

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HORNDON ON THE HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Horndon on the Hill, Thurrock

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 115093

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Hughes

Reporting inspector: Steve Bywater  
18463

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 196314

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hillcrest Road Horndon on the Hill Essex
Postcode:	SS17 8LR
Telephone number:	01375 673260
Fax number:	01375 679265
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Epsly
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18463	Steve Bywater	Registered inspector	Science Music Religious education Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
14404	Alan Rolfe	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
01678	David Peckett	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
04303	Simon Reynolds	Team inspector	English Art History Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in an attractive rural village overlooking farmland. There are 206 full time pupils aged between five and eleven on roll. The school is over-subscribed but slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is larger than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Around two thirds of the pupils attending live in the village itself in a mixture of private and council housing. However, the other third of the pupils attend this school because parents choose it for their children and travel by car or bus to the school from outlying areas. The general attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well above the level expected for their age and includes a wide range of attainment. Two per cent of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals and this is below the national average. A similar proportion of pupils had free school meals during the previous inspection. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority groups and these pupils speak English fluently. There are 13 pupils on the special educational needs register (below average) and four pupils receive support from outside agencies; their difficulties are wide ranging and include physical and learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. At the time of the inspection, the current headteacher had been in post for one term.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school with many good and some very good features. The children are happy to come to school, they have very positive attitudes and they are eager learners. They are cared for well and relationships throughout the school are very good. Good quality teaching and pupils' hard work means that pupils achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven years. The new headteacher's good leadership and management have helped to give a clear direction to the work of the school. In view of the high costs, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well and attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven years.
- Leadership and management of the headteacher, some key staff and governors are good.
- Pupils form very good relationships with each other and with staff. They have very positive attitudes to school and behave well in lessons.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The teaching and overall provision for children in the reception class.
- The use of assessment to provide work which always challenges or supports pupils who are gifted and talented and those who have special educational needs.
- The cultural development of pupils, especially through art, music and knowledge of faiths and cultures other than their own.
- The consistency of all staff in dealing with pupils' behaviour.

*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 April 1997 and has made significant improvements and dealt effectively with many of the issues raised. The quality of teaching has improved and almost all lessons are at least satisfactory. There are many high quality lessons. Overall, teachers have increased the pace of all pupils' progress by improved assessment so that planning is informed and work is more accurately matched to pupils' attainment. However, there is still some way to go in dealing with this aspect. Pupils with special educational needs are now more accurately identified, targeted and provided with appropriate support although more precise planning is still required. Curriculum development has improved and teachers are now much more clear about what it is that pupils are expected to learn in all subjects. Job descriptions have been provided for all co-ordinators. Statutory requirements which promote pupils' well-being, and health and safety, are now fully met. The only area which has not developed sufficiently is the provision for the youngest children in the school.

## 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	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	A	A	A*	A
Science	A	B	A	B

**Key**

very high (in top 5% of schools)    A\*

well above average    A

above average    B

average    C

below average    D

well below average    E

The table shows that in the 2001 national tests for eleven year olds, pupils' performance in English was above the national average, in science it was well above the national average and in mathematics it was very high when compared with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were average in English, above average in science and well above average in mathematics. The school has continued to achieve highly in national terms and to consolidate its performance when compared with similar schools. The full range of inspection evidence confirms the findings of the test results. Evidence also shows that the attainment of children on entry to the reception class is well above average and by the age of seven, standards are currently well above average in English, mathematics and science. In information and communication technology, seven and eleven year olds achieve standards which are above national expectations. By the age of seven, pupils also achieve standards which are above national expectations in geography and history and standards which are in line with national expectations in art, design and technology, music and physical education. By the age of eleven, standards are well above national expectations in geography, above national expectations in history, in line with national expectations in physical education and design and technology but below national expectations in art and music. In music, pupils of all ages are not given sufficient opportunities to listen to and discuss music or to compose and perform their own music. In religious education pupils meet the expectations of the local guidelines by the age of seven but because eleven year olds do not have the expected knowledge and understanding of some aspects of religion, particularly Hinduism and Judaism, they do not meet the level expected of them.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Better in lessons where pupils know what is required of them. Occasionally, behaviour is a little too boisterous at lunchtime and playtime.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils show respect for adults and one another. Personal development is good, though opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning are too few.
Attendance	Satisfactory, broadly in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection the reception class was taught by a succession of supply teachers. The teaching of reception children is unsatisfactory and is not building sufficiently well on the broad range of experiences that children bring with them when they arrive in school. Learning is slow because the organisation of lessons in the reception class limits opportunities for children to develop their independence. In the rest of the school, teaching in the infants and in Year 3 and Year 6 is strong. Literacy and numeracy are generally taught well throughout the school, although there are times when higher attainers in the juniors could be challenged more in their writing. Strengths include pupils being actively involved because the teacher has shared the objective of the lesson with them so that they are clear about what they are expected to learn, and whole-class and group sessions and a good balance in activities that ensure they remain interested. Teachers are skilled at asking searching questions which involve pupils of all abilities and enable them to assess how well pupils are learning. Religious education is taught less well. Most lessons are well organised and teachers use time and resources efficiently. Teachers' marking is inconsistent. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and in the best examples, they praise and reward effort as well as leading pupils forward to the next stage of learning. In poorer examples, mediocre work is accepted and teachers make little effort to set a target for improvement. Most teachers are aware of the learning targets of pupils with special educational needs and use them satisfactorily to plan the work with classroom assistants providing skilled and sensitive support. However, in some lessons teachers do not match work well enough to challenge gifted and talented pupils or to support those with special educational needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and teachers in the infant and junior classes provide children with learning experiences that engage their interest. Children in the reception class do not receive a sound education; many of the activities provided for them are not being used to build upon prior learning and take children forward.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Although the provision meets current requirements, there is a need to include a review of the individual education plans to ensure they consistently identify and differentiate the pupils' needs sufficiently.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable; the pupils speak English fluently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory whilst their moral and social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to work together and respect adults and other pupils. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall but art, music and knowledge of faiths and cultures other than their own are not being developed as systematically as they should be.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There is a strong commitment to the well-being of pupils, which is obvious in the day-to-day work of the staff. Assessment procedures are developing well but they are not being used accurately enough to prepare projected targets for the school, for tracking the progress of individuals and for planning pupils' work.

Parents and carers have positive views about the school but few parents or carers help in the classrooms. Parents and the community provided substantial funding for an additional classroom.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher has a clear picture of what the school does well and where it needs to develop. Some co-ordinators are not as effective as others in developing their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and takes an active role in helping to shape the direction of the school through strategic planning. Governors are fully committed to, and supportive of, the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has evaluated its performance well. It has successfully identified strengths and areas of development and has used the information well in drawing up the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school's spending and plans support the priorities expressed in its aims and school development plan. Governors are conversant with the principles of best value and apply these principles soundly to ensure that effective use is made of resources. More care is needed to ensure that the gifted and talented pupils and those in the reception class are supported more.

The school is staffed with sufficient dedicated teachers and there is a satisfactory number of support staff. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but some classrooms are cramped and this makes the organisation of creative and practical subjects, such as art, difficult. The lack of an enclosed outside play area and suitable wheeled toys and large apparatus for the reception class means that all that should be taught cannot be taught. In most subjects, learning resources are generally sufficient and teachers use them 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"> <li>• Children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is helping their child become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The school working closely with parents.</li> </ul>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • The amount of work pupils do at home. |  |
|---|--|

This table takes account of the views of seven parents attending a meeting held with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and those expressed in 43 returned questionnaires. The inspection team agrees that parents are right to hold positive views. Pupils do develop very positive attitudes and values and their behaviour is good. The teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. As a result, most pupils make good progress throughout the school. The school is well led and managed and parents are kept well informed about the life and work of the school but feel that the school could do much more to encourage parents to come into school. The inspection team also agree that the number and range of extra-curricular activities are much lower than in most schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1 Children enter the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> in the reception class with standards of attainment that are well above average when compared with other five year olds. Children make slow progress in the reception class because they are not provided with a suitable range of activities to move them on and to develop skills at a brisk rate. Teaching in the reception class does not pay enough attention to the experiences that children have already had and what children have shown they can do. Although good assessment procedures have recently been introduced, these have yet to be used and work is often not challenging enough, especially for the higher attaining children who need to be given plenty of practical opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and independence. Despite their slow progress, children are on line to at least meet the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in all areas of learning when they join Year 1.

2 The results attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 in the 2001 national tests were well above the national average in reading and writing and very high (in the top five per cent of schools) in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. The proportion of higher attainers reaching the higher levels in reading and writing was above the national average and well above average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools the proportion of higher levels was average in reading, above average in writing in writing and well above average in mathematics. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls over a period of a few years. In science, the teacher assessments showed the proportion of pupils achieving the level expected of them was very high. For the past two years every pupil has achieved or exceeded it. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level is close to the national average and is below average when compared with similar schools. This suggests there is underachievement amongst the higher attainers or the teacher is inaccurate with the assessments. The weaker aspects of science in last year's assessments would appear to be life and living processes and materials and their properties.

3 The results attained by Year 6 pupils in the 2001 national tests were above the national average in English, well above the national average in science and very high (in the top five per cent of schools) in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is well above average in mathematics and science but average in English. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The trend in improvement is broadly in line with the national trend, and demonstrates the school's success at Key Stage 2 in improving standards since

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

the last inspection. The school now sets suitably challenging and aspirational targets in English and mathematics but in view of previous results it would appear that these targets have not always been based on accurate assessments of pupils since these have been exceeded consistently over the past few years. A significant concern is the suggested lack of progress since this group of pupils did the national tests in 1997 as seven year olds. Higher attainers in particular did not do well and in comparison with schools with a similar set of results by Year 2 pupils in 1997, the progress has been well below average. This setback has been investigated but no reasons can be found and pupils this year read very well.

4 By the age of seven, almost all pupils show a good level of confidence in speaking and listening so that standards are better than in most schools. They start Year 1 already showing good skills in this area and consequently the progress they make in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. However, speaking and listening is not as systematically planned or assessed as other aspects of English. Speaking and listening skills continue to develop securely through the junior classes and by the age of eleven many pupils are extremely articulate. Pupils make rapid progress in Year 6 where the teaching promotes such skills well.

5 Reading develops well in the infants and the juniors. By the age of seven almost all pupils read their books accurately and understand the meaning. They make good progress in reading expressively, many showing mature skills in using clues, such as the use of capital letters or speech marks, to bring their reading alive. The small number of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in reading unfamiliar words, although they are less confident in expressing opinions about what they have read. Some of the brightest pupils skim read a page to pick out relevant details. By the age of eleven the great majority of pupils have good reading skills for their age and know about a range of authors and other types of texts. Many higher attaining pupils summarise the passage they are reading and make deductions. Pupils are encouraged to further their studies at home and develop their independent reading.

6 Standards in writing are above average at the end of the infants and the juniors but the school has recognised that they are not as successful as in reading, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. By the age of seven most pupils can write short stories or accounts and they spell most words accurately and use basic punctuation well. Some higher attaining pupils can use a wider range of writing skills and almost all are learning to join their handwriting. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the junior classes, although there is a dip in Year 5 because the teaching does not expect enough from them. By the time they leave the school, most can write in a range of styles: spelling, punctuating and constructing their writing appropriately. Some pupils are beginning to use a personal, attractive and legible handwriting style and almost all have satisfactory skills when writing for a special purpose. Higher attaining pupils use a sophisticated vocabulary that adds interest to the writing.

