

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CRAYS HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Billericay, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114810

Acting Headteacher: Mr S Jordan

Reporting inspector: Ms R E Frith  
OIN: 2490

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 196728

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: London Road  
Crays Hill  
Billericay  
Essex

Postcode: CM11 2UZ

Telephone number: 01268 521914

Fax number: 01268 526826

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Peake

Date of previous inspection: 28 April – 2 May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2490	Ms Ruth Frith	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology History Foundation Stage English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20534	Nichola Perry	Team inspector	English Art Music Religious education Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Crays Hill Primary School is a community school for boys and girls of all abilities aged 4 to 11 years. There are 160 pupils on roll and a greater number of boys than girls in some classes. The school is situated on the edge of Crays Hill village and pupils come from here and nearby villages and towns. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. On entry to the reception class, a significant number of children use a limited range of vocabulary and have below average levels of speech and communication. Currently, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average and most of the pupils in the mainstream school with special educational needs who require regular additional support have specific or moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are two pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. There is an increasing number of pupils from the Traveller community attending the school who constitute approximately 15 per cent of the school population. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language.

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

Crays Hill Primary is beginning to show some signs of improvement in raising standards, although they are not as high as they could be, particularly in writing and science. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good in the reception class and satisfactory elsewhere. Staff demonstrate a shared commitment to improving further the quality of education. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers and this has affected the consistency of teaching and learning and the standards which pupils attain. Overall, management of the school is satisfactory during a period of transition when the acting headteacher also has a full-time teaching commitment. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Under challenging circumstances the staff have worked well under the leadership of the acting headteacher and display a strong commitment to improving the school further.
- The quality of teaching and opportunities for learning in the reception class.
- Effective development of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is helping to improve standards.
- Staff make good efforts to include pupils from different backgrounds and abilities.
- Good strategies are in place to develop pupils' social education.
- Good extra-curricular activities encourage pupils to participate.
- Staff work well with schools and colleges in the area.
- The accommodation is good.
- Financial planning and control are good

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

- Standards of attainment in writing and science throughout the school and in geography and history in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in Years 3 to 6, particularly the potentially higher attainers, and provide appropriately challenging work.
- Opportunities for pupils to find out and research things for themselves and develop independent learning skills.
- Attendance and punctuality.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and ensuring that all members of staff have sufficiently high expectations.
- Relationships and communication with parents.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has satisfactorily addressed most of the key issues identified in the report following the last inspection in May 1997. Staff have developed the teaching of literacy and numeracy in line with national guidance and have reviewed the curriculum and provision for children in the reception class. Staff have

developed schemes of work for all subjects and improved their systems for planning lessons. They identify in their plans what they want pupils to learn but do not always provide sufficiently challenging tasks for higher-attaining pupils. Further work needs to be done in this area. Assessment procedures have improved and information gained from this is used to inform planning and identify pupils' targets. Systems are now in place to monitor and evaluate the school's curriculum provision but the success of this is hampered by the frequent changes in staff with curriculum responsibilities. Staff and governors demonstrate a clear commitment to further improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	D	C	E
mathematics	E	C	C	E
science	E*	E	E	E*

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

Children often make good progress with their learning in the reception year and most children in the current reception class are likely to reach the nationally expected standards in almost all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. On entry to school, a minority have low standards in communication and speech, and use a limited range of vocabulary, so, although they make good progress, they are unlikely to reach the nationally expected standards in these areas. Results of the 2001 Standard Assessment Tests for seven-year-olds indicated a rise in standards from the previous year in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils in Year 2 are reaching standards which are below average in English and science and average in all other subjects. Results in the Standard Assessment Tests for eleven-year-olds also indicated a rise in English standards from the previous year but a decline in the percentage of pupils gaining the level of attainment appropriate for their age in mathematics and science. Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils in Year 6 are currently attaining standards which are below average in English, science, geography and history. Standards are average in all other subjects. Over the last five years the school's trend of improvement in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged 8 to 11 was broadly in line with the national trend and the school reached the realistic targets it set last year. Pupils' standards have been affected by the recent changes in teaching staff. The pupils with special educational needs generally achieve in line with their capabilities. The higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged and consequently do not always achieve as well as they could. Although no significant difference was noted in the progress and achievement of boys and girls during the inspection, girls have done better than boys in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. Although pupils from the Traveller community make satisfactory progress when they are in school, the poor attendance of some depresses their levels of attainment.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The attitudes of pupils in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 are good and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 they are satisfactory. Many older pupils lack the self-discipline to concentrate on their work consistently. This hampers their progress.
Behaviour, in and out of	Behaviour in assemblies and for pupils in the reception class and Years



classrooms	1 and 2 is good. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 display good behaviour but there are a minority who choose to behave inappropriately.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between members of the school community are satisfactory and observations were made of some pupils playing and working well together. Overall, pupils' personal development is satisfactory. However, some lack initiative and confidence in their learning and their independent and research skills are underdeveloped.
Attendance	The level of attendance is unsatisfactory and for the last school year was very low in comparison with other schools. Most pupils from the Traveller community have lower levels of attendance than other children in the school and this is affecting the school's overall attendance rate.

When pupils are frequently absent, this has a considerable effect on their learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is good in the reception class and particularly effective in developing the children's communication, personal and social skills and their attitudes to learning. During the inspection many lessons observed in Years 1 to 6 were judged to be good but a scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that teaching and learning over a period of time were only satisfactory. This reflects the changes in staffing and differing expectations of teachers. However, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection in regard to the increase in very good and good teaching and a decline in the amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This reflects the school's focus on monitoring teaching, so that teachers' strengths and areas for improvement are identified, and on supporting staff through providing professional development opportunities. Lessons which are unsatisfactory lack pace and rigour and teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Although teachers throughout the school have adopted the literacy and numeracy strategies satisfactorily, staff have been more successful in raising standards in mathematics than in English. Teachers have not yet clearly identified how the pupils' literacy skills are to be developed across the whole curriculum in a consistent and relevant way so that, for example, pupils gain sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills. Also, the teaching of handwriting and spelling is inconsistent. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory overall, although good teaching was observed in both subjects during the inspection. Teaching of information and communication technology is good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory in geography for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects across the school. The school allocates valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils make satisfactory progress. Higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and consequently do not do as well as they could.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the reception class are good. The curriculum for pupils in the rest of the school is satisfactory and enhanced by good extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs receive a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs and, overall, provision is satisfactory.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for their social development is good. Good efforts are made to include all pupils in school activities and pupils are encouraged to act responsibly and help each other.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff make satisfactory provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Improvements need to be made in the way staff monitor and promote good behaviour.
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The school's partnership with parents has deteriorated since the last inspection and a significant number have negative views about the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The acting headteacher is effective in motivating staff and building a team with a shared sense of values and priorities whilst also having a full-time teaching commitment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors play an integral part in the leadership and management of the school and have supported it well during an unsettled time in its history. They are well informed and involved in any decisions. All statutory requirements are met apart from a few minor omissions in the information given to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Staff are improving the ways in which they evaluate their work and have established a system of monitoring and target setting that is guiding school improvement. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and control are good and the school manages and uses its resources effectively. Correct financial procedures are followed and staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending.

The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff over recent years but during the inspection had suitably qualified teachers to ensure that class sizes were not too large and that the wide range of needs in the school were met. This was only achieved, however, through the acting headteacher having full teaching responsibility for a class, as well as undertaking management duties. A local education authority advisory teacher was teaching one class with the support of a supply teacher. The accommodation is good. The overall quality and level of resources are satisfactory and they are effectively used to support learning throughout the school.

## 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>Parents are happy about the attitudes that the school promotes.</li> <li>Parents like the way that the school celebrates pupils' successes and boosts their self-esteem.</li> <li>Parents were pleased with developments such as the computer suite.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards of behaviour.</li> <li>Parents would like to have a closer working relationship with the school and would like to receive more information about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>The leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>Parents would like to see fewer changes in teaching staff.</li> <li>Homework to be provided more consistently.</li> <li>More activities outside formal lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors endorse the positive views held by parents. They looked closely at the issues raised by a minority of parents, and from the evidence gathered during the inspection judge the information given to parents to be satisfactory but recognise that overall the links with parents have deteriorated since the last inspection. They also confirm that, although behaviour is satisfactory overall, a significant minority of

pupils do display incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour. Inspectors acknowledge the views of a minority of parents who would like more additional activities outside school but found that the school provides a good range of activities throughout the school year. The provision of homework is judged to be satisfactory overall, although there is some inconsistency in provision, particularly when there have been changes in teachers. Inspectors support the school in its quest to appoint suitable teachers but acknowledge that they are faced with problems of recruitment and retention which are seen nationally.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children are admitted to the reception class after the age of four. They have a wide range of abilities and experiences and a significant number of children use a limited range of vocabulary and have below average levels of speech and communication. These children are unlikely to reach average standards in these areas by the time they start in Year 1 even though they make good progress. Others, in the current reception class, are displaying average standards and are likely to reach the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning. Children make good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills and this helps to support their learning in other areas.
2. Results of the 2001 Standard Assessment Tests for seven-year-olds indicated that, in comparison with all schools, pupils' attainment was below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. When compared with pupils from similar schools they attained well below average standards in reading and writing and below average standards in mathematics. Results of the 2001 Teacher Assessments in science indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level for their age (Level 2) was average but the percentage reaching a higher level was well below average. These results indicate an improvement in the SAT tests in reading, writing, mathematics and science from the previous year (percentage reaching Level 2+) albeit a slight improvement in mathematics and science. However, they indicate a fall in standards in reading and writing when compared with the previous inspection. Standards in science and mathematics are broadly similar.
3. At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in the 2001 tests was average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, attainment was well below average in English and mathematics and very low in science. These very low standards in science place the school in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally in the 2001 tests for science. These results indicate improvements in English from the previous year (percentage reaching Level 4+), a slight decline in standards in science and a decline in mathematics. They also indicate standards in English and mathematics which broadly reflect those of the previous inspection but there has been a decline in science standards. Over the last five years the school's trend of improvement in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged 8 to 11 was broadly in line with the national trend and the school reached the realistic targets which it set last for 2001. The school is making satisfactory progress towards meeting the targets which it has set for 2002.
4. Changes in staffing have had a significant effect on the progress that children make and the standards that they achieve. Some disruption to their learning has taken place despite the efforts of staff to maintain an element of continuity. Taking everything into account, however, the school shows signs of improving standards.
5. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are below average in English. The National Strategy for Literacy has been successfully implemented and has supported some improvements but standards are still not as high as they should be, particularly in writing. More able pupils read fluently, expressively and confidently for their age but some pupils still experience significant difficulty when they encounter irregular words which are unfamiliar to them. Some pupils lack confidence in speaking but most display average standards. Standards in listening and writing are often below average. Spelling and punctuation are inconsistent and not always sufficiently highlighted for improvement by teachers. Sometimes, pupils do not have sufficient time to develop their skills in literacy sessions and other subject lessons. This is affecting their progress and overall attainment.
6. Standards in mathematics are average for pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 although fewer pupils than expected nationally are working at a higher level. Improvements in standards reflect the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their mental mathematics and this is developing their mathematical thinking. However,

there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge to solving problems so progress and attainment in this area are not always as good as they could be. Also, higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and consequently do not reach the standards of which they are capable.

7. Standards in science are below average for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and fewer than average pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment. Often the work is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities, so, for example, potentially higher attainers are not being appropriately challenged. Consequently, they do not reach high enough standards.
8. Pupils in Year 2 are reaching standards which are below average in English and science and average in all other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 are currently attaining standards which are below average in English, science, geography and history. Standards are average in all other subjects.
9. No significant difference was noted in the progress of boys and girls during the inspection. More able pupils are sometimes not appropriately challenged so do not reach the standards of which they are capable. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The progress they make in classes is commensurate with that of the other children, due to the additional support they receive. They make satisfactory progress towards the targets on their Individual Education Plans. Pupils from the Traveller community make satisfactory progress in individual lessons but their overall progress is sometimes affected by the poorer attendance levels amongst this group.

