

INSPECTION REPORT

MOUNTNESSING CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brentwood, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115117

Headteacher: Mrs J Brown

Reporting inspector: Mike Warman
1516

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 July 2002

Inspection number: 196128

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: 279 Roman Road
Mountnessing
Brentwood
Essex

Postcode: CM15 0UH

Telephone number: 01277 353160

Fax number: 01277 352269

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Kirk

Date of previous inspection: 30 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1516	Mike Warman	Registered inspector	Special educational needs Art and design Mathematics Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13807	Christine Haggerty	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12764	Wendy Thomas	Team inspector	English as an additional language Equal opportunities Geography History Religious education Science	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils?
1718	Kay Charlton	Team inspector	Foundation stage Design and technology English Information and communication technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mountnessing is a small primary school in a village not far from Brentwood. There are 116 pupils on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 which is well below average for primary schools nationally. There are almost equal numbers of boys and girls. There are currently 11 children in their Reception year. Pupils are taught in five classes, all but one contains more than one year group. The school is housed in two main buildings connected by a 250 metre lane. There are also two classes in relocatable buildings, one on each site. Pupil numbers have fallen slightly since the last inspection. The intake of the school is average in terms of socio-economic status and attainment. There are below average numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs; currently, 13 pupils are on the special needs register although no pupils have statements. All pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and no pupils speak English as an additional language. Only a small number of pupils is entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. This is partly as a result of a significant drop in the number of pupils taking school meals since the last inspection. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2001 following an unsettled period of two years whilst the previous headteacher was on sick leave. This resulted in a succession of supply teachers taking the deputy headteacher's class, which had a significantly negative impact on the learning of these pupils and their results in the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Standards are above average. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The school is well led and managed and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- The pupils have very good relationships with each other and with adults, they behave very well and the school is a harmonious community.
- The arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, included in all activities and they make good progress.
- The school is well led by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body.
- Parents have very positive views about the school and the impact of their involvement is very good.

What could be improved

- The development of pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigative work in science.
- The way the school uses information gained from assessments in English, mathematics and science to track pupils' progress and set targets for them.
- The procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' achievements in the non-core subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. Since then, improvement has been good. Standards have improved. The Foundation Stage has improved in terms of facilities, staffing and teaching. Subject co-ordinators are leading their subjects more effectively and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are monitoring both standards and teaching and learning. All subjects now have subject plans. Teachers' planning has improved, with the more able being better challenged. The arrangements for information and communication technology have improved significantly and standards are now above average. At the last inspection teaching was judged to be satisfactory; 16 per cent observed was considered to be unsatisfactory. Teaching is now good; during the inspection all teaching seen was at least satisfactory and a high proportion was good or very good.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Care should be taken when analysing the results of small year groups and small schools. The effect of one additional pupil on, for example, a school percentage measure can be considerable. The findings in the above tables should therefore be interpreted carefully.

The results in the above table show the type of fluctuation usually seen in schools with small year groups where the performance of one or two pupils can make a significant difference to the overall outcomes. The 2001 results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were above national averages in English, below average in mathematics and well below in science. When compared with similar schools they were below average for English and well below for mathematics and science. The results for mathematics and science reflect the fact that fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 5 than did in English. In both subjects, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above was similar to the national average. The comparison with similar schools is a reflection of the very low numbers of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Although there are no national comparisons available for 2002, results show a significant improvement on those in 2001 with a much higher proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. The results for pupils at the end of Year 2, in 2001, showed similar fluctuations to those mentioned above. Results for reading were above the national average, those for mathematics were well above and those for writing were similar to the national average.

Inspection evidence shows above average standards in English, mathematics and science and that pupils are achieving well. The school set challenging targets for the 2002 tests which, on the evidence of the results received, have been achieved. The targets for 2003 are also challenging and on the evidence of the work of the present Year 5 pupils they are on track to achieve them.

In all other subjects pupils are achieving at least the expected levels and in many they are attaining above them. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well against the targets set for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils are eager to achieve well. Most are conscientious and show a very good level of interest in what they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other and visitors to the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They are supportive of each other and take on responsibilities sensibly. Relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are very good.

Attendance	Attendance is good and above the national average.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. A high proportion of teaching observed during the inspection was good, very good or excellent and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Good teaching was seen in all classes in the school. The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is good throughout the school. In all classes, suitable work is provided for pupils in the different age groups. Teachers work hard to ensure that their classrooms are well organised and they establish good relationships with pupils. The overall pace of pupils' learning is good as a result of the good level of challenge provided by teachers. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good; teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. In a good number of lessons teachers have very high expectations to which pupils respond very well and achieve highly. Time is used very well and resources are used imaginatively to make learning exciting.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned to provide an interesting range of learning opportunities. A wide range of visits and visitors also enriches pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. Pupils are well supported and included in all activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good and for cultural development it is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring and safe environment and staff are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils. The school's procedures for checking and supporting pupils' development are good, overall. The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements in the core subjects is good but in many of the non-core subjects assessment against the levels in the National Curriculum is not well-developed.

The school has strong links with parents who make a very good impact on the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well. She is supported effectively by the recently appointed deputy headteacher and together they provide clear direction for the work of the

	school.
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How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are clear about their role and fulfil it effectively. They are very supportive of the school and fully understand the issues affecting it.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school does this well. It evaluates its performance through test results and other performance data, including teaching quality, thoroughly. However, assessment information, although analysed to help improve standards, overall, is not used sufficiently to set challenging targets for individual pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well to improve the standards pupils' achieve. Specific grants are well used.

The school is well staffed with teachers and teaching assistants. Although the school buildings are dispersed, it has suitable accommodation. Resources are at least satisfactory in all subjects. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Their children make good progress • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good • They feel comfortable approaching the school with suggestions or complaints • Children are expected to work hard • The school is well led and managed • The school works closely with parents • The school helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work pupils are expected to do at home • The range of activities the school provides outside lessons

Parents expressed very positive views of the school with which the inspectors agree. Although the amount of homework is similar to that normally seen, the school has responded to the concerns of a few parents and plans to review the homework policy as part of the current school development plan. The range of activities outside lessons is similar to that normally found in schools of this size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment on entry of children to the school varies from year to year but is generally average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical skills and in personal and social skills. The admission pattern means that children have a maximum period of one year in Reception and for a significant number the time is much shorter. Children learn well in the Foundation Stage and most achieve the expectations of the Foundation Stage curriculum in all areas of learning by the time they leave.
2. The results in the 2001 tests, for pupils at the end of Year 2, were above average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. These pupils made good progress from their attainment at the beginning of Year 1. The trend in these results shows fluctuations due to the small number of pupils in each year group.
3. The National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 6, in 2001, were above national averages in English, below average in mathematics and well below in science. When compared with similar schools the results were below average for English and well below for mathematics and science. These are the result of the group of pupils who have experienced a two year period of teaching from supply staff whilst the previous headteacher was on sick leave and the deputy headteacher, who was their class teacher, was acting headteacher. This meant that although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was average it was below for the higher Level 5. Over time, the trends in test performance show the types of fluctuations often seen in schools with small year groups.
4. Inspection found that most pupils in the school are achieving well and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they are reaching standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science that are above average. This is confirmed by the results of the 2002 tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The results for Year 6 showed a much higher proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Better use is made of earlier performance data to set targets for attainment at the end of each year and this has raised teachers' expectations.
5. Progress for pupils in Year 2 is good. Their reading and writing are of a good standard. They read with expression and use a full range of skills to tackle new words and phrases. Their writing is clear, uses a good range of vocabulary and punctuation is used consistently. Handwriting and presentation are generally good. In their number work most pupils are achieving well. They know their number facts to 10 and use these when calculating with larger numbers to 100. Most are working logically when solving problems and they already calculate simple addition and subtraction with large numbers in their heads. They have a good knowledge of money and time and are secure in describing shapes.
6. By Year 6, pupils use language well both orally and in their writing. Pupils read with fluency and confidence both for pleasure and to find information to support their work in other subjects. Writing is well constructed and used for a variety of purposes, although there is little evidence of pupils completing extended stories. Complex sentences are used and correct use of punctuation is evident. They have a good understanding of the number system and are confident when working out calculations in their head. They are secure with strategies for multiplication and division, and have good experience of working with data from graphs. Although pupils calculate mentally quickly and accurately they have less confidence in using their knowledge in problem-solving situations.
7. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and number skills in other subjects. This is making a good contribution to the rate at which they are learning. They listen well to others and work collaboratively, sharing ideas. Speaking and listening skills are generally