7 Overall standards in mathematics are well above national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven. In Year 2 the pupils have a secure understanding of numbers, aspects of measuring, shapes and data handling. All the pupils are developing a good understanding of the mathematical vocabulary. Year 6 pupils are developing a thorough understanding of mathematics. They solve complex problems and use their knowledge and understanding to explain how they solved them. All the pupils have good mental recall to solve multiplication and division. They are very confident when using paper and pencil methods. Most pupils have good, instant recall of multiplication tables up to 12 and strategies to help them remember or extend the tables. Standards in other year groups show the same high level of attainment with some very able and gifted mathematicians. Across the school the pupils have secure skills in handling numbers and calculating in their heads; however, the use and speed of mental calculation is an area that can be developed further.

8 Standards in science are well above national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven. A pleasing aspect of the standards seen during the inspection is the significant number of pupils achieving the higher levels 3 and 5. On the basis of inspection evidence, whilst it is expected that almost every pupil will achieve the expected level 2, around 40 per cent are likely to achieve level 3. This improvement is due to some very good teaching in the infant classes where teachers are placing more emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for planning and recording their science investigations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and many achieve the levels normally expected for their age. By the end of Year 6 overall standards are now well above average, the proportion of higher attaining pupils is well above the national average, and pupils are challenged well. Pupils enter Year 1 with good levels of knowledge and pupils of all abilities make good gains in learning in all areas of the subject as they move through Years 1 and 2. All components of the subject, including investigative science, are well represented in both years. The scheme carefully balances the teaching of information with due attention being paid to the development of skills. In the junior classes, teachers build well upon pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding that have been developed in the infant classes. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of science. Because pupils throughout the school are very keen to learn, and enjoy the practical activities, they are prepared to work hard and offer ideas and ask questions confidently. By Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes.

9 Literacy and numeracy skills are used to good effect in many subjects although opportunities for writing could usefully be extended. Pupils throughout the school read and record their work in different ways. For example, they write stories and accounts in history and they use graphs and tables, make comparisons and record measurements accurately in their science work.

10 Current standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils in both key stages achieve well in the subject. Standards have improved since the last inspection as a result of the increased number and range of resources and the implementation of the scheme of work. The expertise and leadership of the teaching assistant who is the subject leader is helping to raise standards. The range of opportunities to use and develop their knowledge of ICT through most of the subjects of the curriculum is very good. Their knowledge and understanding of word processing, data handling, storing, researching and sorting information in a data base are good. Pupils confidently use a CD-ROM encyclopaedia, compose and send e-mails, follow instructions and learn quickly. All teachers plan to use ICT as part of the overall curriculum. They give clear explanations and make good use of demonstration.

11 By the age of seven, pupils also achieve standards which are above national expectations in geography and history and standards which are in line with national expectations in art, design and technology, music and physical education. By the age of eleven, standards are well above national expectations in geography, above national expectations in history, in line with national expectations in physical education and design and technology but below national expectations in art and music. In music, pupils of all ages are not given sufficient opportunities to listen to and discuss music or to compose and perform their own music. In religious education pupils meet the expectations of the local guidelines by the age of seven but because eleven year olds do not have the expected knowledge and understanding of Hinduism and Judaism in particular, they do not meet the level expected of them.

12 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their individual educational plan targets. Occasionally these targets are not precise enough. In class, pupils with special educational needs make better progress when work is well

matched to meet their needs and extra support is given by teachers and support assistants. The school recognises the need to ensure that all pupils are fully included and has identified that more needs to be done to provide challenge for the gifted and talented pupils. The headteacher has already made significant efforts to identify gifted and talented pupils by carefully analysing the results of tests and assessments. There is no policy yet but the school has started to address the issue and a lunchtime club for the more able is providing challenge for talented mathematicians in Year 6.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

13 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and their behaviour, personal development and relationships are good. This reflects a further improvement on the good standards seen at the time of the last inspection. All these factors have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

14 When children start in the reception class many already have a good level of independence and leave their parents quite happily to come into school. Progress in personal, emotional and social skills is steady and by the time that they reach the end of the Foundation Stage many children are able to play collaboratively and independently, and have developed an enthusiasm to learn.

15 Pupils in all classes say that they enjoy coming to school. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have positive attitudes to learning, they are able to identify favourite subjects and a significant number of pupils participate in the extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Pupils are interested in what they are studying and take an active part in their learning. They listen carefully to their teachers' instructions, maintain concentration for appropriate periods of time and make positive contributions to classroom discussions. In many lessons, pupils showed the ability to work well together; for example, in a Year 6 ICT lesson, pupils were very eager and involved, but were prepared to listen carefully to their teacher's instructions. They worked very well together, sharing ideas and learning from each other, and therefore made very good progress in the lesson. Most pupils take a pride in their work; they are willing and able to talk about their work and explain their ideas to inspectors. Pupils with special educational needs generally have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.

16 The overall standard of behaviour is good, and there have been no exclusions. In a large majority of the lessons seen, behaviour was good and on many occasions very good. For example in a Year 5 science lesson, where pupils were investigating the effects of exercise on their bodies, pupils' attitudes and behaviour was of a good standard throughout the lesson. They were keen and interested in the lesson and clearly excited at the results of testing their heartbeats. Most pupils are aware of what is and is not acceptable behaviour; they like the school's merit system and readily accept the principle of sanctions as an appropriate response to instances of poor behaviour. Generally, pupils' behaviour at breaks and in the dining hall is satisfactory; however, on occasions behaviour in the playground at lunchtime becomes rowdy and boisterous.

17 Staff, parents and pupils themselves confirm that instances of bullying are rare, although the school has in place an anti-bullying policy to enable them to react quickly to any instances of bullying. There is no evidence of sexism or racism. Generally, pupils treat school equipment with care and respect, there is no evidence of vandalism and there is little or no litter around the school.

18 Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, as too are the relationships between pupils. In lessons, pupils work well together in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing resources; they listen



to and respect the views of other members of the group. In class discussions and in assemblies they listen thoughtfully and respectfully to opinions and beliefs that may differ from their own. For example, in one assembly, the theme of which was the special courage of people who are ill, pupils behaved impeccably, whilst one pupil gave an account of the courage shown by a brother during a serious illness. Pupils reacted with sensitivity and clearly showed the ability to reflect on the feelings and emotions of others.

19 Pupils in all year groups show a willingness to take additional responsibilities, performing a range of duties as classroom monitors. The School Council provides a forum in which pupils from each class can meet and discuss with the headteacher any concerns they may have and any suggestions to improve the school environment. Observations of the School Council indicate that pupils take their duties seriously and bring forward appropriate items for discussion. They are encouraged to discuss possible solutions to the problems they raise, and they are willing and able to identify solutions and implement them where appropriate. Pupils in Year 6 have a rota system to help in the dining room, where they assist younger pupils. However, pupils have limited opportunities to use their own initiative; though examples were seen of older pupils working independently, they have few opportunities to undertake personal research.

20 Overall attendance is satisfactory, similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. Authorised absence is broadly in line with national averages and unauthorised absence is below the national averages. Registration is undertaken morning and afternoon and meets statutory requirements.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

21 Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when 23 per cent of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory. During the inspection, the overall quality of teaching was good but extremely variable between teachers and occasionally the same teacher on different occasions. Overall, 62 per cent of teaching was good or better. 19 per cent of lessons were very good and two lessons observed were excellent. All but two of the other lessons were satisfactory. One lesson in the Foundation Stage was poor and one lesson in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. Teaching in the reception class was unsatisfactory whilst teaching in Years 1 and 2 was good overall and occasionally very good. Teaching in the junior classes was satisfactory overall. Many high quality lessons were seen in Years 3 and 6 in particular and good lessons were taught by all teachers. Teaching in Years 4 and 5 was mainly satisfactory.

22 Teaching in the Foundation Stage was judged to be unsatisfactory overall and is a similar judgement to that made in the previous inspection. However, it must be stressed that the regular teacher of the reception class was absent during the inspection week and a succession of temporary teachers taught the class. The judgement is based on the observation of teaching by two of the three temporary teachers used during the week and also on the quality of the learning environment, teachers' planning, discussion with the headteacher and the report of a monitoring visit by a local authority inspector/adviser.

23 During the inspection week children in the reception class made poor progress because for two days the supply teacher made little effort to question, guide and discuss the work with them for much of the day. Children were left to learn for themselves. The major weakness in teaching is clearly the teacher's limited knowledge of the foundation curriculum and the early learning goals. This shows itself in the way that the curriculum is planned and the room is organised. For example, the organisation of the classroom does not enable children to select their own activities to learn independently of the adults. There is no

standard shape to the day and as a consequence children are not clear about what they are learning and do not know what to do at different points of the session. There is not a good balance between activities to which children are directed and those that they can choose. The headteacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and has supported the regular class teacher by providing good guidance in terms of suitable activities for children. However, on the evidence so far, staff do not pay sufficient attention to learning objectives for each activity and because of this, it is not possible to assess children's learning. As a result, the teacher cannot accurately plan what needs to happen next to take individual children forward in their learning. A strength during the inspection week was the work of support staff who have strong relationships with the children. This helped to lessen the impact of different teachers coming into their classrooms in that children still felt safe and secure.

24 In the infant and junior classes, the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully. Strengths in literacy lessons include teachers using challenging, well-chosen texts to interest and involve pupils. This was seen to very good effect in Year 6 where pupils read an extract from a mystery written by Arthur Conan Doyle. This wise choice ensured that all pupils were fully involved. In well-structured numeracy lessons, most teachers ensure that pupils are clearly focused and concentrate on finding methods and strategies to solve problems. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the challenges and are very articulate in their responses. Teachers now need to extend the use of the opening session to increase the pace of mental strategies, raise expectations and realise the value of quick mental calculations. Teachers use the final sessions of the lessons effectively to reinforce the learning objectives and evaluate pupils' progress.

25 Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, teachers throughout the school promote very well the literacy skills through pupils' history work. However, teachers often miss opportunities to encourage pupils to use their writing skills in religious education lessons. The school has made particularly good use of ICT and teachers are making good use of this resource in day-to-day teaching and across the whole curriculum. Pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet to find information in their history, science and geography work. They also use spreadsheets and produce graphs and charts in their science work.

26 Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, and this is an important factor in helping to motivate them to always do their best. Where teaching is of a high standard, teachers involve pupils through skilful questioning and help them to extend their learning. For example, an excellent history lesson in Year 2, completely captured pupils' interest as the teachers explained, "We are going to be history detectives this afternoon". They were engrossed in their work as the teacher skilfully interwove information about Florence Nightingale with opportunities for pupils to consider other sources of historical evidence. By the end of the lesson pupils were taking great delight in showing off their newly-discovered skills, knowledge and understanding.

27 Teachers aim well-targeted questions at different pupils and this acts as a strong evaluative tool in many lessons. Comments to pupils about their work, both verbally and in some cases through marking, strike the right balance between celebrating and encouraging their efforts, and giving them achievable targets and developmental points to help them improve. All of this, together with the specific targets that teachers set for pupils, as a result of ongoing assessments (particularly in English, mathematics and science), gives pupils a good insight into what they are learning. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking, for example some mediocre work is accepted and praised. The way that teachers in all classes share the learning objectives of lessons with pupils, using accessible and

'child-friendly' language, involves them very much in the learning process and is supporting improved standards and achievement. In many effective lessons in Year 3, the teacher managed time particularly well in her lessons with a good balance of teacher instruction and explanation and pupil activity. She also provided helpful time limits to complete work, which created a sense of urgency and motivated pupils to work hard.

