

INSPECTION REPORT

GIFFARDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope

LEA area: 883 Thurrock

Unique reference number: 115046

Headteacher: Mr. G. Giggins

Reporting inspector: Christopher Spencer
15639

Dates of inspection: 21-24 May 2001

Inspection number: 197692

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Queen Elizabeth Drive Corringham Stanford-le-Hope Essex
Postcode:	SS17 7TG
Telephone number:	01375 672138
Fax number:	01375 677083
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. John Cecil
Date of previous inspection:	29 September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15639	Christopher Spencer	Registered inspector	Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
9502	Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector		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?
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Art Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

23434	Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language	
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The inspection contractor was:

icp

360 Lee Valley Technopark
Ashley Road
London
N17 9LN

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Giffards Junior School is a large three form entry school situated in the Corringham and Fobbing ward in Thurrock. The school shares a large site with Giffards Infants School from which it draws most of its pupils. The majority of pupils live in the locality although there has been an increase in the numbers of pupils travelling from outside the local area to attend the school. Currently, there are 356 pupils on roll of whom 15 per cent are eligible for free school meals which is broadly similar to the national average. Nearly 17 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register. The number of pupils on this register is below the national average. Some 1.2 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, however, they all are fluent in English. Attainment on entry is below average with very few pupils achieving higher levels in the national tests at age seven. Over the last four years teacher turnover has been high with some three-quarters of staff leaving including the long established head and deputy.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Giffards Junior School is an effective school with many strengths. Pupils enter the school with standards below average but by the time they leave at the age of 11 they achieve standards similar to the national average. This is largely owing to the good standard of teaching throughout the school. This good teaching helps all pupils achieve their potential. The school has been well led and managed since the last inspection and this has enabled a good curriculum to be established. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and this is reflected in their work. The school has been successful in promoting pupils' initiative and personal responsibility. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good teaching and learning throughout the school have helped raise standards.
- There are good cross-curricular links throughout; the curriculum is enhanced by many extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent; there are very good relationships throughout.
- Pupils' social and moral development are very good.
- The promotion of pupils' initiative and personal responsibility is very good.
- The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are very good.

What could be improved

- The quality of information to parents about what pupils are learning and the progress they are making.
- The collation and use of data that exists on pupil performance to track progress and achievement throughout the school.

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 made good improvements since the last inspection which took place in September 1997. Teaching has improved significantly and standards have been raised. In this inspection nearly three quarters of teaching was identified as being good or very good. There is now almost no unsatisfactory teaching compared with 16 per cent identified in the last inspection. The school has strengthened curricular leadership well. This has been assisted by the school's rigorous performance management system which has set appropriate objectives for all teachers. There is now a good curriculum policy as evidenced

by the long term planning framework which clearly defines what is to be taught in each year group. Co-ordinators provide good support and guidance in the subjects. Assessment procedures are used in all subjects with particular strengths in English, mathematics and science. Assessment information is not yet used to track systematically pupils' progress through the school. A weakness identified in the last inspection concerning the amount of information parents receive about what their children are learning has not been adequately addressed. The school's strategic planning procedures are now satisfactory. All staff and governors are involved in the school planning process. The school has made good progress in raising standards in information technology which are now good. Staff expertise in information and communications technology has improved significantly and the school has invested wisely in good computer hardware.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	E	C	C	well above A average above B average below average C well below D average E
mathematics	C	B	C	C	
science	C	B	C	C	

Pupils achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools and schools of a similar nature. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Boys have achieved higher standards overall. Over time, the trend in the school's results is broadly in line with the national trend although in 1999 standards in English were low. The school has met its agreed targets at the end of Year 6 because of consistently good teaching throughout the school. The targets for next year are challenging but achievable given this good teaching. Pupils' achievements are good given that the majority enter the school with below average standards. This good teaching helps pupils make up any shortfalls in their knowledge so that by the end of Year 6 most have made good progress. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests at age 11 are broadly similar to the national average in English and mathematics and only just below in science. The findings of the inspection confirm these results. In information and communications technology, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and standards are now above average. Previously, standards were below average. The school has made good provision for the teaching of this subject. Standards are also above expectations in art and physical education. Pupils achieve average standards in all other subjects including religious education. Pupils who have special educational needs have good provision and they make good progress. The very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language but who are fully fluent also make good progress and achieve average standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent: Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and about their extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: Pupils behave well in assemblies, lessons and at playtimes. They move around the school in a careful and orderly way and as a result the school has a calm and businesslike atmosphere
Personal development and relationships	Very good: Pupils work well together and they are extremely welcoming and polite. They have a clear understanding of the effect of their actions on others and are helpful particularly to their teachers.
Attendance	Good: Pupils arrive punctually and this contributes positively to their standards and progress.

The excellent attitudes and good behaviour of pupils is a very positive feature throughout the school. Pupils move around the school in a careful and orderly way. This creates a very calm atmosphere. There are very good relationships throughout and pupils have a high regard for one another. They respect each other's views.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	N/a	N/a	Good

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

Overall, teaching is good throughout the school and this is having a direct positive impact on standards. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons. Nearly three-quarters of all lessons were good or better of which one-quarter was very good. The strengths of teaching include the management of the pupils; this results in good behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to work by the pupils, effective use of support staff and resources, good pace of lessons, secure subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. Better lessons proceed at a good pace which keeps pupils interested and well motivated. Good use is made of the time at the beginning of lessons to check and assess pupils' previous learning before introducing new work. Teachers group pupils carefully, vary their activities and, where they are most successful, consider the best methods to use. However, in some lessons, teachers do not always manage their time sufficiently well to give pupils opportunities to reflect and consolidate their learning. The quality of marking is variable; often no points are given for future development. On occasion, the management and organisation of tasks took so long that it adversely affected pupils' learning.

Teachers' enthusiasm and their commitment to their work contribute to the good achievement and progress pupils make. The quality of pupils' learning is good largely because of the good teaching. Pupils learn and make progress in all years and in all subjects. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school.

Teaching in English was good or better in two thirds of lessons whilst in mathematics it was good or better in all but one of the lessons observed.

The consistently good teaching throughout the school ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and they make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum has a good breadth and balance. It is relevant to the needs of all pupils and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Good attention is paid to all subjects including personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: The provision for these pupils is good. Their needs are identified, they are given good support and, as a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school successfully develops pupils' personal skills. It makes very good provision for the moral and social development of pupils. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are strengths of the school. Very good relationships between all staff and pupils ensure that each child is supported well in both their personal and academic development.

The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory; the limited information parents receive prevents them from becoming more positively involved. The well-planned curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are strengths of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: Leadership and management in the school are good. The previous head took the criticisms of the last inspection seriously and addressed the concerns quickly. Senior managers make a positive contribution in driving up standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is effective. It fulfils its statutory functions well. It is able to challenge and support the school and has taken effective action to secure improvements
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: The school effectively monitors and evaluates its performance. Although there is no formal policy, monitoring of teaching and learning is now satisfactory. Performance management is firmly in place and this is contributing to the raising of attainment

The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Resources are used prudently and staff are deployed well.
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There is a suitable number of well-qualified staff. The accommodation is satisfactory and there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. Leadership and management have been good. The previous head offered good management in that he has enabled teachers to develop their skills for the benefit of pupils. He also established a good curriculum that systematically promoted pupils' learning. Governors have offered good support. The principles of best value are used effectively when making decisions in the use of resources, time and staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects children to work hard and do their best • Their children like coming to school • Their children make good progress • The teaching is good • The school helps their children become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like to see the school work more closely with them; they do not receive enough information about what their children are learning. • Parents would like to see a more interesting range of activities.

The inspection team agrees with all the strengths identified by the parents. Inspectors also agree that parents do not receive sufficient information about what their children are learning. However, inspectors consider that there is a wide range of activities within the school curriculum and many activities offered outside the normal school day.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. In particular, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels is well below the national average. In the most recent National Curriculum tests pupils aged 11 achieved the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, pupils' achievements were about average in all three subjects. These standards are confirmed by the inspection. In the tests over the last four years, pupils have achieved broadly similar results except for English in 1999 when their performance was well below average. The school disputes these results and maintains there were inconsistencies in the external marking for six of these pupils. Results in English improved to the national average in 2000. Overall, boys have performed better than girls and have exceeded the national average. However, girls have performed considerably better than boys in English but worse in mathematics and science. Girls' performance overall was exactly in line with the national average. The trend in the school's results for all three subjects over time is broadly in line with the national trend.

2. The school has met and exceeded its targets in the last two years and has agreed targets for 2002. The school is now very much focused on raising standards but will need to work hard to meet these targets of 78 per cent of pupils achieving level 4 and above in English and 74 per cent for mathematics. These targets are challenging. Given the good teaching throughout the school and the continuing good attitudes of pupils there is every possibility that these will be met.