- above average. The targets for the English and mathematics tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, for 2002, were challenging and have been met by the test results just published.
8. In science, pupils achieve standards that are above those that would be expected. As they move through the school they know about the properties of a range of materials, both manufactured and natural, and are beginning to investigate using simple practical experiments. They are able to record their findings appropriately using a range of methods including written, diagrammatic and graphical. By Year 6, pupils have increased their knowledge and understanding well in most aspects of the science curriculum, but their investigative skills are less well-developed.
 9. Pupils are achieving above average standards in information and communication technology. The school provides a wealth of experiences and pupils are acquiring new skills rapidly and using them well to support their learning in other subjects. In religious education pupils achieve average standards and are gaining a good understanding of the importance of faith and prayer to different groups.
 10. In art and design and music, standards are above average and pupils make good progress. In design and technology, history, geography and physical education pupils attain the levels expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress.
 11. Pupils of all abilities are learning at a better rate than at the last inspection. There are no marked differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Those with behavioural difficulties are very well supported. They are fully involved in all the activities, and good strategies for group work ensure that they enjoy learning and are well motivated.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved since the last inspection. Pupils have very good attitudes to school life and have very good relationships with their teachers and their classmates.
13. As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly engaged in their learning and understand that hard work produces good results. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, responsive to their teachers and keen to take part in the many opportunities provided. In lessons, pupils listen and concentrate well. Their co-operative attitudes allow most activities to proceed smoothly and pupils are gaining a good understanding of how their actions can influence others.
14. In lessons, pupils behave very well. Most pupils respond very well to the school's expectations of mature behaviour in an environment where rules are clearly stated and the boundaries recognised and accepted. Pupils listen well to one another, showing respect for different views. As a result, teaching and learning takes place in a calm, happy and purposeful atmosphere. During an excellent religious education lesson pupils offered many ideas about prayers, which were listened to very well, resulting in a particularly sensitive discussion.
15. Behaviour around the school is very good. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils reported that this does not happen. Pupils are confident in talking to an adult if any problems should arise. Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes shows the school to be a happy and harmonious community. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
16. The very good relationships throughout the school are based on mutual respect and are a fundamental strength of the school. On many occasions pupils were seen to be helping each other both in lessons and during playtimes. In one mathematics lesson two Year 6 pupils discussed together what would happen when shapes were rotated. Each one learned from the other, resulting in both understanding the task better and achieving well. Adults in the school act as good role models for pupils. Pupils trust their teachers and the support staff. The very good relationships help to promote an effective teaching and learning environment.

17. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils of all ages act responsibly when carrying out the various monitors' tasks they are given in the classroom or around the school. Even the youngest children in Reception have responsibilities for putting equipment away, which they do very well. Pupils in all classes collect and return registers and older pupils prepare the hall for assembly and operate the overhead projector and music centre very responsibly. Particularly noticeable is the very responsible way in which pupils of all ages move between the two buildings even when the weather is wet. The school council gives pupils from all classes opportunities to discuss matters important to them and make suggestions as to how to improve their school. A notable success is the additional play equipment outside, for which the council raised money by organising a cake stall and then selected the equipment from a catalogue. Pupils use their initiative well both in and out of classrooms.
18. The attendance and punctuality of pupils is good. Attendance is above the national averages and this has a positive effect on the progress and attainment of those pupils who attend school regularly. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. There is a small number of pupils who go on holiday during term-time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching is good, which is a significant improvement from the last inspection. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with a high proportion good or very good. Good teaching was seen in all classes and there was no significant difference between the teaching in different year groups.
20. Teaching of the Reception children is consistently good. This is a major improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection when teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. Staff plan and prepare the classroom well to provide interesting activities which engage the interest of children and promote good learning. Activities presented to the children are appropriate to their needs and motivate them to learn successfully. A good balance of 'teacher-directed' activities and those that the children choose for themselves are provided; for example, some children enjoyed building models with construction materials very independently whilst others were taught the techniques needed to make a clay tile. All staff challenge and question the children effectively to make them think and move on to the next stage of their learning. For example, they develop the children's vocabulary well when discussing the growth of seeds, learning the names of shapes or when discussing the tiny creatures they have found in the school grounds.
21. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy as a basis for their planning and write detailed plans for the different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils of all abilities are successfully gaining skills. Discussions in lessons are often used very well to help pupils learn about opinions and develop confidence in expressing their point of view. For example, when a group of Year 6 pupils was discussing nonsense poems they came to the conclusion that although they are nonsense the authors use ideas that we know to make it funny. Teachers are using the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to guide mathematics teaching. Mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of lessons are used regularly and effectively to develop pupils' learning. In most mathematics lessons, these mental activities are sharp and have appropriate pace which challenges pupils well. Consequently, pupils are developing their confidence in carrying out quick calculations. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in other subjects of the curriculum. However, insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to solve problems in mathematics or investigate in science.
22. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that all pupils take part successfully in all lessons. There is more clarity within the mixed-aged classes and sharper learning objectives for all groups. This ensures that pupils of all abilities, including the more able, are well supported and consequently achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants working individually or in small groups. These pupils take part in all activities and work with other pupils as much as possible. There is a good level of awareness of the needs of individual pupils amongst all teachers and teaching

assistants.

23. A common feature of the most successful lessons is the high expectation that teachers have of what pupils understand, their behaviour and co-operation. This is clearly reflected in the manner in which teachers speak to pupils in lessons and the guidance that they provide. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 6 English lesson where the teacher expected pupils to understand and use terms such as 'alliteration' and 'onomatopoeia', which they did confidently.
24. The positive way in which teachers manage the behaviour of pupils is apparent in all lessons. Where it is particularly successful teachers secure good behaviour with minimum effort. They employ an appropriate balance of praise, encouragement and occasional censure. Pupils understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and respond accordingly. Consequently, teachers are able to concentrate fully on the content of that which they are teaching rather than maintaining discipline, and the quality of pupils' learning benefits significantly as a result.
25. Overall, teachers use a range of teaching strategies well to engage the interest of all pupils and to ensure that learning is most productive. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to contribute as a class and to work in small groups and individually, as appropriate. Some are imaginative in employing methods to enliven teaching and capture the interest of pupils from the outset. In a numeracy lesson in Year 1 and 2, for example, the teacher engaged the attention of pupils well by introducing a fluffy dog puppet as the focus for a lesson on time.
26. The quality of teachers' explanations in most lessons is clear, and questioning is sufficiently incisive to ensure that pupils build on their understanding sequentially. These were features of several literacy lessons throughout the school and were particularly effective where teachers engaged pupils fully. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, when pupils compared the different styles of Spike Milligan and Roald Dahl, or in the excellent Year 3 religious education lesson when there was a very sensitive discussion about prayer.
27. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Where it is particularly good, teachers draw on their own particular interest and expertise well to present lessons confidently to pupils. For example, in one information and communication technology lesson the teacher was very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject and set up some very interesting activities to show how a sensor can take readings from the environment and record them graphically. This resulted in pupils tackling the work enthusiastically and achieving well. All staff have had training to develop their skills in information and communication technology and this is now well used in many subjects.
28. Teaching in information and communication technology is very good and in science, art and design, music and religious education it is good. Teaching in design and technology, geography, history and physical education is satisfactory.

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

29. The school's curriculum is good, covers all expected areas, takes good account of pupils' individual needs and gives pupils of all abilities a wide range of interesting activities to help them learn well. This is good improvement since the last inspection.
30. The last inspection highlighted the need to improve subject plans and teachers' planning throughout the school, and also the provision for the Reception children. The school has worked on subject plans and these are now in place for all subjects and are effective. Good emphasis is given to ensuring that there is systematic teaching of literacy and numeracy. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies suitably and these are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Curriculum planning by individual teachers has recently been reviewed and is now good. The curriculum for the Reception children has improved significantly. Full account is taken of the needs of children who are in their first year of school and they benefit

from a well-balanced and interesting programme.

31. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is good and is a strong feature of the school. Clear procedures are in place, which are very well managed and fully meet requirements. The school has reviewed its policy and practices and these are already in line with the revised Code of Practice, which is expected to be fully implemented by September 2002. Pupils' needs are identified early and a good level of support is provided. All these pupils have Individual Education Plans, which contain clear and appropriate targets. Across the school, all pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum and they are included very well in all activities.
32. Pupils are well supported in their personal, social and health development. There is a planned programme, which helps pupils to realise that each individual has responsibilities as well as rights, and that everyone has to learn how to make choices. There is good attention given to the need for healthy living and the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs. A suitable programme of sex education is provided. Pupils are taught about the need to consider others, for example, when making donations to Great Ormond Street Hospital and by the 'Bin It' campaign where they helped to address problems of litter in the vicinity of the school.
33. There are good links with both the local playgroups and secondary schools, resulting in transfer being well planned. One of the secondary schools is making a particularly important contribution to the curriculum of the school; for example, by providing opportunities for pupils to learn French and German.
34. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. These include several after-school and lunch-time clubs, for example, the football, netball, ICT, German and the ceramic clubs. Friendly sports matches are organised with nearby schools.
35. The school has very strong links with the community, which benefit pupils' learning. A very wide range of visits into the community takes place supporting several subjects, most notably studies in geography, history and religious education. These include visits to the parish church, where pupils also develop their understanding about aspects of the Christian religion very well. Other examples include visits to Walton-on-the Naze and Thorndon Park. The school's website is linked to that of the Church, which demonstrates the close link between these two institutions. A wide range of visitors, including a local Member of Parliament, theatre groups, the over-sixties group, police and local clergy all help to enhance the curriculum very well. There is a good link with the local parish council which is providing each pupil at the school with a memento to commemorate the recent Golden Jubilee celebrations. The school's photocopying facilities are open for use by those living nearby and there are also plans to develop the school's ICT suite in a similar way.
36. The support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, overall, and this is an improvement since the last inspection when this aspect of the school's work was judged to be good.
37. Support for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Staff receive and value pupils' ideas and encourage them to have a positive self-image. They set very good role models and inspire a sense of trust. In this climate, pupils are confident to explore their feelings and emotions. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to find out about what they, and others, believe through, for example, assemblies, religious education, stories and visits to places of worship, such as local churches. There are many opportunities for reflection in assemblies and pupils respond particularly well to occasions when they listen to prayers that other pupils have written. In subjects such as science, music and art, opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a sense of wonder at the beauty of the world. This was particularly noticeable when some of the youngest children in the school used magnifiers to observe the antennae of tiny creatures living in the area immediately outside their classroom.
38. There is very good support for moral development. Pupils are aware that they are expected to behave well. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and they understand that it is their responsibility to behave well and also to help others to do so. The school's 'Values Tree'

provides a good reference point where pupils add comments about the values that they feel are important; for example, one pupil had added a leaf about trust and honesty being important and this provided a good starting point for an assembly which reinforced these ideas. There is helpful discussion about bullying and pupils know what to do should it occur. Those pupils who have identified behavioural needs are set clear and appropriate targets, and the staff work hard to help them to be successful in meeting these. This results in them making particularly good progress in this respect.

39. The support for pupils' social development through the daily life of the school is very good. Adults are very supportive of the pupils and have established very good relationships with them. The school is particularly successful in ensuring that pupils help and care for one another. For instance, older pupils readily help younger ones at lunch-time and in assembly. In class and elsewhere, pupils are encouraged to work together effectively and support the whole school community. They are encouraged to take responsibility and develop their independence. They do this well in many ways, for example, when the pupils take on specific jobs for the whole school or their class.
40. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their cultural awareness. Pupils develop their understanding well through visits to local places of interest, when visitors come to school, and through their lessons notably in music, art, history, geography and religious education. Recent visits include those to the Festival Hall in London, the Civic Theatre in Chelmsford and to nearby museums. Visitors include theatre groups, African drummers and a steel band. A good contribution to this aspect is also made by studies about other countries, for example, when pupils learn about life in India in their geography lessons. Pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures is also promoted through learning about Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism in religious education. Books include appropriate information about the diverse range of cultures represented in society. The headteacher's own experience of working in Ghana also provides a valuable source of information for pupils to learn about different cultures. The school has suitable plans to widen pupils' experiences of and prepare them more for life in a diverse multicultural society by setting up a link with a school in Newham.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Staff are very committed to providing good quality care, support and guidance to all pupils. Procedures to ensure the care, health and safety and protection of pupils are good. The good quality of care provided by the school has been maintained since the last inspection.
42. There are very good procedures for child protection. The named person for child protection has attended the appropriate training courses. All staff have recently received training on child protection awareness and procedures. Staff make good use of outside agencies to support pupils as and when necessary.
43. Procedures for first aid are good. There are sufficient qualified first aiders on site to ensure that all incidents are dealt with efficiently. There are good procedures for dispensing medication and parents are always informed of any injuries that occur in school. Pupils understand the first aid procedures and know who to go to if they feel unwell.
44. The school has very good policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils. All fire regulations are met and all electrical equipment used by the school is regularly tested and serviced. Risk assessments are always carried out before any trips take place. A governor and the headteacher make termly risk assessments of the premises; the results are then reported to the governing body.
45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance are satisfactory. There is no evidence of any parent-condoned absence and parents report that their children enjoy school. The school always contacts parents on the first day that a child is absent, if they do not know the reason why the pupil is not at school. The information is recorded, but there are no formal

procedures for the reasons for absence to be transferred to the registers. As a result, teachers are not informed of the reason. There is, also, no central late book to record the time that pupils arrive.

46. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating poor behaviour are very good. There are clear rules and the system of report sheets works well. Pupils are expected to behave well and the vast majority of pupils respond very well. There is a weekly celebration assembly, which recognises good work and good behaviour. The school has very good procedures in place to provide one to one counselling for pupils when there are particular concerns. The school maintains a central record of inappropriate behaviour but only a few entries are recorded each year. This confirms parents' views that the behaviour of pupils is very good and that there is no bullying. A Theatre Group recently visited the school to reinforce the schools anti-bullying policy.

47. The school's procedures for checking pupils' academic performance in English, mathematics and science are good, which is an improvement since the last inspection when they were described as sound. The school uses the optional tests in English and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers use progress books to track pupils' development in writing through the school. The assessment of pupils' work in the non-core subjects is not as effective but is being developed. Teachers have not developed suitable systems to track pupils' progress and therefore use their knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses in their planning. This has a negative impact on planning the work for higher-attaining pupils. The school has begun to analyse pupils' performance in national tests to identify any areas of strength or weakness. Staff are beginning to use the data gained from assessment to adapt and improve teaching strategies. Targets for year groups are set from the results of assessments but more could be done in using assessments to set challenging targets for individual pupils and thus raise standards still further. For example, the results of the Year 5 optional tests are not being used to identify those pupils who could achieve the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6 and what they would need to do to achieve this. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. Good records are kept, with regular reviews of pupils' progress undertaken.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents who completed the questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection parents meeting had very positive views of what the school provides and achieves. The inspection team agrees with all the very positive comments made by the parents. The main issue where a significant proportion of parents had concerns was that of homework. The school is aware of this through its own questionnaires and has already incorporated a review of the homework policy into the school improvement plan.
49. The school has good links with parents. It regularly sends questionnaires to parents to ask for their views, analyses the results and then responds. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents about their children's progress is good. Parents report that the school is very open and staff are approachable. There are two parent-teacher consultation meetings per year and one formal open day. In addition to this, parents are invited into the school once a month to look at their children's work
50. Parents are very appreciative of the many formal and informal opportunities they have to speak to teachers. Governors also hold a monthly surgery for parents to raise any issues. The school keeps parents up to date with all the events in the school with regular newsletters, which also includes information about the charities which the pupils support. In the annual written reports on pupils' progress information on English and mathematics is informative and evaluative, clearly identifying strengths and weaknesses. Teachers set pupils targets for improvement in these subjects, which are linked to identified weaknesses. However, in a few reports these targets are not always clearly linked to areas of weakness. Information on the non-core subjects is often a mix of subject coverage and attainment. Attainment is not always related to the levels set out in the National Curriculum and, consequently, parents do not know how their child is doing in relation to other children of the same age nationally.
51. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are written in a reader friendly style and provide parents with good quality information on the school routines. However, the attendance figures are given, as whole numbers instead of percentages and parents cannot compare the school's attendance figures with other schools.
52. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and their contribution to their children's learning at home and at school, is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is a strength of the school. A number of parents help in the classroom on a regular basis and there is a rota of parents who help with swimming and with cookery. A current project involves working in the garden on a regular basis with pupils who have successfully renovated the 'Bog Garden', planted marigolds and vegetables and made hanging baskets. The hardworking 'Friends of Mountnessing School' arrange a number of fund-raising events, which are