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

10. Only 33 per cent of those who completed the parents' questionnaire thought that behaviour at the school is good, and parents/carers at the pre-inspection meeting said poor behaviour is the thing that worries them most about the school. Inspection findings show the parents' concern to be at least partly justified and indicate that, overall, behaviour is only satisfactory. The previous inspection described pupils as polite, friendly and very well behaved. Many still are. For example, inspectors encountered several examples of great courtesy when pupils opened doors for them, or helped them find their way around the school. They also found pupils sensible, friendly and polite when speaking with them. Behaviour in assemblies and in lessons at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is generally good. Pupils sit quietly and listen carefully to teachers and each other. They put up their hand to answer questions and take turns when doing so. This is because they understand, and follow, set routines and codes of conduct. However, although most pupils in Years 3 to 6 show they are capable of good behaviour, there are often significant amounts of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils talk amongst themselves and ignore the teacher; a few occasionally make disrespectful remarks to each other and to teachers. Some wander about and try to distract others who are working. One or two openly defy staff. Such behaviour is most obvious in lessons that lack pace, or where pupils have not been well briefed or activities are not sufficiently challenging, and the teacher's behaviour management skills are weak. In these lessons most pupils become distracted and noise levels high; little meaningful work is done and progress is unsatisfactory.
11. Although many pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion and behave appropriately at break times and in the dining hall, some rush about with little regard to the needs of others. At playtimes too, there are pockets of over exuberant 'play fighting' with considerable amounts of pushing and shoving, for example by boys in Year 2. Although there are a few pupils whose behaviour is fairly often unacceptable, none have been excluded for this recently. Most pupils look after their own and the school's possessions well and there is no evidence of vandalism. However, some pupils misuse the picnic tables and some do not remember to use litter bins and wastepaper baskets.
12. As with behaviour, the pupils' attitudes to learning vary. At the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 the pupils' attitudes are good. Pupils generally take an interest in their lessons, settle quickly to tasks and sustain concentration. The way pupils in a Year 1 art lesson concentrated on three portraits for a considerable time, and the sensible comments they made about them, were impressive. That pupils in Years 3 to 6 can also display good attitudes was obvious when pupils in a Year 5 history lesson worked quietly and conscientiously at a work sheet on the Greek Gods

for an extended period. It was also apparent when pupils in Year 4 carefully evaluated their classmates' efforts in a dance lesson and articulated their views sensibly and well. However, many older pupils lack the self-discipline to apply themselves consistently. This results in wasted time and hampers progress. In general, the pupils' independent learning and research skills are underdeveloped because not enough learning activities are based on the key elements of enquiry and interpretation.

13. Relationships at the school are sound. Pupils say that most others are friendly. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils are of the opinion that relatively little real bullying occurs at the school. They also think that any incidents are dealt with well. This contrasts with the views of some parents. Instances of pupils working constructively together were seen. A good example was in a Year 4 dance lesson when small groups collaborated very well to develop a dance routine based on machinery.
14. Pupils generally respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility. They happily volunteer for monitoring duties and perform them conscientiously. Older pupils are given chances to take on greater responsibilities, such as helping younger ones at lunchtime, and do so willingly. Representatives on the School Council undertake this role seriously and sensibly and this will aid the development of their initiative and autonomy. Despite this, several parents feel the school is not helping their child to become mature and responsible.
15. Most pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well. In all lessons observed pupils generally respond positively to interventions, although behaviour is not always good and pupils do not always pay full attention to their teachers. Relationships with teachers and support staff are generally positive in lessons.
16. Overall attendance has fallen significantly over the last two years and is now much lower than at the time of the previous inspection. In the last full reporting year it was well below the national average for primary schools and unauthorised absences were very high. Analysis of this year's registers shows that, although overall attendance has improved, it is still low and this is mainly due to the poor attendance of Traveller children, an increasing number of whom are enrolling at the school. The registers also show that Traveller children are very often late. Inspection findings indicate that Traveller children's attainment is low, although they make satisfactory progress when they are at school. Registers are taken promptly at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon and are returned immediately to the office for checking. The school does not fully comply with statutory requirements regarding the reporting of absences because there are no details in the prospectus.

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

17. The good quality of teaching in the reception class is an important factor in the way children develop good personal, emotional and social skills, attitudes to learning and behaviour. Lesson planning is good and reflects the national guidance for teaching children of this age. Appropriate attention has been placed on settling children into school and a good range of activities is provided which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. The children's knowledge, skills and understanding are successfully extended so that by Year 1 they are prepared to start the National Curriculum. The support staff give valuable help to the children and this is a key feature in making children feel secure in their learning.
18. Although teaching and learning were judged to be good or better in over half the lessons seen for pupils aged 5 to 11, a scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that teaching and learning overall for this age group were only satisfactory. Expectations over time varied both across the school and within classes and pupils' learning did not always move forward in a progressive and systematic way. This reflects the changes in staffing and differing expectations of teachers. However, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection in regard to the increase in very good and good teaching and the decline in the amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This reflects the school's focus on monitoring teaching so that teachers' strengths and areas for improvement are identified, and on supporting staff through providing professional development opportunities. Lessons which are unsatisfactory lack pace and rigour and teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of

pupils' work and behaviour.

19. Throughout the school, teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory and they plan work which is generally appropriate. Teachers have used the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to improve teaching and learning but they have been more effective in raising standards in mathematics than English. Teachers now need to take every opportunity to teach literacy skills in other subjects and give pupils sufficient opportunities to practise their writing. Also, the teaching of handwriting and spelling needs to be improved.
20. During the inspection, some support staff were new to the school and did not know the pupils well. Regular support staff work well and are instrumental in encouraging pupils' progress and the standards that they achieve. In some cases, as in the reception class, they are instrumental in providing a consistent approach to teaching and learning alongside the teacher and this helps to support the children's learning. Overall, teachers use time, resources and the expertise of support staff satisfactorily.
21. In the best lessons, teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share that with them. They provide appropriate support and challenge which ensure that pupils of all abilities maintain a good pace in their learning and build systematically on their previous learning. A key feature of raising pupils' attainment is to highlight clearly the next stages in learning through effective assessment and to use this information to plan a series of lessons. Also, teachers need sufficiently high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour throughout, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
22. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is satisfactory and in the best lessons has a significant influence on how staff successfully manage the pupils in their care. The most successful teachers use a range of strategies to gain the interests of pupils and clearly highlight what they expect pupils to do. These teachers are encouraging and supportive, which results in most pupils becoming confident and behaving well. Where behaviour is less good, teachers fail to apply effective strategies consistently and successfully or use appropriate sanctions. In many classes poor behaviour is rewarded by the use of excessive praise where it is not due and the indiscriminate use of stickers throughout lessons disrupts learning, sends wrong messages to pupils about their behaviour and reinforces inappropriate behaviour. There is insufficient involvement of pupils, or their parents, in being made aware of and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. As a result teachers are having to spend too much time controlling and managing pupils, which is detracting from teaching and learning and is contributing to low attainment.
23. Most teachers use their knowledge of pupils appropriately in lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder. In contrast, some do not comment enough on pupils' work through their marking. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how they can improve. Provision of homework is satisfactory overall and supports the work done in school, particularly in English and mathematics.
24. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory overall, although good teaching was observed in both subjects during the inspection. Teaching of information and communication technology is good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory in geography for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects across the school.
25. The school allocates valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils make satisfactory progress. A variety of strategies is used with those pupils who are difficult to manage and most respond well. They become motivated and maintain their concentration. However, a small number of pupils do not react positively and in some cases disturb the learning of others.
26. Expectations of what some pupils can achieve, particularly the higher attainers, are not consistently high enough. Although in some lessons the work is well matched to their abilities, in others they often have to do similar work to others in the class and consequently they are not sufficiently challenged.



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

27. The school offers its pupils a broad curriculum that meets the statutory requirements in all subjects. The proportion of time set aside for each subject is similar to that seen in schools across the country. Most aspects of each subject are given the right degree of importance, although there is some imbalance. For example, some areas of geography and history are not taught in sufficient detail, while in their use of computers, older pupils do not yet have sufficient experience of testing and improving sequences of instructions. Teachers sometimes create good opportunities for pupils to learn from two aspects of the curriculum simultaneously. For example, computer programs are effectively employed to teach English or geographical skills, while mathematics supports well pupils' learning in some aspects of design and technology.
28. The school has worked hard to overcome deficiencies in the curriculum identified at the last inspection. Then, insufficient time was spent on some areas of music, information and communication technology and science; schemes of work for all subjects were not established and there were no systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. These shortcomings have almost all been rectified. For example, facilities for teaching information and communication technology have improved to the point where all pupils now regularly practise the skills they need, and standards in the subject are now at nationally expected levels.
29. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good; the recommended areas for learning are covered at an appropriate level. The teacher creates a stimulating learning environment in which the children are offered carefully structured opportunities to improve their skills in speaking and listening, and good foundations are laid for reading, writing, counting and sorting. The school provides well for the youngest children to extend their knowledge of the world and to develop creatively and physically.
30. Across the school, the quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. However, pupils who demonstrate greater aptitude and ability in certain areas of the curriculum are not always offered sufficiently challenging work, with the result that they do not achieve as well as they might. In Years 1 and 2, all subjects are taught in sufficient detail and the school has rightly identified the need to examine its provision for the teaching of writing and practical mathematics to ensure that it is offering the best possible opportunities for pupils to make progress in these areas. For pupils in Years 3 to 6, the range of learning opportunities is satisfactory overall, although there are some shortcomings. The curriculum in history and geography does not allow pupils to develop the expected level of knowledge and skills because these are not taught in enough depth. Opportunities for investigative mathematics are not offered with sufficient frequency in Years 4 to 6, while older pupils do not have enough experience of inputting and varying instructions when working on the computer.
31. The school uses appropriate strategies for the teaching of literacy, while those employed for numeracy teaching are good. The national guidance for teaching both subjects is followed appropriately. In numeracy lessons, teachers offer a good balance of mental and practical activities, using questioning well to determine pupils' level of understanding. Lessons for both subjects are generally well planned so that enough time is allocated to class discussion, individual working and to summarising learning at the end of a lesson.
32. The school provides equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum for all of its pupils, regardless of their background, gender, race or disability. It has worked hard to ensure that each pupil has opportunities to take part in every aspect of school life, sometimes making bold decisions for all to be included, and reacting sensitively if there are difficult issues to address. Pupils of average aptitude and ability and those with special educational needs make equally good progress in their work, but those of higher ability do not always make the progress expected because the tasks they are set do not challenge them sufficiently to show what they can do.
33. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. In line with good educational inclusion, all pupils are fully integrated, including those with more severe difficulties, and experience equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life as appropriate. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum and pupils with special educational needs have full

access to their entitlement. They are fully included in lessons which are mainly within the classroom and there are no obvious differences between their treatment and that of others. Planned activities are mostly, but not always, matched to pupils' abilities. However, in some classes teachers' expectations are frequently insufficiently high. The use of additional support generally takes place in class and is effective in accessing pupils to the curriculum without unnecessary intervention, except in one class where a pupil with severe behaviour difficulties is not able to be part of planned lessons. He disengages himself from all learning and support despite the best efforts of the class teacher and support staff.

34. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal and social education, both through timetabled lessons and through incidental opportunities arising in the course of the school day. The school's policy for personal and social education is relatively new, and staff have not yet had sufficient time to evaluate its effectiveness. Members of staff take considerable trouble to counsel pupils when the situation demands. Pupils discuss aspects of citizenship and the responsibility of each in contributing to the good of all; for example, in learning about the dangers and unsightliness of litter, and about the way in which their skills may be used for the common good as they did in Friendship Week. The school's brochure offers helpful advice to parents on how they can support the school's teaching in personal and social education. Through its science curriculum, the school makes adequate provision for sex and drugs education.
35. As at the time of the last inspection, the school offers a generally good range of extra-curricular activities, this despite the fact that attendance at some is inconsistent or has sometimes been too low to sustain, as, for example, in the case of the school choir. Football, netball, gymnastics, athletics and dance are regularly practised, and indoor clubs, such as chess and board games, are offered at lunch times. Pupils are involved in competitive sports with other schools and the school makes satisfactory use of day and residential visits to enhance the quality of learning.
36. Overall, the school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. However, at the time of the last inspection, provision was good. Acts of collective worship consistently meet statutory requirements and offer pupils specific teaching on a range of religious, moral and social themes. Singing and other forms of music are sometimes used well in assemblies to engender a strong sense of community and to encourage close participation.
37. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities are mostly created during daily acts of collective worship and are provided to a lesser extent in the course of lessons. Younger pupils are encouraged to consider with appreciation the advantages of living in a country where there is no shortage of food and to reflect on the benefits of friendship. Older pupils understand why Christians sometimes fast for Lent and consider their own response to Jesus's example. However, teachers create fewer opportunities for pupils' spiritual development during lessons for subjects such as art, English, music or physical education. In dance lessons, for example, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage pupils to interpret expressively the rhythms and feeling of music, while in art, emphasis is more often placed on the re-creation of the style of famous painters rather than encouraging pupils to develop a feeling for the finished product.
38. The school makes satisfactory provision for the moral development of its pupils, both through its teaching in religious education and collective worship and through the opportunities teachers constantly take to encourage pupils to make the right moral choices. As a result, most pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong. Those in Years 1 and 2, for example, receive very clear teaching concerning the impact of their actions, while older pupils learn the importance of valuing the beliefs of others and of tolerating views different from their own. A minority of older pupils, however, sometimes find it difficult to put this teaching into practice, a small number demonstrating through their behaviour a lack of concern about the implications of their actions for the well-being of others.
39. Good provision is made for pupils' social development. Teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to collaborate in pairs or small groups and pupils generally pool their ideas reasonably and share equipment sensibly when they are required to do so. However, a small minority of older pupils find this difficult when space is limited, for example in computer lessons. Across the school, there are established routines for pupils to distribute books and equipment and to clear away at the end of an activity. Many pupils are keen to help each other, for example in the dining hall, while older pupils help to care for younger ones during lunch breaks and sometimes share books with them. Many pupils behave sensibly when they are required to work unsupervised but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning or to engage in independent work. The School Council offers a forum in which pupils' ideas on aspects of school life are discussed, such as improvements to playing facilities. Here, pupils learn to represent fairly the views of others and to report objectively on decisions taken.

40. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In history and geography, pupils learn about past cultures and those further afield, although they do not always study these in sufficient depth. Pupils become familiar with their own cultural heritage through day visits to places of interest such as Bradwell Power Station and Colchester Zoo and to more distant ones such as Rochester. Visits to the theatre in Southend or those from drama companies sometimes serve to enhance pupils' understanding of language and literature. Some opportunities are created for pupils to learn about the cultures of people from the different backgrounds and ethnic groups represented in today's society, but these are too few in number. For example, the school makes very little use of visits or visitors to enhance this aspect of the curriculum.
41. The school enjoys close links with other schools, ensuring that pupils make a smooth transition from this to the next stage of their education. Relationships with the local college have been cemented in practical ways, for example, through the provision of equipment and advice to improve the school's computer facilities. Pupils regularly visit local secondary schools to gain different experiences in design and technology and drama, so that pupils in Year 6 have good opportunities to become familiar with their next school before they transfer. The school shares in some initiatives with the local community, but its role in these relationships is capable of further development. For example, the local horticultural society has provided trees for landscaping, while the parish council has provided funds for equipment for children in the Foundation Stage. However, the school itself currently makes little contribution to the communal life of the village.

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

42. Parents at the meeting agreed that this is a caring school and inspection findings generally support this view. Most staff provide pupils with sound pastoral support; they know them well and take appropriate account of individual needs. Parents at the meeting also stressed that the school takes great care to promote each pupil's strengths, whatever these might be, and to help them to become confident with others. Further evidence of this caring approach is the recent inception of a lunchtime club where pupils may play games quietly and "talk with someone if they want to".
43. Since the previous headteacher left, there has been no one trained in health and safety management or child protection at the school. Nevertheless, inspection evidence shows that the school is generally well maintained in a safe condition and there is much sound practice. For example, there is first aid cover throughout the day and parents are always informed if their child receives a bump to the head. Pupils with special medical needs are catered for well. Staff are sensitive to child protection issues and know about procedures. Fire escape routes are well signed and exits are clear; fire drills are held, evaluated and logged each term. All apparatus and equipment are checked regularly. However, some concerns were noticed during the inspection. For instance, first aid has to be administered in the school office because there is no medical room, and only incidents resulting in injuries perceived as 'serious' are noted in the accident book. Bags and coats lying around on floors and in the middle of the playground could trip pupils. The 'hazard' book for reporting day-to-day concerns is not readily accessible to all staff. The school is aware of these and a few other concerns.
44. With regard to the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science, the school has made sound progress in tackling the last inspection's key issue 'to review assessment procedures so they inform curriculum planning'. At the Foundation Stage a good variety of assessment procedures are used from baseline on entry. Samples of work are annotated and kept to show pupils' progress, and assessment information is used effectively to plan work for children of all abilities. Pupils are assessed regularly and the results analysed. This information is used effectively to decide the focus for the year overall and to identify individual children's needs so that suitable targets can be set. For example, in science, appropriate changes were made to the curriculum after test results showed that the pupils' investigative and data handling skills were weak. Similarly, in English, pupils are now being given more opportunities to write. The acting headteacher plays a pivotal role in monitoring standards and helping teachers to target resources and amend their plans. In religious education, information and communication technology and non-core subjects, teachers now identify on plans which pupils have achieved above the expected level and which below. Apart from this, improved assessment practice has not yet been applied

to these subjects. Recently, too, the school has started to monitor the pupils' personal progress more formally. Targets are discussed with each pupil every half term and are recorded in their 'achievement' folder. Teachers feel that this approach has begun to have a positive effect on standards of behaviour at the school.

45. A local education authority monitoring report of October 1999 stated that poor behaviour in several classes was slowing the pupils' progress. Since then the school has attempted, with help from the authority, to address this problem. For example, staff have been advised about behaviour management. A system of rewards and sanctions has been developed and a standard procedure for dealing with poor behaviour (the 'red card' system) devised. Specialist support has been provided for pupils with particularly challenging behaviour. However, these strategies are not used consistently and well and, as a result, the school is not successful in ensuring good behaviour at all times. Some teachers apply discipline firmly but fairly and explain why certain behaviour is unacceptable. They use praise, and award 'rewards', such as merit points or acclamation in a celebration assembly, judiciously. Pupils confirm that this has a positive effect in improving behaviour. Other teachers constantly chastise pupils for very minor infringements so that the children eventually cease to take notice and the reminders become meaningless. They also have low expectations of pupils' behaviour and are indiscriminate in their use of praise. This prevents pupils from understanding what is appropriate behaviour and developing the self-discipline to conform. A pupil with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties receives only limited in-house support and he and a few other pupils often openly defy staff.
46. The school has also addressed bullying. A new anti-bullying policy has been produced and there was a meeting to explain it to parents. Anti-bullying assemblies have been held. Pupils talk enthusiastically about them, as well as the recent 'friendship' week, the friendship tree in the hall, and the friendship seat for playtimes. It is clear that the school has succeeded in alerting the pupils to the importance of friendship and they assert there is little actual bullying at the school.
47. Levels of supervision at break times are generally satisfactory, although staff are sometimes slow to react to unacceptable behaviour. Teachers are generally safety conscious and teach good practice but a few pupils, including one with special educational needs, were seen using scissors in an unsafe manner during the inspection. Personal, social and health education lessons and physical education programmes are used effectively to promote healthy lifestyles.
48. The school employs sound procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. Parents are reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality via the prospectus, the governors' annual report, and newsletters. Through the Home-School Agreement, parents contract to get their children to school regularly and on time, although not all of them, particularly Travellers, adhere to this commitment. Unexplained absences are invariably followed up on the first day, although this is difficult with respect to Traveller children, some of whose parents do not have a telephone. Registers are checked regularly and the school enlists the help of the education welfare officer and the Traveller Support Service whenever possible. Mindful that lateness is a problem, the school has recently introduced a punctuality challenge for Years 4, 5 and 6 and the younger pupils have had a talk from the 'Early Bird'. However, it is too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives.
49. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to appropriate levels of care, dependent on their difficulties. The school engages with external agencies as appropriate to the individual needs of pupils and maintains links with other local schools as necessary. Monitoring of attendance takes place in line with that for all pupils. There is a fully accessible toilet for the disabled.

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

50. The good partnership with parents reported in the previous inspection has not been maintained. Whilst some parents are satisfied with the school others seem to have lost confidence in it, and significant minorities are unhappy about several aspects, which they perceive to have deteriorated over the last few years. For example, a great many are concerned that unchecked poor behaviour in lessons is impeding the progress of the more orderly pupils. Others complain that their children

do not get the right amount of homework and that they are not kept well informed about their child's work and progress. Inspection evidence indicates that there is some justification for these concerns. Whilst behaviour is generally good in lessons in Years 1 and 2, inspectors agree that lessons in Years 3 to 6 are sometimes interrupted by inappropriate behaviour and that this slows progress. They also accept that, although appropriate homework is given in most classes, there are inconsistencies in the setting, marking and monitoring of it. Inspectors feel the school provides sufficient opportunities for parents to learn about their children's work and progress but that comments on pupils' reports are not consistently useful. Formal consultation evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms. Teachers encourage parents to approach them at any other time to share concerns about their child's education, and they are happy to discuss the pupils' annual report with them. Parents at the meeting applauded the teachers' willingness to speak with them and to help. The pupils' annual reports are positive and encouraging. The best examples give clear details of the individual's attainment and progress in English, mathematics and sometimes science and how they might improve. Comments for religious education, information and communication technology and the foundation subjects are less helpful because, as at the time of the previous inspection, they tend to focus on class activities rather than indicating what the pupil has learnt. The practice of putting comments for 'All other subjects' in a single box is unsatisfactory because there is not enough space to give meaningful information. The opportunity for pupils and parents to make comments on the reports is a good feature. The school meets its statutory requirement to include information about attendance on the reports and to provide parents with national test results.

51. Many parents also say that the school is not well led and managed, and, although it 'listens' when they complain or make suggestions, little action results and their queries and concerns are not dealt with to their satisfaction. Inspection evidence does not support these views. The management of the school at the time of the inspection was judged to be satisfactory. Nor do inspectors agree with those parents who say the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. There are several sporting and other clubs and pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to participate in a school journey. Inspectors regard extra-curricular provision to be good for a school of this size.
52. Arrangements for keeping parents informed about the school's work are generally satisfactory. The governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus both contain much useful information, although this is often only brief, and both omit one or two required details. Details of day-to-day matters are provided via regular newsletters. A clear overview of the curriculum is given in the prospectus, although there is nothing about religious education or the daily act of worship. Teachers give parents topic sheets outlining what is to be taught each term, though these do not include any suggestions for complementary 'home' activities. Meetings to explain new curriculum initiatives are held every year. Scrutiny of written communications to parents shows that some contain spelling mistakes and grammatical errors and this can give the impression of a lack of professionalism.
53. The school considers it important that parents support their children's education and encourages them to become involved, for example through the family learning project in Years 1 and 2. Some do so. They monitor homework and contribute to the pupils' sound progress in reading by helping their children with it at home. Many enjoy attending special assemblies and musical events with their children. A few are more actively involved with the life of the school. About eight provide valuable classroom support on a regular basis by listening to children read or by helping with design and technology, under the guidance of teachers. Others assist with school trips. For example, several parents were going to Colchester Castle with children in Year 3 on the day after the inspection. A mother runs an after school football club and two others the netball club. Occasionally, parents and grandparents give 'one off' talks about areas of 'expertise' such as life after the 1940's.
54. The well-organised school association that 'provides a very useful means of communication between parents and other members of the local community and the school', mentioned in the previous inspection, is now much less active. This reflects the indifference now shown towards the school by many parents and this is further exemplified by the fact that only four attended the 'anti-bullying' meeting which the school organised.

55. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and are appropriately involved with their children's learning and progress, in line with whole-school policies and all other pupils. Parents are involved with reviews of their children's Individual Education Plans, are very appreciative of their contacts with the school and value the level of involvement as partners in their children's learning.

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

56. The acting headteacher shows a clear commitment to the school with a focus on developing good quality teaching and improving standards during his period of interim management. He is particularly effective at team building and motivating staff and has developed a group of people who work hard and share a clear commitment to improvement. This was particularly noticeable during the inspection when several staff were new to the school or had additional responsibilities. The day-to-day management duties were covered appropriately, which resulted in a smooth running school during an unsettled period. Staff work hard to understand the pupils' needs and provide an appropriate curriculum. In most cases they succeed. By the time pupils leave school most show a more mature attitude and are becoming sensitive to the needs of others. There is a satisfactory degree of mutual tolerance and respect. The school has a firm commitment to inclusive education and manages this well.
57. At the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher had recently been appointed and also had full-time teaching commitments. Consequently, insufficient time had passed for them to develop their roles fully. However, they had a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development and were ably assisted by other managers. The role of subject co-ordinator is developing and, although a number of the current co-ordinators are recent or temporary appointments, they share a clear understanding of what should be achieved. Established co-ordinators have a clearer understanding of how to improve practice.
58. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work. Systems have recently been introduced to monitor pupils' progress and systems are established to evaluate the quality of teaching. Records indicate that the school has been successful in improving its results in line with the national trend and most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. The school has worked closely with the local education authority to establish and promote good practice.
59. The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues arising from the last inspection. Governors give full support to the school and are now more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and the progress and attainment of pupils. They have satisfactory levels of knowledge and are well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. Governors, acting headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement. The school has established a cycle of monitoring and target setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims. The school improvement plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and is the result of a sound consultation process. All statutory requirements are met apart from a few omissions in the information presented to parents.
60. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good and all statutory requirements are fully met, including maintaining an appropriate policy, which has been reviewed by the special educational needs co-ordinator in the light of the revised Code of Practice. All pupils on the special educational needs register have appropriate Individual Education Plans in place with a range of specific learning targets identified and these are regularly reviewed with parents as required. The school employs an appropriate number of additional staff to support all pupils' needs. Resources are appropriate to meet the planned curriculum for pupils with special educational needs.
61. Recently, staffing at the school has been in a state of flux. Difficulties in recruiting permanent teachers, the long-term absence due to the ill health of a teacher, and the Year 6 teacher taking on the position of acting headteacher have resulted in the use of several supply teachers. Class 4, in particular, was subjected to a series of supply teachers in the autumn term. As a result,

several parents, dismayed by what they perceived as a lack of continuity in teaching and its negative effect on their children's progress, and the teachers' apparent inability to maintain discipline, transferred their children to other schools. Their decision to do so was exacerbated by the fact that they felt the intermittent attendance of Traveller children in the class was also having a detrimental effect on the other pupils' progress. During the week of the inspection every class had a suitably qualified teacher, although one was a long-term supply teacher and another a local authority expert teacher temporarily based in the school in an advisory capacity. Furthermore, the acting headteacher had to reassume teaching because a supply teacher was not available to cover Year 6. This meant he had a considerable workload. Differences in the quality of presentation of pupils' work under different teachers is evidence that unstable staffing, particularly in Years 3 to 6, has a negative effect on pupils' learning. A newly qualified teacher was appointed in January as a permanent teacher for Year 4 and a new headteacher is due to start next term. This should bring greater stability and allow the school to move forward with several recent initiatives such as moves to encourage all parents to support their children's education. During the inspection, two extra learning support staff had been allocated to the school by the local education authority and the duties of the school's own learning support assistants had been changed. Nevertheless, those observed supported the pupils well; they showed good interaction with the children and effectively helped them to learn. Despite all the upheaval and change, staff remain hardworking, cheerful and kind; they share a commitment to succeed and to improve the school.

62. The previous inspection reported that the accommodation was good, with enough space and specialist areas to meet the needs of the curriculum. Since then it has been enhanced by the development of an information and communication technology suite, the upgrading of toilets and installation of a toilet for the disabled and by improvements to the environmental area. Generally, the accommodation is managed effectively to provide pupils with a range of appropriate learning experiences and to allow for individual and small-group work as well as whole-class teaching. However, classes in the hall continue to be disturbed by others walking through; this is distracting for the pupils and is detrimental to the quality of their learning. Some classrooms are allowed to become hot and stuffy and this can affect the pupils' ability to concentrate. The premises continue to be maintained in a generally good state of cleanliness, repair and decoration and this, together with attractive displays of work, ensures the school provides a stimulating learning environment for the pupils.
63. The school has ample, mainly good quality resources to support the teaching in all areas of the curriculum and there is a particularly good range of materials and equipment for art. However, the upgrading of books deemed necessary by the previous inspection has not yet been fully achieved. For example, there are still a number of old books in the library. In addition, many musical instruments are well worn and could do with replacing. Resources are easily accessible and are used effectively to support the children's learning. Especially good use is made of resources in English and art. However, the non-fiction library is not used effectively as a resource for developing the pupils' independent learning skills. Outside resources, such as local museums and an outdoor residential centre, are used well to enrich the pupils' learning in subjects such as history and geography, and for their personal development.
64. Financial planning and control are good. The recommendations of the most recent audit have been implemented. The Finance and Administration Officer has a good understanding of the school's financial systems and provides appropriate information for the governing body so that expenditure can be monitored. Spending decisions are carefully considered with the priority being given to maintaining staffing levels whenever possible. Specific grants, mainly to support the pupils with special educational needs, are used prudently and for their intended purpose. Financial print-outs clearly identify how the money has been spent. The projected carry forward to next year is appropriate. Tenders are sought for large items of expenditure and staff and governors consider carefully the principles of best value. New technologies are being used satisfactorily in the office. For example, financial information and assessment data are on computer. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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



65. Staff and governors should work together on the following areas to improve the quality of provision further and raise standards:
- Raise standards of attainment in writing and science throughout the school and in geography and history in Years 3 to 6 by:
    - providing opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills;
    - taking every opportunity to promote literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum;
    - ensuring a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling and handwriting;
    - ensuring that pupils are clear about how they can improve;
    - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations;
    - ensuring that the work provided is well matched to the pupils' abilities;
    - ensuring that subjects are taught in sufficient depth.(Paragraphs 5,7,9,19,23,26,27,30,83,84,85,101,102,125,126,127,128,129,131)
  - Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in Years 3 to 6, particularly the higher attainers, and provide appropriately challenging work.  
(Paragraphs 9,18,26,32,86,97)
  - Provide opportunities for pupils to find out and research things for themselves and develop independent learning skills.  
(Paragraphs 30,94,96,102)
  - Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality by ensuring that all parents, including those from the Traveller community, are fully aware of the importance of regular attendance.  
(Paragraphs 16,48)
  - Review procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' good behaviour and ensure that all members of staff have sufficiently high expectations.  
(Paragraphs 10,22,45,88,131)
  - Improve relationships and communication with parents by:
    - ensuring that they are kept up to date with current developments;
    - reviewing the pupils' annual reports to ensure sufficient information is provided on all subjects;
    - encouraging more parents to become involved in the school association.(Paragraphs 50,52,54)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	20	24	5	0	0
Percentage	0	12	36	43	9	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		160
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		28

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	8	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	7	9
	Girls			
	Total	16	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (72)	74 (64)	89 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	10
	Girls			
	Total	16	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (72)	84 (88)	95 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	91 (90)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Results of less than 10 pupils (in this case girls) are only included in the overall figures and not reported separately.

### 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	14	19	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	10
	Girls	17	15	15
	Total	26	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (76)	70 (82)	76 (79)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	17	16	15
	Total	25	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (88)	73 (74)	73 (62)
	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	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	157
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	22.9

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	135

#### **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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	411,134
Total expenditure	424,234
Expenditure per pupil	2,070
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,098
Balance carried forward to next year	48,998

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	160
Number of questionnaires returned	44

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	57	16	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	11	59	14	11	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	2	32	36	25	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	7	59	9	23	2
The teaching is good.	18	57	7	11	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	7	45	30	18	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	11	59	23	7	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	14	70	14	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	14	45	25	11	5
The school is well led and managed.	5	27	34	23	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	5	59	20	9	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	41	16	18	16

### Other issues raised by parents

Several parents indicated in letters and through comments at the meeting that they were concerned about the frequent changes in staffing, which they believed disrupted pupils' learning. Some parents at the meeting were also concerned about the changing profile of children going to the school. The greatest concern, however, was focused on the decline in standards of behaviour. Overall, parents thought that the relationships with parents had declined over recent years.

## **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**

66. The school has maintained the good practice in the reception class which was indicated in the last inspection report. The outdoor play area has recently been developed and staff make the most of the restricted indoor area. The good quality of teaching is characterised by a good understanding of how young children learn, high expectations, and the systematic development of children's good attitudes to learning and good behaviour. This results in children being confident in what they do and willing to 'have a go'. Staff work well together and provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The curriculum takes into consideration the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and staff adapt this to meet the needs of the children. Staff plan the work appropriately and use assessments of the children to inform their planning. Records are kept to monitor the progress that children make in all areas of learning. Staff provide a calm, secure learning environment which encourages children to develop good attitudes to school. Pupils participate well and made good progress as a result of effective teaching and good support.

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

67. Teaching and learning in this area are good and children are likely to reach the standards expected for children of that age by the end of the reception year. The school has an appropriate induction programme and creates positive relationships with parents before their children start school. Staff use a range of strategies to encourage children to play together and they develop relationships quickly. Also, staff are effective in creating a caring and stimulating learning environment in which children quickly understand the routines and structure of the day and develop good attitudes to learning. Children were observed playing well together and sharing resources, for example, when acting out roles in the garden centre. They learn how to share resources and take turns, as a result of the expectations of the teacher and member of support staff, who make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation, for example when observing ice to see how it changes. Children recognise the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of personal hygiene issues. Their independent skills are developed when they are encouraged to help clear away after activities.
68. A good balance is created between teacher-directed activities and those when children are able to play without direct adult supervision. This develops the children's confidence and a growing independence and initiative when presented with choices. They are encouraged to be polite and sensible and move easily from work undertaken as a whole class to group and individual activities. Staff act as good role models and the children's skills are continually developed through the positive interactions between staff and children. Consequently, children are well behaved and form good relationships with each other and with adults. The good gains made in pupils' personal, social and emotional development are a key feature in children feeling secure and learning well in other areas of the curriculum.

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

69. Teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum are very good. Children make good progress through experiencing a range of activities that stimulate their learning and maintain their interests. A significant number enter the nursery with restricted use of vocabulary and have speech and communication problems and this makes it more difficult for them to reach average standards in speaking, even though they make good progress. Other pupils are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the reception class. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed well across all areas of the curriculum, for example when small groups of children sit with an adult and discuss the different properties of materials when they are discovering which materials are waterproof. Children's speaking skills are also systematically developed through the provision of specific activities such as the imaginative play areas when children pretend to be customers or work in a garden centre.
70. Children handle books carefully and know that print carries meaning. Most follow and recall a

story by looking at the pictures and some average and higher-attaining children read familiar words. They enjoyed talking about the books with the inspector. In a very good lesson, children responded well to the story of *The Fish Who Could Wish* and worked well on a range of related activities. The teacher was effective in getting children to use a range of strategies when confronted with unfamiliar words and encouraged children to predict what was coming next in the story. Regular sessions on phonics support children well in their recognition of letters and the sounds that they make and the pace of learning in these sessions is very good. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home, and when they do so this has a significant impact on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve.