28 Teachers generally organise their lessons well and where support staff are available, they are involved in supporting individuals, or small groups of pupils. Pupils benefit well from this additional support and those with special educational needs are helped to make good progress on these occasions. There are times, however, when this support is not used to maximum effect, for example during whole-class presentations at the start of some lessons. In a small number of lessons, the work does not always challenge the higher attainers and these pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

29 There is early identification of special educational need and this ensures that the school addresses learning difficulties as soon as possible. The individual education plans are satisfactory but need to be more specific in some cases to allow the teacher to measure progress accurately and plan further targets to develop learning. Some targets are a little too general and evaluation of success relies on particular teachers' knowledge of the child. When planning lessons, teachers do not always make explicit reference to pupils with special educational needs, although in many lessons these pupils are well supported both by teachers and by support assistants.

30 Homework is given on a regular basis and is relevant to the work pupils are doing in class. Pupils often enjoy their homework and some set challenges for each other. For example, a friendly disagreement about the ingredients of cornflakes ended with one Year 6 pupil showing that Dr Kellogg used corn to produce the first cornflakes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ninety-five per cent of parents who returned their questionnaire were satisfied with the level of homework.

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

31 The curriculum provision has improved since the last inspection and now fulfils statutory requirements. Schemes of work have been introduced for each subject and care is taken in the planning and organisation to provide a broad curriculum. As a result of these improvements teaching and learning are better and standards are generally higher.

32 The curriculum for children in the reception class is not fully developed to provide for all areas of learning and is unsatisfactory in the quality and range of provision. This is explained more fully in Part D of this report.

33 A new curriculum policy statement, currently in draft form, addresses the school's approach to ensure statutory requirements are met and the provision is broad and balanced. Time allocations for each subject and some suggestions for the organisation of time and subjects are included. All teachers currently plan very carefully for all subjects. There is some flexibility for all subjects to take place every week or for some to be put into blocks over a half term. However, there needs to be a review of how time is currently used each day for there are small but significant changes that could be made to ensure the curriculum is more balanced.

34 The requirements of the National Curriculum are now fully met with an appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics, science and ICT. The National Strategies for Literacy

and Numeracy have been fully implemented and teachers are using the support available to help in the planning of lessons. Progression in the teaching and learning of basic skills in using numbers, reading, spelling and grammar is good. However, some teachers still need to receive additional training and support in using the strategies effectively.

35 The schemes of work are used to establish the annual and half-termly plans for science, ICT and the foundation subjects. There are still some weaknesses in the provision of religious education. Good opportunities have been identified, and used well, to link learning in English, mathematics and ICT to other subjects. For instance, Year 3 have established a database and were interrogating the data to produce frequency graphs about height or birth months. Year 5 have used the Internet to do research about Kenya, as part of their studies in geography. There are effective arrangements in place to use the materials developed by the national strategies to provide additional support in numeracy and literacy, including 'booster' groups, additional literacy support and Springboard for mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5. All of these and the club for more able mathematicians in Year 6 enrich the provision and contribute to the raising of standards.

36 The curriculum for pupils with special education needs is generally satisfactory. Good arrangements are in place to ensure equal access for these pupils. Although the provision meets the current Code of Practice the introduction of the Revised Code of Practice should include a review of the individual education plans to ensure they consistently identify and differentiate the pupils' needs sufficiently.

37 Policies for medium-term and weekly planning are used consistently to match the lessons to the schemes of work in all subjects and to the general abilities of the pupils. The detailed plans for teaching and learning are on display in each classroom. This is a helpful policy but more could be done to share the planning with pupils and their parents. Everyone then could work in partnership when they understand the planned purpose and progress in learning in all subjects.

38 The statutory curriculum is broadened by the inclusion of personal, social and health education. There is a governors' statement on sex education but there is no written and agreed statement for the inclusion of education about drug misuse, although it is included in the teaching programme.

39 Learning opportunities are enriched and extended by a small number of extra-curricular activities, some of which require a payment and include specialist games coaching, and visits to theatres, museums and other interesting places. In-school visits from theatre groups and book fairs play a part in motivating pupils and developing their interests. The school has a tradition of including a valuable residential visit for the older pupils that extends their physical and social education curriculum by providing opportunities for adventure activities that are greatly anticipated and enjoyed. There is cycling proficiency and safety education and a small number of clubs are well attended, including pottery and netball. Each summer there is a whole-school production that involves every pupil and is one of the highlights for pupils, staff and parents. About 40 pupils receive specialist teaching to learn to play the flute, violin or a brass instrument. There are plans to extend this teaching so that the pupils are given more time to practise and make music together and perform for their parents and other pupils. With such a number of pupils involved there is scope to develop this aspect of the curriculum.

40 Overall the school's links with the community are satisfactory. There are strong links with the local church; the vicar visits the school and participates in school assemblies. Pupils visit the church for services and to support their studies in religious education. There are, however, no visits to places of worship of faiths other than Christianity. The school

makes use of the local environment to enrich the curriculum and makes a series of visits in the wider community, for example visits to theatres, museums and a planned visit to the Globe Theatre in London. Pupils in Year 6 experience a residential visit.

41 The school has developed good links with partner institutions. There are good links with a local playgroup from where many of the school's pupils come. Children from the playgroup visit the school prior to their arrival in the reception class. The school has established good links with their lead secondary school to ensure good transition from primary to secondary phase of education. Staff from the secondary school visit the school, whilst Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school at which time they meet their form tutor. The school has forged good links with the specialist language college. A teacher visits each week to introduce Year 6 pupils to French and German. The pupils enjoy this so much that there are plans to establish a club to encourage them to speak the languages more.

42 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and remains a positive feature of the school, as it was in the last inspection. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Teachers give pupils some opportunities to learn to take social responsibilities and to show initiative, but they could do more of this – given pupils' eagerness to help and their willingness and confidence to try out new ideas. The School Council, however, is a very positive feature where pupils from all year groups meet with the headteacher and discuss how they can work together to make the school a better place. This also promotes citizenship. A good example of the fostering of a sense of community can be seen from the annual visit to a theme park which is organised and supervised by a non-teaching member of staff. In a short while, some older pupils will share a very special day at Lambeth Palace where they have been invited to present their 'Newspaper' article to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. Spiritual development is satisfactory and some assemblies effectively encourage pupils to show empathy and compassion and concern for others. For example, the headteacher told pupils a moving story of an African child who lost a leg when stepping on a landmine and pupils showed great sensitivity as they gazed at a flickering candle and related over that child's courage. However, whilst all assemblies meet requirements, some lack a sense of joy and enjoyment, and meaningful participation by pupils is limited. During the inspection very little provision for spiritual development was seen through lessons but in a Year 2 lesson about Florence Nightingale, the teacher's words "Wouldn't it be wonderful to go back in time and help others" truly struck a chord with the pupils.

43 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The yearly programme for assemblies covers many areas likely to encourage pupils to think about the differences between right and wrong. The school lays an emphasis on developing self-discipline. Pupils in Year 6 in particular speak about the school being a community which promotes respect, trust, confidentiality, being positive and taking people seriously. The pupils display very mature listening skills and respect for each other's views. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory but there are strengths and weaknesses. Much of the work in literacy lessons centres on studies of literature and poetry. However, in religious education lessons, pupils do not demonstrate a secure awareness of other faiths and cultures and they have only a superficial knowledge and understanding of customs, festivals and celebrations of faiths other than Christianity. In art, pupils observe and paint in the style of famous artists such as Mondrian, Matisse and Van Gogh, but there is only a little evidence of pupils experiencing the artwork of ethnic minority cultures. Cultural experiences include pupils listening to a range of music from different times and cultures in assemblies and in lessons, but there are too few opportunities for all pupils to participate in drama and musical productions.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

44 The school is successful in creating a warm, friendly environment in which pupils feel safe, and secure, where they can learn and develop. Staff and pupils are well known to each other and interact well both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils are confident that they can approach their teachers should they have any problems either of a personal or of an academic nature, and that appropriate support and guidance would be forthcoming.

45 The school has in place a health and safety policy that meets statutory requirements. Procedures for general risk assessments and fire risk assessments are in place, and inspections are carried out on a regular basis. First aid procedures are good; there are appropriate numbers of qualified first aiders, and good records of accidents and injuries are maintained. Overall, the school is successful in providing a safe working environment for staff and pupils; however a small number of minor areas of concern were brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection. Overall, arrangements for child protection are good. The school has in place a child protection policy linked to the Area Child Protection Committee's procedures. The headteacher is the designated teacher and has received the appropriate training on child protection. All teaching staff are provided with a copy of the child protection policy, which provides guidance on the recognition of child abuse; however, lunchtime supervisors have not received child protection training. The school has good links with outside agencies and the designated teacher attends case conferences as appropriate.

46 The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, including a school discipline policy that identifies what is and is not acceptable behaviour. The anti-bullying policy makes clear that bullying will not be tolerated. The headteacher maintains a record of poor behaviour and contacts parents should a pupil's behaviour become a major cause for concern. However, behaviour in the playground at lunchtimes is sometimes unsatisfactory, and staff, including lunchtime supervisors, do not always intervene soon enough or in line with the school policy to prevent rough play escalating into boisterous and immature behaviour. Discussions with lunchtime supervisors indicate that they have not received any formal training on behaviour management or the school's anti-bullying policy.

47 Overall the school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring good attendance. Parents are advised of the need to inform the school if their children are absent for any reason. Staff monitor the attendances on a daily basis and make contact with parents if there are any unexplained absences. The educational welfare officer monitors attendance on a monthly basis. The school awards certificates for 100 per cent attendance on a termly basis.

48 The school teaches pupils about the choices they can make in order to live a healthy lifestyle to improve their well-being. They also learn about ways of keeping safe when they are out in the community and about road safety.

49 Overall assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Marking is more often linked to assessing progress and linked to the planned learning objective. Systematic assessment and the analysis of data to identify strengths and weaknesses have contributed to the improvements in standards. Systems and procedures are being developed to use assessment information more effectively so as to monitor pupils' progress and raise expectations further. Weaknesses still exist in using assessment information to guide curricular planning. Developments in assessment are one of the priorities in the school improvement plan.

50 The reception class baseline assessment, made when they first come into school, is not used well. Although it is used to identify clear strengths and areas of need, these are not taken into account sufficiently to be used as starting points for their learning. The headteacher has introduced a good system for keeping records of what children know, understand and can do in each of the six areas of learning but this is very new and has yet to be used effectively. Regular assessments are made of pupils' learning in reading, writing, mathematics and science as they progress through Key Stage 1. Some of the forms of assessment need to be reviewed to ensure their purpose is relevant and that they provide useful information. At Key Stage 2 the teachers use the profile for each pupil to monitor and record progress in English, mathematics and science. The records are completed regularly and summarised termly. Current developments involve the subject leaders in reviewing the assessment and record keeping for each subject. They are attending relevant courses to help develop useful procedures that will make recorded information useful and help to raise expectations.

51 The headteacher has a good understanding of the use of assessment and the need to monitor the pupils' progress. As yet the impact of more recent developments is limited but there are good records of each class with a detailed analysis of their prior attainment and challenging targets for their progress. Baseline assessment is used to monitor pupils' progress in reception and set the targets for Year 1 and for the end of Year 2 tests. Similar developments for each class in Key Stage 2 identifies the level of development of each pupil and uses the information to set challenging targets for each pupil over the year and for the end of Year 6 tests. The headteacher is now identifying and tracking the progress of more able pupils; this is an important development. However, there is not yet an effective database to record all the information available about each pupil. A computerised system needs to be developed that will enable teachers to see each pupil's progress over each year against challenging targets set for them.

52 The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is not focused sufficiently on identifying their specific needs. Too often their planned programme of work is based on general assumptions rather than on a clear diagnosis of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

53 Assessment information is also being used to set learning targets for individual pupils based on current achievement and the next stage of learning. The whole process of assessment now needs to become a coherent process. Teachers should develop targets with the children which link with the National Curriculum criteria to attain each level. Progress needs to be fully discussed with pupils and parents and then used to set the challenge for the next stage. Pupils and parents will then be more aware of the pupils' potential and the school's expectations. By engaging the pupils in the assessment process they will become much more involved in their own learning and it will help to raise their aspirations, especially of the more able pupils.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

54 Parents' views of the school are very good. Approximately 23 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire and seven parents attended the parents' meeting. Almost all parents are pleased with the progress their children are making in their learning, the quality of teaching, the good standard of behaviour and the expectation that their children will work hard. Parents also indicated that their children enjoyed coming to school, that the school is

helping them to become more responsible and mature and that the school is well led and managed. Evidence from the inspection mostly supports these positive views of the school. A significant minority of parents expressed concerns in relation to the following areas: a lack of extra-curricular activities (47 per cent); and the school does not work closely with parents (21 per cent). Inspectors consider that the school could do more to encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school, for example helping in classrooms, and whilst the school does provide a range of extra-curricular activities, there is scope to expand these activities, for example by establishing a school football team and by giving musical opportunities such as a choir or orchestra.

55 Overall, parents' involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory. The Friends of the School Association is very active in organising social and fund-raising events, and they have raised substantial funds that have been used to provide additional learning resources, that have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. A small number of parents accompany pupils on educational walks in the local area and a small number of parents organise the school netball team. However, few if any parents help in classrooms and there is little evidence to indicate that the school actively encourages parents to help in classrooms. Informal discussions with small groups of parents prior to the school day indicate that parents would readily help in classrooms, but say they have never been asked, and do not think that it is the school's policy to have parents helping in classrooms.

56 Overall the quality and range of information provided for parents are satisfactory. The school brochure and governors' annual report provide parents with a wide range of information about the school and its activities. Weekly newsletters and letters about specific events ensure that parents are aware of current school issues. The "Horndon Times" provides parents with a pupil's view of the school, and is a credit to the Year 6 pupils who produced it.

57 Parents are invited to a parents' evening each term at which time they can discuss with teachers their children's progress, and in the summer term discuss their children's annual report. Parents are invited to attend assemblies and weekly drop-in sessions. Overall, pupils' reports are satisfactory; however, there are some inconsistencies: whilst almost all reports contain good quality information about what pupils can understand and can do, not all contain targets for improvement or indicate to parents how pupils' achievements relate to National Curriculum levels. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are insufficiently involved in decisions about how their children's special needs are met. Pupils' individual education plans are highly technical in nature and therefore not parent-friendly and there is no record of parents' comments.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

58 Leadership and management have shown very good improvement since the previous inspection when some significant weaknesses were reported. They are now a strength at Horndon-on-the-Hill, offering a secure basis for the school to move forward.

59 The new headteacher has been in post for just over a term. She has quickly developed a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses whilst gaining the confidence of parents, governors and staff. She has a clear vision for the future. Working with staff and governors, the school's aims are being redefined. Whilst staff do not all yet share this vision and there is some anxiety about change, the headteacher has wisely insisted on a period of consolidation and review before moving too quickly into the next period of development.



60 Historical factors mean that the school does not currently have a deputy head. A sensible senior management team structure has been established, taking advantage of the experience of two staff members. The role of subject co-ordinators is clearer than at the time of the last inspection and is continuing to develop. Some weaknesses continue, for example in the co-ordination of the Foundation Stage and in the rigour with which subjects and the provision for special educational needs are monitored. However, co-ordinators are beginning to play a more systematic role in strategic development. The school shows its commitment to this by allocating non-contact time to staff with management responsibilities.

61 The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the direction of the school. Most members have a good understanding of where the school is successful and where it could do better. They have established effective procedures and structures for their work. For example, individual governors are attached to different aspects and classes, reporting to committees after visiting and talking with key staff. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well, there are no vacancies and individual governors bring a good range of expertise into their work as critical friends of the school.

62 The management of special educational needs is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. A useful process for early identification is in place. The school has relatively few pupils with special needs and the organisation of their support, including the role of the special needs co-ordinator at different stages, needs to be clarified. Information about the Revised Code of Practice for special educational needs arrived in school just before the inspection and an appropriate timeline has been drawn up to consider its implications. Improving the ways in which parents are involved will need to be a central feature in the school's revised policy as this is currently unsatisfactory.

63 The headteacher, with the support of the local education authority, has quickly established a strong basis for evaluating and developing the teaching and improving standards further. Consequently her priorities for development are very well chosen. The current school improvement plan goes some way towards meeting those priorities, although the headteacher recognises that, as an interim document, it is only partly successful in setting out where the school wants to be in the next five terms and how it will get there. Nevertheless, costings and success criteria are clearly identified, with teaching staff having clear responsibilities for their own subjects and aspects.

64 Financial systems are secure and well supported by the school's use of new technology. The available budget is allocated wisely, including the use of specific grants. For example, funding to improve provision and training in ICT has been well spent to raise standards in the subject. Principles for achieving best value are followed under the watchful eye of a governor with specific expertise, although procedures for drawing on the views of parents and pupils are not yet fully effective.

65 Sufficient qualified teaching and support staff are in place, although other than the headteacher, expertise for the Foundation Stage is limited and the current management of this area is a weakness. Some non-core subjects, including music and physical education, would benefit from additional training. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are satisfactory.

66 The accommodation is now judged as satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection with the building of a new classroom as a result of parental efforts. This means that pupils can be taught in single-age classes. Provision outside has also been improved, for example with attractive sitting spaces and a covered area. However, as in the previous inspection, there is still no designated outdoor activity area for the youngest pupils. An ICT suite has been opened and is used well because of the creative use of staff expertise.

Classroom space is slightly cramped and the library area is inadequate to develop library skills and as an area for independent study. Resources are satisfactory overall with weaknesses in the Foundation Stage, physical education, music and in some resources to support the recently adopted history and geography topics.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

67 In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve the quality of learning for pupils in the reception class by:
  - making sure that reception teacher pays greater attention to children's prior learning and experiences;

- raising teachers' knowledge and expectations of what children should be expected to do in each of the areas of learning;
  - providing the outdoor accommodation and more resources for the outdoor activities for the reception class so they can practise physical skills in an informal setting (for example, wheeled toys, collaborative toys);
  - giving children more opportunities to work independently and to select and evaluate their work;
  - making more effective use of assessments to decide which individual children are ready to move on to their next stage of learning;
  - extending the programme of monitoring and evaluation to ensure the needs of children in the reception class are met.  
(paragraphs 1, 21-23, 32, 50, 60, 68-72, 75, 76)
- (2) Improve the effectiveness of assessment and teachers' target setting for individual pupils and year groups by:
- raising expectations of teachers, for example in the marking and assessment of work in all subjects;  
(paragraphs 95, 101, 102, 109, 114, 119, 125, 131, 137, 145, 152)
  - engaging pupils and parents fully in setting pupils' personal targets;  
(paragraph 53)
  - ensuring that teachers set individual targets (related to national curriculum levels) and forecasts for all pupils from reception class onwards and monitor pupils' progress towards these targets each term (paragraph 53);
  - analysing pupils' progress to ascertain if support is needed for pupils with special educational needs or further extension work is needed for higher attaining and the gifted and talented pupils, and adapt planning accordingly (In the first instance the targets should be for English and mathematics and should follow a consistent format throughout the school); (paragraphs 29, 36, 52)
  - improving the consistency in quality of individual education programmes for pupils with special educational needs by ensuring that:
    - (a) work is more accurately matched for individual pupils;
    - (b) teachers set specific, measurable targets in key skills that fully reflect the needs of pupils and those objectives in pupils' statements and using these targets as a benchmark against which to measure pupils' progress;
    - (c) targets are met in the shortest time possible;
    - (d) individual education plans are updated more frequently.
 (paragraphs 29, 36, 49-53, 62)
- (3) Improve the personal and cultural development of pupils by:
- providing more opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes in all subjects; (paragraphs 6, 9, 25, 79, 84, 85)
  - providing a more systematic approach to the teaching of religious education to raise pupils' awareness, knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism; (paragraphs 153-158)
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to listen to, compose and perform music;
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to discover more about how other cultures contribute to the world in which they live, for example through art, music and dance.

(paragraphs 11, 43, 114, 144)

In addition the school should:

- continue to stress the importance of good behaviour at all times and ensure that all staff, including non-teaching staff, employ a consistent approach in praising pupils where necessary and in dealing with any inappropriate behaviour.  
(paragraphs 16 and 46)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	7	15	12	1	1	0
Percentage	5	19	38	32	3	3	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	206
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### 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	12	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	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	15	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	24	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (92)	96 (92)	96 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	10	8	12
	Total	21	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (76)	73 (84)	85 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	204
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147.25

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
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

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	441148
Total expenditure	446177
Expenditure per pupil	2361
Balance brought forward from previous year	19565
Balance carried forward to next year	14536



*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 22.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out	189
Number of questionnaires returned	43

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	26	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	84	12	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	42	0	5	0
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	40	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	9	12	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	33	16	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	21	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	40	21	26	5

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

68 Children join the reception class in either September or January, depending on when they reach the age of five. Their attainment on entry to school is well above the level normally expected of their age. At the time of the inspection, there were 30 children in the reception class. Children are making slow progress due to the unsatisfactory teaching and the ineffective way that activities are organised. Despite the slow start, by the end of the reception year almost all children at least meet the targets expected of them in the six areas of learning specified nationally for this age; many exceed them.

69 The provision for reception children was judged to be a weakness in the last inspection and has not improved sufficiently since 1997. There have been changes in staffing and there are also different criteria by which to judge both teaching and learning. The current teacher, who has been in post only since September 2001, was allocated the responsibility for managing the Foundation Stage provision by the previous headteacher. However, the teacher is not fully trained or secure in knowledge for this role and the supporting non-teaching assistants are also not specifically trained in providing for the youngest children. This judgement is characterised by the disappointing displays, the dull environment and disorganised nature of the classroom which does little to enable children to access areas such as role-play, sand and water activities and writing areas. Due to the unusual nature of the inspection week with only supply teachers teaching the class, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the individual areas of learning.

70 The current headteacher has recognised the need to develop the reception teacher's skills and has organised in-service training and a visit to view good practice in a nearby school. This is helping to develop the teacher's skills and the headteacher is looking forward to consolidating these improvements when the teacher returns from illness. The headteacher is a knowledgeable practitioner in the teaching of reception-aged children and her audit of the reception class provision identified weaknesses in the curriculum and lesson planning for the youngest children in the school. Much more needs to be done to provide helpful information for parents and in trying to involve them more fully in their children's education. Teaching seen during the inspection was very variable since the usual teacher was absent and the teaching of the three teachers ranged between very poor and good, although best described as less than satisfactory over the four inspection days.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

71 The children arrive in the reception class with very advanced personal, social and emotional development and this enables them to settle quickly and happily to school life and routines. This is remarkable considering the many disruptions in staffing this year. They attain above average standards by the end of the reception year. They separate with little stress from their parents and take a full part in registrations, assemblies, physical education lessons and playtimes. They are confident to join in whole-class discussions or to work with the many different adults who support them in lessons and at lunchtime. They listen well to their teachers' and other adults' guidance and do what is expected of them. Their behaviour is normally good and they play sensibly with equipment and materials. Most children get along very well with each other. They are mostly friendly, polite and courteous towards others, but a few children sometimes call out in whole-class discussions. This is usually due to their enthusiasm, excitement or eagerness to answer questions. During the inspection,

one of the teachers directed the children too much and left too little to children's initiative and independence.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

72 The children are good listeners and confident talkers by the end of the reception year. Most are willing to talk in a small group and all will talk one to one with an adult. Some children are very good thinkers and ask 'why' and 'how'. By the end of their time in the reception class, children achieve well and attain most of the early learning goals, including those for reading and writing. Only two children do not recognise their name, most know letter names and higher attainers recognise the sounds they make. Whilst most children recognise that the words on a page carry meaning, many children do not use the pictures as a clue to help them understand. Although children enjoy listening to stories and join in the familiar bits, they are not encouraged to read as well as they should be. For example, there is no clearly designated book and reading area and the few books that are in the classroom are not displayed well. In their writing, most children make a good attempt to write their own name and all children were able to dictate their own story based on the book 'The wind blew'. One particularly articulate child dictated, "last but not least, the kite joined the other things....". However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of reading and writing skills. Teaching and learning during the inspection and in some of the work seen were not as good as they should have been. Some of the teaching showed a lack of understanding of how young children learn best and very little of the careful questioning and talking with children which are so important. Much of the reading and writing appears to be too structured; for example, the children are expected to copy print but are not encouraged to practise making marks (emergent writing).

### **Mathematical development**

73 Children achieve well and most attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year; a significant number of pupils exceed them. Children join in saying several number rhymes, using their fingers to show that they understand adding up and taking away smaller numbers. Most can count objects correctly, at least to ten, and many count comfortably to 20. They are beginning to become familiar with positional language such as *over*, *under* and *in front* as they place plastic animals in their toy farm. Many children can name several two-dimensional shapes and most name colours accurately. Very little evidence of numeracy teaching was seen during the week due to the absence of the usual teacher and the coverage of the class by a succession of supply teachers.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

74 Very little evidence of teaching and learning of this area of learning was seen during the week due to the absence of the usual teacher and the poor range of activities provided by the supply teachers. However, when speaking to children it is clear that many bring to school a wealth of knowledge and by the end of the reception year, they attain most of the early learning goals. In their work on toys last term, children compared old and modern teddy bears. This gave them a chance to learn to look for evidence of how things change over time. They were curious about magnets, asked questions and made important observations such as "these don't fit together" when the like poles of the magnets repelled each other. They enjoy discussing personal events and talking about their families. In another lesson, the hardworking support staff and voluntary helpers encouraged children to wash and hang out to dry clothes made from a variety of materials. Children discussed what they were doing and were eager to find which material would dry the quickest. Children are confident to try out new technology and show good skills in using the mouse and computer keyboard.

### **Physical development**

75 Children handle a good range of small equipment, such as scissors, brushes and crayons competently. They move around the school and their classroom safely, sensibly and confidently. Children take part in formal physical education lessons in the hall and enjoy moving in a wide variety of ways, such as when they stretch their bodies with control and imagination developing 'washing machine' shapes, running, skipping and jumping, and moving their bodies along the floor. Only a small part of one physical education lesson was seen during the inspection and no outdoor physical activities took place. The provision for physical development is unsatisfactory since the reception class has no specific outside play area in which children can use a variety of wheeled toys and large play facilities such as climbing equipment and large construction blocks. Nevertheless, children attain the level expected of them by the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

76 Very little evidence was available to enable a secure judgement about children's creative development but it is clear from the work on display and the activities provided that the teacher does not provide children with sufficient opportunities to have their own creative ideas. Too many 'pictures' are similar in style and children are over-directed. Older children can use paint to mix colours for themselves, and there has been a little work with three-dimensional materials such as creating an animal house (linked to the story of 'After the Storm' from the Percy the Park-keeper series of books). Music is a weak area and children rarely sing or play instruments properly, mainly due to the lack of confidence and subject knowledge of the teacher.

## **ENGLISH**

77 At the time of the last inspection, test results in English were not as good for eleven year olds as they were for seven year olds, indicating that pupils did not achieve as well in the junior classes as they did in the infant classes. Standards for the oldest pupils have improved since then and are now well above average at the end of both the infants and the juniors. Given the context of the school, the results for eleven year olds over time are about the same as in similar schools. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully introduced throughout the school, contributing to the rise in standards for the older pupils.

78 Over the last two years, all seven year olds have reached the expected level in reading and writing. However, results overall are similar to the previous inspection, mainly because the school has been less successful in reaching the higher levels in writing.

79 The results for eleven year olds have improved from being below average at the time of the previous inspection. This has been recognised by two national awards for raising results. There was a setback in 2001 when many of the brighter pupils did not make the expected progress from their levels four years earlier and the school's target for the number reaching the level 4 was much too modest. There are no notable differences between the achievements of boys and girls and generally the higher attaining pupils do well in reading, but not so well in writing.

80 By the age of seven, almost all pupils show a good level of confidence in speaking and listening so that standards are better than in most schools. They start Year 1 already showing good skills in this area and consequently the progress they make in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. They can listen well, not only to adults, but also to each other. For example, in a Year 2 religious education lesson, a pupil was selected to play the role of Joseph with other pupils asking relevant questions that he answered confidently. Most pupils understand and

use a good range of vocabulary, partly because of the good example set by teachers. For instance, in a Year 1 science lesson, many pupils enjoyed talking about their diagrams of a flowering plant using correct terms such as *roots* and *stem*. These examples illustrate the way that different subjects are planned to include opportunities for speaking and listening. However, as in the older classes, speaking and listening are not as systematically planned or assessed as other aspects of English.

81 Speaking and listening skills continue to develop securely through the junior classes. By the age of eleven many pupils can put forward a point of view about books they have read, supporting their opinions by referring to the text. Generally, they are less advanced in discussion and persuasion because fewer opportunities are offered. However, they make rapid progress in Year 6 where the teaching promotes such skills well. School drama productions and some choral speaking provide opportunities for pupils to perform to a larger audience. Most teachers are less confident in using drama techniques in their day-to-day teaching.

82 Reading develops well in the infants and the juniors. By the age of seven almost all pupils achieve their potential to read a text accurately, understanding the main meaning. Many can talk about characters and events in a story and are beginning to understand different forms of non-fiction writing. They make good progress in reading expressively, many showing mature skills in using clues, such as the use of capital letters or speech marks, to bring their reading alive. The small number of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in reading unfamiliar words, although they are less confident in expressing opinions about what they have read. Some of the brightest pupils are beginning to skim read a page to pick out relevant details, as in a very successful history lesson about Florence Nightingale.

83 By the age of eleven the great majority of pupils have good reading skills for their age and know about a range of authors and other types of texts. They use their literacy skills well to research into subjects such as history and geography. Pupils increasingly make use of the computer to access information; they show good skills when retrieving information that they have read, with many higher attaining pupils being able to summarise and make deductions. For example in a Year 6 lesson looking at the writing of Conan Doyle, many pupils were excited by the way that the author uses red herrings to keep the reader guessing. Opportunities for independent reading develop well when pupils are encouraged to further their studies at home, but the school library is too small to enable pupils to work away from the classroom.

84 Although standards in writing are above average at the end of the infants and the juniors, the school has recognised that they are not as successful as in reading, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. By the age of seven most pupils can write a short story or chronological account, spelling most words accurately and using basic punctuation well. Some higher attaining pupils can use a wider range of writing skills and almost all are learning to join their handwriting. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the junior classes, although there is a dip in Year 5 because the teaching does not expect enough from them.

85 By the time they leave the school, most can write in a range of styles, spelling, punctuating and constructing their writing appropriately. Some pupils are beginning to use a personal, attractive and legible handwriting style and almost all have satisfactory skills when writing for a special purpose. Many of the higher attaining pupils can use sophisticated words that add interest to the writing, often drawing on their enthusiasm for different authors. However, there are relatively few opportunities for more extended writing with an eye for the needs of different audiences. Throughout the school the drafting process is seen largely in

terms of correcting spellings and punctuation rather than developing the text. The satisfactory, and improving, use of ICT is helping to raise standards.

86 Pupils' attitudes in English lessons, and particularly in the literacy hour, are very positive. They listen very well and most of the time try hard to do their very best.

87 Teaching and learning are good in the infant department and satisfactory in the juniors. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection. Teachers have a sound and sometimes good understanding of the subject. Because of the literacy strategy, good opportunities are usually made for pupils to apply their skills in real contexts. For example in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were looking at the way words are used in packaging, the teacher imaginatively included work on adjectives and prefixes, such as might be found in advertising. Similarly, good cross-curricular links are made, particularly in history and geography, where literacy skills are used well in researching and writing about the topic. However, some elements of English teaching are insufficiently integrated into the overall curriculum so that pupils do not make use of what they have learned.

88 Planning for the literacy hour is good. Teachers' expectations are matched well to the capabilities of the pupils. Planning is less effective for other English lessons where, if it exists at all, the needs of all pupils are not always considered rigorously enough. For example, in some classes the daily silent reading session lacks focus and in others the same weekly word list or dictation is given to all pupils regardless of their ability. As in the previous inspection, there is still too much teaching 'to the middle' where higher and lower attaining pupils are not well served. The planning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, including good communication between class teachers and teaching assistants about what needs to be covered. However, there are times when the provision made is no different from the rest of the class because their individual needs have not been identified sufficiently precisely. Specific, well-targeted, sessions, such as early literacy support, are provided in several year groups to boost pupils' reading and writing skills. These are helping to raise standards for lower attaining pupils.

89 The first part of the literacy hour is taught well. Interesting resources, good relationships with the pupils and a lively pace contribute to pupils' enthusiastic engagement with the learning. Most teachers use very good questioning skills to involve everyone, giving genuine praise that helps raise self-esteem. Where the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, expectations are too low. Mediocre work is marked as 'good' and pupils become disheartened when they are not encouraged to become actively involved in the lesson.

90 A promising start has been made in setting targets for pupils, based on the National Curriculum. These are sometimes, helpfully, pasted into exercise books and occasionally referred to in marking. The marking of work is detailed in recording what pupils have achieved but less good in pointing out what they need to strive for next. Consequently, pupils have too little understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses – which is a pity because they are so keen to learn and to do well. The statutory targets for Year 6 pupils are now much more realistic and the school has begun to identify more systematically pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels. Homework makes a constructive contribution to standards and to the positive views of parents about the teaching of English.

91 The curriculum consists of a daily literacy hour in all classes and a range of other activities such as diaries, spelling lists, silent reading and handwriting practice, that take place at different times of the day. Overall this constitutes a significant emphasis on English in the curriculum, although provision for speaking and listening is less systematic. The literacy strategy has been adopted without a rigorous examination of which parts of previous

practice need to be maintained or modified. The assessment system is an example where relevant National Curriculum assessments are undertaken alongside a battery of other, long-established tests, some of which provide limited information to help improve teaching and raise standards.

92 The management of the subject has improved since the previous inspection. The subject co-ordinator monitors the work across the school in a number of ways. Combined with the review work already undertaken by the new headteacher, the school has an improving picture of what is working well and where change is needed. Resourcing is good, other than the inadequate library provision.

## **MATHEMATICS**

93 Overall standards have risen significantly since the last inspection. At that time standards were judged to be in line with those expected nationally. They are now well above national expectations in both key stages.

94 Standards of pupils on entry are generally high and above those expected for their age. The 2001 test results for the Year 2 pupils show that standards are well above average when compared to all schools and well above similar schools, based on entitlement to free school meals. All the pupils achieved the expected level 2, with almost half attaining the higher level, which is also well above average when compared to similar schools. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

95 By the end of Year 6 in 2001, the standards were well above the national average and those of similar schools. All but one pupil, who was not able to be in school at that time, reached the expected level 4 and almost a half attained the higher level 5. The results over the last four years have improved at a pace significantly better than the national trend. The targets set by the governors for the Year 6 pupils in the national tests over the next two years are realistic and challenging. However, there is still scope to engage the pupils more in the target setting and the understanding of the criteria for the assessment of levels that will increase the challenge for more able pupils.

96 In Year 2 the pupils have a secure understanding of numbers, aspects of measuring, shapes and data handling. They can all order numbers to 100, such as 8, 29, 51, 58, 74. They are familiar with simple doubling and halving numbers to 20 and a significant number can work with larger numbers. They have a good grasp of place value and can count confidently to 100 in ones or tens. Most pupils can tell the time using o'clock and half hours, whilst a number can recognise the quarter hour. In simple multiplication they can use the 2, 3, 4, and 5 times table and are able to divide numbers by 2. The more able pupils confidently divide numbers such as 42 by 2. When using the 100 square about half the pupils demonstrate very good understanding of place value and can place any number accurately on a blank square. All the pupils are developing a good understanding of the mathematical vocabulary, including *total*, *sum of*, *the difference*, *double* and *minus*.

97 Year 6 pupils are developing a thorough understanding of mathematics. They are able to solve complex problems and use their knowledge and understanding to explain how they solved them. All the pupils have good mental recall to solve multiplication and division problems, such as 260 divide by 100 equals 2.6 or can multiply 1.07 by 10 to give the answer 10.7. The majority of pupils can work confidently with two and three places of decimal fractions and use the appropriate language of thousandths, hundredths and tenths. Pupils are very confident when using paper and pencil methods and all pupils can multiply and divide numbers such as 239 by 42 and 275 by 24. In addition and subtraction, problems with large



numbers are approached confidently using numbers to 10,000. Most pupils have good, instant recall of multiplication tables up to 12 and strategies to help them remember or extend the tables. Standards in other year groups show the same high level of attainment with some very able and gifted mathematicians.

98 Across the school the pupils have secure skills in handling numbers and calculating in their heads. They are especially confident with paper and pencil methods. They have a good understanding of specialist words used in mathematics such as *sum*, *factor*, *equivalent fraction*, *percentage* and *calculate*. In Year 1, for example, they can remember the names of two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties: circle, cylinder, three faces. However, the use and speed of mental calculation is an area that can be developed further.

99 The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall, ranging from excellent to satisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and has contributed to the raising of standards. In Key Stage 1 the teaching is consistently good. It is more variable in Key Stage 2, though it is generally good with some examples of excellent and satisfactory teaching. All teachers plan using the national numeracy framework and support materials. They identify clear learning objectives for each lesson and in the best examples share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils and use it to assess and summarise progress. Teachers have good questioning skills and encourage pupils to explain their thinking to the class. In both key stages teachers ensure the pupils are well motivated and the pace of lessons is good with a variety of activities to ensure pupils apply themselves intellectually. In the excellent lesson observed the pupils were inspired by the teacher's subject knowledge, high expectations, listening skills and relationships. Routines and expectations are well established. Lessons begin promptly and pupils settle quickly and are ready to work. The work provided is matched to the intended learning identified in the planning. The lesson structure follows the pattern recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy. The opening session encourages the development and practice of mental recall followed by focused teaching and independent or group work and the plenary session to assess learning and progress. This successful pattern has helped to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. Teachers now need to extend the use of the opening session to increase the pace of mental strategies, raise expectations and realise the value of quick mental calculations. The use of white boards, number fans and digital cards are examples of good practice that engage more pupils all the time in a faster pace, as well as helping the teachers to assess learning and progress. Homework is set regularly and in the best examples is used to extend and practise the pupils' current knowledge and understanding. In other examples it relies on published booklets that cover too wide a range in any one section of work to help the pupils gain confidence or increase their depth of understanding.

100 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are very good. They are attentive, listen carefully and usually are eager to respond and answer questions to solve problems. Strategies and methods to solve problems or share understanding are explained confidently. When answering questions they listen to, and show respect for, each other. When working together in pairs or small groups they work collaboratively very successfully, showing excellent relationships. Standards of presentation could be improved without losing any of the pace of learning. The very high quality of the pupils' attitudes to their work has a very positive effect on the progress that they make.

101 Work is marked regularly. In the majority of books, the teachers' comments focus on the learning objective and the pupils' progress. This good practice is not as consistent as it should be, although overall there is good improvement since the last inspection. Tests are used regularly to assess the pupils' attainment and progress. At present, however, there are no clear records of how successful each pupil has been in mastering the key objectives for learning. Individual short-term targets for improvement are being set for each pupil and linked

to overall class targets. This developing good practice does not yet involve the pupils sufficiently. There needs to be better information from assessment that can be used to engage the pupils in understanding their own achievements and the criteria for success for the next stage. Pupils and parents need to know what is involved in achieving a level 3 in Year 2 or level 4 or 5 in Year 6, for example. The involvement in their own learning will be an additional motivation for pupils and will raise their expectations, especially of the more able and talented mathematicians. Some good analysis has been done of the results of the national tests to identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning.

102 The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Since her appointment standards have risen significantly. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully and resources improved to support the teaching and learning. There is good use of the support materials for 'booster' groups and the Springboard packages for Years 3, 4 and 5. A club for more able pupils in Year 6, held at lunchtime, is used to work through very challenging problems. Although the school is beginning to identify the more able pupils and raise expectations of their achievements, more needs to be done to identify and challenge the more talented and gifted mathematicians. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning as part of the subject leader's role and it is included in the current school improvement plan as part of the subject development.

## **SCIENCE**

103 Standards in science are well above national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven. This broadly reflects the findings of the teacher assessments and national tests in 2001. A pleasing aspect of the standards seen during the inspection is the significant number of pupils achieving the higher levels 3 and 5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and many achieve the levels normally expected for their age. The judgement represents an improvement in standards from the last inspection where standards were described as above the national average by the end of Year 2 but in line with the national average expectations by the end of Year 6 because much of the work was too easy in the junior classes. By the end of Year 6, overall standards are now well above average and the proportion of higher attaining pupils is well above the national average and pupils are challenged well.

104 In the most recent teacher assessments in 2001, every seven year old achieved the expected level 2 (in the top five per cent of schools nationally) but only 22 per cent achieved the higher level (in line with the national average). On the basis of inspection evidence, whilst it is expected that almost every pupil will achieve the expected level 2, around 40 per cent are likely to achieve level 3. This improvement is due to some very good teaching in the infant classes where teachers are placing more emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for planning and recording their science investigations.

105 Pupils enter Year 1 with good levels of knowledge and pupils of all abilities make good gains in learning in all areas of the subject as they move through Years 1 and 2. All components of the subject, including investigative science, are well represented in both years. The scheme carefully balances the teaching of information and the development of skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 carry out a long-term growing experiment and compare very carefully how well plants have grown in certain conditions. Year 2 pupils investigate the rate at which ice cubes placed in different locations melt and the same year group consider which material will keep a jacket potato warm for the longest time. Pupils co-operate well together in carrying out their observations and show sensitivity and care in their work and the presentation of their recording.

106 In the junior classes, teachers build well upon pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the infant classes. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of science. Because pupils throughout the school are very keen to learn and enjoy the practical activities, they are prepared to work hard and offer ideas and ask questions confidently. Pupils increasingly manage their own work, with experiments and investigations conducted and evaluated effectively. Year 3 pupils learn that plaque affects their teeth and use a disclosing tablet which stains and identifies where it has collected. Through seeing this in a carefully prepared and well-executed scientific investigation, pupils realised that they must clean their teeth regularly and focus on certain areas in their mouths. In Year 5, pupils build on their knowledge and understanding of the human body and understand the benefits of exercise on their bodies. By Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes. They confidently use correct scientific vocabulary such as *stamen* and *stigma* when naming the parts and higher attainers understand what photosynthesis is and the purpose of chlorophyll.

107 Literacy and numeracy skills are used to good effect. Pupils throughout the school record their findings in different ways, make comparisons and record measurements accurately. There is some very good evidence that computers are used not only to produce graphs and tables, but also through the use of temperature sensors to record how quickly a hot potato cools when covered in a variety of materials.

108 Teaching is good overall, with some impressive work seen in lessons and work scrutiny in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6. Teachers make lessons interesting and engage pupils' attention well. This was particularly evident in Year 3 where pupils enjoyed seeing the effect of a disclosing tablet on their teeth and in Year 2 where pupils were amazed to see how fibres looked when viewed through a computer microscope. The emphasis on practical work is good. In order to improve this further, teachers should encourage pupils to ask, "What could I do to improve this experiment?" and also to consider repeating an experiment to see if the result differed the second time. One constant factor that underpins the quality of science teaching and was identified especially in the better lessons is the positive relationships teachers have with their pupils. This helps to ensure that pupils take pride in their work and are fully involved. Teachers regularly use the introductory time effectively, ensuring that pupils are aware of what they are to do and how it relates to what they have done previously. The teacher of the Year 3 lesson set time limits and this ensured the lesson pace was brisk. High levels of challenge are common in many lessons and teachers use praise effectively to maintain confidence and motivation. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure which ensures pupils develop their understanding and this is seen to good effect in the very good emphasis through purposeful questions and on developing the skills of scientific enquiry.

109 The subject is soundly led. There are satisfactory assessment procedures including end of unit assessments which help teachers to identify what pupils know and understand. However, there are currently no consistent approaches to recording pupils' progress in the skills of scientific enquiry as they move through the school. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to assess their own work and take responsibility for their own learning. Results from national tests are carefully analysed, with weaknesses identified and overcome, and this is helping to raise standards. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

110 Standards in art are in line with expectations by the age of seven but below average by the time pupils leave the school. This represents a deterioration since the previous inspection when standards were described as satisfactory. Pupils experience a variety of

media, some of which lead to attractive designs. For example, Year 4 pupils have been experimenting with wax resist techniques and the resulting designs are imaginatively displayed as banners. However, skills when working in media such as pencil, paint or print are not taught systematically enough so that by the time they leave the school, few pupils reach the expected level of proficiency and confidence in their artwork or when illustrating other subjects.

111 Because of the timetable where most art is taught at the end of the week, no direct teaching of the subject was seen and no judgement made about the quality of teaching. However, examination of completed work, including sketchbooks, and a useful collection of photographic evidence kept by the co-ordinator, gives an indication of the standards reached by pupils in their finished work.

112 By the age of seven pupils have used a range of media including pencil, paint, weaving and fabric dyeing. They can represent what they have observed with reasonable accuracy and detail and are beginning to learn about the work of one or two famous artists. As in the juniors, they have opportunities to practise their art skills in other subjects. Skills in handling brushes or pencils are relatively weak for most pupils, because they are not taught or practised methodically.

113 By the age of eleven pupils have experienced a wider range of media, including clay which is taught as an extra-curricular club for the oldest pupils. Some good pastel chalk work in Year 5 was seen where pupils were mixing colours carefully for portraits from Tudor times. The resultant designs were attractive, showing evidence of pupils having experimented with the pastels before committing themselves to the final picture. Whilst some development in pencil techniques can be seen in the sketchbooks, which pupils usefully take with them through the school, most could achieve more. For example, they rarely have the opportunity to choose the best medium for their designs. In Year 6 in particular, conditions are cramped and restrict opportunities for larger scale artwork. On the other hand, older pupils have good opportunity to work collaboratively with adult guidance on large scale projects such as the Millennium hanging and the scenery for the annual production.

114 The subject co-ordinator plays an active role in promoting the subject even though it has not been a major priority for development. She leads by example in workshops and in implementing the school's display policy, making sure that pupils and parents get good opportunities to see the artwork around the building. Subject monitoring and assessment are largely informal and have not yet been used to raise standards. A weakness is the lack of opportunity for pupils to experience the artwork of other cultures. Whilst they paint in the style of Matisse and Mondrian, for example, they do not have the expected awareness and experience of artwork of ethnic cultures.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115 Overall the standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and eleven. Only part of one lesson was seen during the inspection, but pupils' work was examined, teachers' planning and other documents were scrutinised and the subject leader was interviewed.

116 The school's policy and scheme of work provide for good coverage of the subject with a wide range of opportunities using different skills and materials, including food. There are appropriate links to other subjects that give an interesting context for learning. The subject

has improved since the last inspection with the development of a policy and scheme of work that have helped to improve both coverage and standards.

117 All the teachers plan for the subject on their medium-term plans. Over the year pupils are given the opportunity to use a range of materials along with the appropriate tools to cut and construct as well as time to design and amend their ideas. Reception pupils worked with fabric and added festive designs. Year 1 used salt dough to make a candleholder whilst Year 2 worked with clay and later used a variety of ideas and materials to design puppets. In Key Stage 2 there was a wide range of designs using card and paper, fabric and mosaic materials. Year 3 pupils are designing packages to be both strong and attractive. Year 4 combined work on circuits in science to the design of a torch, paying attention to the important materials to reflect light and also easy to hold and use. Year 6 pupils are designing slippers and investigating their construction and the use of suitable materials. For different units of work linked to other subjects, for instance both science and history, there are well-chosen opportunities to use more resistant materials using saws, knives and glue to design and make.

118 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress because the scheme of work provides a good structure for teachers to follow. The subject leader has a sound understanding of the subject and has ensured the scheme of work is suitably resourced. She monitors the use of resources and replaces the different materials as required. To develop and improve the standards the subject leader has had time to work in all classes, leading the units of work for the different age groups. This has helped teachers to understand the skills and knowledge necessary to teach the subject, as well improve their planning, and help pupils to make progress.

119 There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The policy and scheme of work follow national guidelines and the subject now has its just place in the curriculum. There is a good balance between designing and making. The planned programme to monitoring teaching and learning, with the development of a whole school assessment, set out in the school improvement plan will add further to the improvements in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

120 At the last inspection the standards were considered to be satisfactory but, because there was no scheme of work and there was too little time given to teaching geography, the subject was unsatisfactory overall. There have been significant improvements since then with the implementation of a policy and scheme of work. This has helped to raise standards in Key Stage 1 to above average and in parts of Key Stage 2 to well above average.

121 Pupils in Year 1 are conducting a local survey to see how they can make their local environment safer and looking at the implications of cars parking near school. In Year 2 they are using maps, atlases and globes to compare locations, and looking at the differences between Horndon and an island. Simple maps and diagrams of islands show their understanding of geographical features, like hills, coast, lakes and rivers. They have looked at the country of Bangladesh, its climate and how buildings and people's way of life are different because of the climate. Using photographs, the pupils were able to identify differences in clothing, crops and building materials. Year 3 pupils have begun to consider the local environment and how places change. They are studying the planned changes and industrial developments in the nearby Thames Estuary using 'Jeannie's Window' to help them understand the advantages and disadvantages to the environment and the community. They consider the impact of more traffic, especially lorries and tankers, as well as how more

jobs can help the local communities and other businesses. They use maps, newspaper articles and readers' letters to raise questions and discuss the plans. Chembakoli in India is the village being studied by Year 4 to compare with Hordon and the local area. They consider the climate, the agriculture and the economic opportunities of the two locations. Pupils develop their geographical skills and knowledge, noting similarities between their own lives and those of people in a village in India. As part of the geographical study of Kenya the pupils use the computer to undertake research about the climate and rainfall and its impact on the people and the landscape. Pupils in Year 6 are studying rivers in localities across the world. The work shows good research skills using atlases, globes and maps of Great Britain. In studying the stages of a river they have learned about erosion, valleys, meanders and deltas and how rivers influence the lives of those who live and work near to them.

122 Geographical vocabulary is well developed in the written work. By following the scheme of work there is good coverage of the elements of the National Curriculum. Pupils are undertaking geographical enquiry and developing their knowledge and understanding of places and environments. As a result of the planned programme, standards have improved so they are now good.

123 Pupils enjoy geography and show very good attitudes to work. They are able to work independently to undertake research and work collaboratively to share resources and discuss their findings. The pupils' knowledge and skills in reading and writing are used well for research and recording their geographical studies. Work is usually presented neatly, although it is not always of this high standard.

124 Overall the quality of teaching observed was good. There is consistent planning for geography with the clear purpose of the study identified. In the very good teaching the learning objective is clear, explained to the pupils and used to focus the study on geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Resources are well prepared and used effectively to stimulate and interest the pupils. Teachers are looking for ways to use computers to support the learning and extend the range of resources available.

125 The subject leader is working hard to ensure geography plays its full part in the curriculum of the school. She has undertaken a review of current provision by monitoring teachers' planning. This has helped to identify the use of resources and the units of work that need additional resources. The subject leader has received training for the role and has begun to show effective leadership. She is aware of some of strengths and weaknesses: use of ICT is good and so are the links to literacy and mathematics. Teachers need additional support to focus on the geographical learning objective in their planning and in the ways lessons develop. The policy for the teaching and development of geography has been fully implemented although not yet fully resourced. There are examples of good practice in the marking of pupils' work linked to the learning objective. The subject leader is attending training to enable her to review the current assessment in geography and to implement a whole-school approach to assessment and recording.

126 The current policy set out in the long-term curriculum plan uses the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidelines to allocate areas of study and the amount of time for each unit to each class. Each class teacher then allocates one lesson each week to geography or uses a block of time within a half term. The school needs to review the long-term plan and the way the time allocation is used to consider if the current policy is the most effective way to enable the pupils to pursue their studies to greater depth.

## **HISTORY**

127 Standards in history at the end of the infants and juniors exceed national expectations, an improvement since the previous inspection. Most pupils achieve their potential primarily because they are encouraged to find out and record information from a good range of secondary sources. Pupils use their literacy skills well, for example when researching for information or writing about the period being studied. As the recently adopted scheme of work beds in, opportunities to use first-hand resources and visits are being developed, although currently this is a weaker strand in the learning, inhibiting standards being even higher.

128 By the age of seven pupils relish the opportunity to find out about key people or events in the past. In Year 1 they enjoy examining and comparing everyday Victorian objects such as irons with those they are familiar with today. Many show a good general knowledge, for example about the recent introduction of plastics, which helps in their work. By Year 2 they have a very good understanding of the ways they can find out about the past, including books, photographs, and searching on the computer. In their study of Florence Nightingale they show an appetite for acquiring new information – for example one group excitedly telling others that she never went to school but was taught by her father. There is a clear enthusiasm for the subject shared between the teacher and the children.

129 In the juniors, pupils study the required range of time periods including the Greeks, Romans and Tudors. This work is made interesting by an emphasis on research, including good opportunities for pupils to further their studies at home, sometimes using the Internet. Topics, such as the Ancient Greeks covered in Year 3, are given value by being recorded in good quality booklets with specially designed covers using the computer. In Years 4 and 5, pupils are increasingly able to empathise with aspects of the past, for instance the life of a Roman soldier. Topics are studied in sufficient depth and higher attaining pupils are able to build up a good knowledge base as well as refined research skills. Other than the higher attaining pupils, most pupils are less confident in their sense of chronology and in their ability to explain cause and effect. Because there are fewer opportunities for pupils to examine first-hand evidence, they tend not to question and compare different sources and interpretations of the past.

130 Teaching and learning are good and on occasions excellent. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, resulting from the enthusiasm of teachers and the adoption of a new scheme of work. Teachers present lessons in lively ways, making good use of the available resources. Effective introductory sessions with the whole class are followed by well-chosen individual and group tasks, usually designed to cater for different attainment levels. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They are almost always expected to record their findings in their own words and worksheets are used very sparingly. Observational drawing skills are considerably less well developed. Good use is made of ICT to access information, but less often to present findings in a range of ways. Time is used well, as in lessons in Years 2 and 6, where groups were expected to find out about different aspects of the topic in order to report back to the rest of the class. Some opportunities for pupils to pose and answer their own historical questions are missed, although a study by Year 4 pupils was effectively established by individual pupils being asked to think of questions that interested them about the Roman period.

131 In order to make further progress in the subject, assessment and monitoring need to be developed and the scheme of work personalised to the school's own situation to include a greater use of first-hand resources.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

132 Current standards in ICT are above expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils in both key stages achieve well in the subject. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection as a result of the increased number and range of resources and the implementation of the scheme of work. The expertise and leadership of the teaching assistant who is subject leader are helping to raise standards.

133 In the reception class, pupils are very confident in the use of the mouse to organise and sort shapes and sequence numbers to 10 on the screen. They could find the menu, identify programs and use the bin to deal with mistakes. Year 1 pupils have used art programs to draw and design. In Year 2 they use different fonts and size to enhance their written work and produce attractive fronts to their folders in history. As part of their geographical studies they have researched the weather in other countries and used e-mail to communicate with pen pals. They have used the 'programmable toy' to plan and control movement. Following studies in art, they worked on the computer to produce designs in the style of Mondrian. Their research on the Internet enabled them to find relevant information about Bangladesh. Currently they are using a sensor to explore the insulation properties of materials in science. In Year 3 they are making good use of the computer to design packaging as part of design and technology. Year 4 pupils are able to compose stories for different audiences, using 'Red Riding Hood' as the stimulus, and set them out using different fonts and layouts, including newspaper style columns and pictures. In science, the studies on insulation and the use of materials led to a spreadsheet they could interrogate to produce bar charts and line graphs. In addition they have explored the design of repeating patterns in mosaics. The developing skills and knowledge are evident in Year 5, as they have produced complex designs to demonstrate symmetry as well as pictures in the style of Matisse. They have also been engaged in exchanging e-mails with children in America. By Year 6 they are able to do independent research about famous Victorians and develop a spreadsheet about calories in a packed lunch. The school newsletter produced by the pupils is a very good example of the use of ICT to motivate and encourage the development of new skills and knowledge. The layout uses column, digital cameras and photographs and a journalistic style of writing.

134 The range of opportunities to use and develop their knowledge of ICT is very good. Their knowledge and understanding of data handling, storing, researching and sorting information in a database are good. Pupils confidently use a CD-ROM encyclopaedia, compose and send e-mails, follow instructions and learn quickly. Pupils are enthusiastic in their use of ICT. They listen carefully and are eager to join in all the activities. In the computer room and when sharing a computer in the classroom, pupils work together really well. They share and take turns; they help each other to make progress.

135 Teaching in the subject is good. The school has organised the curriculum so that half the class can work in the computer room. This enables them to use the computers and for the subject leader to manage the learning successfully. These arrangements work well and undoubtedly have a good impact on the rate of pupils' learning and the standards being achieved. The teacher is able to circulate, intervene appropriately and challenge pupils' thinking. The pupils' confidence is greatly enhanced by the teacher's skill in encouraging them to think and try alternative ways to use the technology. All teachers plan to use ICT as part of the overall curriculum. They give clear explanations and make good use of demonstration.

136 The school has increased the number and range of resources. There are sufficient computers in the computer room for half a class to work productively and computers in classrooms. There are resources for control technology and an electronic microscope. An interactive white board is being used enthusiastically by teachers as they explore the possibilities to improve the teaching and learning in a range of subjects. Teachers, under the



knowledgeable leadership of the co-ordinator, are developing their knowledge and confidence. This is evident in the range of contexts that ICT is now being used across the curriculum.

137 The pupils' learning is planned effectively across both key stages. The subject leader is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The school makes good use of her expertise and ensures she is able to attend relevant courses. Her leadership is having a significant impact on the quality of the curriculum and the standards being achieved. Teachers use her knowledge and support to plan and develop the learning opportunities of their pupils as well as to help them develop their own knowledge and expertise. The scheme of work is now well established and the subject leader is about to review it, so as to ensure that it provides a suitable challenge for all pupils in this school. Assessment and record keeping are developing and the subject leader has attended relevant training to help set up an effective process. The curriculum is good; standards are good and improving; leadership is dynamic and effective; the priority now is to develop the assessment and record-keeping process to ensure all pupils are making the maximum progress.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

138 Pupils in Year 6 have only recently begun their French lessons and have a one-hour lesson each week. Due to the limited time spent in observing the lesson, it is not possible to comment on standards achieved. However, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson taught by a talented teacher from a local secondary school. She displayed high expectations and encouraged all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to speak only in French for the duration of the lesson. Almost all pupils responded accurately to the instructions to stand up and sit down and responded well to the greeting "Bonjour". Pupils have already mastered and remembered the days of the week and months of the year to correctly state the date in French. Pupils confidently counted to 40. They delight in their success at speaking a new language. The teacher responds to their efforts with a "Fantastique!" as pupils make rapid progress. This is a worthwhile extension to the Year 6 curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

139 Standards in music are in line with national expectations by the age of seven and pupils in infant classes, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. In the junior classes, although two of the three lessons seen during the inspection were good and the other was satisfactory, the overall standards by the age of eleven are below national expectations and not as high as they were during the last inspection. The big picture in music is one of great variability. A large number of pupils in junior classes play orchestral instruments and achieve very well. The proportion of pupils who receive tuition for flute (16 pupils), violins (17 pupils) and brass (10 pupils) is impressive but the vast majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, who do not pay for these additional lessons make unsatisfactory progress.

140 Although there are a few occasions when pupils listen to recorded music their listening skills are under-developed. Pupils are seldom asked to comment about the music and to say what they like or dislike about it. Pupils do not appraise music enough and have a limited and very basic musical vocabulary. Taking account of the limited evidence available, pupils' performing and composing skills are also below average. There are very few opportunities for pupils to perform in front of an audience and this is restricting their social development.

141 Whilst pupils in the infant classes sing sweetly in the assemblies, those in junior classes make little effort and clearly do not enjoy participating. Throughout the school, singing is under-developed. Pupils do not sing very often and have a limited repertoire of songs. Pupils have a very limited understanding of dynamics, sound quality, tone or rhythm. As a result singing lacks sparkle and joy. There is little excitement from music for most pupils. Since there is only one half-hour session per week in some classes, it is likely that pupils do not achieve as well as they might if they had more time for musical activities. These findings indicate that music provision has not improved enough since the last inspection.

142 Scrutiny of planning and discussion with the music co-ordinator show that pupils do cover all aspects of the subject, but there is little time in the tight schedule to be certain of how balanced the subject is. There is evidence that pupils have some opportunities to compose music and some pupils in Year 4 have used a computer program to produce their melodies. There are occasional opportunities for pupils to experience live music. An African percussionist has played for the pupils and a number of peripatetic teachers have played their instruments in an ensemble. Such experiences widen pupils' cultural development but they are not frequent experiences and the subject plays only a minimal role in supporting pupils' cultural development.

143 Many teachers lack the confidence to teach the subject but to their credit many try hard to deliver their music lessons. Teaching is judged to be satisfactory in infant classes, but when considering the lack of knowledge and musical skills of the older pupils, teaching is judged unsatisfactory in the juniors. There is good teaching at times, however. During the inspection, good lessons were seen in two of the junior classes and in Year 1, whilst the other lesson was satisfactory. However, it is clear that some teachers lack subject knowledge, for instance they do not explain how percussion instruments should be played and cannot expand on some of the pupils' answers to their questions. They do not take account of previous learning when planning lessons. For example, a large number of pupils already read music and play orchestral instruments but they are expected to do exactly the same work as the rest of the class.

144 Overall, it is clear that music in school is under-developed since pupils' listening skills are under-developed. Pupils sometimes discuss the music they hear but do not say what they like or dislike about it. Although children perform for parents in a very small number of musical productions, there are too few opportunities for pupils to perform as a choir or ensemble in front of an audience and this missed opportunity is restricting their social and cultural development.

145 Pupils occasionally develop their literacy skills through music. For example, in Year 6, pupils discuss the purpose of a song and what message the lyrics are trying to convey. There is little assessment in music to help other teachers plan lessons which could build on previous learning. There is a lack of suitable guidance for non-specialist teachers and this is seriously holding back the development of music. There needs to be a more systematic approach to teaching music skills and more music played for pupils to listen to and appraise. The subject co-ordinator only took up her role at the beginning of this academic year and has had little time to have an impact. The subject itself has too low a profile in the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

146 Although the previous inspection reported standards as being in line with national expectations, significant weaknesses were found at that time in the techniques being covered and an unacceptable level of unsatisfactory teaching. Standards by the ages of seven and

eleven are now easily in line with those found in most schools and teaching is much more satisfactory. Staff now pay good regard to pupils' health and safety in physical education lessons and pupils enjoy the opportunities presented.

147 Due to the timetable, only some aspects of the subject were seen during the inspection. Planning indicates that all the required elements of the National Curriculum are covered during the year, supplemented by a satisfactory, if slightly limited, range of extra-curricular activities. By the age of seven, pupils understand the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after physical activity. They show appropriate control in their movements and can practise and improve a short sequence to make a simple dance. For example, Year 1 pupils can follow a simple beat, although occasionally the exuberance of some boys can run away with them! Good teaching ensures that they learn to respond appropriately to the music.

148 By the age of eleven, pupils can put together a more extended range of movements to make a dance. They work very well as part of a group, although boys and girls often need encouragement to work together. In a good lesson for Year 3 pupils, for instance, pupils concentrated well because the teaching kept the lesson moving at a good pace. Pupils' physical co-ordination is good and dance lessons contribute well to their social and collaborative skills as they work in pairs and small groups.

149 The arrangements for swimming have recently changed and are now securely focused on the need to ensure a basic competence for all pupils. Data was not available to show how far the school is successful in getting pupils to the expected level before they leave, but current indications are that they are well placed. Higher attaining pupils have some opportunities mainly through an extra-curricular programme that currently includes netball, athletics and cricket, to develop and use their skills by taking part in competitive sport. However, this is not a major feature of the school's work and many parents would like to see it extended further.

150 Other areas of the subject, including good provision for outdoor and adventurous activities in the juniors, are covered during the year. Pupils enjoy physical education. They maintain an impressive level of concentration and effort throughout lessons.

151 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and significantly improved since the previous inspection. In dance lessons sensible use is made of recorded music and broadcasts. Teachers have previewed the materials, stopping the recording frequently to make relevant teaching points based on their perceptive observations of the pupils during the lesson. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils to observe each other and to comment on their work in order to improve their performance. The management of pupils is a strong feature in all physical education lessons, resulting in very good behaviour and safe practices. On occasions the pace of the lesson slips when too little time is spent in movement and too much in organising the work.

152 The recently appointed subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to improve her own expertise. She has completed the policy and, with the headteacher, is looking at resources which are currently somewhat restricted. Governors are already aware of the need to invest money in this area of the curriculum. The subject is not yet assessed or monitored satisfactorily because the focus has been on other areas of the curriculum.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

153 Standards are in line with the expectations of the Essex guidelines for religious education by the age of seven, but do not meet the expectations by the age of eleven since there are certain aspects with which they are unfamiliar. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 but do not make sufficient progress in the junior classes.

154 By the age of seven pupils have a good recall of many of the Christian festivals and stories in the Old and New Testaments. For example, they have rewritten the story of Jacob and Esau in their own words and have a secure knowledge of some of the more familiar stories such as Joseph and his coat and Noah and the flood. However, they sometimes miss the point and deeper messages of the stories, despite their accuracy with the details. The same comment applies to their writing about Remembrance Day. Pupils explain what the day is about, but they do not show empathy or spiritual reflection in their writing. Pupils do not reflect enough, although there are a small number of good examples where pupils have taken time to think about things for themselves. In Year 1, for example, pupils consider their talents and recognise that “we are all good at something!” In Year 2, children write about their feelings when they enter a new class and speak about the love they give and receive from their families.

155 In the junior classes, pupils do not make the expected progress because their work is too closely linked with ‘worship’, and their knowledge and understanding of Judaism and Hinduism are insecure and well below the level expected in the Essex syllabus. Indeed, there are examples of a tokenistic approach to some work about faiths other than Christianity. For example, a pupil’s comment suggesting that all followers of the Hindu faith wear different clothes and have a red spot on their forehead is not corrected by the teacher and is setting a poor example. The scrutiny of pupils’ work indicates that in Year 6, some pupils are unsure in their work about Judaism and mistake the Torah (a part of the Jewish Bible written on a holy scroll) for the synagogue (a place of worship). Work in religious education is not being approached in a systematic way and there is little written, recorded work. Much of the work is based on discussion.

156 Only one religious education lessons was observed but it is possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching following the scrutiny of pupils’ work and discussion with pupils. Teaching is judged to be at least satisfactory in the infant classes but is judged unsatisfactory in the juniors. Teachers of pupils in the infant classes provide pupils with suitable opportunities to learn about Jesus, his birth and his life. They provide effective links to developing literacy skills as pupils write their own prayers and produce extended pieces of writing such as a multi-chapter account of Joseph and his life in Canaan and Egypt. In junior classes, teachers continue to promote literacy skills, although they miss many opportunities. For example, Year 6 pupils use bullet points when they record the main facts in a story that they intend to rewrite. On rare occasions teachers astutely link their religious education stories with the modern day world and this promotes their social and moral development. For instance, pupils in Year 5 link their work on the Creation to how the beauty of the world is spoiled by pollution. However, overall the evidence from pupils’ books shows a lack of expectation in the subject.

157 Teachers demonstrate some uncertainty in the teaching about other faiths and are not ensuring that the requirements of the syllabus are met. Far too often all pupils in the class are expected to record the same information and the progress of higher attainers is inhibited. On some occasions work is unfinished and is not marked well, and teachers are not paying sufficient attention to this subject.

158 The leadership of religious education is unsatisfactory. The linking of the programme of collective worship to the Essex Agreed Syllabus has proved unsuccessful. The lack of monitoring and lack of formal assessment mean that pupils’ knowledge and understanding of

the essential aspects of the syllabus are not being tracked as they move through school. Although there is a good link with the local Christian church, there are no visits to places of worship of other faiths.