very well supported by parents and the local community. Parents help their children with homework and a few help with after-school clubs. A high proportion of parents attend parents' consultation meetings. Many parents also attend the church services and school productions. Parent governors are very committed to the school and its aims.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school is well led and managed, which is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. The leadership provided by the headteacher, who has been appointed since the last inspection, is good. With the strong support of the recently appointed deputy headteacher, governors and staff she has provided the school with stability, after a period of uncertainty, and worked effectively to move the school forward.
54. The headteacher provides positive educational direction. She has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and knows what the school must do to improve further. She has consulted parents through questionnaires to gain their perceptions of how well the school meets their needs; for example, the planned review of homework arrangements suggests that the school is responsive to suggestions.
55. The headteacher works closely with the deputy headteacher, who plays a significant part in the leadership of the school. The roles of other key staff are better developed than they were at the last inspection. There are leaders for all subjects and other important aspects of the school's work. Although a few are new to the school or to their roles they are keen to take on additional responsibilities and have a clear view of how they wish to develop their subjects. Their role in monitoring standards and checking how well their subjects are taught has developed well and they are having a significant influence on their subjects. The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all its pupils and, led by the headteacher and governors, all staff demonstrate a strong sense of inclusion. It has clear and effective policies on inclusion and race equality. The management and support for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are a number of examples of pupils who demonstrate specific needs having well-planned programmes and making good progress.
56. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. It has been instrumental in deciding priorities for the school development plan in conjunction with the headteacher and is proactive in setting the general direction for the school. Most governors visit the school regularly during the school day to see lessons in action and keep a record of their observations.
57. The way in which the school evaluates how well it is doing is good. The headteacher and deputy head work together on evaluating pupils' performance in national tests and on monitoring and supporting teaching. The analysis of the national tests in 2001 showed no differences between the performance of boys and girls. Their monitoring of pupils' work confirms the need to improve pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigations in science. Targets are set from the results of assessments, mainly for whole year groups but more could be done in using information gained from assessments to set challenging targets for individual pupils and thus raise standards still further. For example, by increasing the number of pupils achieving Level 5 by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
58. The headteacher monitors teaching regularly and provides staff with feedback on what works well and how they can improve their lessons. This has been effective, as is evidenced by the good teaching seen during the inspection.
59. The school makes effective use of its resources, including its finances. The plan for school improvement contains a number of suitable targets, which are costed against success criteria, to enable governors to measure the effectiveness of major spending decisions. For example, there has been considerable investment in computers and the school is monitoring the impact of this on pupils' standards in ICT. Financial management is good. The school's budget is monitored closely and the school uses specific grants well for their purpose. For example, the additional funding for

special educational needs is used flexibly to provide support for the individual pupils when it is most needed. The school uses new technology effectively in managing its finances and monitoring the budget. The recommendations in the recent auditors report have been implemented. The school had a large under-spend on its budget in the financial year ending in April 2001. Much of this amount was the result of funds built up during the absence of the headteacher and plans to improve the school environment. One such project was the creation of the outside classroom for the Reception children, which has now been completed. The governors were also concerned to protect staffing and maintain standards during a time of falling rolls. The surplus for the current year is very much lower and represents only 3 per cent of the total budget.

60. The extent to which the school seeks to provide best value is good. The governors and headteacher are not complacent. They challenge themselves to improve the school's provision by consulting parents and pupils and, where appropriate, acting upon the responses. They compare the standards pupils achieve with all schools nationally and with similar schools in order to improve pupils' performance in national tests. In purchasing major items for the school, such as computers, they explore different sources to get best value. Taking into consideration the pupils' attainment when they begin in Reception, the predominantly good quality of education they receive and the generally above average standards they attain when they leave at the end of Year 6, the school provides good value for money.
61. The school is well staffed with teachers and teaching assistants. Newly appointed staff have had suitable induction and the professional development of all staff is linked appropriately to the school improvement plan and personal needs. The school administrator is efficient and carries out her responsibilities well.
62. Although the distance between the buildings presents some difficulties, the school's accommodation is satisfactory, overall, and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. Most classrooms are of a suitable size with good displays of pupils' work. There is now a separate Foundation Stage play-area and outdoor classroom, which is beginning to be used well, with further plans for development; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Outside areas are large with good hard surface and grassed areas, including a field. The school is kept very clean and tidy by the hardworking cleaner in charge.
63. Resources are at least satisfactory for all subjects and good for many. There has been considerable recent expenditure on computers and these are being well used. The library is suitably stocked and there are enough books for the number of pupils on roll. Design and technology resources have also been brought up to a satisfactory level. Resources for the children in the Foundation Stage have improved considerably and are now good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of education the headteacher, governors and staff should:
 - (1) Further improve pupils' achievements in mathematics and science by:
 - planning for pupils to solve problems and investigate in mathematics;
 - planning for pupils to investigate in science.*(paragraphs 6, 8, 21, 57, 86, 90, 93)*
 - (2) Use the information gained from assessments in English, mathematics and science to track progress more effectively and set challenging targets for individual pupils.
(paragraphs 47, 57, 88)
 - (3) Improve the current approaches to the assessment and recording of pupils' achievement in the non-core subjects in order to ensure that all pupils are making expected progress.
(paragraphs 47, 100, 105, 110, 131)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	4	18	6	0	0	0
Percentage	3.5	14	62	21	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	116
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	7	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (90)	94 (90)	94 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (90)	94 (90)	94 (90)
	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	12	10	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (81)	73 (71)	86 (90)
	National	77 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (76)	82 (67)	86 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

The figures for boys and girls are omitted because there are 10 or less of one gender group. This is to ensure that individual pupils cannot be identified.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8:1
Average class size	23.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	337,839
Total expenditure	351,833
Expenditure per pupil	3,141
Balance brought forward from previous year	42,000

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
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	116
Number of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	51	46	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	54	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	46	14	6	9
The teaching is good.	57	40	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	51	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	23	0	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	40	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	46	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	57	37	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	51	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	43	11	0	17

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. *There are eleven reception-aged children on roll who are taught in Class 1 along with a small number of pupils who are in Year 1. Children are admitted into their reception year at the beginning of the term in which they become five. At the time of the inspection about a third of the children had been in school for less than one term. Many have attended a local playgroup on a part-time basis before coming to school.*
66. Children's attainment on entry covers a broad range but, overall, is in line with that expected of children of this age. Children make good progress, overall, and are well on course to attain the expected early learning goals in all areas of learning for children as they enter Year 1. They make very good progress in the area of personal, social and emotional development and most exceed the expected outcomes. The quality of teaching is good, and very good in personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum and teaching for the children in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the last inspection where the quality of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. This is a strong area; teaching is very good and children achieve very well. Staff set very high expectations of children and they respond well to these. Relationships are very good and as a result children feel secure and are confident to leave their parents each day. Staff are consistent in their approach to behavioural management and, as a result, children behave very well. Children learn to co-operate, share and relate to others well through the very good opportunities planned: for example, in role-play situations such as 'The Mini-beast Haven', where children play together looking for tiny creatures, and when playing at camping in the garden. They enjoy working in small groups as well as a whole-class group and they rapidly gain confidence and independence. Respect for each other and for those of other cultures is taught sensitively and supported effectively by the work covered in religious education. Children's inner spirituality is developed very well through times of quiet reflection and thoughtful prayer, both in class and in assemblies. Children show that they are confident in choosing activities for themselves, work quietly, concentrate very well and remain engaged in their activities for extended periods of time. Children are good at tidying up after themselves and they take a pride in their classroom and in the presentation of their work.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Teaching is good and children make good progress. Lesson plans are thorough, well-organised and effective in moving the children on to the next stage of learning. The teacher has good knowledge of the early learning goals and of the National Literacy Strategy and provides a wide range of carefully chosen activities for the children. Lessons are introduced enthusiastically and explanations and instructions are clear, for example, when noting words which rhyme in the book about 'Mr Magnolia'. The children listen very carefully, they respond well to questions and enjoy opportunities to share their ideas and thoughts. Well-organised activities for learning letter sounds and carefully chosen individual reading books are used alongside the guided reading approach and all of these contribute to the children making good progress in reading. Children hold books, turn pages correctly and make good reference to the illustrations to help their understanding. A good number of them know the sounds and letters of the alphabet and can sound out letters to help them write and identify new words. Many are able to read simple sentences and a good number talk knowledgeably about the stories. Children know an appropriate range of rhymes and poems, and most can identify and write simple rhyming words. They make good progress in learning to write. They hold pencils and most form letters correctly.

