spelt are recognisable. During the inspection good examples were seen of extended writing from the higher attaining pupils. These pupils have a clear understanding of the use of speech marks. Their work contains good descriptive phrases and confident use of imaginative vocabulary such as 'squishy and squashy' to enliven their work.
77. By the age of seven years pupils' speaking skills are well established. The majority of pupils express themselves well either on a one-to-one basis or to a larger audience. This was most noticeable during a Year 2 lesson. Here pupils spoke clearly and confidently to the class about their section of the story. Most pupils have a good range of vocabulary and are prepared to talk to adults about their work with enthusiasm and excitement. Pupils' listening skills are good. They listen carefully to instructions from the teacher, are attentive during class discussions, listen quietly to the contribution of others and wait their turn to respond. Pupils who are reticent to speak to a larger audience are encouraged by teachers and teaching assistants to develop their confidence in other situations.

78. Overall, by the end of Year 2, reading skills are not as established as the other two elements: writing, and speaking and listening. However, higher attaining pupils read well. They read with expression, varying the tone of their voice when reading speech. They read a wide range of books, talk about what they have read with enthusiasm and use phonics to work out unfamiliar words. The standard attained by average pupils is lower. Although they recognise and attempt a range of words they do not take into account the punctuation and experience difficulty retelling the story or describing the characters in the story. Lower attaining pupils are well below the level expected. They have difficulty recognising high frequency words, are very hesitant, depend on adult help and struggle with the use of phonic clues. The Early Reading Research is having a positive effect and there are signs of improvement. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been maintained since the previous inspection.
79. The overall attainment of 11-year-old pupils is below the level expected. However, the emphasis that the school has placed on the raising of standards in writing is beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainment. There is evidence of good progress since the beginning of the academic year. All pupils present their work well and handwriting is joined and legible. They are writing in a range of forms and have a clear understanding of writing for different audiences. An example of this was in a Year 3 class. Here pupils, writing a letter of complaint for an intended reader, planned the letter carefully using the appropriate vocabulary to emphasise an issue. The standard of spelling has improved but too many pupils are still making mistakes with high frequency words. The majority of pupils have a clear understanding of the use of punctuation and use it accurately. Although progress has been good there is limited evidence of extended writing. The writing by higher attaining pupils is imaginative, with complex sentences with good connectives. The writing of others is less well developed with limited use of imaginative vocabulary. Standards in writing and standardised tests have declined since the previous inspection mainly due to the frequent change of teachers. Speaking and listening skills continue to be strengths. Pupils talk confidently on a range of different issues through a variety of opportunities. In plenary sessions pupils talk about their work, make sensible comments on other pupils' work and listen carefully to the contributions of others. A good example of this was in a Year 5 book review lesson. Here pupils confidently recited their sequences commenting on the use of the 'powerful vocabulary' and using phrases such as 'caught my eye'.
80. Although pupils are showing progress with their reading with regular reading sessions the overall standard by the end of Year 6 is below the level expected. However, higher attaining pupils exceed this level, reading independently with expression and talking at some length about their favourite books. Average pupils read with understanding, observe punctuation but their choice of reading is mainly books for information lacking the range of vocabulary. These pupils are not enthusiastic about the books they have read and are reluctant to share the ideas about developments in the story and the types of books they prefer. During the inspection several reading sessions were observed. Although these sessions are planned appropriately for the shared reading groups the independent reading groups lack focus with limited opportunities for pupils to talk about the books they have read. By the time pupils are 11-years-old they know how to select books from the library. However, the guidelines to help pupils identify books in different categories are not 'pupil friendly'. It is small and does not assist less confident pupils by using a colour code to identify a particular subject. The school is aware of this and extra funds have been allocated to increase resources.

81. Pupils' attitude to the subject is positive. They are well behaved and show a good level of interest. When pupils are working directly with the teacher they are well focused but concentration tends to decline when pupils are expected to work independently and there are occasions when they are not always on task. Pupils are lively and are keen to contribute to lessons and are collaborative during group work. However, there are occasions when the noise from adjoining rooms in the open plan structure of the school is affecting the pace of work, making it at times difficult to hear the instructions from the teacher. The school has imminent plans to address this in the next phase of building.
82. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good, a proportion very good and one excellent lesson. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers have a clear understanding of the literacy strategy. Where teaching is most effective, lessons have clear objectives, the objectives are shared with pupils and thorough planning matches the needs of the pupils. This results in very good learning. These lessons begin briskly; move at pace establishing a clear working atmosphere with pupils' attention immediately engaged. Although the planning is thorough, individual time targets are not always made clear to pupils. When working independently and without teacher intervention pupils make slower progress. Teachers have very good pupil management skills, behaviour is good and pupils are able to work with relatively few distractions. This was most noticeable during discussion sessions where pupils were able to contribute without interruption, contributing positively to their speaking and listening skills.
83. The majority of lessons conclude with a plenary session to assess pupils' progress during the lesson but there are occasions when it is not clearly focused and not all abilities have the opportunity to contribute. Teachers know their pupils well, relationships are good and pupils are anxious to improve. Where teaching is less effective the displayed text for the shared reading was too small for pupils to clearly see. The outcome of this was that when pupils were questioned about the text the response was slow being unable to refer to the text. Generally, the marking is good and where teachers make comments on the quality of work with suggestions on how to improve there is clear evidence that subsequent work is improved. However, this approach is inconsistent. Generally homework is used well. There is some good evidence of word processing on display about the school. A particular strength of the teaching is the skilful, well focused questioning to develop pupils' understanding and to extend vocabulary and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to contribute. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
84. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The literacy co-ordinator for Key Stage 2 has had responsibility for the subject for a short period and has yet to make an impact. She has a clear vision about future developments and the need to raise attainment. The assessment of the subject is thorough and there are sound procedures in place to track pupils' progress. Pupils are given individual literacy targets but this approach is not consistent. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both the end of Year 2 and Year 6 benefiting from good quality support from the teaching assistants. They are fully integrated into lessons and achieve appropriate targets.