3. Given that the majority of pupils enter the school with below average standards pupils' achievements are good. They quickly make up lost ground because of consistently good teaching from Year 3 onwards. The curriculum is well organised and this too promotes pupils' achievements. Higher attaining pupils also achieve well and make good progress particularly as very few enter the school having achieved the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests at aged seven. In the most recent tests at age 11, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels was broadly similar to the national average for English and mathematics and only slightly below in science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards from their starting points in most areas of their learning. They are well supported by a specialist teacher who keeps good records that track their progress. Pupils who have specific behaviour difficulties often make good progress towards targets that relate to their personal and social development. The very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language and who are fully fluent also make good progress and achieve average standards.

4. Overall, pupils make good progress from the time they join the school so that the majority achieve average standards when they leave and are well prepared for the next stage of the education in secondary school.

5. Standards in English are average and are similar to those found in the previous inspection for 11 year old pupils. Teachers have high and consistent expectations for pupils' listening skills. Consequently, pupils listen carefully in lessons and are able to discuss their work productively. Although they speak confidently and willingly they do not use more formal language and structures readily or with confidence despite there being opportunities for discussion and debate reflected in teachers' planning. As a result of good

teaching in literacy and other subjects, pupils are generally competent readers by the end of the key stage. Teachers are good role models for pupils when they read texts expressively. Guided reading sessions are well planned and, as a result, pupils are able to retrieve and collate information from a good range of texts, including the internet and can skim and scan text to make their reading more efficient. However, some higher attaining pupils do not yet read enough books that extend and broaden their experiences.

6. Pupils have good opportunities to write not just in English lessons but also in other subjects across the curriculum. Because of this, they are able to organise their writing for a range of purposes. They are able to write book reviews, newspaper reports, persuasive articles and poems and prayers. They are able to write with a range of punctuation, organise their work into paragraphs and spell correctly. Most have developed a neat cursive style of writing because it is specifically taught. There are good standards of presentation. Overall, pupils' achievements in English are good given their attainment on entry.

7. Standards in mathematics are average and are similar to those found in the previous inspection for 11 year old pupils. When they enter the school at age seven they have below average understanding and knowledge of mathematics but by the time they leave the school they have caught up and leave with average standards. Their achievements are good. At the end of the key stage pupils have a good grasp of number and computational skills. They work well in practical tasks and have a sound understanding of the concept of decimal notation. They have a similar level of understanding of the properties of shape, area and perimeter. The school has placed a very strong emphasis on the investigative element of mathematics. This emphasis has improved pupils' confidence in using mathematics. The mental and oral starts to lessons have increased pupils' skills in the use of numbers. Higher attaining pupils are using these skills effectively to solve problems.

8. Pupils achieve average standards in science by the end of Year 6. In the previous inspection, standards were found to be good despite pupils only achieving average results in the national tests in 1997 and 1998. The school has placed a strong emphasis on experimental and investigative science and this has underpinned their knowledge and understanding. By the age of 11, pupils know how to conduct investigations, make predictions, interpret their results and draw conclusions. Most have a clear understanding of the concept of a fair test. Their work is recorded in a variety of forms including the use of information technology. Pupils are able to recognise parts of plants, know that forces can be measured in newtons and can classify some changes as reversible and others as irreversible. Older pupils know that materials can be classified as solids, liquids and gasses and are able to investigate how changes occur when some solids are added to water. Pupils achieve well in science.

9. In information and communication technology at the end of Year 6, pupils achieve above average standards. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and reflects the level of investment the school has placed in the subject over the last few years. The computer suite is well used and contributes to pupils' attainment. Older pupils have well-developed abilities in using computers. They control them accurately, are adept in their data handling skills and know how to use control and sensing. They have good skills in using the internet and can use this for researching information. There are effective links with other subjects and this, too, helps raise standards. Pupils in a geography lesson used the internet to research the climate in Egypt and find the best value flights and hotels. The planned curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to reinforce standards.

10. In religious education by the age of 11, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time pupils leave the school they have a sound insight into the beliefs, festivals, symbols, traditions and literature of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Many pupils are able to retell Old Testament stories and they understand that sacred texts contain teachings and moral guidance that are helpful to people in their lives.

11. In art, by the age of 11, standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils achieve above average standards. In physical education, the good standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. Standards are average at the end of the key stage in design and technology, geography and music. In history, standards were judged to be above average in the last inspection. They are now judged to be average.

12. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment on entry has deteriorated. Given this, the school has worked hard to raise standards for its pupils so that they leave with overall standards similar to those that can be found nationally.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent. They arrive on time, ready for work. They are very enthusiastic about their learning and about their extra-curricular activities. Pupils speak with pride about their school and their work and other events such as a recent performance of Disney songs and dances. They are very motivated. This was evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on partitioning. They work in class with a sense of common purpose.

14. Pupils behave well in lessons. The majority of pupils are quick to respond to teachers' instructions and settle down to tasks well. In assemblies they listen and participate appropriately. They move around the school in a careful and orderly way and, as a result, the school has a calm and businesslike atmosphere. Year 3 pupils were particularly sensible as they walked back from swimming. At lunchtime pupils behave well; they are able to relax and chat as they eat. In the playground they play together well and make full use of the space for a variety of games. There was no evidence of bullying or racism seen during the inspection.

15. The school has a number of pupils whose behaviour is often more challenging but all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and disruption by these pupils is kept to a minimum.

16. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils work well together, for example, in a Year 5 art lesson, pupils worked well collaboratively as they designed and made Egyptian vases. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem and are very confident in speaking to adults. They are extremely welcoming and polite. Pupils have a clear understanding of the effect of their actions on others and are helpful particularly to their teachers. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and by the time they reach Year 6 they are mature and thoughtful young people. They are keen to use their initiative, for example, in a Year 3 Science lesson on plants, some pupils had undertaken independent research to answer questions posed by others in the class. There are opportunities to take roles of responsibility in each classroom and Year 6 pupils run the tuck shop, organise the flag system in the playground and some act as "buddies" to other pupils. They take these responsibilities seriously. Pupils participate well in an active school council where issues such as litter are discussed.

17. Pupils have a high level of respect for the feelings values and beliefs of others. They listen respectfully to staff and to each other and often break out in spontaneous applause when one of their peers achieves something well. This was evident in many plenary sessions at the end of the Literacy hour.

18. Attendance levels are good. Very few pupils are late. Those who arrive late are challenged and recorded appropriately. There have been no exclusions in the last few years.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching and learning is good when judged on a whole school basis. In 72 per cent of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or very good with 25 per cent being very good. It was satisfactory in 25 per cent and unsatisfactory in three per cent. The quality of learning reflects these figures closely. This represents an improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection when one sixth of the lessons were not satisfactory. Over the last four years teacher turnover has been high with some 73 per cent of staff leaving, including the long established head teacher and the deputy head teacher. Examples of good and very good teaching were observed throughout. Across the school, the good teaching is having a direct and positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and promotes good progress.

20. Throughout the school, good and very good teaching in a significant number of lessons is characterised by well-planned lessons and effective teaching of basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Strengths of teaching include;

- the management of pupils which results in good behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to work by them
- the effective use of teaching assistants and resources which means that pupils' receive the support they require to extend their learning.
- the good pace which keeps pupils interested and well motivated.
- the secure subject knowledge that teachers possess and the high expectations they have of pupils.

21. These are major influences on the good progress made by pupils. Teachers are skilled in finding different ways to question and use a range of methods to ensure successful learning for all. Teachers group pupils carefully, vary their activities and, where they are most successful, consider the best methods to use. Good use is made of the time at the beginning of lessons to check and assess pupils' previous learning before introducing new work. In most lessons, teachers praise pupils where appropriate and steer them skilfully towards clearer understanding. These features, together with the teachers' enthusiasm and their commitment to their work, contribute to the good achievement and progress pupils make. The quality of teachers' marking, however, is more variable and often no points are given for future development. Weaknesses in the two unsatisfactory lessons seen included a failure to develop subject matter through insufficient knowledge and management and organisation of tasks that took so long that it adversely affected pupils' learning. In some other lessons, teachers do not always manage time sufficiently well to give pupils opportunities to reflect and consolidate their learning.

22. In the school as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education,

music and art. It is satisfactory in religious education, geography, history and design and technology. A Year 6 literacy lesson embodied the features of the very good teaching found in the school. The teacher introduced the lesson with a clear discussion of the target for the lesson, linking it carefully to the pupils' previous work, which provided pupils with very clear idea of the next stage in their learning. The teachers' very effective use of questions helped to secure pupils' understanding of the structure of argumentative writing. Pupils were able to make relevant observations about the structure of the text based on school uniform and identify similar and opposing points of view. The teacher used the plenary session well to assess pupils' progress and to develop further their understanding of how language is used to convey opinion and to weight an argument. As a result of the teachers' high expectations, very well selected resources and challenging questions, pupils attained above average standards in this lesson. Similar strengths in the quality of teaching were also illustrated in a Year 3 numeracy lesson. The teachers' lively approach, high expectations and effective interaction with the pupils led to them all recognising right angles in turns and to using the four points of the compass. In science, the very strong emphasis given to developing pupils' enquiry skills is increasing their ability to use their knowledge and understanding and to apply it to planning their own investigations. Throughout the school, the very good ethos for learning is well established through the very good relationships between pupils and teachers.

23. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils develop their skills and knowledge well. Their individual education plans include clear targets related to literacy and numeracy and teachers plan lesson activities that are well matched to their needs. The co-ordinator and learning support assistants provide effective support both in lessons and when they are withdrawn for additional support in small groups. Teaching and learning support assistants know their pupils well and provide pupils with a secure atmosphere in which they can develop their confidence and social skills well.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school for all pupils are good. The school provides a broad curriculum for its pupils. This includes all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements. The balance of the curriculum is good. The school is continuing to maintain a suitable emphasis on the creative elements in the curriculum whilst taking effective steps to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

25. Key issues from the previous inspection included the need to strengthen curriculum leadership particularly that of the subject co-ordinators. There were also weaknesses in planning, provision of supportive schemes of work and insufficient provision to develop independent learning. There was criticism of the quality of liaison with the feeder infant school that affected progress in learning adversely. The school and subject leaders now monitor the curriculum planning carefully and ensure that it meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are supportive schemes of work for all subjects and the school takes positive steps to promote and develop independent learning skills. The school now works closely with the feeder infant school to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress in their learning. This represents a very significant improvement since the previous inspection.

26. The school has policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects including religious education. There is careful monitoring of planning to ensure that the work is

suitably challenging for all pupils. This includes different abilities and ages. All teachers use the monitoring findings effectively to amend and adapt planning to meet pupils' needs. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection.

27. The school makes very good provision for pupils' physical and personal development. It has successful and sensitive strategies for including pupils with learning and physical difficulties into all school activities. The science curriculum includes a suitable and relevant health education programme that encompasses sex education and drugs awareness. The school is successful in its implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Its use of pupils' skills in writing and number skills in all subject areas is very strong. The school correctly emphasises the investigative element of work in mathematics, science, art and music. This makes a positive contribution to the development of independent learning skills. The time allocation within the curriculum for the foundation subjects is adequate. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. These include a wide range of sporting activities as well as music, drama, chess and visits to places of interest. These activities broaden and enhance pupils' experiences. The inspection findings do not agree with parents' concerns about the lack of extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate enthusiastically in these activities.

28. The grouping of pupils enables all to make progress commensurate with their abilities. All pupils are given full and equal access to the resources within the school. All pupils are given equal access to the curriculum provided by the school. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons for learning support and music tuition. The class teacher ensures they receive support on their return to the classroom. However, there are no structured guidelines for the provision of this support. This does not ensure consistency of practice. Extra-curricular activities, including sport, are open to all regardless of gender, ethnicity or home circumstances.

29. The school has an effective policy for equality of opportunity. All members of staff are aware of the policy and its contents. Adults respect and value pupils and their contribution to school life. All members of the school community take pride in the school and care for their environment. Work in lessons takes account of pupils' differing abilities and has a clear sense of purpose. Relationships between pupils, adults and pupils/adults are good.

30. Statements about equality of opportunity are contained in school's aims and curriculum policy documents. The school makes good provision for lower attaining pupils. Suitably challenging provision is made for pupils of all abilities, including higher attaining pupils.

31. The school's overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

32. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school provides adequate opportunities for reflection in the daily act of collective worship. Pupils reflect on feelings such as loyalty and trust as they consider the meaning of friendship. This develops their awareness of the value of intangible things. The school incorporates spiritual opportunities naturally into many lessons. An example of this is seen when pupils' write prayers. One pupil, reflecting on the death of his Nanny, thanks God 'for putting her on your earth in the first place and for letting her be my Nanny'. There is an element of spirituality at the end of lessons when pupils reflect on what they have learnt.

33. The provision for the moral development of pupils is very good. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school teaches pupils the principles that distinguish right from wrong effectively. This begins on entry to Year 3 and increases as pupils' progress through the school. There is a strong code of conduct implicit in everyone's actions. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff provide good and effective role models. They ensure that their dealings with issues are firm, fair and consistent. Pupils have many opportunities to explore and develop moral issues within the curriculum and assemblies. For example, in one assembly, pupils recognise the moral issues surrounding the concept of loyalty. They consider the effect human beings have on the environment and issues about pollution. All pupils tidy away equipment and look after it carefully. This enables them to appreciate moral issues concerning other people's property. By the time they enter Year 6 pupils have a well-developed understanding of the effects of their actions on other people and on themselves. They respect their teachers and other adults who work in the school. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff and voluntary helpers maintain a calm and orderly community. This promotes purpose to the pupils' learning and to all school activities.

34. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. This is a significant level of improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 3 quickly develop independent attitudes to learning. Teachers build on and increase these opportunities as pupils progress through the school. Pupils develop their ability to work co-operatively and collaboratively in lessons very well. In mathematics and information and communication technology, for example, pupils work closely together when they investigate and solve problems. This encourages and promotes the development of social skills. The school prepares pupils well for their transfer to secondary school. It makes effective use of residential visits to enable pupils to develop a sense of group identity and acceptable group behaviour. All members of staff foster good relationships between pupils and between pupils and themselves. The school develops pupils' concept of citizenship through their participation in the work of the school and the wider community. It involves pupils in a variety of tasks around the school. For example, members of the School Council run a successful 'buddy' system to assist pupils who need help. Pupils have an effective involvement in the wider community, for example; they take part in music festivals and support a range of charities.

35. The school makes good provision for the cultural development of pupils. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils have many opportunities to develop awareness of their own culture. They visit local places of interest as part of their work in history and geography. For example, pupils investigate the geographical features of the local area when they visit the Tilbury Environmental Centre. They visit local museums and places such as Hatfield Park, Hever Castle, Braintree Museum or Colchester Castle. There is a marked improvement to the opportunities for pupils to develop awareness of life in a multicultural society. The school teaches pupils about other religions, cultures and beliefs. This happens during lessons such as history and religious education. Pupils learn about ancient civilisations in Greece, Egypt and India and compare them with present day life in those countries. They learn about the practices and beliefs of Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism. Books are checked for gender and race stereotyping and the school takes care to ensure that it presents positive images of cultures other than western. The school teaches pupils to value and respect a range of faiths and beliefs and prepares them well for life in a multi-cultural society.

36. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is good provision made for pupils' literacy support through the Additional Literacy Support

programme and where learning support assistants and the co-ordinator for special educational needs work with small groups of pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy takes place mostly outside the classroom in small groups from different classes. The school has identified the need to increase the number of learning support assistants in order to provide more support within the lessons. Individual education plans are well thought out and are reviewed regularly. Their targets include goals for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The pupil who has a statement of special educational needs has very good provision that is well matched to his ability and supports his very good level of inclusion in class activities and with other pupils. Annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are strengths of the school. Very good relationships between all staff and pupils ensure that each child is supported well in both their personal and academic development.

38. The school has good systems for Health and Safety and regular inspections of the site are undertaken. Good Child Protection procedures are in place. There is good coverage for first aid and detailed records of incidents are kept.

39. The implementation of the behaviour policy is effective and fair. Pupils understand the codes of behaviour and these are discussed regularly. There are a variety of rewards for good behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour at lunchtime is reported through a yellow card system. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are monitored very carefully. Pupils whose behaviour is more challenging are handled particularly well and supported by individual behaviour plans. Effective procedures are in place to deal with bullying and racism and there was no evidence of incidents of this nature during the inspection. Year 6 pupils who are on the school council act as "buddies" to the rest of the school to assist those pupils who have problems they feel they cannot bring directly to teacher. Lunchtimes are well organised and pupils are supervised well. This time is enriched further by the provision of a wide variety of clubs.

40. Procedures for attendance are applied consistently and registers are completed accurately. Attendance and incidents of lateness are monitored carefully and the school works closely with the education welfare officer where necessary.

41. Since the last inspection work has been undertaken on the area of assessment which was a key issue. Pupils are assessed in most National Curriculum subjects and procedures for assessment are now satisfactory. The assessment information gathered by class teachers enables them to have a clearer understanding of their pupils' achievements. This information is used to inform curriculum planning and this too has helped raise attainment. However, whilst the school collects comprehensive data on pupils' performance using a variety of tests, this is not collated within a whole-school assessment strategy. The absence of a comprehensive strategy makes the setting of individual targets for pupils and whole school targets very difficult. The school is aware that there is still work to do in developing this area. Whilst procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory there are sound procedures for monitoring their personal development. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to respond to their personal needs.

42. Overall the care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. The caring

ethos of the school is well reflected in the way in which all staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs have opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions in lessons are valued and their achievements are given good recognition. As a result pupils develop their confidence well. There are good procedures for identifying pupils' special educational needs. The responsibility of the co-ordinator for special educational needs for both the infant and junior schools ensures that the support pupils receive continues without interruption. Parents appreciate the continued contact with staff who know and understand their children. Reviews of pupils' progress against their targets take place regularly and useful records are kept of their progress. There is good liaison with a range of outside agencies.

43. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is experienced in her role which is shared with the partner infant school. She carries out her duties responsibly and effectively and maintains careful, well detailed records of pupils' progress and dealings with outside agencies. There are good links with both the infant school and the secondary school which most pupils attend. Staff from the secondary school visit to discuss pupils' needs and meet the pupils. Pupils visit the secondary school before they transfer. There is a designated special educational needs governor who meets regularly with the specialist teacher. Funds allocated for the support of pupils educational needs are used to good effect and the school makes additional contributions from its own resources.

44. Learning support assistants are well qualified and well motivated. They form an effective partnership with teachers to provide support both in and out of the classroom.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents have positive views of the school. Two thirds of parents responded to the questionnaire. The statements that received the highest support were that parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school, that the school expects children to work hard and that their child likes school. Over a quarter of parents are concerned about the amount of homework given by the school, the level of information they receive about how their child is getting on and the range of extra-curricular activities. A third of parents disagreed with the statement that the school works closely with parents. The small number of parents who attended the meeting also repeated these views.

46. The findings of the inspection team support all the positive views expressed by parents. The team, however, in contrast to parents, judge that the provision for homework is good and that the range of activities outside the curriculum is very good. The team felt that for the reasons outlined below the concerns about information and how closely the school works with parents are justified.

47. Parents receive limited information about the school and this area of communication is unsatisfactory. Although the prospectus and annual meeting for parents meet requirements and are well written and accessible there is very little provided about the taught curriculum. No recent meetings have been held to inform parents about aspects of the curriculum or wider education issues. There are opportunities for parents to meet with teachers after school and parents commented that all staff are very approachable. Consultation evenings are held which are well attended. The annual report for parents on each pupil's progress meets requirements but comments are often descriptive rather than evaluative. Opportunities to discuss the report with teachers are limited because the reports are distributed after the open day. The level of information available to parents was raised as a concern by the previous inspection team and little progress has been made. The new headteacher is aware that this is an area needing development as are the

governors who, for example, are planning monthly surgeries to deal with parents' concerns or queries.

48. The contribution of parents to children's work at school and at home is satisfactory. The majority of parents hear children read regularly and ensure that children complete their homework. Parents are invited into school and help with swimming. There is an active Friends of Giffards that raises considerable funds for the school as well as organising a range of social events such as end of term discos.

49. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory; the limited information parents receive prevents them from becoming more positively involved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. Leadership and management in the school are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection where there were some weaknesses identified. The school is now very much focused on raising standards and the school development plan, now coming to the end of its present cycle, has identified appropriate priorities for development which have been based on an effective evaluation of the school's needs. The new head is already assessing the school's needs together with staff, governors, pupils and parents in order to produce a new school improvement plan by the end of the summer term. The new head has a clear vision for the future focused on the further raising of attainment. The school is successfully meeting its aims which are reflected throughout all its work.

51. The role of the co-ordinators has been strengthened since the last inspection. For example, they now review and report on their subjects which now all have schemes of work, and they regularly monitor teachers' planning. This has impacted significantly on the quality of the curriculum offered throughout the school which is now good.

52. The governing body has improved since the last inspection. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Governors have been actively involved in development planning and take a keen interest in all aspects of the school. They have a clear view of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. There is a good measure of support and challenge in its work.

53. The school effectively monitors and evaluates its performance. Although there is no formal policy, monitoring of teaching and learning is now satisfactory. In particular, the head personally sees each pupil with their work twice per year. All teachers have been monitored and there are plans to develop a monitoring role for subject co-ordinators. Performance management is firmly in place and this is contributing to the raising of attainment in that objectives for pupil performance have been set.

54. There has been a significant surplus in the school's budget over the last two years. This can largely be accounted for by the failure to recruit a teacher to release staff, particularly the co-ordinators, to develop further their management roles. An appointment has now been made. The current surplus is now within acceptable recommended limits. The school has sufficient resources and teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. The head has plans to increase the number of teaching assistants to support teachers in their classrooms. Accommodation is satisfactory and the school benefits from a large play area and sports field. The extent of this outdoor provision has helped the school keep attainment in physical education good. Financial planning is well linked to educational planning through the school development plan; for example, the large investment in information technology has proved successful as this has led to a significant raising of

attainment in the subject. The head and governors have applied the principles of best value for some time and have sought to gain the best deals in staffing and resources. Specific grants are used well for the benefit of pupils.

55. The school has an effective policy for equality of opportunity. All members of staff are aware of the policy and its contents. Adults respect and value pupils and their contribution to school life. All members of the school community take pride in the school and care for their environment. Work in lessons takes account of pupils' differing abilities and has a clear sense of purpose. Relationships between pupils, adults and pupils and adults are good.

56. Day to day management is smooth and efficient. The administration and secretarial support add a quiet, calm and welcoming atmosphere on entry to the school. Good leadership and management have created a climate within the school which has enabled it make good improvement since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Devise a whole school assessment strategy that brings together the comprehensive data that exists on pupil performance and use this information to track pupils' progress and achievement. (paragraph 40)
- Improve the quality of information to parents about what pupils are learning and the progress they are making. (paragraph 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	25	47	25	3	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		357
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		63

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	42	37	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	33	38
	Girls	30	29	32
	Total	61	62	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (61)	78 (78)	89 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	31	34
	Girls	30	26	27
	Total	56	57	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (74)	72 (74)	77 (79)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	352
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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	573,593
Total expenditure	537,791
Expenditure per pupil	1,582
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,157
Balance carried forward to next year	73,959

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	357
Number of questionnaires returned	236

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	49	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	51	6	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	56	6	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	52	23	4	0
The teaching is good.	34	56	5	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	47	23	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	46	6	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	51	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	15	49	28	5	4
The school is well led and managed.	27	54	7	3	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	61	7	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	42	19	8	9

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

ENGLISH

61. Standards in English are similar to those found in the school's previous inspection and continue to be average for 11 year old pupils. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that standards were comparable with those in similar schools and that pupils achieve standards in line with national averages in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Standards over the last four years have risen at a similar rate to the national trend apart from a fluctuation in 1999 which the school attributes to some variation in the marking of the tests. The school met its agreed targets in English in 2000. Girls achieve slightly higher standards than boys. Inspection findings reflect the test results but found no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls.

62. When pupils enter the school reading skills are well below average and there are a below average number of pupils achieving the higher grades. Effective teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and by the age of 11 standards in all aspects of English are typical for their age. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and their work is well matched to their needs. As a result they achieve well and reach good standards when compared to their earlier attainment.

63. Teachers' high and consistent expectations for pupils' listening skills establish a high degree of regard for other people's opinions and by the age of 11 pupils' listen carefully in lessons and are able to discuss their work productively with each other. They participate confidently and willingly in whole class discussions at all ages through the school because the school encourages good respect for each other's opinions. A good range of group and paired activities develops pupils' confidence well. Pupils interact effectively and communicate their findings to the rest of the class clearly. Opportunities for formal discussion and debate are appropriately reflected in planning but pupils do not use more formal language and structures readily or with confidence.

64. By Year 6, pupils are generally competent readers of the texts they encounter in class. This is the result of the good teaching in literacy and other subjects in the curriculum. Teachers are good role models for pupils when they read texts expressively and often dramatically. Year 5 pupils were captivated by their teacher's reading of 'Tomorrow is a Great Word' when the main character is trapped in the aftermath of an earthquake. They were, as a result, very effectively involved in the discussion which followed and their interest and understanding was well enhanced. The teacher's use of very effective open ended questioning enabled pupils in Year 6 to analyse more formal and complex language when they considered a number of quotations from philosophers and historians on slavery in Ancient Greece. For example, 'How do you know he is in favour of slavery? What do you learn of people's attitudes to slaves?' Guided reading sessions are well planned and focus carefully on developing pupils' understanding of their reading and their appreciation of how language is organised for different effects. Pupils retrieve and collate information from a good range of texts including the internet and are familiar with techniques such as skimming and scanning to make their reading more efficient.

65. Pupils are able to talk about the books they are reading for themselves discussing aspects of some of the main characters and offering their opinions. However, some higher attaining pupils are reading comfortably within their range and do not read enough books that extend and broaden their experiences.

66. Pupils have good opportunities to write in their lessons in English and also in other subjects across the curriculum. As a result, pupils in Year 6 are able to organise their writing for a good range of purposes. For example, they write book reviews about their reading; newspaper reports about the turn of the Millennium; instructions for a variety of activities; imaginative responses to music; persuasive articles on aspects of the environment; poems and prayers. They use a good range of charts, graphs and annotated diagrams in their work in science, geography and design technology. This range of experience helps pupils to begin to select vocabulary appropriately, to use a range of punctuation and spelling correctly and to organise their ideas into paragraphs. The more formal range of vocabulary and structures such as those used in argumentative writing is still being consolidated and many pupils need support in this aspect of writing.

67. Most pupils develop a neat, joined style of writing because it is specifically taught and good standards of presentation are encouraged. Pupils' work is therefore well organised, neat and they take a pride in its appearance.

68. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. All teaching in English is satisfactory and in more than half the lessons teaching is good or better. Across the school, teachers understand how to teach reading and writing effectively. Teachers are well organised and plan effectively to ensure that the work they expect pupils to do links well with what they have learnt previously. They also communicate clearly to pupils what they are expected to learn. As a result, most lessons have a purposeful pace and pupils have a productive concentration on their work. These qualities were seen in a very good lesson in Year 6 where pupils were preparing a piece of discursive writing linked to their work in history on the Ancient Greeks. In a brisk introduction pupils were given the literacy focus for the lesson and how the lesson linked to their previous lessons on the differences between fact and opinion. Pupils were immediately clear about the direction of the lesson and were able to concentrate well. Through a series of well-focussed questions pupils established a framework which would help them structure their writing. There was a good level of challenge in the material used in the lesson and tasks were well matched to pupils' abilities. Additional guidance, such as writing frames that show the beginnings of paragraphs, helped less confident writers. Pupils were therefore all involved in their work and discussed their ideas in pairs and groups productively. By the end of the lesson pupils had developed well their understanding of how to extract information from a complex selection of texts. As they shared their findings they felt a real sense of achievement. The feeling of success was well fostered by the very positive relationships in the classroom and the teacher's high expectations for pupils' self-organisation.

69. Teachers have good strategies to help pupils to develop an awareness of themselves as writers and, in Year 3 lessons, teachers wrote alongside their pupils in class and shared their own writing at the end of the lesson. This gave an enhanced status to the process of writing and pupils were able to appreciate the experience more vividly. They shared words and phrases they had found interesting and made a list of useful words to include in their own work.

70. Good use is made of pupils' individual literacy targets and group targets in lessons to provide clear steps for development and to help pupils be more effective in understanding what they need to do to improve their skills.

71. In the very few lessons where teaching is less effective this is generally reflected in a slower pace of learning. This is usually the result of less efficient organisation of activities or lower expectations for the amount of work pupils' achieve.

72. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual action plans, which are followed carefully by both teachers and learning support assistants. In the secure supportive atmosphere of classrooms, pupils feel confident in contributing to class discussions. Where pupils are involved in work in small groups, such as in their Additional Literacy Support, they develop their skills and their understanding well because teachers and learning support assistants plan interesting activities that are also linked to the work of the rest of the class. These strategies result in good teaching which help pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.

73. Management of English is very good and is a significant factor in the full and effective implementation of the Literacy Strategy. The literacy co-ordinator, who is a skilled teacher herself, has established very clear and relevant priorities for the development of the subject. She leads a very effective level of consultation and discussion about the development of pupils' English skills in the school and makes good use of the support of the local education authority advisory services. The teaching of literacy has been monitored in all classes. Good assessment procedures in the subject are being developed but these are not yet consistently in place in all classes. The school has identified the need to ensure that practices are consistent across the school and is working effectively towards that goal.

MATHEMATICS

74. By the age of 11 pupils achieve average standards in mathematics similar to those expected from this age group. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. There has been a marked improvement in the progress pupils make and in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This, together with the impact of the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, is having a positive effect on standards for the younger pupils. The good quality displays in mathematics give an effective level of support to pupils' work in the subject. These, and the analysis of pupils' work, provide further evidence of learning, progress and standards.

75. In the most recent National Curriculum tests pupils achieved results close to the expectations for their age. There is an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5. Performance in comparison with similar schools is also average. This represents good progress from a below average start. The school's results show year on year improvement. There are carefully planned structures in place to ensure this continues.

76. When pupils enter the school in Year 3 they have a below average understanding and knowledge of mathematics. The majority of pupils are taught very well in Year 3. This helps to develop their mental computation skills rapidly and there is an equally rapid increase in their ability to use mathematics across other subjects. An example of this is the work the pupils do on angles of turn and co-ordinates. This gives an effective level of support to work in geography. Teaching in Year 3 is not consistent. It is better in two out of the three classes. The quality of learning and progress reflects this. Teaching in Year 4 is consistently good. This is reflected in pupils' learning. Teachers build carefully on the pupils' developing skills and they continue to learn quickly. For example, most pupils know how to create patterns using reflective symmetry. This consistently good quality of teaching continues through Year 5 to Year 6. It ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress because of the careful planning that provides different challenges to meet individual needs. An example of this is the progress pupils make from Year 4 as they move on to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the axis of symmetry. Most pupils know how to translate shapes accurately. Pupils in Year 6 have a good grasp of number

and computational skills. They work well in practical tasks and have a sound understanding of the concept of decimal notation. The analysis of pupils' work shows a similar level of understanding of the properties of shape, area and perimeter. It also provides evidence of satisfactory standards in data handling. These are all improvements since the previous inspection.

77. The school correctly places a great deal of emphasis on the investigative element of mathematics. This is a considerable improvement from the previous inspection and is having a positive effect on pupils' confidence in using mathematics. The majority of pupils have well-developed skills in number. These are helped greatly by the structured oral sessions at the beginning of each mathematics lesson. All teachers encourage pupils to join in these sessions. They make skilful use of carefully targeted questions to ensure there is a suitable level of challenge for differing abilities. The higher attaining pupils in Year 5 use these skills very effectively to solve problems. For example, they use computers to work out the cheapest flights to Egypt. The teacher supports pupils who are not as strong in their understanding to achieve success.

78. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was very good in six out of twelve lessons. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' learning. Teaching in five out of twelve lessons is good. It is satisfactory in one lesson out of twelve. There are examples of very good and good teaching in all year groups. In these lessons, the pupils make the best progress in their learning. The teachers set very clear and specific targets for the pupils to achieve and expect them to succeed. They use questions effectively and plan work that interests, enthuses and motivates pupils. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher uses practical methods to demonstrate angles of turn. The teacher reinforces this very effectively by taking the class into the playground for further work on a large set of compass points. The pupils enjoy this activity and consolidate their learning through a practical and relevant summing up session. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. Where it is satisfactory the tasks are less demanding and the lesson is not as well organised. This means that the pupils' learning slows and restricts standards in that class. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving the targets on their individual education plans. They receive effective support that ensures they carry out practical tasks as well as written calculations.

79. The curriculum leader for mathematics has a very clear determination to raise standards. Monitoring of planning is systematic and thorough. There is, as yet, no structured monitoring of teaching. This is because the head teacher is only four weeks into his appointment and monitoring systems are under review. The current published scheme of work is under review because it does not place sufficient emphasis on practical and investigative activities. The national recommendations for numeracy are firmly in place. This is helping teachers to plan their lessons in more detail and with greater emphasis on structure. The subject leader is currently reviewing the use of assessment procedures. The results of this review will be used to track pupils' attainment and progress more closely and give a whole-school picture.

80. There are many improvements since the previous inspection. The most significant improvements are the quality of subject leadership, the quality of teaching and the increased ability of pupils to investigate and use mathematics across the curriculum. These improvements are having a positive impact on learning and on standards for the younger pupils in the school.

SCIENCE

81. By the end of the key stage pupils achieve average standards in science. This finding is in line with the school's results in the most recent National Curriculum tests. When compared with the results of similar schools, the standards were also average. Trends over time from 1996 to 2000 reflect a similar pattern of improvement found across the country as a whole. The findings of the previous inspection judged attainment to be above average despite pupils only achieving average results in the national tests in 1997 and 1998. However, given their prior attainment the present pupils' achievement is good. This inspection finds no significant difference in performance of boys and girls, both of whom achieve average standards.

82. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, are achieving well for their abilities and make good progress. This is because the emphasis given to experimental and investigative science is particularly effective.

83. By the age of 11, pupils' recognise parts of plants, such as stamen and stigma, know that forces can be measured in newtons and classify some changes as reversible and others as irreversible. They investigate and learn that how much an elastic band stretches depends on the force acting on it, make careful measurements of length and represent the data in a line graph. They know how to conduct experiments, make predictions, interpret their results and draw conclusions from their investigations. Their work is recorded in a variety of forms using graphs, charts, diagrams and is aided by the sound use of information and communication technology and close links with mathematical measurement. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the use of information and communication technology was judged to be a weakness. Most pupils have a clear understanding of how to make a fair test. Pupils of above average ability, discuss their work confidently using appropriate scientific language, but in general, older pupils do not include sufficient detail in their explanations. From the analysis of pupils' work teachers' place a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding through the context of scientific enquiry. For example, in their work on materials and their properties, pupils in Year 3 carry out investigations using magnets and in Year 4, they explore thermal insulators as materials that can help to keep things warm or cool. Pupils in Year 5 know that materials can be classified as solids, liquids and gases and by carrying out an investigation learn that changes occur when some solids are added to water.

84. The quality of teaching is good overall with a number of strengths that have a positive impact on pupils' learning in lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is an improvement in the teaching of science since the last inspection where there were instances of teaching being less than satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and explanations given are accurate and interesting. Work is planned to meet the learning objectives which are shared with pupils and reinforced during and at the end of lessons. This engages the interest of pupils who work with enthusiasm and in most instances sustained concentration.

85. In all lessons, the management of pupils is very good and the content is pitched at an appropriately challenging level. Pupils are highly motivated in lessons and behaviour is good. This positively contributes to pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and pupils respond well with their presentation of work. Science work seen during the inspection, from most pupils, was tidy with legible handwriting and well illustrated. In lessons where the best practice is seen, for example, a lesson based on investigating the effect light and water has on the growth of plants, the teacher shared learning objectives with the pupils, ensured that scientific vocabulary was well understood and confidently maintained a brisk pace. Her standard of questioning was high and she constantly pushed

the pupils to give reasons for their replies by always asking 'Why? Back this up, I want a reason?' As a result of this, the teacher raised the pupils' attainment to above average. There is good evidence of progression of skills as pupils move through the school particularly in their ability to set up their own investigations. A very good example of this was in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher gave pupils the opportunity to devise an investigation to prove or disprove a hypothesis. This covered a range of experiences that included friction, air resistance, mixing, dissolving and how plants take in nutrients. The level of interest was very high and was maintained by allowing the pupils to explore and take responsibility for their own learning. As the lesson progressed, all pupils put forward ideas about the methods they were going to use and were able to explain how they were going to make the test fair. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, learnt from this lesson as they were required to work closely with each other and share ideas. A particularly effective aspect of science teaching throughout the school is the opportunity for pupils to work together to discuss and develop their own ideas. This helps raise pupils' achievement.

86. Science is well supported by a school policy and scheme of work, based on the nationally recommended guidelines. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the lack of a comprehensive scheme of work was judged to have an adverse effect upon the continuity of work and progression in the development of skills. Links with other subjects are strong and the science curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors to the school that includes the Tilbury Environmental Centre and the Quantum Theatre for Science. Assessment procedures are good and include regular formal assessments at the end of each unit of science taught. The recently introduced a system to track pupils' progress throughout the school has yet to become fully effective. The leadership of the subject is good overall. The co-ordinator's role is sufficiently well developed to enable him to have a good overview of the teaching and pupils' learning. Learning resources for science are good and in addition the school has a wildlife area and pond in the school grounds.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Pupils make good progress in art and design and standards are above average by the end of the key stage. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. It reflects the consistently high quality of teaching. The quality of work on display around the school gives a clear picture of pupils' increasing level of skill. This work illustrates the breadth of pupils' knowledge and ability to use a suitably wide range of techniques.

88. The quality of teaching is consistently good. This makes a strong contribution to the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve. The carefully thought through scheme of work underpins all planning and enables teachers to plan challenging and stimulating activities. This ensures that, throughout the school, pupils are interested in their artwork. They work hard and with much enthusiasm to develop their skills. An example of this was seen in a Year 3 class where pupils experiment with a range of different modelling materials. They quickly learn how to achieve pleasing results with wire and tin foil and with paper mache. The pupils using malleable material talk sensibly and confidently about the difficulties they encounter. These experiences enable pupils to understand the properties of different materials and link effectively with their work in science.

89. Pupils' learning is reinforced further by the discussions they have on the work of famous sculptures and artists such as Henry Moore, Alberto Giacometti and van Gogh. This enables pupils to understand how different styles create a variety of effects. Inspirational and careful teaching ensures that pupils learn the skills they need to look

closely at objects and make effective representational sketches. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. By Year 6, pupils know how to use perspective and shade in their drawings and create correctly proportioned watercolour paintings. Throughout the school pupils have ample opportunities to work with a range of materials and tools to produce two and three-dimensional pieces of work. They apply their skills effectively to illustrate work in other subjects such as geography, English and history. An example of this is the work on rivers that is prominently displayed. All pupils use their skills in information and communication technology to create striking posters and illustrate work. Pupils' work makes a positive contribution to developing their awareness of art from a range of cultures. It makes effective links with religious education. For example, pupils in Year 4 use Aboriginal art to inspire their work on journeys.

90. There have been a number of improvements in art since the previous inspection. For example, the school has a clear and comprehensive scheme of work that details exactly what pupils are expected learn. It identifies how to develop pupils' skills and knowledge of techniques. This has improved the quality of teaching. As a result of the improved teaching pupils' skills in looking closely at objects, drawing them carefully and evaluating their work has improved. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator who monitors planning and keeps records of progress through the use of sketchbooks for all year groups. All these improvements are helping to support the high quality of teaching and standards in the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards in design and technology are average at the end of the key stage. They are similar to that in 1997 when the school was last inspected. However, improvements have been made particularly in the long term planning framework over the four-year groups which plans for a range of designing and making assignments using a variety of materials. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when there was no scheme of work. This scheme of work now allows for skills in designing and making to be consolidated over the key stage. It also enables pupils' learning to be systematically reinforced and they make the expected gains in skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. Older pupils now use information technology to research and investigate products as part of the design process. This, too, is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.

92. The maintenance of average standards by the end of the key stage is largely owing to satisfactory teaching and the long-term framework that has linked many of the design and making assignments to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 have designed and made torches using electrical circuits as part of their science study of electricity. Year 5 pupils have designed and made Egyptian vases and bowls from mouldable materials as part of a history study of Ancient Egypt. Over the four years pupils have made gains in their learning so that by the end of the key stage their skills, knowledge and understanding enables them to design and make products of a satisfactory quality.

93. In the two lessons observed teaching was at least satisfactory. In one lesson it was good. The good teaching promotes pupils' design and product research skills. This was evident when pupils were able to select a variety of media through which to research initial ideas for their designs of musical instruments including information technology. This good teaching allowed pupils to investigate musical instruments and see how these were constructed. However, skills in disassembly are not systematically taught as part of the design process. There were no opportunities to see pupils making their products but in

discussion with Year 6 pupils it is clear that they have experienced a wide range of activities using a range of materials. They are able to describe the design and make process using their sketches but product evaluation is limited. There are insufficient opportunities for all pupils to evaluate their products and comment on how they would make further improvements.

94. There is sufficient evidence of the success of a range of assignments using a variety of materials. For example, older pupils designed and made slippers using textiles. These slippers are of good quality. There is evidence of pupils having average skills in the use of small hand tools such as saws and glue guns when they made moving puppets and photograph frames. Work in resistant materials indicates that pupils have marked, cut, joined and assembled their products with increasing precision. Over the key stage there are also opportunities for food technology. Pupils in Year 3 designed and made sandwich snacks whilst Year 5 pupils undertook an interesting project on biscuits. This assignment required them to research existing products and design and make their own including the packaging. There was a sound evaluation of this product undertaken by the pupils.

95. Both in the lessons observed and in discussion with pupils it is clear that they enjoy the subject. They are able to work co-operatively when they share research materials. They respect each other's efforts and are very willing to share their ideas and their work. This reflects the teaching well. In the lessons observed, pupils displayed good attitudes and behaviour. They investigated the musical instruments sensibly and with care. This is largely owing to good classroom management and the independence of the pupils. Pupils received good support from a teaching assistant in one lesson. This further promoted their good attitudes and behaviour.

96. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the school's position and is aware of what needs to be done to improve further teachers' subject knowledge through more in-service training.

GEOGRAPHY

97. As was observed in the school's previous inspection, standards in geography are average for the age of the pupils by the end of the key stage. Owing to timetable and curricular arrangements, only a small number of geography lessons were observed during the inspection. However, judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils in Year 6 and an examination of planning for the subject. Some lessons were also observed in which geography was an additional focus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs make sound progress through the school.

98. By the age of 11 pupils have an appropriate knowledge of the local area. In Year 5 they consider reasons for the growth of their local area Corringham and conduct surveys on relevant issues such as parking. Pupils in Year 4 make plans and maps of their areas using aerial photographs indicating main features using a key and simple coordinates. Throughout the school pupils have good opportunities to develop their investigative skills and to discuss topical geographical issues such as flood damage; the implication of foot and mouth epidemic in their area and noise pollution around the school.

99. Analysis of work and discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that they have a sound knowledge of river systems and the water cycle. They understand and can explain an appropriate range of the special vocabulary related to river systems, such as tributary and delta. However there are too limited opportunities for pupils to develop their fieldwork skills under the existing curricular arrangements. The school is aware of this shortcoming

and has made arrangements to provide pupils with a greater range of fieldwork experiences. Pupils develop their knowledge of the geographical features of other localities in their studies of India and the village of Chombokalli. They investigate localities linked to holiday destinations and use the Internet to identify associated weather patterns.

100. Teaching and learning in the subject is satisfactory overall although there was evidence of some very good teaching where geography had a shared focus with another subject. In a very good lesson in Year 5 pupils were using the internet to book flights to a hotel in Egypt and using a CD ROM to research facts about Egypt. The lesson was very well organised and pupils were given a very clear understanding of what they were to do. As a result, they were able to offer very good discussion and make informed choices. The class was very well managed with productive relationships that encouraged a good level of pupil participation and interest. At the end of the lesson, pupils were given good opportunities to say what they had learnt. They were able to show that they had a good understanding of some of the important features of Egyptian geography that was well supported by their studies of Ancient Egypt in history. Pupils achieved their lesson objectives well. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the organisation of the tasks took so long that it adversely affected pupils' learning.

101. Pupils' recorded work shows evidence of useful links with other subjects such as their use of numeracy in developing their understanding of the points of the compass in Year 3 and their use of literacy when they analyse the argument for and against turning Shellhaven into a container port. Less effective elements of lessons are concerned with organisation and the productive use of time in lessons and the adverse effect on the amount of work pupils are able to achieve.

102. The co-ordinator for the subject is very new to the post and is still developing her understanding of elements of the role. She has however been able to identify appropriate and relevant priorities for the development of the subject. Assessment in the subject is one of the areas identified as an area needing improvement. Currently, there is insufficient use of assessment to help pupils improve their work and to develop their understanding further. Although the local area is used appropriately to enhance pupils' geographical understanding and skills the school has recognised the need to develop further the opportunities for older pupils to undertake a wider range of fieldwork.

HISTORY

103. Standards in history by the age of 11 are average and are similar to those usually seen in pupils of this age. In the school's previous inspection standards were judged to be above average. Since the previous inspection there have been changes in the curriculum to which the school has responded effectively. Some very useful opportunities have been created for pupils to make links with their work in other subjects. During the inspection, lessons were seen in Years 4,5 and 6. Evidence from these lessons, an analysis of pupils' work in all years and discussions with teachers and pupils have formed the basis for judgements. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs achieve well across the school.

104. As in the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The good development of pupils' literacy skills while they are in the school helps them to read and record their work more effectively and to develop their understanding well. Teachers plan carefully to enhance pupils' experience in history through well-planned links with literacy, art and geography. This was seen in one good and one very good lesson in a Year 6 class where pupils were studying Ancient Greece. In literacy, they studied a range

of extracts from Greek philosophers and historians that showed their attitudes to slavery in Greek society. Pupils were able to make relevant observations about the information they had extracted forming the basis of a discussion about slavery. All pupils were involved in this challenging activity because the teacher had provided good supportive materials for pupils to use and because she used well focussed questions to encourage all to contribute to the discussion. In their history lesson, this knowledge helped pupils to make some thoughtful observations about everyday life in Ancient Greece.

105. In Year 4, pupils were able to use their good level of knowledge about the Vikings to empathise with Anglo Saxon peoples who experienced Viking raids. They were able to consider some of the reasons why the Vikings raided other countries and why people were so afraid of them. Pupils used their knowledge and their literacy skills effectively to produce well-written accounts of the raid from the point of view of one of the monks at Lindisfarne.

106. Pupils' sense of chronology is developing appropriately when they compare how aspects of their lives are different from the period they are studying. This is most clearly evident in the good range of work Year 3 pupils produce in their study of life in Victorian times. They compare Christmas time one hundred years ago and in the present day and consider some of the differences between their school and schools in that time.

107. Teachers' plan a good range of interesting activities that are well enhanced by visits from such groups as Legion 1111 and visits to places such as Hever Castle and Braintree Museum. As a result, pupils are interested and show enthusiasm for the subject. They are given appropriate opportunities to use their research skills through the use of a range of books and information and communication technology. Good use is made of desk top publishing programmes for pupils to present their findings in a range of different ways, such as in creating a poster advertising gladiatorial games in Ancient Rome.

108. However pupils' experience of how history is interpreted is a weaker area of the work. Although there are some planned opportunities that are evident in pupils' work this is not developed systematically throughout the curriculum nor is it sufficiently evident in the work of older pupils.

109. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator for the subject has made good use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines and the school's previous planning to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The units of work are providing good support for teachers' planning. Assessment in the subject is not yet sufficiently frequent or rigorous to ensure that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The co-ordinator has established clear priorities for the development of the subject, including the development of her monitoring role and assessment in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. The majority of pupils achieve above average standard in all aspects of information technology by the end of the key stage. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in their learning and there is a considerable improvement to the quality of teaching. The quality of displays of work around the school provides further evidence of the standards that pupils' achieve.

111. The quality of teaching is good overall. No teaching is less than satisfactory. Teaching in three out of eight lessons observed was very good. This is a very good improvement from the unsatisfactory teaching identified at the previous inspection. The

school has a comprehensive scheme of work with clear learning objectives and carefully planned steps of progress. This assists teachers and gives them a good level of support and confidence. It reflects positively on the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make. The computer area provides pupils with a very good range of equipment to support their learning.

112. All teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills. They also make very effective links with other subjects. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils learn how to apply their mathematical knowledge to produce pie and bar charts from previously collected information. By Year 4, the majority of pupils know how to rotate text and pictures on the screen. They use these skills to create posters linked with work on the environment. Effective links with work in geography prepares Year 5 pupils very well for life outside school. They research the climate in Egypt and find the cheapest flights and hotels. Teachers build on these skills carefully and, by the time they are in Year 6, the vast majority of pupils have well-developed abilities in using computers. They control them accurately, are adept in their data-handling skills and know how to use control and sensing. Pupils respond positively to their work and are keen to learn. They take a great deal of pride in producing quality printouts. For example, some Year 4 pupils printed extra copies to give to their friends and to other adults.

113. The co-ordinator monitors all lesson planning and gives considerable support to less confident colleagues. This has a positive effect on the quality of teaching and, in turn, on standards. The school keeps samples of work from each year group. These provide teachers with a clear picture of progress. They also give a secure base for planning future work. The planning ensures that all pupils use their skills very effectively to support work in other lessons. This enables pupils to understand the wider use of information and communication technology.

114. There have been many improvements to information and communication technology since the previous inspection. For example, teaching is considerably better and there is a marked improvement to standards. The school has a scheme of work that gives a very effective level of support and guidance to teachers and ensures all aspects of the subject are covered. The co-ordinator monitors planning and achievement and there are clear instructions for using the equipment. These are all significant improvements since the previous inspection and support the quality of teaching, learning and standards effectively.

MUSIC

114. Pupils throughout the school attain the average standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities. This judgement is similar to the findings of the school's last inspection. However, while attainment in listening and appraising has improved, the quality of singing does not reflect the same standard as that achieved in the previous inspection, apart from the performance of pupils who belong to the choir. There were no peripatetic instrumental lessons at the time of the previous inspection. This is much improved and the tuition provided by specialist teachers for guitar, violin, woodwind and keyboard now enhance the provision for many pupils. In assemblies, the pupils generally sing in tune with appropriate control of pitch but few exhibit a lively style or demonstrate control when using different volume levels to create moods. However, the opportunity to sing in the choir and in the music club, contributes well to aspects of pupils' performance. By the age of 11, pupils' show a sound understanding of different styles of music and compare and evaluate them using the appropriate vocabulary. All pupils,

including those with special educational needs make good progress in this aspect of music because much of the work is carried out in groups and pupils support each other well.

115. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good. Music is taught by all class teachers who have sufficient subject knowledge to impart basic musical skills. The scheme of work is instrumental in providing detailed guidance to help teachers plan their lessons and ensure the progression in pupils' musical ideas. These findings show an improvement on the judgements of the previous inspection when the quality of teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. The teaching of music is often imaginative and captivating. For example, in Year 3, after the teacher had explored the use of 'body' percussion with the pupils she provided a wide selection of materials and utensils for them to create their own percussion instruments. The teachers' lively approach and enthusiasm caught the imagination of the pupils and retained their interest throughout the lesson. Showing very good command of the subject, through a mix of questioning and explaining the teacher was successful in getting all pupils to make a percussion instrument, identify the sound it made and liken the sound it made to that of a musical instrument.

116. In Year 6, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to listen to different styles of popular music, such as blues, calypso, heavy metal, traditional jazz and reggae and use these well to develop the pupils' appraising skills. In these lessons, the teachers' emphasised the importance of listening carefully and introduced pupils to the correct musical terms and symbols used for dynamics in music. In Year 4, the pupils learn to combine musical elements of tempo and groups of beat to produce the mood and effect of part of a Canon by Pachelbel. The teacher ended the lesson well, with pupils' exploring their feelings about the music through the use of movement. In this lesson, the higher attaining pupils were provided with the opportunity to extend their musical skills and work at the keyboards with the teacher assistant. Hymn practices provide sound opportunities for pupils to experience the pleasure of singing together and in choir practice the music co-ordinator makes effective use of her own voice to support and improve the pupils' performance. The quality of learning is often improved in lessons because pupils enjoy music and their interest enables them to make the best use of opportunities provided by their class teachers. There are however, few opportunities for pupils to record their own compositions and singing and evaluate and improve on what they have done.

117. The music co-ordinator provides good leadership of the subject. She has the knowledge and expertise to play the piano during acts of worship and hymn practices and leads the choir well. However, she has had no opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. The music policy and scheme of work provide very good guidelines to support the teaching of music. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in music are in the early stages of development. Pupils have the opportunity to join the choir and music club and music tuition is available from the peripatetic music service. Currently, at least 60 pupils take advantage of the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument. The school's resources are adequate and there are sufficient percussion instruments to support the teaching of music. However, their quality is variable and some are in need of repair. The collection of music for pupils to listen to as they enter the hall for assemblies is limited. Musical productions and seasonal celebrations give opportunities for all pupils to be involved in performances but the curricular provision is not enriched by musicians invited into the school to perform for the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. Standards in physical education are good by the end of Key Stage 2 and are similar to that found in the last inspection. There are no differences between the standards

achieved by boys and girls. The school has worked hard to maintain these standards and this is reflected in the enthusiasm of both teachers and pupils for the subject.

119. These good standards have been maintained partly owing to the comprehensive physical education curriculum that is spread over the four years of the key stage. The scheme of work encompasses all of the programmes of study and all pupils have equal access to all aspects. It also allows pupils to build on their skills and knowledge progressively from the time they enter the school to leaving at age 11.

120. Standards are above average because teaching is consistently satisfactory and often good throughout the school. Teachers approach physical education with a good subject knowledge that is readily passed on to the pupils. For example, in dance lessons, teachers are able to demonstrate to pupils appropriate movements which express their feelings about music. In these lessons, pupils are able to select and use skills. They show a measure of co-ordination and control and are able to respond appropriately. Teachers have a range of skills throughout the curriculum that they are able to pass on to pupils. They have high expectations of pupils in lessons. Pupils are expected to create their own performances whether it be in dance, gymnastics or games. They are taught to evaluate critically their own and other's performances. Most lessons are well planned so that skills are progressively developed. In a Year 6 games lesson, pupils developed throwing, catching and fielding skills as a prelude to being taught the game of rounders. The teacher made these skills progressively harder as the lesson developed.

121. Over a school year pupils experience a good range of activities including dance, gymnastics, games and athletics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience outdoor activities. This wide curriculum offer makes pupils enthusiastic and contributes to their good attitudes and behaviour. An example of their good attitudes was shown in a games lesson when they set about organising themselves and setting standards and rules for the game. They demonstrate a good tolerance of each other and a growing sense of responsibility. In this lesson most were able to link skills, techniques and ideas and apply them accurately. In athletics, pupils often work in pairs to time and measure each other's performance. These results are recorded on a record card. Over the weeks, pupils are able to see their performances improve. This also contributes to their sense of maturity in the way they approach physical education activities. As in the last inspection, there are good procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress. The athletics record card is an element of self-assessment.

122. As was found in the last inspection, the school has limited swimming to pupils from Year 3. Standards in swimming are well above average. All pupils can swim the minimum 25 metres and most go on gain awards well beyond this. Pupils' enthusiasm for swimming is demonstrated by their willingness to continue with the sport beyond Year 3 in their own time.

123. The enthusiasm of both teachers and pupils to physical education is also evident in the large number of extra-curricular activities available. Teachers give freely of their time. These activities include the entering of teams in local competitions in soccer, rugby, athletics, netball and cross-country running. The school has had a good measure of success in these competitions over the last few years. This also demonstrates good standards.

124. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in maintaining the good standards. He has updated the schemes of work and ensured that teachers have had successful in-service training. His enthusiasm is reflected throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. It was only possible to see three religious education lessons during the inspection. Judgements about standards include evidence from the analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. The evidence indicates that pupils' standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is the same as the finding of the previous inspection. The caring ethos of the school supports the teaching of religious education well and makes a distinctive contribution to pupils' personal development. All pupils make sound progress in the subject as they move through the school. Their achievements are closely related to the quality of religious education teaching in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress especially when they receive well-targeted support in lessons.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is overall, satisfactory, which broadly reflects the judgements of the previous inspection, when teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. The analysis of work shows that by the time pupils are aged 11 they have a sound insight into the beliefs, festivals, symbols, traditions, and literature of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. They learn that they can belong to different sort of groups in their life, those they can choose, such as sport clubs and those they have no choice over, such as their family. As a result of the thoughtful teaching in Year 6, pupils entered into the discussion openly and wrote their own personal ideas of groups to which they belong. Their knowledge and understanding of the major units of Christianity are well established. Many pupils know some Old Testament stories, such as Moses and the Exodus, David and Saul and the story of Ruth. In their study of the history of the Jews they have looked at aspects as diverse as the story of the siege of Masada, the holocaust and the creation of the modern state of Israel. Pupils in Year 5 understand that holy texts, such the Bible, contain teachings and moral guidance that are helpful to people in their lives, such as the story of the Good Samaritan. Through this they learn of the work of the Christian charity, the Samaritans. They also learn to appreciate the importance of prayer in their lives and show great sensitivity when writing their own prayers. For example, one child wrote:

Dear God,

Around three years ago, my Nanny joined you in Heaven. I would like to thank you for putting her on your earth in the first place and for letting her be my Nanny.

127. As a result of well-structured teaching, pupils in Year 4 have a satisfactory understanding of how Jews celebrate their Sabbath and learn about the ceremony and customs associated Shabbat. Pupils in Year 3 visit the local parish church and put quite searching questions to the vicar to find out what happens in the church, such as, 'Is the water holy? A strength of the teaching and learning of religious education is the way teachers present the subject and enable pupils to present their work in a variety of styles. For example, pupils in Year 3 draw the story of 'The Lost Sheep' in cartoon style while in Year 4 they design 'wanted' posters of Jesus. This approach also ensures all pupils can participate at their own level of knowledge and understanding. The well-planned lessons correspond to the locally agreed syllabus and are very well supported by the detailed guidelines provided by the education authority. Most teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding of aspects of the subject they are teaching and offer good opportunities for discussion. However, in the one unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher's knowledge was weak and the lesson taught insufficiently researched. Consequently, misleading information was given to the pupils that clearly had a detrimental effect on their learning. In general, however, teachers create a climate in which pupils feel secure to reflect on, share

their ideas and ask questions. Relationships are always good and the pupils and teachers respect one another's views and ideas.

128. The clear policy and detailed scheme of work effectively ensures the progressive development of the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Since the last inspection the school has successfully implemented the Essex Agreed Syllabus "Open Worlds" and the co-ordinator is in the process of introducing an innovative form of assessment to provide evidence of pupils' learning. The subject is well resourced. Good links are maintained with the local churches, but there have been no visits to places of worship for faiths other than Christianity. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and to the very good ethos of the school.