The children can write their names, attempt to write simple sentences on their own and write for a suitable range of purposes. Children develop a good level of vocabulary, for example, when discussing the growth of seeds, and they are confident in speaking in front of others. The well-thought-out role-play situations play an important part in developing children's speaking and listening skills. Children are gaining a good awareness of the listener and are able to recall events and stories, for example, about 'The Hungry Caterpillar', in the correct sequence.

Mathematical development

69. Children achieve well as a result of good teaching. Careful consideration is given to catering for the wide range of ability within the class when organising the children into groups and in providing them with suitable activities. Children learn to count and sequence numbers effectively both forwards and backwards, for example, at the beginning of the daily numeracy session. These skills are taught particularly well and almost all of the children can count accurately and recognise numbers to ten. Many count well beyond this. Through practical activities children are gaining confidence in calculating the difference between two numbers, for example, to work out numbers 'more than' and 'less than' a given number and also to solve simple addition and subtraction problems. Children are developing a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary, for instance when learning about the concept of 'longer' and 'shorter', 'tall' and 'small', when comparing the height of their bean plants. They are gaining a good understanding of early capacity and use terms such as 'full', 'empty' and 'half full' appropriately. Children learn to form numbers correctly; they know the names of basic shapes and present their work neatly. They make mathematical patterns using items such as pegs and pegboards, and by threading beads, and also make more complicated sequencing patterns by drawing shapes such as a triangle, circle and square. Children are familiar with a good range of mathematical games and rhymes which staff use well to reinforce their understanding of number.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Staff provide the children with a wide range of interesting experiences which enable them to find out how things happen and work, for example, to find out which objects will or will not roll. Appropriate activities are planned for children to find out about living things and the natural world, for example, when exploring the plants and animals found in the school grounds. Children notice how things change over time and recognise that sun and water affect the growth of their cress seeds. They work regularly with construction equipment and a suitable range of materials and tools, for example, to make a model slide, a swing and a see-saw. The classroom is organised so that the children can select tools and materials for themselves. Through work in the local area children have gained a good sense of the past and they are also gaining a good sense of place using simple maps of the area. They talk effectively about where they live and how they travel to school. Visits from people, such as the vicar, have helped the children grasp an early understanding about people who work within the community. Skills in information and communication technology are well-developed and children are very confident to use the computer unaided. They know how to click on and 'drag and drop' different items on the screen and use a 'mouse' with a good level of confidence. Children are also confident to operate a tape recorder and headphones to listen to stories. Good progress is made by the children in learning about their own and other people's cultures and beliefs.

Physical development

71. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Lessons are well planned, led enthusiastically and the children are well organised. Children learn a good range of games in the playground and have successfully developed their ability to run, walk, skip and hop in different directions and stop and start at appropriate times. They practise catching and throwing techniques using small equipment and most children can catch a medium-sized ball. Good use is made of the hall space to help develop the children's large motor skills and their ability to move imaginatively to music. In many situations the children show good awareness of the space about them and of each other. Children's climbing and balancing skills and an awareness of space are developed by

using the apparatus in the school hall and also the climbing equipment which is situated in the school grounds. The children use wheeled toys with enthusiasm in the newly established outdoor area. They manipulate tools, such as scissors and malleable materials, and use materials like clay with a good amount of control and concentration. They can join pieces of construction equipment together to make a variety of models. Fine manual skills and hand-eye co-ordination are practised regularly, and the children demonstrate good control of equipment, including pencils, crayons and paint-brushes. Children enjoy physical exercise sessions. They are increasing in confidence in being able to adjust their speed and move in different ways whilst considering the safety of themselves and others. Staff pay good attention to showing the children how to handle equipment correctly and teaching them to observe appropriate rules for safety. Children are taught successfully the importance of keeping the body healthy, for example, the children know to wash their hands at appropriate times and they learn to appreciate the effects of exercise on their bodies.

Creative development

72. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Children are able to use body actions to maintain a rhythm and they respond appropriately to the mood and tempo of music. Children's listening skills are developed effectively as they listen to different pieces of music during assemblies and in the classroom. Most children know a good range of songs and hymns such as 'Alleluja' and they make good progress in learning to perform in front of others, for example, when they take part in school productions. Children know the colours of paint, and they enjoy mixing them to produce different colours, for example, to paint pictures of themselves. Different techniques, such as printing, are taught effectively and a wide range of media is used, which enables the children to express their ideas appropriately, for example, when making shape patterns. The children are confident in making comments about the different textures of materials and enjoy developing their own ideas when drawing their own designs, for instance by 'letting their pencil go for a walk'. Most children respond well to what they hear, touch, smell and feel, as when feeling clay and damp sand, and they use an appropriate range of tools. Staff have high expectations of the children's work and behaviour when they are working independently and in whole-class activities they hold the children's attention well. Children enjoy role-play situations and staff develop a good level of dialogue with them in these situations.

ENGLISH

73. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' attainment in English is above average by the end of Year 2 and also by the end of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well.
74. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are developed effectively in all classes. In Class 1 especially, staff pay particularly good attention to ensuring that pupils establish a firm foundation. Pupils of all ages listen carefully in lessons and contribute ideas with confidence. They show respect for one another's ideas. Older pupils are very articulate, for example, when describing what they feel are the most noticeable features about their school. They contribute very effectively to informed debate, as was seen when they discussed their personal responses to poetry. Pupils develop a wide range of vocabulary and in Year 6 most can use words such as 'alliteration', 'onomatopoeia' and 'homonym' with good understanding. Pupils learn to speak confidently in front of a large audience, for example, in assemblies, when taking part in school productions, such as *Captain Cook*, and when speaking at church services.
75. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop their skills in reading and writing well. They have a good understanding of the relationships between letters and sounds, and by the end of the Year 2, almost all can read accurately and fluently. They are confident to express opinions and to discuss the story they are reading. They refer to characters in the story and often can predict what will happen next. When meeting unfamiliar words, they are confident in guessing working out the meanings using a good range of strategies. Pupils understand how information books are organised and can explain the features that distinguish them from story books. They take

pleasure in finding words in the index or the glossary and can quickly find page references. When writing, they construct clear, simple stories, descriptions, poems, letters and lists, but few produce longer pieces of writing. They enjoy writing and show a good understanding about the purposes of the different forms. Their vocabulary is good and they generally use punctuation well, although spelling is not always sufficiently well-established. Handwriting and presentation are generally good.