MATHEMATICS

85. By the age of 11, standards in mathematics are below national averages. Results in the 2001 national tests indicate that the expected proportion of pupils gained the required standard Level 4 but less than the national proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5. Inspection findings confirm a similar standard. However, current

Year 6 pupils achieved well below average results in the Key Stage 1 national tests and in addition, a significant proportion of these pupils have not attended the school throughout their primary school career. This has contributed to the current low standards but there is secure evidence to indicate standards are improving and that pupils are making satisfactory progress. For example, some pupils in Year 6 are undertaking work well above the expected levels in aspects of fractions and decimal calculations and have a good understanding of using formulae for calculating the area and circumference of circles. In addition, many pupils in Year 5 are already achieving the expected level for Year 6 pupils that is Level 4. The inspection also identified satisfactory progress in other Key Stage 2 year groups. This is the direct result of consistently good teaching and planning and the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy.

86. By the age of 11 pupils have a sound understanding of place value to four digits, can convert simple fractions to decimals and percentages and can record calculations using all four rules to two places of decimals. They have a satisfactory knowledge of how to use raw data to construct a variety of diagrams and graphs and subsequently to use the data to solve a variety of questions. There is some use of computer programs in constructing a variety of graphs to support pupils' understanding but this is only at an early stage in teachers' planning. Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of how to calculate the perimeter and area of different shapes, and the measurement of angles. Higher attaining pupils understand that using percentages is useful when making comparisons and recording progress. They also use mental strategies when calculating percentages. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported by teaching assistants and, as a result, they make similar progress to the rest of the class.
87. By the age of seven, the standards in mathematics are in line with national averages. This represents an improvement over 2001 national results when standards were below average. This is due to the much greater number of pupils currently working at the higher Level 3. Most pupils are competent when working with numbers up to three digits and higher attaining pupils up to four digits. They understand the patterns when adding and subtracting the same 2-digit number and use different strategies for calculating results mentally. All pupils know and recognise the names for common two and three-dimensional shapes, being able to record accurately the number of corners, edges and faces. Higher attaining pupils understand the characteristics of shapes with curved faces such as cylinders and cones. All pupils make satisfactory progress, which is an improvement since the last inspection when there was unsatisfactory progress in some lessons.
88. The quality of teaching is good. The great majority of lessons were judged good or better with examples of outstanding teaching. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when there were 'significant unsatisfactory features' in lessons in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2.
89. In the great majority of lessons during this inspection, teachers' strengths were demonstrated by good subject knowledge and use of mathematical language, that encouraged pupils to use terms correctly, such as percentages, decimals and fractions. Good planning includes clear learning intentions, which are shared with the pupils. Good teaching methods are used to present a high level of challenge, as in a Year 4 lesson on calculating perimeters, when the teacher provided a good balance between intervention and explanation. Expectation of pupils' responses, concentration and behaviour are good. The use of resources to support logical steps in pupils' learning is good.

90. In addition, teachers use the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy to ensure a good pace and interest level for the pupils. In particular, the plenary sessions are used to enable pupils to explain what they have achieved in the lesson, to share results and explain some of their methods of calculating. Homework is used appropriately and on display there are some examples of information and communication technology linked with mathematics.
91. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive. They behave well, concentrate throughout the lessons and co-operate with partners, as when checking results in a Year 6 lesson following the use of raw data to calculate percentages. In all lessons, pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and their teachers.
92. The current co-ordinator has been in post for only one year but, together with the previous co-ordinator still teaching in the school, they have made a good impact on standards of attainment, quality of teaching and organisation of mathematics. There is a strong commitment to improving all aspects of the subject and there has been considerable progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has carried out a full programme of monitoring standards of teaching and attainment of pupils and continues to sample teachers' planning and pupils' work. She manages a budget well in order to maintain an adequate supply of resources to support teaching. The co-ordinator has attended training in mathematics co-ordination and training has been delivered to improve staff expertise. The school is aware of the need to develop the use of information and communication technology in mathematics.

SCIENCE

93. Standards attained by pupils in national tests in 2001 were well below the national average. When compared with similar schools standards were well below average, particularly for the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. By the age of 11, standards in science are below average. However, this indicates recent improvement. This is a direct result of improved teaching and learning.
94. Standards attained by pupils by age seven, on the basis of teacher assessment, in 2001 were closer to the national average but showed that their attainment was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was also below average. When compared with similar schools, standards were below average. Inspection findings confirm these assessments. Results have fluctuated and the high level of pupil movement impacts on these results. For both key stages, this indicates a decline in standards since the last inspection.
95. Pupils' attainment at the age of 11, in tests and in teachers' assessments, was well below the national average. At both key stages pupils attained less well than pupils in similar schools. The 2001 cohort of pupils, however, contained many pupils who found the work especially difficult. It also contained many pupils who had not been in the school for the full seven years of their primary school life and some who had left the school to rejoin it later. This was unsettling and adversely affected results.
96. At the time of the last inspection standards were at about the national average and the 2001 results show a decline. Standards are higher in the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes. Indications from both the pupils' work and the lessons seen are that standards are rising and have returned almost to the level of the previous inspection. Pupils of seven and eleven are attaining standards nearer to the national average and more pupils are reaching the higher levels, although still not enough. Although at the age of seven standards are still below average, by the age of 11 they are approaching the national average. This is due mainly to good teaching.

97. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 understand that light is needed to see and that solid objects block light causing shadows. One pupil's work contains the lovely phrase 'The sun is a huge star which 'shines' over the whole world'. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 understand well that they must make their test for the hardness of rocks fair by using the same number of 'rubs' and the same pressure on the sand paper. Similarly in Year 5 work on plant germination, pupils understand that they must control all the variables to make the test fair. They also have a sound grasp of what the seeds will need to germinate. Pupils carry through the idea of testing into design and technology where they test the strength of paper folding to make bridges. The school has addressed particularly well the criticism of the last report about the lack of investigative science. Pupils now do much experimental work and understand why a test is fair.
98. Pupils enjoy their science and are particularly keen to experiment. They work rapidly and discuss experiments excitedly. They share equipment and co-operate well together.
99. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. It is at its best when providing opportunities for pupils to experiment and find out for themselves. Pupils benefit from the opportunities to discuss ideas and work out why something does or does not. Marking is not consistent and the work sample generally reflects teaching slightly less favourably than the lessons seen. Some books are well marked where teachers have taken time to write helpful comments and ensure that pupils understand what they have done correctly and what they could improve. Objectives are clear and usually shared with pupils. Teachers manage classes effectively and this means that pupils can concentrate and learn. In many lessons teachers revise at the end, consolidating what pupils have learned. Teachers relate to pupils well and there is always a good atmosphere in classrooms. These help pupils to feel secure and more confident in their learning. Generally, teachers organise lessons carefully. In one Year 5 class, for example, the teacher timed the active work by the children so that she could explain the first part of the lesson to those returning from extra reading help.
100. There is little evidence of information and communication technology being used in the pupils' work. However, in one lesson seen pupils were using a computer to record the results of an experiment about the waterproof qualities of various papers. Good opportunities are given for pupils to record their findings. For example, in Year 6 some pupils have written up their experiments well. There is, however, some copied work in several classes and examples of all pupils writing exactly the same descriptions in the same way. This means that the lower attaining pupils have a less secure grasp of the work and that the higher attaining pupils have found it very straightforward. Pupils also build on their numeracy skills by making tables and grids for results of experiments.
101. The science curriculum is not well organised and progression of topics is not clear and logical. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to re-shape the curriculum so that there is a better progression of work and more logical coverage of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 1 there is insufficient work in the work sample. This means that pupils have too little experience of setting down what they have done and their ideas about it. Older pupils have more opportunities to record their observations and, especially at the top of the school, books show some good recording and well presented work. Pupils with special educational needs, given extra help especially with reading, make good progress in science. There is some evidence that teachers provide extension work to help stretch higher attaining pupils. Some very good

assessment practices are evident. Resources are appropriate and are being extended.

102. The relatively new co-ordinator leads science well. She has a very good grasp of how to develop it towards raising of standards.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards in art and design have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils' attainment at seven and eleven is at the level expected overall. On display about the school is some exciting and interesting work and some of this, for example textiles and close observational work, is above that expected for pupils of this age. All pupils are fully included in lessons and progress is good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those of higher attainment, make good progress.
104. Younger pupils begin to communicate their ideas and express their feelings through drawing, painting and textiles, for example, when exploring fabric printing. They dye fabric swatches, cut stencils and overprint their designs. Pupils work independently, creating a wide range of stencils and listen to the teacher carefully. They investigate the work of different influential artists, for example, Matisse's 'Blue Nude' and talk about the curvy lines and bold shapes in the picture. They extend their own understanding using torn coloured paper and they create their own curved abstracts of everyday objects and animals. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 explore colour mixing. They reinforce their knowledge and understanding of primary and secondary colours through mixing, blending and matching exercises. Pupils have improved their close observational skills whilst drawing and painting spring flowers such as daffodils. They are aware of the work by Jackson Pollock and have had great fun producing their own 'splatter' paintings. They have experimented with collage when making their own version of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night'. Exceptional work is seen in textiles. Pupils have produced some fantastic weaving using raffia, twigs, wood and shells.
105. By the age of 11 pupils are confident in using a wide range of media and equipment. In Years 5 and 6 they study the work of Braque, consider his still life composition and interpret his style of composition. Looking at musical instruments and informed by Braque's work they explore collage. They produce good quality large-scale paper collages, depicting line, shape and pattern well. Pupils have studied L.S Lowry and have produced some superb collages and painting. They know about Art Deco and have studied work by the ceramicist, Clarice Cliff. They have produced wonderful, vibrant and decorated examples of plates, bowls, and jugs. All of this work is high quality.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Expectations of what pupils can do are usually good. Lessons are well planned and refer to a good range and variety of tasks using different media. Literacy skills are reinforced with teachers and pupils using correct, subject specific language. Oral evaluation of work is frequent and pupils are developing their own critical skills well. The balance of teaching skills and techniques and exploring and experimenting is right. Pupils learn effectively and they are encouraged to take risks and try out their ideas. Sketchbooks are used to store pupils' ideas. The co-ordinator justifiably wants to build on their use and development. There is some evidence of information and communication technology contributing to pupils' knowledge in art, as when they use simple graphics to depict houses and objects.

107. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good overall. They enjoy art. The art and textiles club is very popular amongst pupils. Pupils listen well are well motivated and work hard. In discussion they readily share their views and ideas. They share equipment and media and help one another. They are offered good opportunities to build on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
108. The leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is an enthusiast herself and is keen to help others. She has a clear vision to build upon the strengths of art in the school and also plans to hold workshops for teachers to build on their existing skills. She has developed a portfolio of work to assist teachers. Curriculum planning has been modified to incorporate best practices and to ensure a full range of media opportunity for pupils. She has suitable plans to extend the use of information and communication technology throughout the school. The school has well-established links with local galleries and regularly has visiting artists such as an African artist working in clay. Assessment opportunities are developing and planning will form the basis for assessing pupils' work; the co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop this further. The co-ordinator monitors planning but, as yet, has not formally monitored lessons, although she is fully aware of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Resources are appropriate and are of good quality as is the accommodation. At times practical working surface space is cramped in some classrooms. Art has a high profile and many of the displays about the school are most attractive, informative and are of a high quality. The overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards in design and technology are good through the school. Work displayed about the building, work in lessons, and designs in books and on display all show work of above national expectations. Pupils design, make and evaluate and sometimes rethink their designs in the light of the making experience. This is all good design technology experience. The textiles club shows pupils engaged in high quality work such as the batik on display. Year 6 pupils have recently made play-stations for gerbils and Year 5 fairground merry-go-rounds. Both designs and final products are good, some being of very high quality. Pupils' evaluations show that they have thought carefully about the work and derived benefit from the whole process of designing and making. They have also practised their writing skills in the evaluations.
110. By the end of Year 2 teachers have linked the work well to other subjects such as English, science, history and art and design. There are very few examples of information and communication technology skills being used in design and technology. Year 1 pupils have made some lovely pictures made of wool wrapped on card. The designs for Joseph's Coat of Many Colours have an interesting use of colour and shape. Work through the school shows that pupils have opportunity to work with a wide variety of materials in many different ways.
111. Pupils are very keen on design and technology work. They co-operate with one another well in lessons and work energetically and thoughtfully. They talk about what they have done enthusiastically; only when work is 'completed' without adequate follow up or extension do they relax and concentrate less well. Pupils at all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. A pupil recently won a national competition to design a maze and appeared on television during the inspection. This partly reflects the interest in design and technology in the school.

112. Teaching in design and technology is good with appropriate attention to health and safety issues. Resources are appropriate. The work sample and work around the building show that it is consistently good through the school and over time. Teachers prepare well. Tasks are very suitable and open-ended offering challenge to pupils of all abilities. Teachers plan well and organise practical activities well. The curriculum co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has a good grasp of what is happening and how the subject might be improved even further. These are all improvements since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

113. Standards across both key stages were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Current standards are in line with the national expectations by the end of Year 2 and this maintains the position since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6 the standards are above the national expectations and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
114. By the age of seven pupils gain appropriate experience in using maps to locate places in and around their school and the local area. They map important features, for example, shops, houses and churches. They can discuss aspects of their environment that make it pleasant or otherwise. They are beginning to get an understanding of a world map, for example, by putting postcards received from different people on to a large-scale map. They make good comparisons between their own area and another, for example, the Isle of Struay. Through this study they learn about differences in the number of people, the provision of parks, the number of tractors and the scenery in the different places. They make simple and accurate measurements of the weather, for example, rainfall and temperature.
115. By the age of 11 pupils have learned to draw or sketch and label a local area, describing what they see with increasing accuracy. They plan a route from school to a local church, identifying notable landmarks on the way. They can transfer this on to a map and provide grid references for someone else to follow directions accurately. They are learning about the different rocks that make up the earth, and have set up a Rock Quiz to support their learning. Pupils are learning to show a valuable appreciation of environmental features. They learn about the features of rivers and valleys and how rivers wear away rocky beds. By taking a trip to the local park pupils are able to carefully map the stream. They learn about the water cycle. They confidently use the Internet and other secondary sources to make a contrasting study in another area. Pupils make their own maps and learn to use co-ordinates with increasing precision. Pupils have produced a major study on Llandudno in Wales, learning about the physical features, the different industries, the roads and the weather. They have studied maps of different scales to get a better overall picture of the area. Pupils build on their research skills when using detailed atlases to learn about continents, major cities around the world, political maps and climate maps. They are improving their map skills as they learn about all these different features.
116. Only one lesson was observed at the end of Year 2 and it was a very good lesson. However, overall judgements on teaching at the end of Year 2 cannot be made. The teaching at the end of Year 6 was good overall, with one lesson seen as satisfactory, one very good and one excellent. In the lessons seen the teachers' knowledge and understanding were good. The lesson plans were clear and the management of the pupils was very good. There is good opportunity for the pupils to listen and to share experiences. The pace of the lessons is good. The work scrutiny of pupils' work showed that there was insufficient recording of the work that the pupils had done. Assessment does not inform teachers' planning and links with other subjects are not

consistently maintained, for example, developing writing skills. Where there is evidence of recorded work there is an inconsistency in the marking. There are few constructive comments to take the pupils forward in their learning. The displays around the school and in the classrooms show a much greater depth and coverage of work done.

117. The pupils' learning by the end of Year 2 is satisfactory and good by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in their learning. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement as to whether the higher attaining pupils are being challenged enough. All pupils are given equal opportunities to the subject. Pupils link new work with previous work and they are acquiring new skills during the lessons. Pupils show good listening skills and have a good understanding of the work being done. They know what is expected of them. By the end of Year 6 they are developing independent learning strategies, for example, in their discovery of information about different continents and countries.
118. The attitude of the pupils to geography is good overall. They enjoy talking about what they have learned. Their progress is good throughout the school. Behaviour in the lessons ranges from satisfactory to excellent, with the emphasis being on very good. Relationships within the classes are very good and the pupils respect each other and the adults.
119. The co-ordinator for the subject, a part-time teacher, has only been in post since the beginning of this year. The post is shared with the headteacher who has rewritten the policy and oversees assessment. She has a clear vision for the subject but time restricts her ability to monitor teaching and learning as well as maintaining a clear assessment policy across the whole subject. Geography is blocked with history on the timetable. The allocation of time meets that recommended but it does not necessarily ensure sufficient time is given over a whole year to deliver the curriculum. Accommodation is adequate for teaching the subject and the resources are good. Overall there have been some improvements since the last inspection, notably by the end of Year 6.

HISTORY

120. During the inspection no lessons were seen at the end of Year 2 because the subject is taught in blocks alternating with geography. Judgements on attainment, teaching and pupils' learning are based on planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils.
121. There was limited evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work but there are some very good displays around the classrooms and school. The standard of work seen by the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations. This maintains the situation from the previous inspection. Pupils have a good understanding of time lines. They are beginning to understand the developments that have taken place over time. Pupils make a study of toys from the past and compare them with the present. They visit a local museum that enables them to look at a variety of toys. They also learn from the past by looking at different buildings, for example, a comparison of homes, comparing the use of a candle and an electric light, an old stone hot water bottle with a present one with warm covers. They understand the differences between modes of transport then and now. Pupils look at the different styles of writing in Victorian times and compare them with writing styles today. They use a wide range of artefacts to see how things from the past help us to understand how people lived.

122. By the end of Year 6 standards are above the national expectations. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. In Years 3 and 4 pupils build up a detailed understanding of aspects of life in Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking settlements. Pupils can explain why such settlements developed and can indicate common factors in these societies. They use maps and plans as part of their studies. Pupils make a local study of Romans in the town of Colchester and have produced a very good wall display showing a variety of Roman soldiers. They learn about ancient Egyptians and use a range of methods to display their work, for example, a time line and artwork. This is a good link into the art curriculum. Pupils learn about industries in another part of Britain and this is a good link to the geography curriculum. This work also provides a good link to information and communication technology because the pupils are using the Internet to make a study of the different industries. Pupils in Year 5 also have a good opportunity to use the Internet when they look at entertainment, clothes, transport and technology through the years. They can locate information and then record it relevant to the subject. Pupils look at World War II and use a range of secondary sources, for example, newspaper cuttings, photographs and artefacts. They look at a time line of World War II, using secondary sources to investigate an event in the war. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit the British Museum and this enhances their studies of history. Pupils in Year 6 look at sources of evidence and discuss them among themselves, picking out the important points. They share what they have discovered with other groups, so the learners become teachers.
123. No lessons in history were observed at the end of Year 2 but, from the analysis of pupils' work and displays around the school, the teaching is at least satisfactory. Teaching by the end of Year 6 is good, with one lesson being very good. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. The teachers have a clear understanding of the work and are enthusiastic about passing this on to the pupils. Lesson objectives are written up at the start of the lesson and the teachers use different methods to achieve those objectives. Relationships with the pupils are very good and the teachers' management of the pupils is effective. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their learning skills and to share their ideas. The pace of the lessons is brisk and the teachers make good use of time, resources and support staff. The quality of pupils' written work varies and the quantity of work recorded is limited. Teachers are aware that they need to give time to developing this aspect of history so that monitoring and assessments can be made over time to better inform the planning of the curriculum. Marking is not always consistent and attention is not given to using constructive comments that will aid the pupils' learning.
124. Pupils make good progress in the development of historical skills and build on their numeracy skills, as, for example, chronology. On display there are some good examples of historical accounts and facts. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. They are learning to understand the importance and enjoyment of historical investigation, using a variety of sources. The good choice of tasks and purposeful teaching ensure that the quality of pupils' learning is good. The tasks provide suitable challenge for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils are expected to produce a high standard of work and those who need more help are given appropriate support. Pupils work well together and learn from each as they are given the opportunities to share their work. All pupils are given equal access to the curriculum. Differentiation of work is used as appropriate for a class or for individuals.

125. Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes across all the age groups. This was also reported to be the case at the time of the previous inspection. They enjoy history, particularly the practical aspects of investigation. They respond well during the times of questions and answers. When working together they work well. They understand the need to be careful with the resources and they handle them with care.
126. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is a history specialist. History has an increasingly high profile across the curriculum and the co-ordinator is keen to maintain this. Some monitoring of teaching is taking place but it is at an early stage of development. There is a detailed scheme of work in place that is an improvement from the previous inspection. Regular planning meetings take place and coverage is ensured through the detailed curriculum map. There is a very good range of resources, including artefacts, and these are well used. These assist the learning of all the pupils. There are some cross-curricular links to other subjects, such as art and design, geography and information and communication technology, and this is a developing aspect. The various visits made by different year groups extend the experiences of the pupils and add to their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national expectations. By the end of Year 6 standards are above the national expectations. Although the standards by the end of Year 2 are lower than at the previous inspection, there have been improvements across the school in that time.
128. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of using the keyboard and mouse. They know how to delete text using the delete key and how to add punctuation marks such as commas and full stops. They demonstrate a satisfactory use of simple art programs, for example, to create pictures involving shapes and colour to which they can add text. Pupils use the computer to develop their writing skills, when writing messages to a pupil who has gone abroad. They use a colour magic program to draw a house and then add text with title and name. Pupils use a computer to record and draw a simple graph of birthdays. They use different tools on the computer; for example, the pencil tool, the brush tool and the spray tool and they can use the flood-fill to complete their pictures. They are using the computer in a range of different activities. Pupils save and print their work and combine text with graphics. They change the font size and colour. Pupils use computers in mathematics to produce a simple bar graph of their favourite stories. They can also produce a block graph of the different types of transport used to come to school.
129. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of using the computer in a range of different activities. They use a simulation program to link a science experiment on cooling and insulating materials. They are learning to ask their own questions of the simulation program to make further discoveries about the best and worst insulating materials. Pupils are learning to create a multimedia presentation by using PowerPoint. They are learning to set up individual slides by inserting clip art, writing text, introducing sounds and different effects. They use an Information Magic program to help in their investigation of bags. Pupils use the computer to represent their data as either a bar graph or pie-chart. They link this to their work in design and technology when studying the types and uses of bags. They use the computer to produce graphs and tables showing conversion charts for different measurements. Pupils collect factual data from the Internet for information. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements in the range of work covered and pupils are gaining new skills across the curriculum. There are other examples where

information and communication technology is being used across the curriculum, in addition to mathematics, science and design and technology. In history, pupils use a digital camera to record a drama about how people suffered during World War II, using the Internet to find out the information. In geography, pupils use a Power Point presentation to illustrate their work on producing an information pack about Llandudno. The use of the computers in the classroom is not as well represented. During the inspection the computers in the classrooms were rarely seen being used to support the curriculum.

130. Teaching is satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and overall very good at the end of Year 6. The knowledge and understanding at the end of Year 2 is satisfactory. Not all teachers are fully confident in delivering the curriculum. In-service training is ongoing and is improving their confidence and skills. Lesson planning is satisfactory. Where the teaching at the end of Year 6 is very good, the teachers have clear plans and are confident about using technology. Lessons are well organised and teachers are enthusiastic about the work being done. The management of pupils is very good and they use time, resources and support staff very well. Information and communication technology is developing an increasing role across the whole curriculum. It is not yet fully expanded to ensure coverage across all subjects.
131. The pupils' learning by the end of Year 2 is satisfactory. They are beginning to develop a confidence in their use of computers. Their gaining of skills and knowledge is satisfactory overall. They have satisfactory levels of interest and motivation. By the end of Year 6 pupils' learning is very good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. They are developing very good confidence and have good levels of interest and concentration. They are beginning to develop good skills of independent learning in using their initiative when working on the computers. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are making good progress. Higher attaining pupils are also making good progress and work is given which challenges them appropriately when using the computer.
132. Pupils' attitudes to information and communication technology are good across the school. The pupils are very enthusiastic when given the opportunity to use the computers in the ICT suite. They work well together and enjoy helping each other. They respect the equipment and respect each other as they work together. There is good provision for the development of social skills as they work together. Pupils are well behaved due to the good relationships between staff and pupils.
133. The leadership of information and communication technology is good. The new computer suite has improved the delivery of the subject. This is a good resource but the ventilation in the information and communication technology suite is not adequate. There also needs to be a white board, or equivalent, which will enable teachers to demonstrate the learning objectives for each lesson. The co-ordinator has clear plans for the development of the subject and is about to introduce a comprehensive assessment package that will help all teachers to improve their own skills as well as developing the skills, knowledge and understanding of the pupils. Monitoring of teaching and learning needs to be developed and the recording of work done by pupils needs to be given priority so that clear assessments can be made which will then inform further planning. The introduction of individual pupils' record of progress should be made at the earliest opportunity. Taking all the evidence into consideration, the improvement since the last inspection has been good and the National Curriculum requirements are fully met.

MUSIC

134. Only two sessions of music at the end of Year 2 were observed during the inspection, a class music lesson and an infant singing session. Judgements on attainment therefore have been made on these two lessons, audio tapes of compositions and discussion with pupils. From this evidence the attainment of pupils at the age of seven is at the level expected.
135. Pupils sing well and with enthusiasm maintaining reasonable pitch. They confidently perform to others. They know the words to a variety of songs adding the appropriate actions in time to the music to help maintain rhythm and to accentuate the meaning of the words. Pupils are beginning to appreciate the role of the conductor, can follow a simple graphic score keeping a steady pulse and respond to the directions of a conductor. Creative skills are developing using percussion instruments adding appropriate percussive sounds to a text. Using art as a stimulus, pupils successfully add inventive sounds to represent the art images of Kandinsky.
136. By the time pupils are 11 attainment is above the level expected. The overall standard of singing is good. Pitch is well established and their vocal range is developing. Older pupils sing complex songs, coping well with difficult intervals whilst developing an understanding to maintain the quality of sound when singing loudly. Pupils' creative skills are developing well. They are beginning to understand that compositions have a clear structure and a musical progression. An example of this was with both the Year 6 classes. Here pupils used vocal sounds, based on onomatopoeic words, to successfully produce group compositions, creating musical sequences using percussion instruments with directions from a conductor. Pupils are beginning to use the appropriate musical, technical vocabulary, using words such as crescendo, pitch and tempo with understanding and effectively transferring this knowledge to enhance their compositions. Younger pupils play simple tunes on the recorder either from memory or reading formal notation. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and make good progress. The quality of singing has improved since the previous inspection.
137. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive. They show a good level of interest and are anxious to improve. When working in groups they all contribute sensibly, show respect for instruments and confidently perform their compositions to the rest of the group. They are very well behaved and show respect for their teachers.
138. The overall quality of teaching is good, a proportion very good. The group singing sessions, led by the music co-ordinator, are well planned with appropriate choice of songs to develop pupils' vocal range and rhythmic skills. These sessions moved with pace and pupils responded well showing a good level of interest. Good warm up strategies at the beginning of these sessions added to pupils' progress and improved vocal quality. Generally, class music lessons are appropriately planned and, where teachers have both confidence and competence, progress and learning are good. Where teaching is good the objectives are clear and shared with the pupils. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to perform at the end of lessons. This was most evident in the Year 6 classes. These lessons had pace and good opportunities for independent learning, allowing pupils to explore different sounds and develop compositions with a musical structure. On the occasions when teaching was less effective the objectives were unclear, lacking in independent practice opportunities resulting in pupils losing interest and becoming restless. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

139. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator, a music specialist, has good subject knowledge and gives good support for colleagues who are less confident. She has a clear vision about future developments and the need to maintain standards. Assessment is developing appropriately. During the inspection no evidence of the use of information and communication technology was seen; this is a recognised area for development by the school. The resources for the subject are good with a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments which support pupils' progress and their musical and creative development. Music contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. Standards in physical education are in line with the national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Aspects of gymnastics seen were above average by the age of 11. In Year 6 standards are judged to be above average. There has been a marked improvement in all aspects of physical education since the last inspection when it was identified as a key issue. All pupils have the opportunity to plan and evaluate their own performance and all lessons encourage pupils to practise and develop their skills. This consistent practice throughout the school ensures that pupils make good progress. There is also a high standard of safety and care demonstrated, by all pupils, when moving equipment.
141. By the age of seven, pupils know about the need to warm up before physical activity and the effect this has on their heartbeat. In gymnastics, they have good co-ordination, using their arms to help balance when jumping and landing. They have a good awareness of space and of how to use it to advantage. They perform a good range of stretching, jumping and curved body movements linking them together into simple sequences. They enjoy the opportunities for evaluation, especially suggesting ways of improving their performance and in praising other's achievements. Some pupils achieve above expectations because of the opportunities provided to improve. These pupils are developing individual creative styles, which support progress, particularly in dance activities.
142. By the age of 11 pupils have made good progress in gymnastics. They create and refine sequences of movements demonstrating a full range of high, medium and low level balances, changing direction and speed throughout the sequence. They have good skills of collaboration especially when planning and refining asymmetrical and symmetrical balances at different levels. Pupils are developing sound hand-eye co-ordination skills in a variety of games including tennis. The involvement of outside agencies, such as coaches from Colchester Football Club and the Top Sport Training scheme, are used well to support pupils' progress. Pupils are making sound progress in developing skills in athletics such as different jumping methods and co-operation in relay racing. Standards in swimming by the age 11 are satisfactory, with a majority of pupils able to swim the required 25 metres distance. However, the recent introduction of swimming lessons for Year 3 and 4 pupils indicates that almost all pupils will exceed the requirements by the time they leave the school. It is evident from photographic records that a full programme of dance activities has been available for all pupils. This culminated in pupils taking part in a dance festival with local schools, performing a range of dances representing different musical styles, and cultures around the World, and displaying personal feelings and emotions.
143. Pupils have consistently good attitudes to their physical education activities. This is another improvement since the last inspection. They show enthusiasm and react energetically in all activities. In gymnastics, pupils demonstrate high levels of concentration and creative thought as in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils worked hard in

pairs, to improve their balances and sequence of movements. In addition, they made clear and informative comments about their own and other's performances. In all lessons, pupils listen very carefully to instructions and react well to improve the standard of their movements. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection.

144. The quality of teaching is consistently good with examples of outstanding teaching. All teachers have good levels of planning including a clear understanding of the use of learning objectives. Planning takes account of teachers' assessments of previous lessons and these are shared with pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and translate this into high-level challenges of the pupils. The progress of pupils is enhanced as a result. In all lessons, teachers have good control of pupils and this encourages high levels of concentration and activity.
145. The co-ordinator has positively promoted the improvement in standards over the last two years. Developments in the scheme of work, resources and staff training have all contributed to this. In addition, she has initiated a high level of monitoring and evaluation; some in partnership with local education authority advisors. These activities have focused on gaps in provision and appropriate action resulted. Resources are much improved. The standard of reporting and feedback to staff after observations has been very high. A high level of extra-curricular sporting activities is provided, many supported by outside agencies such as Essex County Cricket, the local university, Premier Sport and Colchester United Football Club. The subject contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The current promotion of physical education is a great improvement since the last inspection and has contributed to improvements in all aspects of the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. Standards in religious education are above expectations for pupils by the age 11 and in line for pupils aged seven. The older pupils have a good understanding of the impact of religion in peoples' lives. They develop good knowledge of the essential elements of the Christian faith and have a clear understanding of the essential beliefs in other world religions. Younger pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and links with other world faiths.
147. There is much evidence in the recorded work that religious education is taught systematically and regularly. By the age of 11, pupils know about sacred writing such as the Bible and the Koran, and of a wide variety of festivals from different religions such as Hanukah from the Jews, Holi from Hindus and the nature of covenants from Old Testament stories of Moses, Noah and Abraham. They also understand the relevance of symbolism in religion such as water, clothing and light. Older pupils have discussed marriage including Jewish marriages and the characteristics of Barmitzvah. They have also examined their reactions to belonging to a group or not and 'What I would have done' in problem scenarios. After a visit to the local parish church, younger pupils had a better understanding of the place of the church in people's lives. They also know about the main festivals in the Christian calendar and some Old Testament stories such as Jacob and his son Joseph. In addition, all pupils have the opportunity to think about their own emotions and reactions to life events. For example, younger pupils consider friendships and what it means, the nature of jealousy and about remembering people who have died.
148. Three lessons were observed during the inspection, all in junior classes. Taking into account pupils' recorded work and these lessons, the quality of teaching is always satisfactory and, in one instance, outstanding. In this lesson, Year 6 pupils made

excellent progress as a result of very clear learning objectives being shared with them; very good resources of taped music, pictures, photographs and maps of Israel making the lesson exciting and interesting. Pupils were challenged to think deeply about the life of Jewish people in exile to Babylonia because of the open ended questions prepared by the teacher. The pace of the lesson was very brisk. Pupils were able to recap on last week's lesson, listen to 'The Rivers of Babylon' song, to make comments about how this linked with their knowledge of the story, to make thoughtful and mature observations and to pose some difficult questions themselves. In another lesson, good planning, resources and good use of questioning supported pupils' learning and concentration.

149. Pupils have very positive attitudes and are well behaved in lessons. They listen carefully and maintain good levels of concentration. In the Year 6 lesson, pupils showed great interest in the nature of being exiled from their own land. Their mature attitudes provoked questions such as 'Did the Jews return to Jerusalem?' and in response ' Why did some Jews remain in another land?' They also provided a wide range of responses to the question ' What would I take with me if I was exiled?'
150. The co-ordinator has a keen interest and commitment to developing the standards in religious education. She has had a really positive impact and has successfully raised the profile of religious education in the school. The Essex agreed Syllabus 'Open World' and the national QCA scheme have been combined to form a new two-year cycle of work for every year group. This is ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum and assessment are being addressed. Some monitoring of lessons, planning and resources has been completed. As a result, the co-ordinator has identified the need to improve the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning and the need for some staff training to continue to develop staff expertise. There are good resources available to support the curriculum. Religious education contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Considerable improvements have been made since the last inspection.