71. Children initially develop their writing skills by learning how to hold the pencil correctly and recognising and writing their names. They quickly become aware of writing for different purposes, for example by writing zig-zag books, or by writing lists in the garden centre. Higher-attainers are well challenged and this results in their writing complete sentences unaided. Average attainers write words to describe pictures. Children receive good support from staff, which encourages the development of their handwriting and use of vocabulary. Overall, a good range of resources to encourage writing and communication is available.

### **Mathematical development**

72. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good and children make good progress. Children in the reception class are likely to reach the standards expected nationally by the time they start in Year 1, and a few higher attainers will achieve above this. The children's skills and understanding are regularly developed and consolidated through daily play activities and through specific sessions. In one good session, children quickly got involved in identifying and ordering numbers by using carpet number tiles. There was a wide range of abilities in the class but the teacher's good management and skilful questioning ensured that pupils of all abilities were involved and made progress. Higher attainers could quickly identify the missing numbers in a sequence whilst lower attainers needed support to order numbers to 5. The needs of the higher attainers were further well met when pupils discussed shapes. Again, the skilful questioning of the teacher prompted one pupil to identify that both a rectangle and square had four sides but '...in a square they are all the same length but in a rectangle there are two short and two long sides'. The teacher's good subject knowledge is used well and her careful use of mathematical language and questioning encourages the children's mathematical thinking and understanding.

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

73. Teaching to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good and pupils progress well. Most children are likely to reach the standard expected nationally for children at the end of the reception year. In a very good lesson, the teacher quickly captured the children's attention when she encouraged them to look at different protective materials such as wellington boots, umbrellas and paper whilst pouring water over them using a watering can. The children were excited in their learning but listened well and developed their use of appropriate vocabulary such as 'waterproof'. Very good support was later provided by the teaching assistant, who got children to 'test' materials to see which were most appropriate to make a coat for a toy duck. This inspired one higher-attaining pupil to spend the rest of the lesson fully concentrating on the challenge set. Children extend their work on water by looking at its uses and the need for water to make plants grow. Children develop an understanding of how humans grow and develop, by looking at photographs of babies in a display entitled *Can You Guess Who?* Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and disassemble simple models, using a variety of construction kits. The children's skills in using the computer are appropriately developed through regular use throughout the day and specific information and communication technology sessions. Children confidently use the mouse to work through programs which encourage them to click and drag and also encourage their counting skills and phonics. Due to good teaching which involved effective demonstration, children programmed a moving 'robot' forwards and backwards for accurate distances when they 'posted' a letter to the house with the correct number. Children found this activity interesting and behaved well.

### **Physical development**

74. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and the children are expected to reach standards appropriate for their age by the time they leave the reception class. Children get regular opportunities to develop their physical skills through playing outside where they learn to balance and climb and run. When playing on the larger play area, children were seen organising their own game of football and working together co-operatively. They also develop their skills through weekly physical education sessions. The children were well dressed for the session observed and developed a good sense of the use of space through following directions to walk and run in different ways. Their actions indicated that they listened well as a result of the teacher's high expectations and good management. Children responded very well to the range of activities, particularly the work with a ball where their catching and throwing skills were systematically developed. In this lesson, evidence of how children care for each other was demonstrated when one child fell over. Children are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies: for example, one child commented 'I'm hot. Are you?' whilst another said 'I'm out of breath'. The children's use of small objects, such as pencils, construction equipment and paintbrushes, is satisfactory and they handle them safely and appropriately.

### **Creative development**

75. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are effective in getting good responses from children in relation to what they see, hear, feel and imagine and most children are likely to reach the standard expected for their age by the end of their time in the reception class. Their creative development is successfully fostered through a range of activities. Children were observed creating fish with tissue paper in response to the reading of a story. Others painted a fish tank using a colour wash and crayons. This prompted a few children to say that the crayon areas were waterproof as they painted over these sections. The children's work is celebrated well through class displays entitled *Creatures Living Under The Sea* and *At The Farm*. Also, a good range of work is undertaken, for example painting flowers for the garden centre and their own portraits. Children get the opportunity to mould objects using malleable materials. The children's responses are also developed through specific music sessions and through singing rhymes and songs. The role-play area provides opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own.

### **ENGLISH**

76. Standards in English are not sufficiently high and higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Fluctuations in attainment, due mainly to changes in cohort size, have been exacerbated as a result of inconsistencies in teaching during recent staffing difficulties. The school has experienced a significant number of staff changes during the autumn and spring terms, which has caused pupils to become unsettled. Since the last inspection the whole staff has changed, with the exception of one person, and there have also been changes in the make-up of the school population. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate progress. Provision and learning in English overall for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
77. The previous inspection in 1997 found attainment in reading and writing in Year 2 broadly in line with national expectations. Results of similar aged pupils in 2001 were below the national average in reading and well below average in relation to similar schools. In writing, results were well below average both nationally and in relation to similar schools. These results indicate an improvement from the previous year but a fall in standards since the last inspection. The previous inspection found attainment in writing in Year 6 broadly in line with national expectations and in reading below national expectations. Results for similar aged pupils in 2001 were average in comparison with schools nationally and well below average in relation to similar schools. These results indicate an improvement from the previous year and broadly reflect those of the last inspection.
78. The school has recently appointed an experienced English co-ordinator, who has a clear vision of what the school needs to do to improve. Areas of weakness have been identified and already



there have been significant improvements since September. The National Literacy Strategy is being successfully implemented and the school now has satisfactory strategies in place for the teaching of basic literacy skills. All pupils have targets for reading and writing in order to raise standards throughout the school. Teachers' plans generally follow the National Literacy Strategy and provide a range of activities which match pupils' abilities, to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress. With the current staffing difficulties resolved and release time for management duties available, the co-ordinator will be able to recommence development and improvement in English.

79. Standards in speaking are sound overall and a significant number of pupils have very well developed speaking skills, and are confident and articulate speakers by the end of Year 6. Pupils make progress in developing oral skills as they move through the school. They are offered regular opportunities to speak in a range of situations, for example, to their class, in assemblies and in concerts, and most pupils speak fluently and with confidence. Good progress is made in speaking skills where teachers are developing pupils' confidence in speaking through role play and 'hot seating' where pupils take on the role of the teacher or of a character from a text. Listening skills are markedly less well developed and a number of pupils do not listen or concentrate sufficiently in lessons, although there has been some good progress in developing pupils' skills, for example, through effectively planned collaborative activities and well managed circle time activities. These successful strategies need to be modelled and shared so that they become fully embedded across the school.
80. Current standards in reading indicate some improvement throughout the school as a result of action taken to promote reading, although practice is not yet sufficiently embedded to have any serious impact on standards. The school has addressed reading as a priority development and there has been notable progress with this. A storyteller has visited the school as part of a book week to raise the status of reading and a recent meeting with parents has promoted the gains to be made from regular practice in reading. A clear expectation has been established that pupils should read at home on a daily basis, although this remains variable in practice. All reading books have been levelled and reading resources in Years 1 and 2 have been increased to match levels of reading ability and to meet the demands of the National Literacy Strategy. Resources for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are adequate but still need developing so that pupils' reading skills, comprehension and the range of their reading are further developed. The school library contains a reasonable range of books which can be used by pupils for research purposes. The area is well furnished and central for use by the older pupils. However, further resources are required to increase the range of books available.
81. Reading records are maintained and show that a large majority of pupils do read regularly, either to parents or as independent readers. Class teachers hear pupils read once a week with further opportunities for silent reading each day in most classes. Throughout the inspection many pupils were heard reading in a range of situations. Most liked reading and a good number of pupils were able to name and talk about other authors and books they had read. Strategies for accessing difficult words are being satisfactorily addressed through increasingly effective phonics teaching, specifically in Years 1 and 2, although this has not yet impacted fully across the school.
82. More able pupils read fluently, confidently and expressively, and with good observation of punctuation. Less able readers talk about their books and some retell the story, if it is familiar to them. When they are unable to read a word, pupils use picture clues well and some continue reading with confidence even when they do not know the words at all. Pupils are still experiencing significant difficulty when they encounter irregular words and, although they know initial letter sounds, they rarely use blends to access the word. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their reading across the school and are well supported.
83. Spelling across the school is not consistent and has been identified as an area for development. A spelling policy has been written and decisions on the progression of spelling are being discussed with staff during the spring term. Future action on spelling will need to be planned alongside regular, effective teaching of phonics so as to raise pupils' spelling skills beyond basic levels and enable higher-attaining pupils to achieve in line with their abilities. There also needs to be further whole-school development of core and subject specific word banks which support pupils' progress in spelling and which build on the developing good practice in place in some

classes.

84. The current teaching of handwriting is inconsistent and is not having sufficient impact on standards across the school. The quality of handwriting seen in lessons and in pupils' books varies widely. Some pupils have developed a neat, cursive style of writing with well-formed letters; however, handwriting generally shows inconsistent joining and often poor letter formation. Standards in writing are not sufficiently high and more able pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Although there are good links developing with other areas of the curriculum, including information and communication technology, the lack of breadth or depth evident in pupils' story writing or in other subjects is affecting standards overall. Currently, there is insufficient satisfactory direct teaching in writing skills or opportunities for pupils to extend their writing within English and across the curriculum. Work is often spoilt by inconsistencies in the school's approach to presentation and the teaching of handwriting and teachers' marking does not yet consistently indicate what pupils have to do to improve their writing.
85. The school is aware that writing is an area requiring development and has planned a range of appropriate strategies designed to have an impact on the quality and range of pupils' writing, but these have not yet been successfully implemented. Progress books have been established so that staff can develop their skills in levelling work and monitor pupils' progress over time. These are being monitored by the co-ordinator to check on pupils' progress throughout the school and the development of teachers' marking techniques.
86. Some teachers' lesson plans lack sufficient detail and do not provide sufficiently well-planned, differentiated activities to match either pupils' individual abilities or the time available and as a result learning opportunities are not maximised. In these lessons there is little interactive or collaborative work planned to address weaknesses, for example, in writing or listening, and pupils' learning is strongly teacher directed. This fails to motivate or extend pupils' learning and the lack of planned extension tasks for more able pupils leaves pupils frustrated or bored. Activities for pupils with special educational needs are broadly matched to their abilities and teaching assistants provide appropriate support.
87. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory with some evidence of good teaching, but also some unsatisfactory lessons. The best lessons are well-structured and maintain good pace and teachers demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the subject. As a result, pupils are motivated to achieve well, they enjoy lessons and develop good relationships with their teachers and each other. Teachers engage constantly with pupils, checking on progress, clarifying misconceptions and ensuring pupils are motivated to remain on task. Support staff work effectively with pupils who have special educational needs and successfully access them to the curriculum. In one class, however, the behaviour of one pupil excludes that pupil from learning, undermines the authority of adults within the classroom and impacts seriously on the learning of other pupils.
88. In unsatisfactory lessons, teaching is not always confident and lessons lack pace and rigour. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and there is no insistence on pupils applying what they know, for example, in handwriting and spelling. This lack of rigour and expectation leaves pupils unclear as to the purpose of lessons. They do not strive to achieve and they make limited progress as a result, particularly when working without adult supervision. There is low level distraction in these lessons because classroom routines, self-control and attentive listening are not yet consistently taught and followed through by some staff. Acceptance of this casual attitude to learning continues to reinforce the behaviour, which results in some unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour on the part of a few pupils. Inappropriate awarding of stickers during lessons is disrupting teaching and learning and sends wrong messages to pupils by rewarding them for behaviour that should be expected as a norm by all teachers.
89. Teachers are keen to improve and a regular programme of monitoring has been established. Teachers' weekly and medium-term plans are monitored half termly and termly, and the co-ordinator provides written feedback to staff which identifies strengths and weaknesses as well as pointers as to how improvements might be made. Feedback is also given at whole-school level and on a one-to-one basis as appropriate. Monitoring of teaching and learning is also developing. A Literacy Hour observation format is used to ensure equity and consistency and written and

verbal feedback is provided for all staff. As a result of the recent staffing difficulties non-contact time has not always been consistently available since September.

90. New initiatives, such as the additional literacy support and reading recovery programmes, have been established in order to raise standards. Good records of pupils' progress are being maintained but there has, as yet, been no monitoring of these which shows a positive difference in pupils' learning or impact on standards. The school is aware of this and will be establishing a programme of monitoring which will provide this evidence. Procedures for assessment are now in place and pupils' test results are now being analysed. However, staff do not yet have a clear understanding of attainment throughout the school. Regular, appropriate professional development is undertaken and this is shared with staff, either through staff meetings or to individual teachers as appropriate. This keeps staff well informed, develops their confidence and is supporting the effective development of English across the school.
91. The recently appointed English co-ordinator is experienced and offers strong leadership and clear direction for her colleagues. A comprehensive action plan and supporting diary of monthly activities identify priorities and guide progress and there is clear evidence of improvement. It is important that the school maintains this impetus and is not diverted from what is evidently increasingly good practice.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. Standards in mathematics for pupils aged both seven and eleven are in line with the national averages. The findings of the inspection confirm that standards are similar to those indicated by pupils' results in national tests in 2001. However, while the numbers of pupils expected to attain an average standard are similar to those for last year, current performance suggests that the proportion of pupils at both ages likely to attain a higher level is lower than it was in 2001. This is principally because of differences of ability between pupils in different age groups. However, standards of work among pupils of greater aptitude and ability are not as high as they could be because these pupils are not consistently offered work that challenges them to puzzle out problems or to demonstrate what they really understand and can do.
93. Since the last inspection in 1997, when attainment was also in line with national averages, standards have broadly risen in line with national trends. Each year, those for pupils aged seven have closely mirrored national averages, with the exception of a dip in 1999. Results for pupils of eleven have fluctuated more markedly but are now also closely in line with national figures.
94. Building on the good start they receive before they are five, pupils in Year 1 grow in confidence in ordering numbers up to 20, and in adding and subtracting them. They gain experience in counting forwards and backwards in twos, fives and tens. Pupils practise weighing items against a number of cubes, and begin to measure objects using a standard length. In Year 2, pupils extend the range of their mathematical vocabulary; they come to understand the terms 'more' and 'less' and 'greater' and 'fewer'. They can find a half of a value between 1 and 30, and begin to look for patterns in larger, rounded numbers. They divide shapes into halves and begin to appreciate the symmetrical properties of regular two-dimensional figures. Most pupils make progress at the expected rate but those of greater aptitude and ability are not given sufficiently challenging open-ended tasks that allow them to investigate numbers or the properties of shapes, for example, to the limit of their understanding. There is much use of photocopied sheets and, while these sometimes invite pupils to explore a particular problem, they too often anticipate the sort of answer that pupils are expected to give so that there are too few opportunities for them to lay out work for themselves. Those with special educational needs make the expected progress, and are generally well supported in their work.
95. Between the ages of seven and eight, pupils often make good progress because the work set is very closely matched to pupils' ability. Here, pupils are offered a wide range of mathematical experiences, many of which are rooted in real, practical situations, and this reinforces pupils' understanding and helps to foster their enthusiasm for their work. Most pupils in Years 4 to 6 make sound progress, although those of greater aptitude and ability are not always offered work sufficiently challenging to enable them to progress at the expected rate. This is because they are

often set additional work when they have completed a standard task rather than different work from the outset. As they grow older, pupils become increasingly competent in calculation, so that, by the age of eleven, many can multiply accurately two digit numbers. They become progressively aware of the properties of shape, so that many in Year 6 can calculate the area of a right-angled triangle or plot translations of a shape onto the quadrants of a grid using positive and negative coordinates. Pupils generally have sufficient experience of learning about the different aspects of mathematics, although the range of experiences is more balanced in some classes than others. For example, pupils in Year 3 have very good opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge, while in some other classes, these are less frequently offered. In all classes, most pupils make at least sound progress in their acquisition of numeracy skills because there is heavy emphasis on this aspect of the curriculum. Almost all pupils with special educational needs are offered a curriculum similar to that of other pupils and are mostly well supported by classroom assistants.

96. Standards of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory over time, although both good and very good teaching was seen here in the course of the inspection. An analysis of work completed since the beginning of the school year indicates that more could be expected of pupils showing greater aptitude and ability because they are not always set sufficiently challenging work. Many of the tasks set, for example, employ photocopied sheets that do not allow pupils to practise setting out work for themselves in different ways. The lessons seen were well planned and organised, offering pupils good opportunities to practise both mental and practical mathematics. Teachers circulate well among pupils when they are working individually, offering appropriate help when they encounter a problem and managing their behaviour well. Lessons move at a good pace, so that there is enough time for learning to be summarised at their end.
97. In Year 3, teaching and learning are consistently good, and in Years 4 to 6 they are of a satisfactory standard overall, although some good teaching was also seen in the course of the inspection in Year 4. In Year 3, pupils of all levels of ability are offered sufficiently difficult work. A significant proportion of tasks relate to real, practical situations so that almost all pupils are well motivated to learn. In Years 4 to 6, expectations for the achievement of more able pupils are not always high enough; challenging work is not always offered and pupils are not expected often enough to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, some older pupils do not work as hard as they might and this impairs the creation of a busy, working atmosphere. When challenged, pupils display enthusiasm for the subject and make good gains in their learning. In one good lesson for younger pupils, for example, pupils were expected to make shapes using matchsticks to calculate area. They were fully involved in this activity and made good gains in their learning. All teachers prepare and pace their lessons well, making good use of resources and ensuring that adequate time is allocated to each phase of the lesson. They monitor progress well, offering good support when pupils need help. In every class, those with special educational needs are well taught and are well supported in their work.
98. In almost all lessons, pupils display an interest in the subject and generally respond well when they are questioned. They generally discuss work sensibly in pairs but older pupils in some classes find it difficult to concentrate for long periods. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding. Most have a good understanding of what they are expected to do, because learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. Behaviour in lessons is generally good but in some lessons, a minority of pupils spoil the working atmosphere.
99. The mathematics curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced across the school, although there is scope in some classes for the more extensive application of mathematics to real-life situations. Pupils demonstrate a greater speed and confidence in the use of mental arithmetic than they did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils practise the handling of mathematical data much more frequently in some classes than in others, so that there is not always sufficient continuity in the building of skills in this area. Across the school, pupils use their numeracy skills regularly and often, and national guidelines on numeracy are generally used well. The subject manager, in post for six months, provides very good leadership that is beginning to make an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. She has a very good understanding of the direction the subject now needs to take and is well aware of the nature of its strengths and shortcomings. The school has analysed pupils' test results and devised individual targets for pupils, although these are not always used as effectively in every class when teachers are planning future work. The school possesses a good range of resources for the subject; these are generally well used and accessible. The school itself is sometimes used as a source for information for pupils to interpret, and information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning in handling and representing data.

## **SCIENCE**

100. Standards in science are lower than at the time of the last inspection and in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. In the 2001 national assessments, the percentage of pupils attaining a level appropriate for their age was average for seven-year-olds but few pupils achieved a higher level. The percentage of eleven-year-olds reaching the level appropriate for their age in 2001 national tests was below average and here, too, fewer pupils than expected nationally gained a

higher grade. Over the last three years, girls of this age did better than boys in the National Curriculum science tests. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, although some good teaching was observed in Years 2, 5 and 6.

101. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. In Year 1, they develop a sound understanding of human growth and the five senses through their study of *Ourselves* and, although the work is appropriate for most pupils, for some it lacks challenge so their progress is not as good as it could be. In Year 2, there was a small sample of work and some of this indicated low expectations, particularly for the higher attainers. Often, all pupils do the same work so the challenge presented does not always match pupils' abilities. A lot of the work is done on worksheets. Although this may be appropriate and useful to guide some below average and average attainers, in some cases it restricts the work of the higher attainers. Also, it does not offer appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills. In one good Year 2 lesson, the teacher planned the work to meet the variety of needs in the class and appropriate support was provided by an additional teacher and support staff. Consequently, pupils made good progress and by the end of the lesson were aware of why people took medicines and what were the important safety issues.
102. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make predictions and most understand the need for fair testing. Through practical investigations they find out for themselves, for example in Year 3, about loud and soft sounds and how to test electrical circuits. In Year 4, they try to find out whether temperature affects how materials dissolve and in Year 5 the effect of height on seed dispersal. In Year 6, pupils are expected to record their findings on dissolving materials to a good standard and respond accordingly. Marking in this class was good and pupils responded to the teachers' comments on how to improve their work. Similarly in Year 5, pupils recorded their work well but in some cases all the class copied from the same text and so missed opportunities to develop their own ideas and writing. From a scrutiny of work, most pupils were undertaking the same tasks and so higher attainers were not being appropriately challenged. This hindered their progress and depressed their levels of attainment. In Year 6, pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of the main organs of the body, the digestive system and the human life-cycle but work is not as good in other areas of the curriculum.
103. Little evidence was found of pupils using information and communication technology to support their science work and this is not regularly seen in teachers' plans. Also, teachers do not systematically plan how pupils' literacy and numeracy skills could be developed when studying science.
104. In the better lessons, teachers planned the work well to match the abilities of the pupils and provided tasks which captured their interests. For example, in Year 5, pupils enjoyed experimenting with electrical circuits to find out the effect of adding more than one component. Most pupils worked well and were interested in what they were doing. A few were not keen to record their findings and needed prompting by the teacher to complete the task. The last part of the lesson was used well to assess the pupils' knowledge and understanding and to consolidate their learning. By the end, pupils made appropriate conclusions based on their findings. The lessons observed which were judged to be satisfactory and not good lacked pace or pupils experienced difficulty in interpreting data.
105. Pupils with special educational needs are supported satisfactorily in lessons and make similar progress to that of their peers. Pupils from the Traveller community are well integrated and make similar progress to that of their peers. There were no differences noted between the progress and attainment of girls and boys in the lessons observed. All these examples reflect the school's commitment to inclusive education.
106. The school uses a published scheme of work for science which has been reviewed in the light of current national guidance. This helps to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The subject has been monitored over the last year; lessons have been observed and feedback given. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning but has not yet fully impacted on standards. The results of annual tests are analysed and areas of strength and weakness identified. This has helped the school to identify that there should be more opportunities to work on the properties of materials and to explain and interpret graphs, for example to see patterns and

trends in data. The inspectors agree that these are the weaker areas in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.

## ART AND DESIGN

107. Judgements are made based on lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work around the school and discussion with the co-ordinator. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards in art and design are in line with those expected nationally at age seven and eleven. This reflects the position at the previous inspection.
108. Pupils are offered an appropriate curriculum, which now follows national guidelines, with opportunities to experience a wide range of materials and processes. In Year 2, the majority of pupils demonstrate and share ideas effectively and are able to make simple evaluations of their work. They show a developing knowledge of processes and produce work using a range of materials with some confidence. By Year 6, pupils' work demonstrates competence in colour mixing and matching in a range of media. They use drawing and other artwork confidently, for example, in the pictures depicting movement, and also to illustrate work in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' evaluative skills are developing well when considering their own work or that of others, including the work of well known artists.
109. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their fine motor skills and make satisfactory progress in art and design. Their creative skills are extended and developed appropriately and observational drawing skills are further developed by extending the range of media used. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use collage, painting and printing. Discussion is well used to develop pupils' critical and evaluative skills. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were studying a range of portraits, including a Modigliani portrait of women, in preparation for producing their own portraits, pupils were able to make judgements on the qualities in three different styles of paintings and drawings presented to them.
110. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils' observational and critical skills were developed well through discussion of the work of Matisse and pupils concentrated hard when arranging their cut out shapes in the style of a Matisse picture. They discussed their work throughout the lesson and were very pleased with their efforts. Pupils enjoyed the lesson and showed maturity in their reflection on what they had learned about the artist.
111. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop their investigation and pattern designing skills, for example, in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were researching ideas for a two colour pattern stencil print on fabric. Pupils demonstrated a good range of ideas, some of which were very complex, and most pupils took great care with their sketches and meticulously repeated them to produce some delightful outcomes. They demonstrated sound drawing skills and clearly understood the concept of repeat designs, as a result of support from the class teacher, who circulated frequently, discussed pupils' work with them and offered suggestions for improvement.
112. Throughout the school, colour matching skills are being successfully developed and pupils are aware of the need to experiment with colour. Teachers provide a good range of practical activities and develop different skills and techniques to match the range of abilities in the class. Although sketch books are used well in some classes to plan art work, their use across the school is not yet sufficiently well developed and this needs to be included as part of the co-ordinator's art action plan. The process for assessing pupils' work and helping them to become aware of how they can improve has not been established as a result of other school priorities. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to include this in her action plan.
113. Teachers are continuing to develop their subject knowledge: teaching is generally confident and enthusiastic and this is contributing to pupils' good learning. Most teachers generally maintain high expectations of pupils and the pace of lessons is good, except in one lesson where the inappropriate behaviour of some pupils was not effectively managed by the class teacher. Here, the pace of the lesson slowed and as a result gains in pupils' learning were limited.
114. Pupils' attitudes to art are positive. They are motivated by their teachers and they enjoy their art lessons. Use of adult support is generally effective and there is good communication between teachers and support staff. As a consequence pupils' individual needs are being met appropriately and those with special educational needs have access to the full curriculum and are making satisfactory progress.





115. Displays in classrooms and around the school demonstrate the activities and range of materials and processes pupils have used, including some three-dimensional models, although these are less well represented. There is good evidence of pupils investigating different kinds of art and working in the style of famous artists or using their work as a starting point, such as Matisse, which is contributing effectively to their cultural development. This has been further enhanced through an African visitor to the school, during an African week, who focused on stories which made very good links between art, music and geography.
116. The subject co-ordinator is currently providing satisfactory management and leadership and an appropriate action plan is in place which identifies priorities for the subject, although this requires further development to become more comprehensive. Planning now follows national guidance and links with other areas of the curriculum are being well developed, including those with information and communication technology, where pupils are able to carry out a wide range of computer based artwork, particularly in relation to their work on repeating patterns. Teachers' medium-term plans are monitored termly to consider progression in art across the school and staff are provided with verbal feedback. Art and design is very well resourced, including a large number of prints which pupils can use for a range of activities in their study of art and design. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

117. Standards for seven and eleven-year-olds are in line with those expected nationally. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Overall, pupils are currently making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical difficulties, receive satisfactory support and consequently make similar progress to that of their peers. No significant difference was noted in the attainment and progress of girls and boys. A display of work from each year indicated an appropriate range of activities and satisfactory progression in the pupils' learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.
118. A scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils and observations of lessons show that they understand the designing and making process at a level appropriate to their age. Also, for example in Year 3, pupils were able to evaluate their work appropriately and had moved beyond comments such as 'I'm pleased with it'. They indicated that they knew the purpose of evaluation in relation to the original design brief. These pupils were also aware of the need to ensure that their designs were not too complicated and could be made from available resources. However, not all pupils could evaluate the process and work in appropriate depth.
119. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but a discussion with pupils indicated that they enjoyed their work. They used the correct terms when describing what they had made, for example the importance of the axle when making moving vehicles. Pupils were also aware of safety issues, referring to the importance of hygiene in food technology and the need to hold and use tools safely. Younger pupils are aware of an appropriate range of materials and ways of joining them.
120. Only two lessons were observed, one each in Years 5 and 6. In these, teaching was satisfactory. In Year 5, pupils continued their work from a previous session by making moving toys. Despite clear guidance from the teacher, several children showed quite immature behaviour and took too much time to settle. They showed little evidence of independent learning and were quite dependent on the teacher to tell them what to do. One of the key problems for some was that they made little reference to their original designs unless reminded to do so by the teacher. Consequently, they kept changing their minds about what to do next and did not settle. In Year 6, pupils were observed investigating materials to see which would be the best for making a tent. Pupils used the knowledge gained from science lessons to ensure that their tests were fair and recorded results in an appropriate manner. When asked to predict their results, most made appropriate choices based on their knowledge of materials and their characteristics, and some changed their predictions in the light of their findings as the lesson went on. Learning was satisfactory as appropriate guidance was clearly given by the teacher and all pupils knew what they were expected to do. Also, after a while the teacher brought the class together to discuss their findings before they moved on to the next stage in their learning.



121. Although individual teachers use design and technology to further the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, this is not always planned in a systematic way across the school. Also, it is not clear how computers are systematically used to support pupils' learning in this subject. However, some good links are made. For example, in Year 3, when pupils studied packaging, their designs indicated a good understanding of nets through their mathematics lessons. Also, in Year 4, pupils looked at a range of books before they went on to make designs of their own books with moving parts such as flaps, pivots and pop-ups.
122. Teachers and support staff generally manage pupils satisfactorily and encourage them to work together, sharing resources. Teachers value the work that pupils do by the way they display it. This was particularly evident in Year 3, where pupils' work on *Sandwich Snacks* showed a good range and quality of work. Behaviour is usually satisfactory, particularly when pupils are interested in the tasks, but some of the pupils in Year 5 and 6 are dependent on the teacher to keep them working. They lack the ability to sustain concentration for significant periods of time unless reminded by the teacher.
123. Staff have reviewed the curriculum in line with the current national guidance and this has resulted in appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Satisfactory resources are available to teach each topic and due care and attention have been placed on addressing issues of health and safety, for example, by ensuring that pupils wear safety glasses, when appropriate. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.
124. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop the use of information and communication technology in the subject and ensure that skills are taught and assessed in a systematic way.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125. Only two lessons were seen in the course of the inspection but sufficient evidence was gained through analysing work and discussions with pupils to form judgements about the subject. Standards by the age of seven are in line with those expected nationally, while by the age of eleven, standards are below those expected. While pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding between the ages of five and seven, that for pupils between seven and eleven is unsatisfactory because they do not study the various aspects of the subject in sufficient depth and do not therefore acquire the expected skills and knowledge.
126. By the age of seven, pupils know that people live in different kinds of buildings and environments. They are aware of the differences between village, town and city, and some can cite examples of each. Pupils display a growing awareness of the locality in which they live, knowing, for example, the names of nearby towns and villages and understanding that some buildings in a community, such as shops, church and school, are more important than others. They begin to develop a notion of relative distance and understand that those living far away have very different lives from their own, for example, village children in Mexico. They understand the purpose of maps, although they have little experience of comparing local features to their representation on a map or plan. By the age of eleven, pupils have studied some aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth but others have been taught too superficially to enable them to build up a coherent body of knowledge and understanding at the expected level. For example, pupils display the expected level of knowledge of some aspects of physical geography, such as that of the features associated with river and mountain scenery, but are not able, at the expected depth, to make comparisons of their own environment with one in a contrasting location. While they are familiar with using atlases to locate countries, for example, they have little experience of using large scale maps or aerial photographs to understand relative location and distance, nor of examining environmental issues in enough depth. Pupils display some knowledge of other countries, sometimes using the Internet to gain information, but learning is not always systematic enough to ensure that pupils build a body of coherent knowledge.
127. Over time, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for pupils aged between five and seven; pupils make sound progress and some speak fluently about what they have learnt. Only one lesson was seen for these pupils in the course of the inspection and this was of good quality. The teacher used good questioning techniques to determine pupils' levels of understanding and

they listened intently while a story was read. A range of teaching techniques was employed to consolidate pupils' understanding, including discussion in pairs. Good reference was made to previous learning. For pupils aged between seven and eleven, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall because much of the work offered is not at sufficient depth to ensure that pupils build up their knowledge and skills progressively. In the one lesson observed at Year 6, teaching was sound. Information and communication technology was used imaginatively to enable pupils to gain the information they needed to complete their work, so that previously acquired computer skills supported pupils' learning.

128. The geography curriculum is broad enough but many aspects of the work for older pupils are covered too superficially to ensure that they acquire the necessary skills and understanding. The subject manager has a good understanding of the curriculum for younger pupils but is less certain of the work offered to older ones. Although teachers' planning is reviewed each term, there is currently no systematic monitoring of teaching and no procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Resources for the subject are just sufficient in number and quality. Visits to places of geographical interest are sometimes used to enhance pupils' understanding, for example to study the features of a river, and an annual residential visit is arranged to Rochester, where geographical, historical and physical activities are undertaken.

## HISTORY

129. Standards by the age of seven are in line with those expected nationally, while by the age of eleven, standards are below those expected. This indicates a decline in standards for eleven-year-olds since the last inspection. In some cases, pupils' knowledge and understanding are at a higher level than their written work indicates. Most pupils talk enthusiastically about their work but the vocabulary used in their writing and the unsatisfactory spelling and punctuation affect the overall quality of their work. Also, some pupils find it difficult to remember specific details of what they have learnt previously. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, generally make satisfactory progress but coverage for some older pupils is superficial in some areas and affects their overall standards.
130. The teaching and learning of history are satisfactory. In Year 1, pupils develop a sense of chronology by focusing on changes over time. For example, they look how the school has developed. They also study old and new toys by identifying differences and similarities. In Year 2, pupils further develop their sense of time passing by the use of timelines ranging from 'a long time ago' to 'now'. From their study of the lives of famous people and historical events, pupils place pictures of Queen Elizabeth 1, Samuel Pepys, Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole on the timeline. Pupils also have a sound understanding of 'family trees'. In one lesson observed in Year 2, pupils developed an understanding and knowledge of The Great Fire of London. A good range of activities supported their learning and maintained their interest. After watching a video, the class discussed what it must have been like to have been part of this event. This was followed by pupils writing an eye-witness account of the event. The end of the lesson was used well to consolidate pupils' learning: they were clear about what they had learnt but most pupils forgot the term 'eye-witness'. Average and above average attainers reached standards appropriate for their age but no pupils reached the higher levels.
131. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils displayed good levels of concentration and most worked hard when studying the consequences of Boudicca's Revolt. The high expectations of the teacher resulted in pupils making good progress and displaying good attitudes to learning. All were aware of what they were expected to do and had a clear understanding of the differences between the Celts and the Romans. Most spoke confidently about the revolt whilst others listened, with obvious interest in the subject. In the final part of the session, pupils were very keen to read out their work and get others in the class to guess whether they were writing in the role of a Roman or Celtic soldier. The last part of the lesson was also used well to discuss the forthcoming visit to Colchester Castle and pupils were prepared well by deciding what more they wanted to learn and phrasing appropriate questions. In a Year 5 lesson, most pupils worked quite well and made satisfactory progress when studying the Greek Gods. However, a few pupils displayed immature behaviour and did not make the progress of which they were capable. In Year 6, most pupils were interested in the topic *Britain Since 1938* and used a variety of sources to gain information. They

were interested in finding out about, for example, education and transport but when asked to record their findings they lacked motivation and relied on the teacher to keep them working. Although most pupils in this class displayed satisfactory standards in the current topic being studied, a significant number could not remember clearly some other aspects of history which they had studied and no pupils were attaining standards higher than those expected for their age. A scrutiny of pupils' past work indicated that, in some classes, there was a limited amount undertaken and some topics were studied superficially. Mostly, all pupils are given the same work to do, so the higher attainers are not being appropriately challenged.

132. The types of activities described above indicate that pupils are aware that the past is divided into historical periods and they understand how historical evidence can be gained from a variety of sources. They realise, for example, that historical artefacts are important for finding out about the past but only the older, higher attainers clearly understand that historical events can be interpreted in different ways. Visits to local places of historical interest motivate pupils well and extend their learning.
133. Although in the best lessons pupils are encouraged to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in history, this is not identified in a planned way across the school. Also, teachers' plans do not clearly indicate how information and communication technology is used to support the teaching of history.
134. The school's commitment to inclusive education is reflected in its teaching of history where all are encouraged to take part and achieve. No differences were noted between the attainment and progress of boys and girls. Most teachers manage the pupils appropriately but in some cases they need to be clearer about their expectations, particularly in Years 4 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported but, despite good efforts by the staff, a couple of pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties are not making appropriate progress and sometimes affect the learning of others. Pupils from the Traveller community make similar progress in lessons to that of their peers.
135. Currently, there is no history co-ordinator. The previous co-ordinator, together with staff, reviewed the curriculum according to current national guidance and this has resulted in appropriate coverage of the curriculum. Satisfactory resources are available to teach each topic but more are needed to support pupils' use of information and communication technology in history. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

136. Standards of pupils' work are in line with those expected nationally by the ages of seven and eleven. The school has made good progress in the subject since the last inspection, when standards were below those expected. This is because improved facilities offer pupils more frequent opportunities to practise the range of skills they require, but also because teachers demonstrate the confidence and expertise to teach a greater range of skills than was previously observed.
137. Pupils make good progress between the ages of five and seven. Building on the good start they receive before they are five, pupils in Year 1 become familiar with some of the principal functions of the keyboard and begin to control the mouse competently. They use some of the tool buttons, for example to change font size and style, and begin to edit their work. By the end of Year 2, pupils can input simple commands into a floor computer to control its movements, using it to draw simple geometric shapes. They employ simple word processing skills; for example, to make captions for art work or to write a longer piece of text. Many know how to save and retrieve their work.
138. Between the ages of seven and eleven, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Most understand how to represent data they have collected in pictorial form and many edit their work by dragging text with the mouse or using 'copy' and 'paste' functions. In Year 3, pupils enter information onto a spreadsheet and select the appropriate tool buttons to print it as a block graph, while those in Years 4 produce line graphs and learn to improve the appearance of their work

using lay-out tools. Older pupils use the computer for a wider range of purposes; for example, to calculate values or to gain information from the Internet. Sometimes, pupils make good progress because the teacher provides the class with written instructions on how to access the information they require. This encourages pupils' independence in learning and gives the teacher greater scope to assist those who need help. In other lessons, however, teachers spend too much time instructing pupils in what to do next. This means that the learning of all pupils is obliged to proceed at the same rate and therefore those of greater aptitude and ability do not progress as quickly as they might. Across the school, those with special educational needs usually make the progress expected because they are well supported in their work.

139. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive good teaching and there are high expectations for their learning. For example, those in Year 1 are expected to show a high degree of independence in their learning, while pupils in Year 2 follow written instructions to achieve the tasks they have been set. Here, different work is sometimes set for pupils of different ability. Pupils in both classes are well motivated to learn, displaying a high degree of concentration and determination to complete their work. They are well supported in their learning, so that the difficulties they meet are quickly overcome. Between Years 3 and 6, teaching is satisfactory overall. Here, examples of good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching were all seen in the course of the inspection. In the best lesson, different tasks were set according to pupils' aptitude and ability; pupils followed written instructions well and received clear additional explanations and further support if they required it. Teaching in one lesson was unsatisfactory because too much time was spent in giving and repeating instructions. As a result, pupils became increasingly restless and did not receive the support and direction they needed to make the progress expected. Across the school, teachers generally display at least a sound knowledge of the subject. Lessons are generally well structured and have clear objectives; these are achieved in the majority of lessons.
140. The quality of the curriculum for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection, with the result that most of the aspects are covered in sufficient depth. However, there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to test and improve upon sequences of instructions given to the computer, nor do they spend sufficient time considering the merits of representing data in different ways. The school makes appropriate use of the Internet to acquire information. The subject manager has successfully introduced many improvements to the curriculum and has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Resources for the subject are sufficient and facilities for systematic teaching have improved significantly since the last inspection. However, computers based in the classroom are not used often enough and the configuration of the computer suite makes it difficult for the teacher to monitor the progress of all pupils without support. Teachers have an informal knowledge of the aptitude and ability of their pupils but there are currently no formal systems for assessing strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

## **MUSIC**

141. Only four lessons were observed during the inspection but evidence from assemblies, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinator indicate that pupils attain standards which are about in line with those expected nationally for those aged seven and eleven. This reflects the position at the previous inspection.
142. Lessons indicate that satisfactory progress is being made overall. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning varied between satisfactory and very good, but was satisfactory overall. In the better quality lesson, the pace was appropriately fast and the pupils took a very active part in the lesson, in partnership with their teacher. They were encouraged to think about instruments, their names and the sounds they make and how they might be used to interpret a story which the pupils knew very well. Throughout the lesson the class teacher maintained the quality of teaching confidently and by the end of the lesson the pupils had performed a marvellous accompaniment to the story, narrated and conducted by the teacher. Pupils were enthralled by their experience and made evident gains in their learning.
143. As a result of staffing difficulties during the week of the inspection, the other lesson was not taken by the usual teacher and was planned with limited knowledge of the pupils. Some pupils were

unsettled and, although they were well motivated, found it hard to concentrate and the teacher had to use her experience and worked hard to maintain their involvement. Her experience paid dividends and appropriate learning developed as the lesson proceeded, although a number of pupils did demonstrate some difficulties with recognising low and high pitch sounds. Ultimately the pupils enjoyed the lesson and some performed very well.

144. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. In a Year 6 lesson pupils demonstrated their very good evaluative skills by listening to an excellent previous whole-class composition and identifying sounds recorded which represented elements of a galaxy, such as shooting stars, moon, rockets and meteors. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and identified phrased sounds very well and were also able to identify them when played out of sequence. The ethos of the lesson was spoilt by the persistent, low-level, inappropriate behaviour of a small number of pupils, which the class teacher did not manage effectively. In a Year 5 lesson pupils enjoyed making up their own lyrics to some well-known pop songs which were linked to environmental concerns. Progress, however, was limited by the unsatisfactory attitudes of some pupils, which the class teacher failed to manage appropriately.
145. Management of music is satisfactory. Planning now follows national guidance and is beginning to link with other areas of the curriculum, such as with work on the Tudors, rhythmic sounds in English and music to rivers in geography. Staff are finding the new guidance difficult to work with and this will need to be addressed appropriately through the music action plan. There is as yet no monitoring in place and staff do not have knowledge about attainment across the school. The subject is very well resourced, including a wide range of musical instruments and tapes, and the co-ordinator is building up further listening resources. The school focuses on involving all pupils in musical events and there are good opportunities for pupils to perform to a range of audiences, including assemblies, concerts and other performances such as a millennium concert involving nine local schools. Pupils' singing in assemblies during the inspection was excellent. The extra-curricular dance club, involving boys and girls, is strong.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

146. As on the occasion of the last inspection, standards in physical education are in line with those expected nationally at the ages of both seven and eleven. Pupils were not given sufficient opportunities to be physically active when the school was last inspected. This weakness has now been largely overcome, although explanations are still too long in a small minority of lessons; when this happens the benefits of warming-up are lost.
147. Across the school, pupils make the expected progress in their acquisition of knowledge and skills. Between the ages of five and seven, pupils learn how to control the movements of their bodies in different directions and at different speeds. They understand well the importance of using space safely and are carefully taught how to move and arrange apparatus and benches. They practise smooth, controlled movements and learn how to link these economically into a sequence. In Year 1, pupils learn to control a ball with the foot, working together in pairs, first co-operatively and then in opposition to each other. This is a good strategy that enables them to become familiar with elementary tactics. Those in Year 2 combine different movements using both the floor and the apparatus, although some have difficulty in adapting their sequences from the one to the other. Pupils of greater aptitude and ability have the opportunity to share the results of their work with other members of the class. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils build soundly on the skills they have acquired. In dance, they practise the interpretation of rhythms and link sequences of movements to match those they hear in the music. In some lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to improve on their initial efforts and to evaluate their own work and that of others. This they generally do objectively and sensibly. In games, pupils build on their skills and knowledge of tactics. Those in Year 6, for example, practise the more advanced skills of sending and controlling a tennis ball with a hockey stick and make clear progress during the course of a lesson. Across the school, pupils develop sound skills in gymnastics and games but could make still more rapid progress if teachers paid greater attention to rectifying the mistakes pupils make while they are practising. Those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils.



148. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory, although good and very good teaching was seen among both the oldest and youngest pupils. In these lessons, pupils are allowed plenty of time to practise their skills and the work moves forward at a good pace so that much is achieved in the time allotted. Here, a good balance of individual and group work permits pupils to develop a range of physical and social skills. In a small minority of lessons, opportunities for practice are restricted either because groups are too large or because a minority of pupils lose concentration and need to be recalled to attention. In a small number of lessons, too, the pace of learning is impeded because explanations are too long. Teachers across the school plan their work well, so that pupils practise increasingly more complex skills as the lesson progresses. In some lessons, pupils are invited to evaluate their work and that of others. This is a good strategy that encourages pupils to observe closely when others are demonstrating and teaches them the value of constructive comment.
149. The curriculum for physical education is sufficiently broad and balanced. Pupils are offered a full range of activities that includes swimming for all older pupils, competitive sports, and opportunities for supervised outdoor activities such as orienteering, climbing and balancing. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include two football clubs, netball, dance, gymnastics and athletic skills. There is adequate attention given to the progressive teaching of skills but teachers could give more attention to rectifying pupils' mistakes as they make them, so that pupils do not develop habits more difficult to correct at a later stage. The experienced subject manager offers advice or support where this is solicited but there is currently no monitoring of teaching and no basic assessment of ability. For example, no records are kept of pupils' competence in swimming. Resources are adequate and accessible but small equipment is not always neatly stored.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

150. Evidence from the small number of lessons observed, the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils indicates that by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils are attaining in line with the standards expected in the local education authority's programme of work for religious education. Satisfactory levels of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection.
151. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the one lesson observed in Year 2. Due to staffing difficulties during the week of the inspection, this was a one-off lesson planned with limited knowledge of the pupils. In Years 3 to 6, two lessons were observed; teaching and learning were very good in one lesson and unsatisfactory in the other. The unsatisfactory outcome was largely as a result of inexperience of the class teacher and changes to the support staff timetable during the week of the inspection, which unsettled pupils and undermined the teacher's confidence.
152. Overall, teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and use effective techniques in bringing out pupils' ideas and feelings through a calm, thoughtful and sensitive approach which awakens a spiritual awareness in most pupils. In a lesson on learning about the Buddhist faith, pupils' speaking and listening skills were effectively used through discussion on the importance of hand signals and pupils made good use of opportunities to try out some simple meditation. A circle time session, planned to help pupils focus on others so as to encourage a less self-centred approach, was well received by pupils and made the point effectively.
153. The work presently being studied in Year 3 is centred on the theme of 'losing something'. The lesson observed approached the idea by placing pupils in the role of the person who had lost something. The class teacher modelled the process of 'hot seating' very effectively and pupils made good gains in their learning through asking specific questions of the person in the hot seat. Their questions and responses were well thought out as a result of the very good teaching and conveyed a sense of mutual respect between teacher and pupils. Teaching used the pupils' own experiences very effectively to develop their understanding of the feelings associated through the loss of something valued. Pupils contributed in a most mature way. They can write short descriptive paragraphs about stories, retell them and discuss what they mean.
154. Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable but they generally pay attention to their teachers, behave sensibly and contribute in a mature way to discussions. There were some good examples of respect for one another's points of view.

155. There are some good displays in classrooms which enhance pupils' awareness of the variety of religious beliefs. Resources are generally adequate to support pupils' learning, including some artefacts and an acceptable range of books in the library. Resources are appropriately stored and well cared for. The very recently appointed co-ordinator is aware that lesson planning is sometimes imprecise and limited in detail, particularly in relation to appropriately differentiated activities which match the learning needs of all pupils. This needs to be considered as part of a whole-school approach to planning which identifies clear learning objectives and more appropriately differentiated tasks. Procedures for regular monitoring of the curriculum and how it is taught are in the process of being developed, although monitoring of the current medium-term plans against the scheme of work has already been carried out.