76. By Year 6, pupils read and write with confidence and fluency. They interpret different texts and can discuss the point of view of the author. Most pupils respond well to the teacher's challenging questions when working on complex texts. They are confident in expressing their own opinions and giving reasons for them. They are also keen to offer their interpretations of characters' behaviour and motives in the stories they are reading. When needing information for the topics they are studying, pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 show that they know how to find and use relevant books. Many refer knowledgeably to their use of CD-ROMs or the Internet in their search for information. They show pleasure in acquiring new knowledge and their research skills are well established.
77. Pupils enjoy writing. In lessons, they write competently. Their writing includes a wide range of different forms, which include letters to real people about topics they are studying, a variety of poems, biographies and short plays. However, there are few extended pieces of writing, which would give pupils opportunities to develop plots in stories and ideas and arguments. By Year 6, pupils make particularly good use of different styles and show a good awareness of the audience for whom they are writing. They use an extensive vocabulary and show pleasure in using more unusual or adventurous words, particularly when writing in the style of Spike Milligan, producing lines which have a similar rhyme and rhythm to ones such as 'teapots go jibber, jabber, joo'. Their ability to talk about language, including grammar and style, is good. The standard of punctuation, handwriting and presentation is generally good. Pupils' skills in spelling are less well-developed.
78. Throughout the school, pupils' literacy skills give good support to their work in other subjects, most notably in history and geography, where they make particularly effective use of their literacy skills to extend their knowledge and understanding in the subject. Pupils' skills in information technology are used very well to help develop their skills in writing.
79. Teaching in English is good. There is a systematic approach to teaching basic skills through the school. This, along with lessons which are always at least satisfactory, enables pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. Early reading and writing skills are taught effectively in the younger classes and are extended systematically in the older classes. Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils, which can be seen in the challenging questions they ask, the extended vocabulary they use and the pace of most lessons.
80. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy Framework as the basis of their lessons. Their plans are good and take account of the wide range of ability in each class. The beginnings of lessons are consistently effective, and teachers choose stimulating texts as the basis for shared reading and discussion. Pupils respond well to these sessions and to teachers' encouragement to express their ideas. The quality of small group work is often good. Work is usually well-matched to pupils' different abilities, and time is generally used effectively, although the pace of learning slowed in one lesson observed when the pupils were not sufficiently clear about the outcomes expected of the task.
81. Throughout the school, teachers explain clearly what they want their pupils to achieve and they also review the pupils' work with them, highlighting what was successful and how they might improve further. Good examples were seen of pupils taking an active, positive role in evaluating their own and each other's work. Teachers generally give constructive oral feedback to pupils, and pupils are well-motivated by this. Pupils redraft or edit their work appropriately and this helps them understand how improvement might be achieved. Books are regularly marked by teachers and pupils are usually clear about the next steps in their learning, although there is not always sufficient attention drawn to pupils' targets, which are set out in the front of each pupils' exercise book.
82. Teachers' management of lessons is good and relationships in class are very good. This climate has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and on their growing confidence in their reading, writing and speaking skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress against the targets set out in their Individual Education Plans.

83. Leadership of the subject is effective. There has been focused development based on a clear understanding about strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The curriculum is richer and better balanced than at the time of the last inspection so that pupils are now making good, rather than satisfactory progress through the school. Resources are good and teachers use a wider range of interesting reading material. A suitable level of monitoring of the subject is being undertaken. The school has highlighted appropriately the need to develop pupils' skills in extended writing and improvement in spelling as key areas for future improvement.

MATHEMATICS

84. Inspection evidence shows that pupils attain above average standards, both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the individual targets set for them.
85. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. The younger pupils solve simple addition and subtraction problems successfully. They know that addition can be done with the numbers in any order. Pupils measure in non-standard units such as hand-spans. Many name two- and three-dimensional shapes, such as a triangle or pyramid. By the end of Year 2, pupils have extended their understanding of number to include mental two-digit addition and subtraction and the halving and quartering of numbers and shapes. Many pupils read three-digit numbers correctly and work confidently with the larger numbers. Pupils identify shapes such as quadrilaterals, pentagons and hexagons and draw lines of reflective symmetry on shapes and pictures. Most pupils measure accurately in metres and centimetres and can tell the time using both digital and analogue clocks.
86. Most pupils make good progress through Years 3 to 6. This is largely achieved through teachers providing tasks and activities that are well-matched to the different abilities of the pupils. In Years 3 and 4, pupils build progressively on their mental mathematics skills during the quick-fire mental skills activities at the beginning of sessions. They undertake some investigations, but have insufficient experience of solving problems. Older pupils develop their mental skills to include working with decimals and percentages and, by Year 6, most calculate confidently and accurately. During the main part of the numeracy lesson, pupils use long-multiplication and division in their calculations. They create graphs and charts to represent statistical data and many use a computer for this purpose. Pupils measure angles to the nearest degree accurately and can identify different types of angle, know their properties and name them correctly. For example, they can identify and describe 'acute', 'obtuse' and 'reflex' angles. Most pupils use positive number coordinates to plot points on graphs and some plot coordinates in four quadrants. They translate and rotate the positions of geometrical shapes. There is less evidence that pupils use their mathematical skills regularly in problem-solving situations. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that a good amount is completed and pupils of different abilities receive work that challenges them at the appropriate level. This ensures that all pupils achieve well.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and on occasions very good, and pupils respond positively to this. The quality of teaching across the school has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned using the National Numeracy Framework and this generally enables pupils to build on existing skills effectively, although there is less evidence of problem-solving skills being developed systematically. Teachers usually, though not always, share the purpose of the lesson with pupils at the start. This gains pupils' attention and interest and contributes to better learning. Teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy and all lessons begin with mental mathematics practice. All teachers manage and organise their pupils well. Pupils responded well to the challenge presented in lessons and think hard about their answers. Teachers use teaching assistants effectively, often to help lower-attaining pupils to meet their lesson objective. Teachers make good use of resources and, consequently, learning is supported with the most suitable apparatus. Computers are well used to aid mathematical understanding throughout the school.

88. Assessment procedures for mathematics are good. Good use is made of assessments, on entry to the school and in Years 4 and 5, to set realistic attainment targets for groups of pupils. However, this information is used less to set challenging targets for individual pupils. The school analyses assessment data to provide information on which areas of mathematics need a greater teaching focus. The subject leader provides strong support for colleagues and has clear plans for the development of the subject. She carefully monitors teachers' planning and has an accurate picture of the standards, and of teaching and learning throughout the school. Mathematical resources are good and used well.

SCIENCE

89. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve above average standards. The standards seen in lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work confirms an improvement, since the last inspection, in the attainment of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6.
90. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in all aspects of the subject, although aspects of exploration and experimentation are less well-developed. Work in pupils' books shows that science is covered systematically and all aspects of the subject are covered. In the lesson seen, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were learning about the growth and reproduction of animals. They were introduced to the term "metamorphosis" and could talk about how butterflies lay eggs, which go through a series of changes to become adult butterflies. Most can explain the scientific terms of the growth process using the words larvae, pupae, chrysalis and caterpillar.
91. Pupils in Year 3 enjoyed investigating materials suitable for swimwear. They tested a range of materials to find out which would be the softest, which would stretch most and which would dry most quickly. They are beginning to understand the principles of fair testing.
92. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to predict what might happen when water from a solution evaporates. Pupils understand that heating the water will make the added salt dissolve quickly. They know that water vapour will condense when cooled. Some pupils suggested that as the water evaporated, the deposit of salt would be green, as green food colouring had been added to the solution. They understand that water can exist in different forms, in the form of ice as a solid, in the form of steam as a gas and as a liquid. Pupils asked interesting questions about the experiment. They asked if the water vapour from the solution might be green because they had added green food colouring to the solution. Pupils are interested in science and enjoy their lessons. They concentrate well, which helps them to achieve well.
93. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Teachers plan their work well, their explanations are clear and they use resources effectively. Teachers discuss the learning intentions of lessons with pupils, helping them to understand what they are learning. They include key vocabulary in their planning, which helps pupils' understanding. Teachers review learning well at the end of lessons, they use scientific vocabulary effectively and help pupils to use the correct terms. They use good questioning skills to extend pupils' understanding and to check their learning. The school has recently introduced national guidance for science. This helps to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered appropriately although there is less emphasis on pupils undertaking their own investigations. Satisfactory use is made of information technology to support learning in the subject.
94. The subject leader has only been responsible for science since September 2001. She has made an effective start to her role and is developing procedures for monitoring progress. Science is identified as a major focus for development in the school improvement plan in the Spring term of 2003. The subject leader is working with colleagues to develop assessment activities in science and to promote investigative opportunities in science. The school has made good improvement in science since the previous inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Standards in art and design are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils make good progress, which is an improvement on that found at the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in all aspects of art.

96. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use a range of media, including paint and crayon, to experiment successfully with colour and shape and to develop good techniques. They develop their techniques successfully to produce pictures of houses and they have made drawings of the 'birds eye view' of Mountnessing as part of their topic on "Where do you live?". By Year 2, pupils work confidently and creatively, as is evident in their careful drawings of flowers. Pupils have made three-dimensional models of fruit and vegetables using a variety of materials and are currently experiencing the use of clay to make their designs for signs for different buildings.
97. Through Years 3 to 6 pupils learn to work in the style of famous artists. For example, they have produced work in the style of Dali and Matisse. Pupils show good techniques in mixing and blending colours and in the composition of their drawings and paintings. Pupils have produced designs for sculptures for an area outside their classroom following their study of a variety of different types of sculpture. Careful observation skills can be seen in the drawings of flowers and the use of pastel and crayon helps them to show the textures of stones well. Three dimensional work is seen in the Mod Roc models currently being made and the use of a wide range of other materials.
98. Links with other subjects include drawings to support a geography topic on a "Sense of Place" and the mathematics involved in making symmetrical pictures. The use of information technology can be seen in several classrooms, including designs using straight and curved lines.
99. Teaching is good. In the lessons seen, the teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and the lessons were well planned to provide the opportunity for all pupils to develop their skills and use their imagination. Pupils learned well, were enthusiastic and sustained concentration throughout the session.
100. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory and the curriculum is planned to provide pupils with the development of the appropriate skills and experience of using a variety of media. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment against the expectations of the National Curriculum are in the process of development. Resources are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Only one design and technology lesson was seen during the inspection, but evidence from other sources, such as talking to pupils and teachers, and looking at work done earlier and at the teachers' planning, enabled overall judgements to be made. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory, overall, and pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age.
102. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, they have learnt a wide range of design and technology skills. They have been involved in practical activities that entail shaping, cutting and joining different materials. They learn to relate the properties of materials to their function, and to carry out simple tasks involving designing, making and evaluating objects. For example, in Year 1, when pupils designed and made finger puppets, they considered such issues as the purpose of the item and the materials best suited to the task effectively. In Year 2, pupils designed and made waistcoats for their teddy bears, paying particular attention to the decoration on the waistcoat. They also made some very effective 'wind-up' toys using cardboard tubes, cotton reels, dowel and string.
103. In Year 3, pupils' skills are developed very well, for example, when they made free-standing picture-frames to display a photograph of themselves and also when creating models of sculptures that they would like to have to enhance the school grounds. In Year 4, pupils have used their understanding of electric circuits developed in science effectively, to design and make alarms of different sorts. In Year 6, pupils have continued the process of developing their skills through further cross-curricular topic work, for example, by designing and making shelters in Tudor times and by making book covers for their work on the Tudors. Pupils have also designed and made biscuits and sewn samplers such as might have been seen in Victorian England.

Throughout the school, there is a good emphasis on working in clay and pupils have designed and made some very effective models to represent objects seen on visits undertaken; for example, the starfish seen during a visit by the older pupils to Walton-on-the-Naze.

104. Although the one lesson seen in Year 3 during the inspection was very good, teaching is satisfactory, overall. Teachers present the work in an interesting way, so that it appeals to all pupils. Pupils develop their ideas about how they might use what they have learnt in real situations effectively. Staff plan conscientiously but there is not always sufficient emphasis given to ensuring that pupils, particularly the older ones, know about structures and mechanisms. The cross-curricular approach ensures that pupils see how the work is related well to other subjects but does not always ensure that their skills in design and technology are fully extended. Nevertheless, the practical and enjoyable nature of much of the work ensures that pupils of all abilities find it very interesting. Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of safety issues, and they learn to handle tools and materials carefully. In the very good lesson seen, the teacher showed very good knowledge of the subject and enthused the pupils with her own interest in the work.
105. The subject is led satisfactorily by a member of staff who has only been in post for a relatively short time. The school has a good range of resources that enable all aspects of the subject to be taught effectively. Tools and other resources are well-cared-for and readily available when needed. Staff ensure that potentially harmful materials and resources are used safely. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment against the expectations of the National Curriculum are in the process of development. Information technology is used very well to support work undertaken in design and technology. The subject has improved since the last inspection when unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Timetabling arrangements meant that it was only possible to observe two lessons in geography. In both the lessons observed pupils attained standards in line with the national expectations. This was also the case at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers' planning shows that geography is taught systematically through the school. Work on display and in pupils' books shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Visits are made to local places such as Walton-on-the-Naze, to study the features of coastal geography.
107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have studied the local area and identified features that they like or dislike about the village. They draw plan views of their journeys to school. They have made posters advertising the features of the village that might attract people to visit Mountnessing. They are developing an understanding of other countries as shown in an attractive display "Where in the world are our bears?" The display showed pupils on holiday in different parts of the UK and other countries together with written accounts of their experiences.
108. Pupils in Year 3 have observed the world beyond their classroom. They have taken digital photographs of the school grounds and considered how they might improve the environment. They have drawn plans to record their ideas and included existing physical features.
109. In Years 5 and 6 pupils showed a good understanding the effects of humans on the environment. They have visited Walton-on-the-Naze, a nearby coastal resort, and considered how it has changed over time. Pupils' study of the environment was well-linked with their work in art. Pupils have studied the work of Salvador Dali and have produced pictures using features of interest in Mountnessing, modelled on Dali's work. The school has good links with a local language college, funded through a European Union initiative. As part of this, a teacher from the college taught German during the geography lesson. The language teaching was linked very well to the geography curriculum, focusing on German coastal resorts and holidays. This made learning coherent for the pupils and helped them to develop their skills. Pupils enjoyed working on a computer program, they were able to orientate themselves and follow directions. Another group were able to use map keys to identify the principal features of farming in Britain.

110. In the lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory in one and very good in the other. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare their lessons well to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment arrangements are in the process of being developed. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The subject is led satisfactorily.

HISTORY

111. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in history were described as satisfactory for pupils in Years 2 and 6. As the school teaches history and geography in blocked units, only one history lesson was observed. Teachers' planning shows that history is taught systematically throughout the school. Evidence from the lesson observed, work in pupils' books and on display, indicates that satisfactory standards have been maintained.
112. Pupils in Year 3 have studied life in Britain 50 years ago. They have contrasted the shopping habits of people in the 1950s with their own family experiences. They understand that the types of shops have changed since the 1950s. A few pupils were able to describe local shops that are similar to shops in the 1950s.
113. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have visited Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood and investigated the ways in which toys have changed over time. They have made an attractive book about their experiences at the museum. An attractive display in the school hall shows the significant events in each decade from 1950 to the present day, including the Queen's coronation, the first moon landing, technological advances and the Queen's Silver Jubilee. Displays also show that pupils have studied Victorian Britain and features of Southend as a popular seaside resort in the 1930s.
114. In the lesson observed, teaching was good. Evidence from teachers' planning shows that teachers have secure subject knowledge and teach the subject well. The school uses national guidance for history but supplements this with guidance from the local education authority. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment against the expectations of the National Curriculum are in the process of development.
115. The history curriculum is enriched by a range of visits to places of interest such as Oaklands Museum in Chelmsford, Colchester Museum and Ingatestone Hall. The school also makes good use of visitors to support pupils' work in history. A local resident who fought in Italy during the Second World War visited to talk to pupils about his experiences. Another local resident spoke to pupils about her experiences as an evacuee.
116. The subject leader for history has only been in place since January 2002. She has made a good start to her role, carrying out an audit of resources and considering what needs to be done to take the subject further. The school has made satisfactory improvement in history since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

117. The standards attained by the pupils are above those expected nationally by Year 6 and pupils achieve very well throughout the school. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards in ICT were average. This improvement has been achieved by a strong emphasis on staff training along with significant improvements in resources. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, now make very good progress. They build their skills effectively as they move from class to class and use them in relevant, interesting and enjoyable ways.
118. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn the basic operations of switching the computers on and off, loading and saving work, and controlling the computer by means of the keyboard and mouse. The school

has developed a good range of appropriate software and, as a result, pupils enjoy using computers, and quickly learn how they can help them with their work. They use computers to write, draw pictures and design. They learn how to use a word bank and know how to change the size and colour of text, and how to combine text and pictures. Pupils represent a range of information graphically and can answer questions about the 'print-outs' well. They have good opportunities to use the 'Roamer' programmable toy, giving it a series of commands in order to produce pre-planned movements.

119. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend their word processing and desktop publishing skills successfully, for example, to present their work on the 'The Great Mouse Plot'. Pupils are confident in selecting and changing fonts and altering the size of text to write and print their work. They are able to make borders around their work and insert pictures to present it in an attractive way. Whilst exploring programs which present computer simulations pupils become adept in using all of the computer keyboard keys and become competent in following screen instructions as well as beginning to understand how the computer can model situations. The pupils make effective use of CD-ROMs to interrogate a database, for example, to find out about the earth's geology. They add information successfully to a database and gain confidence in using the Internet, for example, to develop their research and enquiry skills in history and geography as they look for information about both the immediate area and places further afield. Pupils particularly enjoy sending 'e-mails'. They are familiar with LOGO programs and know how to create patterns, for example, to represent a flower.
120. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a widening range of ICT materials, for example, to make music and to create a multi-media presentation. They have a good knowledge of control mechanisms and are competent in using LOGO to make items, such as robots, work. Pupils are very skilled in making different types of graphs to support their work in mathematics and science. They use sensors and data-logging equipment well, for example, to monitor sounds in the environment. They are competent in using spreadsheets and can use them effectively to make comparisons, for example, to cost out items up to a twenty pound limit to provide for a party. They know how to interrogate data in a variety of ways, such as arranging it in alphabetical order or order of size. Good use is made by the pupils of the wide range of programs available to them to create pictures, make posters and designs. By Year 6, pupils can use a search engine independently and they refer to a wide variety of web-sites for research. They particularly enjoy incorporating images and pictures taken with a digital camera, as well as sound and text, to make a presentation.
121. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and has brought about the rise in standards since the last inspection. The subject leader sets a model of what is expected by her very good understanding of the subject. Lessons are well planned and organised and resources are very carefully chosen to enable the pupils to experiment and develop the specific skills highlighted in planning. Staff have high expectations of the pupils and because lessons are introduced very well and are carefully structured to build on previous skills learnt, the pupils respond with good concentration and enthusiasm and develop good levels of independence. For example, pupils were challenged effectively to develop their understanding of monitoring sound by comparing the analogue and digital data of the same phenomenon. Demonstrations by the staff taking lessons in the computer suite during the inspection were very well delivered and showed that staff have a high level of competency in the subject.
122. Teachers and teaching assistants are very committed to undertaking training to develop their skills in ICT. Very good use is made of teaching assistants, who are well briefed, and who make a significant contribution in the development of both skills and knowledge in the subject. The computer suite is used effectively and efficiently throughout the day, even at lunch-times where, for example, pupils were observed taking part enthusiastically in the ICT clubs. Very good links are made with other subjects, such as art, mathematics, religious education and history, so that pupils can see an added relevance to ICT as a subject within the whole curriculum and they can also develop their research and enquiry skills to a much greater extent. Staff are competent in using a range of ICT resources in lessons to support their teaching in a range of subjects and also to motivate the pupils and encourage them to be more actively involved.

123. The leadership of the subject is very good and this has been instrumental in ensuring that improvements have taken place. Since the last inspection, the policy for ICT has been updated and it sets out clear aims and objectives. There is comprehensive guidance for teaching the subject through the introduction of a new subject plan, which is ensuring that pupils build up their skills as they move through the school. The subject leader very effectively promotes, guides and monitors staff training and supports the staff in their own professional development. Pupils' records and the planning for ICT are regularly monitored and the information gained is used effectively to inform future planning. Resources for the subject are very good. Assessment procedures are currently being improved with the implementation of revised procedures devised by the local education authority.

MUSIC

124. Standards in music are above average and pupils enjoy music-making activities. These standards are an improvement on those found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in music as they are well supported.
125. Pupils listen to music very well and can identify the composer and instruments being played. They are good at describing how the music makes them feel and older ones talk about the intentions of the composer when writing the piece of music. Singing is good for pupils of this age, in assemblies it is tuneful and expressive. Most pupils follow and maintain the beat well, with improving control of diction and phrasing. They sing hymns and songs from memory and are developing a good repertoire of ones they know. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning songs and accompany themselves using tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They can follow and copy a rhythmic pattern well by clapping or tapping and they can identify different instruments that make sounds in different ways. Pupils know, for example, which ones are beaten and which ones are scraped. They respond effectively to signals to play softly and loudly. Pupils in Year 3 are learning that music can be used as a description. For example, how Saints-Saëns communicated the movements of different animals. They can make their own interpretations of different types of movements using a variety of instruments very well. Pupils in Year 6 are able to hold their own part whilst others sing theirs.
126. All music is taken by the headteacher and the quality of teaching is good. Planning has clear learning objectives, builds pupils skills and knowledge successfully and enables them to enjoy their music lessons. The teacher has a good subject knowledge, which enables her to ask questions to make pupils think, contributing well to their understanding. There are good opportunities for pupils to compose and perform their pieces to the whole class or school.
127. The music curriculum is good. National guidance is used to plan a good range of activities and ensure that pupils gain appropriate skills as they move through the school. All pupils are included in all activities and have equal opportunity and access to the curriculum. Information and communication technology is well used to support pupils' work in music. Resources are good, with a good variety of instruments available, including keyboards, which are used effectively. The leadership of music is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. The picture in physical education is much the same as that found at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress and, overall, attain standards in line with those expected for pupils of this age. They show particularly good awareness of the need to work together. They make good progress and attain standards above those expected in swimming.
129. Pupils have opportunities to undertake all the areas of activity outlined in the National Curriculum. Most pupils have established good awareness of space and of others. They are able to sustain

energetic activities and to explain the effects of exercise on their bodies. By the end of Year 6, they are developing sound knowledge and understanding of a range of team games and can explain, for example, the importance of marking an opponent and using different techniques to gain possession of a ball. Most pupils demonstrate the ability to plan ahead and show that they have good ideas. Pupils' skills in evaluating their own performance and that of others are satisfactory. Teachers are currently concentrating on these skills, as was seen in Year 6, and, as a result, pupils are learning to refine their skills effectively.

130. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Two lessons were observed. Staff are confident in their subject knowledge and planning is undertaken conscientiously. At the outset of lessons the teacher ensures that pupils are clear about the purpose of the session. There is a good focus on the development of specific skills. Staff spend time explaining how these can be developed and the pupils are prepared to practise to improve their performance. Pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in physical activity and occasionally become over-excited, as happened in the Class 2 lesson seen, which was managed effectively by the teacher. Resources are organised and used effectively. There is suitable attention given to the importance of safe practice. Staff dress appropriately for physical education and in this way set a standard for pupils, who in turn dress appropriately. Good use is made of the time available, with a suitable focus given to warming-up and cooling-down. Staff are prepared to help pupils' understanding by demonstrating techniques themselves and they often use other pupils for demonstrations. In the lessons seen, teachers praised the pupils' efforts and the pupils responded to this well. In a good lesson, there was good emphasis given to using evaluative feedback to improve performance. Because the pupils in this class were so clear about the ways in which their performance was to be judged, they were able to refine their movements and, as a result, produce improved outcomes.
131. Leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader has only been in post during the present academic year. Planning, based on national guidance, is carefully organised and resources and accommodation are adequate. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment against the expectations of the National Curriculum are in the process of development. The school field is good. Extra-curricular clubs, such as the football and netball clubs, enhance the provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in religious education was judged to be in line with expectations. During the current inspection only a small number of lessons was observed. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that by the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 6, pupils attainment in religious education also reached expected levels; however, in a Year 3 lesson pupils' attainment was above average.
133. In Years 1 and 2 there is little recorded evidence of pupils' work in religious education. However, pupils have discussed the importance of special journeys and talked about the different journeys they have made. In Year 1, pupils enjoyed talking about their recent visit to the parish church and showed good recall of the artefacts they had seen and their use in worship. In an excellent lesson in Year 3, pupils discussed prayer. They talked about why people might pray and the occasions and places when this might happen. They showed good recall of their previous lesson when a visitor had explained that worshippers can pray in any place and at any time. Pupils understand that this is also true of Christian prayer. They talked about different kinds of prayer; praising, being sorry, being thankful, and requesting. Pupils went on to write their own prayers. A significant feature of the lesson was that, without prompting, the majority of pupils wrote prayers of thanksgiving. They were thankful for the love of friends and family. One pupil wrote a prayer requesting help for the poor. This lesson made a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development. In Years 4 and 5 pupils learned about the importance of Shabbat. They enjoyed watching a video of how Shabbat is kept in a Jewish household and were able to compare this with special occasions in their own families.
134. The quality of teaching in religious education is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the

subject. They are concerned to teach pupils about the significance of a personal faith to communities of believers. Teachers show confidence and good subject knowledge. They have a good understanding of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and teach it well. Teachers make good links with the syllabus for personal, social and health education. They have all visited a Hindu temple in north London. The school has close links with St Giles' church and the vicar is a welcome visitor to the school. The school has a good range of resources for the teaching of religious education and is developing these further. Leadership of the subject is good. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection.