

INSPECTION REPORT

**RICHARD de CLARE COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Halstead

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114765

Headteacher: Mr D Iles

Reporting inspector: Mrs Wendy Simmons
23674

Dates of inspection: 26th to 29th June 2000

Inspection number: 198147

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Parsonage Street Halstead Essex
Postcode:	CO9 2JT
Telephone number:	01787 472153
Fax number:	01787 475 143
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body, Richard de Clare Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Broomhead
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Wendy Simmons	Registered inspector	Music, Equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Terry Elston	Team inspector	English, Information technology, Geography.	How well are pupils taught?
Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	Religious education, art, children aged under five.	
Anthony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Mathematics, History, Design and technology, Special educational needs.	
Bob Lever	Team inspector	Science, Physical education, English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants, "Thule", 60 Joy Lane, Whitstable,
Kent, CT5 4LT 01227 273449

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

5

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved?
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

9

The school's results and achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13

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

15

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

17

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

18

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

19

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

22

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

24

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

28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Richard de Clare Community Primary School educates 398 boys and girls aged between four and 11. Throughout the school, there are more boys than girls and this is most evident in the Reception year. This school is larger than most primary schools. The school has 58 pupils who are aged five or under in the two full-time Reception classes. The number attending has increased in the last three years. Pupils come from a broadly average range of social backgrounds, although there is a higher percentage of disadvantaged pupils in comparison with other local schools. Two per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language; this is slightly above the average for most other schools. About one per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 20 per cent, which is just above the national average and has increased recently. The school has 139 pupils on the register for special educational needs which shows an increase since the last inspection and is well above the national average. There are four pupils who have a statement of special educational need, which is slightly below the national average. Pupils enter school at below average standards. The school shares a sprawling site with the Youth and Adult Education Centre. The 14 classes have a variety of buildings, separated by a public pathway.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Richard de Clare is an effective school that gives satisfactory value for money. The capable leadership of the school provides a clear direction towards good improvements. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are achieving well for their capabilities, although higher achieving pupils are not sufficiently stretched in English and science. In Year 6, standards in English, science and information technology are below those found in most other schools. This is mostly due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs and insufficient resources for information technology. Standards in design and technology, religious education and art are above those found in most other schools. The school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses.

What the school does well

- The pupils are achieving good results in mathematics for their ability.
- Standards in writing are high at Key Stage 1.
- At Key Stage 2, standards in design and technology, religious education, and art are above those found in most other schools.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in Year 6. The senior staff are very good role models in improving teaching and pupils' attainment.
- Special educational needs provision is very good. The school successfully meets a very wide range of needs and pupils are very well integrated.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed and shows good development since the last inspection
- Delegation to staff is very good and is resulting in good improvement in the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology, especially control technology, the use of the Internet and its use in lessons.
- Assessment information is not used sufficiently to support teachers' planning for pupils with above average abilities in their work in aspects of English and science.
- Assessment procedures do not cover all subjects.
- The quality and range of reading opportunities are not sufficient to develop fully pupils' reading.
- Pupils' awareness of different cultures is insufficiently developed and is not supported well enough by resources or visits.
- The governors are not fulfilling all their statutory requirements including, the provision for the information technology curriculum, aspects of health and safety and monitoring attendance and compliance with the requirements for corporate worship.
- The library, the play area for children under five and the space for physical education are not fully developed.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last OFSTED inspection in 1997 found that there were serious weaknesses in the school, many of which concerned leadership and management. This inspection finds that the school has made a good improvement since 1997. Leadership has been enhanced to provide an effective management structure and regular monitoring by governors takes place. The school's development planning is now broadly satisfactory. These factors have helped to promote improvement. Teaching has improved, especially at Key Stage 2. There has been fluctuation in standards in English, mathematics and science during the last four years, although they are broadly average when compared nationally. There has been very good improvement in mathematics throughout the school. At Key Stage 1, standards in writing have improved. At Key Stage 2, standards have improved in design and technology, art, music, religious education and geography. Information technology at Key Stage 2 has declined to below standards found in most other schools. The curriculum and assessment have improved. The provision and management for special educational needs show very good improvement. Behaviour is now good. The school is maintaining good standards for children under five. The targets for further school improvements and the capacity to succeed in implementing them are good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	B	E	C	A	well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	C	D	C	B	
Science	C	D	C	B	

This table shows that pupils achieved average standards in 1999 compared with all schools and above average standards in mathematics and science when compared with similar schools. Attainment in English was well above the average when compared with similar schools. The findings of the inspections show lower standards in English and science compared with previous year, largely due to the high number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. However, standards in mathematics show good development and are similar to those found in most other schools. Attainment in information technology is below that found in most other schools. In religious education, art and design and technology, pupils are achieving standards that are above those found in most other schools. Overall, pupils are achieving well for their abilities. However, higher achieving pupils are not quickly identified to ensure that they are fulfilling their potential in English and in science. By the age of five, pupils are achieving standards similar to those found in most other schools. In Year 2, standards are similar to those found in most other schools, although pupils' attainment in writing is above average. The school has set realistic targets for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall. There has been good improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. A few boys act inappropriately in a some lessons. Occasionally, support assistants are not well deployed to help teachers with pupils who have difficulties with their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Pupils respect one another's views and collaborate appropriately. Personal development is hampered by the lack of a well resourced library. For children under five, personal development is good overall, but is restricted by insufficient outside resources. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly satisfactory. Absences are insufficiently monitored and recorded and unauthorised absence is high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. Eighty-nine lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons and of this, 65 per cent was good or better. In total, 24 per cent of teaching was very good. Three lessons were unsatisfactory and all of these were due to inappropriate behaviour of pupils, usually despite very good efforts to address this by skilled teachers. There are considerable strengths in the Year 6 teaching, with over 50 per cent being very good or excellent. The senior management team is successfully contributing to the high standards of teaching. There are particular strengths in the teaching of mathematics, design and technology and religious education. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers have strengths in teaching basic skills and good knowledge of subjects. Their planning is good and they employ effective teaching methods and management of pupils. Teaching of information technology is satisfactory but it is hampered by the lack of resources. Literacy is taught well, but opportunities for frequent reading are insufficient. Numeracy is also taught well and results in good learning. The quality of learning is good. Writing at Key Stage 1 is a strength of pupils' learning, especially in Year 1. However, at Key Stage 2, the pupils frequently produce small amounts of work and their ideas are not sustained. Furthermore, work is not always well presented and there are inconsistencies in spelling and punctuation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory and has improved considerably since the last inspection, most notably in mathematics, writing at Key Stage 1, religious education, design and technology, aspects of art and geography. There has been general improvement in most subjects. However, there has been insufficient overall improvement in information technology and the subject does not meet National Curriculum requirements. The curriculum for children under five remains good, except in the lack of appropriate outside play space and resources. The range and storage of books limit pupils' independence and wider appreciation of literature.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is a real strength of the school and shows very good development since the last inspection, when there were weaknesses. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to develop effective systems to ensure that these pupils are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall, but there are missed opportunities to monitor and track pupils' acquisition of English and few resources to support their work. Teaching is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual development is satisfactory. Moral and social development is good. Cultural development is unsatisfactory overall, as pupils are not developing a strong enough appreciation of different cultures and an understanding of the multicultural nature of society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring environment and there is generally effective support for pupils' welfare. Currently, the governors are not doing written assessment of health and safety issues and this is unsatisfactory. The school has been informed of where improvements can be made in health and safety issues. Assessments of pupils' achievements have improved but are not available in all subjects.

The school works well with parents. Relationships are good. The parents' association provides additional funding to support pupils' improving attainment. Parents are better involved in their children's learning at Key Stage 1, than at Key Stage 2.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall and shows good development since the last inspection. There is a strong sense of team effort. The senior staff are leading developments well. Delegation of responsibility is very good. The subject co-ordinators are developing their roles effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have worked hard to improve the school since the last inspection, especially their monitoring role. They are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to ensure further developments. There are several areas of statutory responsibility which are not complied with, as noted above, and this is unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There are strengths in the monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance at the start of school and in mathematics. The school has been less successful in identifying higher achieving pupils. There is good use of data to support average and lower achieving pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources satisfactorily. Funding is being used to raise standards. The development plan is appropriate, but is not set beyond 2001. Furthermore, it does not break down projects into very small steps, which are carefully costed.

There are weaknesses in resources, which were also identified, in the last inspection. These largely concern the range, storage and access of library books. The accommodation is poor overall. The development of the library, accommodation for physical education and information technology resources has been held up due to the delay in starting building work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like coming to school.• The staff are caring and support their children.• Teachers have high expectations of their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extracurricular activities for younger pupils.• Greater opportunities for sports provision.• The garden area in the infant playground.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views of the school and agree that there are few extra curricular activities for younger pupils, although provision at Key Stage 2 is very good. Sporting provision is satisfactory. The garden has too many inappropriate plants.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The 1999 national tests show that, by the time pupils leave the school, they achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools. When the pupils' achievements are compared with similar schools, they are achieving standards in English which are well above the average. In mathematics and science, pupils are achieving above the national average. When the school's results for 1999 are compared with 1997 and 1998, they show some fluctuations with a good improvement between 1998 and 1999. Standards in English dropped significantly between 1997 and 1998 and then improved in 1999. Standards in science between 1996 and 1999 are variable, but lower than the national average overall. Trends over time show that attainment in English, mathematics and science, when taken together, is broadly average when compared nationally. The school has set challenging targets for improvement over time for the numbers achieving the expected Level 4, although the targets for improvement in the higher Level 5 attainment in aspects of English and science are less well identified. The current Year 6 has 36 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, which is well above the average. The targets for improvement reflect this. The school clearly recognises the differences in girls' and boys' attainment and has taken part in a county research programme to monitor boys' attainment in particular. The school has satisfactory evidence showing that it recognises the underachievement of girls in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics.

2. The findings of this inspection are that pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards that are below those found in most other schools in English, science and information technology which represents lower standards than those found by the school's previous OFSTED inspection. Attainment in mathematics is similar to that found in most other schools and to those found at the time of the school's last inspection. In the last year, the school has paid very good attention to the development of mathematics in the school. In design and technology, religious education and art, attainment is above that found in most other schools. In all other subjects, pupils achieve average standards for their age. Lower attainment in English and science is due to two main factors. Firstly, the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Secondly, the lack of identification and challenge for higher achieving pupils which has resulted in fewer pupils attaining the higher Level 5 results in their work and tests. In addition, the findings of the inspection note that the current Years 5 and 6 have experienced several periods of unsettled teaching due to staffing difficulties earlier in their time in the junior school. The current good and very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is having a positive overall effect on pupils' behaviour and improving results. Furthermore, the impact of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is satisfactory and that of the National Numeracy Strategy is good, and both are aiding pupils' improving attainment. Throughout the school, pupils are achieving well for their abilities, with the exception of higher achievers at Key Stage 2 in English and science, especially the number of girls reaching Level 5 work. Achievement at Key Stage 2 in information technology is hampered by lack of sufficient resources. There are also resource and organisational constraints which hamper independent learning and extension work in English, including the lack of an easily accessible and a well resourced library. This was also identified in the last inspection report.

3. In English, at the age of 11, standards in speaking and listening are average. Standards in writing and reading are below average and show lower standards than in the 1997 inspection, when standards were above average. Many pupils talk confidently and listen well and show an appropriate understanding. Most pupils accurately read a range of appropriate texts. Lower achieving pupils read with growing accuracy but often find it hard to work out new words by putting sound and letter patterns together. The most capable readers read accurately and fluently. However, they are not reading from a sufficiently challenging range of texts and find it hard to talk about authors and express their own reading preferences. Moreover, opportunities for pupils to read frequently on a daily basis are underdeveloped and reading skills are not systematically taught to allow pupils to find and interpret information quickly. In writing, pupils use their imagination well and handwriting is usually well formed. However, standards in punctuation and spelling are variable and, in some cases, presentation is unsatisfactory. Pupils' output is frequently small and ideas are not sustained consistently enough.

4. Attainment in mathematics at the age of 11 is a strength of the school as, despite the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, they are achieving standards which are broadly similar to those found in most other schools. This shows the impact of very good teaching in Year 6, and the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has resulted in good progress for all pupils whatever their ability or gender, including those with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. In Year 6, pupils handle numbers for meaningful problem solving purposes although some find it hard to make the best use of multiplication tables. They find the perimeters of shapes and produce graphs to show the results of surveys they have made using information technology.

5. In science, attainment in Year 6 is below that found in most other schools and the percentage achieving above average standards is low for both boys and girls. Moreover, work does not sufficiently identify greater challenge for higher achieving pupils. Indeed, assessment procedures are not being used to their best advantage in identifying these pupils. Although pupils engage in a variety of work, there are few opportunities for them to devise their own investigations and experiments. Work for all pupils is hampered by their skills in recording and presenting work to a high standard. They understand about human and plant growth, the identification and classification of materials and magnetism and electricity. In the school's last OFSTED report in 1997 it was noted that this area of the curriculum required further development. Since then, there have been satisfactory improvements in developing the curriculum but the use of information technology to support work is limited.

6. In information technology, standards of attainment are below those found in most other schools and show a decline since the last inspection when they were judged to be average. Overall, progress is too slow as the breadth of learning is restricted. This is largely the result of insufficient resources and limited access to computers to support work in class lessons as the information suite is not easily accessible without a support assistant being present. Word processing skills are broadly average, but control technology and use of the Internet are insufficiently developed.

7. Attainment in religious education is above the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in Year 6. Standards in design and technology are also above those found in most other schools. This shows good improvement since the last inspection where there were weaknesses in both of these subjects. In religious education, pupils are acquiring a good understanding of different faiths, although resources to support their learning are limited. In design and technology, pupils are confidently designing, making and modifying their work to improve their designs. The teaching by the headteacher and religious education co-ordinator has a very positive effect on pupils' higher than average attainment.

8. In art, the high quality teaching of water-colour skills is having an impact on pupils' attainment in Year 6 which is above that found in most other schools. Pupils have made good progress in drawing and painting since the last inspection. However, skills are not developed progressively enough as the subject does not have a clear scheme of work. There are also limited opportunities for pupils to broaden their appreciation of multicultural art. In history, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of ancient and more recent history and are developing empathy and appreciation of the lives of historical characters. In geography, pupils know about rock and river formation and can compare different localities. The work on the residential trip enhances pupils' attainment significantly. However, there are insufficient atlases and globes for wider research work. There has been good development in the subject since the last inspection, when attainment was below average. In music, pupils attain overall standards which are similar to those found in most other schools, although skills in performing and composing with instruments are less well developed than singing. There are insufficient opportunities to widen pupils' understanding of different cultures through music. The work for the local music festival was of a high standard. Pupils who receive additional instrumental music tuition achieve higher standards of attainment and talented and gifted pupils are well supported. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection as aspects of Key Stage 2 music were then judged to be unsatisfactory. In physical education, pupils take part in a range of physical activities which are appropriate for their abilities and age. However, in swimming, pupils achieve higher standards overall, this is due to the very regular practice and specialist teaching of skills.

9. The 1999 national end of key stage test results for pupils in Year 2 shows that compared with all schools, standards in reading were average. When reading results are compared with similar schools, the pupils achieved well above average attainment. In writing, standards were above the

national average compared with all schools and well above when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, standards were below the national average when compared with all schools. However, when compared with similar schools, pupils attained average results. In science, assessments made by teachers showed that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was above average. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was average, except in their understanding of life processes, which was lower than average. Since 1999, the school has focused attention on raising the standards in mathematics, especially through the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has been successful. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results in reading, writing and mathematics are compared for the past four years, they show that the performance of pupils in reading and mathematics was broadly average. In writing, it was above average. Girls achieved higher standards than boys in reading, mathematics and writing to an above average percentage. Boys achieved average standards in reading and above average results in writing, but their attainment in mathematics was below the average. Since 1999, the infant teachers have been very careful to monitor boys' attainment and this has been very successful in raising their attainment in mathematics.

10. In Year 2, the findings of the inspection show average attainment in speaking, listening and reading and above average attainment in writing. This shows a good improvement in writing since the last inspection and this is a considerable strength of attainment. Pupils listen attentively and make suitable responses although some have a limited vocabulary. Nearly all pupils read simple books accurately and many pupils write interestingly. In mathematics, there has been good improvement in the last year, which has resulted in attainment which is similar to that found in most other schools. The pupils solve simple mental problems correctly, add and subtract numbers to 20, recognise two dimensional shapes and record data on bar charts. Standards in science are also similar to those found in most other schools. The pupils make predictions, understand what promotes good health, understand why some materials are useful for certain purposes and can make a bulb light up in an electrical circuit. In information technology, standards are average for seven year old pupils in word processing skills and broadly average in other aspects of the curriculum, although higher attainment is hampered by lack of resources as noted in the Key Stage 2 section above. In religious education, few lessons were seen but other evidence indicates that standards meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, for example, understand that the Bible is a special book.

11. In all other subjects, pupils achieve standards similar to those found in most other schools. In art, the pupils' drawings show appropriate attention to detail and, in design and technology, they sketch their ideas suitably before making, for example, Victorian beach huts. In history, the pupils have studied the story of Grace Darling and are able to compare this with modern methods of rescue at sea. The pupils sing tunefully but their appreciation of music is under developed. In physical education, they have appropriate ball skills for their ages and in geography they make sound use of atlases.

12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their own learning targets. They achieve standards that reflect their potential and, in general, they are well supported in lessons. There is good planning, teaching and assessment of their specific needs, thereby ensuring that they make good progress overall.

13. Pupils who have English as an additional language achieve similar standards to pupils of the same age. This is because almost all are fully fluent in English. For pupils who are less fluent, their attainment is not consistently well monitored and resources are too few to help them recognise new vocabulary in books which also have their first language printed in them. Overall, pupils are confident in their use of English in social situations and they make good progress.

14. Pupils start school at the age of four with lower than expected levels of attainment in speaking, listening, reading and knowledge of the alphabet. However, their appreciation of books and enjoyment of reading are slightly above the average found in Essex. Their understanding of writing is average. In mathematics, they are broadly average in their understanding of simple numbers and mathematical language. Personal and social skills are considerably lower than the average, including their ability to collaborate, concentrate and work independently. The number of boys and girls who achieve higher than average scores in the assessments made on entry is consistently low, whilst the number achieving lower scores remains high.

15. The findings of this inspection match the 1997 findings. By the age of five, the pupils have made good progress and achieve similarly to other five year olds across the country in their personal

and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The school has effective systems in place for making good use of its initial assessment information. There is particularly good progress in personal and social development and in language and literacy. The children learn to listen carefully and to take turns. They speak confidently and are eager to take part in discussions. The children sort objects into suitable groups and understand the life cycle of a frog. They show good levels of dexterity when cutting and sticking, however, the lack of a well-equipped, secure and attached play area for children under five hampers their physical and social improvement. This is because these children are not able to play co-operatively often enough. The foundations of some formal aspects of music are good, and children have made very good progress. Children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, given their level of attainment on entry.

Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

16. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they are generally well behaved. Relationships in school are very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and punctuality is good. This is a much more positive picture than that found at the last inspection.

17. As in the last report, children under five respond well to their teachers, and most are developing sound social skills. They engage in activities with gusto, work well together and help each other. Attitudes to learning in Key Stage 1 are good. Pupils show great interest in their work and are proud of their achievements. They form constructive relationships with one another and with their teachers. In Key Stage 2, nearly all pupils are attentive and well-motivated. They are keen to answer questions, work independently and share their ideas well. However, independent learning opportunities are limited in science and in using library skills. A small number of boys occasionally find concentration difficult and are uncooperative. However, the situation is much improved from the last inspection. Participation in extra-curricular activities by pupils at Key Stage 2 is good. There are too few opportunities for pupils' personal development to be enhanced by greater awareness of different cultures.

18. Behaviour is now good overall and, in many cases, very good. Pupils understand the school rules. They move about the school in a very purposeful and orderly fashion. They are very polite and welcoming to visitors. In assemblies and in personal and health education lessons, pupils listen very well to their teachers and are thoughtful and sensitive in their discussions. With the exception of the few boys in Key Stage 2, pupils treat resources with respect and are courteous to staff. They are tolerant and patient to those with special educational needs. There is no evidence of bullying. These findings reflect the views of parents, who expressed some reservations about behaviour in Key Stage 2. There were ten fixed-term exclusions last year of one pupil who has now left the school. Although support assistants are supporting behaviour well, occasionally, their deployment is not consistently helpful to teachers.

19. Pupils willingly take responsibility in the school. Younger pupils take registers to the office and have classroom duties. Older pupils have a good range of responsibilities. These include helping with assemblies and at lunch times, as well as listening to younger pupils read and running the tuck hop. The 'class rep' system gives all pupils a strong sense of responsibility, which they take very seriously.

20. Attendance figures are in line with national averages. Unauthorised absence is still twice the national average. This is due to a small number of families with attendance problems, who do not inform the school of the reasons for pupils' absence. Attendance is not consistently monitored and this is a weakness.

21. In general, most pupils with special educational needs behave well, especially when fully supported. They are generally well integrated into lessons and only on a few occasions, when the assistant had left the class, was there a behavioural problem. On occasions the deployment of support assistants is not helpful enough to some teachers in a few lessons where pupils' behaviour has the potential to become demanding, for example, in some physical education lessons in Year 5.

22. Children in the Reception year feel safe and secure, which enables their confidence to develop. Their attitudes to school are good: they are eager to learn, interested in new information, enjoy stories and rhymes, and like to explore. Their behaviour is good for their age: they sit quietly, learn to take turns and help one another, and listen attentively. Independence is encouraged well by teaching and

assistant staff, and opportunities are built into lessons and activities. Relationships between children and between adults and children in the Reception year are good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is good overall, and promotes pupils' learning well. During the inspection, 89 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in nearly a quarter of lessons, good in four out of ten and satisfactory in three out of ten. Three lessons were unsatisfactory, one in each of Years 3, 4 and 5. Parents believe that the quality of teaching is good, and the figures show a significant improvement from the previous OFSTED inspection when 17 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory.

24. The quality of teaching and learning is good for children aged under five, as it was in the previous inspection. During this inspection, in more than eight out of ten lessons, the quality of teaching and learning observed was at least good and in nearly one in four lessons, it was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching or learning was seen. Teaching in the Reception year is good. Relationships and presentation of lessons to children are very good, and the management of pupils is good, and often very good indeed. Subject knowledge is thorough, and the teaching of basic skills is both effective and able. Planning is very thorough and detailed, and individual and group assessments are made daily which provide notes for the next steps in planning. This is very good practice and supports well the good teaching and learning which is taking place. Teaching is planned to meet the needs of children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, and does so well as all groups are appropriately challenged. Good strategies are employed in teaching, notably the use of first-hand experience in mathematics and in investigations, and the use of appropriate language. There is plenty of purposeful involvement of pupils and use of structured play activities suitable for the age group. Imaginative approaches capture the interest of the children and this maintains motivation. All areas of learning well taught, and aspects of investigative work and of music are very well taught. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of children's learning and their progress. Children's learning is good, and all ability groups, including those with special educational needs, do well for their capabilities and their previous learning.

25. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with well over half the lessons at least good, and none unsatisfactory. Teaching in Year 1 is the best, where two thirds of lessons were good or better, whilst in Year 2, one third was of this quality. This variation results in different rates of progress in the two years. Teachers' planning is thorough, but occasionally provides too little to extend higher achievers. Teachers show a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach, and all use resources well to make lessons interesting, so that pupils enjoy learning. Their direct teaching works well, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, and promotes pupils' learning of basic skills effectively. Their management of pupils' behaviour is generally good, but better in Year 1 than in Year 2. In Year 1, the strengths of the teaching were exemplified in a literacy lesson, where pupils were highly motivated by a chocolate cake produced by the teacher, and could hardly wait to talk about it. The teacher structured pupils' talk skilfully so that they searched for more and more imaginative words for their descriptions. The teacher then used questions very well to make pupils use their imagination to consider: "How will Mum find out that the cake had been eaten?" The teacher managed their excitement very well, so that all listened to everyone's ideas. Their progress was very good. In Year 2, although all the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, pupils' behaviour is not always managed well enough to make the best of the teachers' enthusiasm and good ideas. Consequently, time is sometimes lost as the teachers' have to remind pupils not to call out, or fiddle with pencils, and this affects the speed of their learning.

26. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and pupils make good progress. In one third of the lessons, the teaching was judged as very good or excellent, and in nearly two thirds, it was at least good. Against this, in three lessons out of 51, the quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory, because too much time was lost controlling pupils' behaviour or insufficient attention had been given to inappropriate behaviour. The teaching is particularly good in Year 6, where teachers' expectations are particularly high, and pupils work hard to meet teachers' demands. In the school's previous OFSTED inspection, the quality of teaching at this key stage was affected by teachers' insecure subject knowledge, slow pace and a low rate of challenge. Teachers have generally improved in these areas. Their knowledge is good, and this gives pupils confidence to ask questions. The pace of lessons is generally brisk, and pupils move quickly on to the next task.

They all plan for the different levels of attainment in the class, but not always well enough to extend the learning of the higher achievers to the full. Assessment information is often less helpful. In literacy lessons, for example, although work is set for different ability groups, teachers give too few opportunities to pupils who read particularly well to skim and scan text, and conduct their own research. Most teachers keep a tight control on pupils' behaviour, and apply rewards and sanctions effectively. In one of the most effective lessons, for example, the teacher sent a pupil who insisted upon calling out to the back of the room. Realising his mistake, this pupil immediately raised his hand to answer the next question. The teacher rewarded him by selecting him to answer, and then praising him, both for his correct response, and for putting his hand up, and this pupil had learned a valuable lesson. A small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory when teachers struggle to manage pupils' behaviour. In these lessons, teachers' strategies are not consistently applied, and, for example, pupils who are told not to call out are rewarded for shouting out a correct answer. This results in pupils being unsure of what is expected of them, and the whole class making slow progress in the lesson. Assessments at the end of lessons are good, but wider assessment procedures are not fully integrated for all subjects. Moreover, formal assessments in English and science are not giving sufficient recognition to the needs of the higher achieving pupils.

27. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good. Their comments are helpful and direct pupils to how work can be improved by comments such as "...this is good work, but you need to think more about where full stops should go". Teachers set homework appropriately. This starts with reading and number practice in the infants, and builds up to some challenging extended topic work in Year 6.

28. Throughout the school, the teaching of basic skills is good overall. Teachers have introduced the National Literacy Strategy appropriately and the Numeracy Strategy has been implemented to a good standard. Teachers have worked hard to improve pupils' writing, and, as a result, most write with imagination and in a neat style, although the presentation of work in science is of variable quality. The teaching of basic reading skills is satisfactory, but the school does not take every opportunity to provide focused reading sessions where teachers, for example, teach how to tackle new words or how to progress with more challenging reading skills. In general, reading is not practised frequently enough. Teachers are particularly good at teaching numeracy skills, and some sessions are excellent in the way they give pupils a thorough understanding of number. Mental mathematics sessions are brisk, and are well focused on speeding up pupils' responses to questions fired at them. As a result, pupils' attainment in mathematics is significantly higher than in other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning is good for children under five in the Reception classes. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, history, design and technology and in music, when taught by a subject specialist. Art teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and at Key Stage 2, it is good. Teaching in religious education is very good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Overall, the teaching of information technology is satisfactory but it is hampered by the lack of both resources and the tracking of pupils' progress. In science and physical education, teaching is satisfactory across the school as a whole. It was not possible to observe the teaching of geography at Key Stage 1, but teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory.

29. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers work closely with support assistants in helping pupils who have special educational needs. They mostly plan work that is appropriate for these pupils, and ensure that they are fully integrated. However, in some classes such as English, parts of lessons are too long for pupils with special educational needs, and they cannot sustain interest. Occasionally, teachers need additional help with pupils with behavioural difficulties and support assistants are not consistently well deployed to help teachers to the best possible effect.

30. The teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. Pupils are supported by an assistant and most are fully fluent in English. However, where pupils are not totally fluent, the school is missing opportunities to develop English by using resources that recognise the other languages of pupils. The rate of development in fluency in English is not well formalised and monitored by senior staff. Furthermore, these pupils have family histories and experiences that are not integrated into the whole life of the school. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to broaden the cultural awareness of all pupils in the school.

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

31. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum where these apply, except in information technology where the full programme of study is not taught in Key Stage 2. It reflects the aims of the school and the commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. Religious education follows the locally Agreed Syllabus and the school provides well for health education, sex education and attention to drug misuse through the science curriculum and through planned lessons in personal, social and health education. The school is successful in offering a satisfactory range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils that interest and motivate them.

32. Overall, issues raised in the previous inspection report regarding the development of schemes of work for all subjects have been addressed well. The curriculum now ensures that pupils' learning builds and extends what has been previously learnt. The school has ensured that the requirements for religious education, music, geography and design and technology, which were not fully met at Key Stage 2 at the previous inspection, are now in place. Standards are now average for music and geography and above average for design and technology and in religious education. Aspects of water-colour artwork are now above average.

33. The quality and range of nearly all opportunities for learning for all children in the Reception Year are good, and show improvement since the last inspection. Although most of the areas of this curriculum are relevant and are fully implemented, provision for outside play is unsatisfactory and resources for indoor play are insufficient. As a result, the curriculum as a whole is satisfactory rather than good. Personal and social development is generally well provided for and takes place informally as well as being planned. Children are encouraged to be confident and independent for their age, and to begin to think for themselves. Nevertheless, the lack of a good library hampers children's independent exploration of books. In language and literacy, the National Literacy Strategy is well established, and activities are well adapted to the needs of these young children. Teaching letters and their sounds is a particular strength. Mathematics is carefully taught, with good provision for the use of first-hand experience and careful progression. The National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented. In developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them, good attention has again been paid to the provision of a variety of first-hand experiences, and to develop vocabulary. Creative and expressive areas of learning are well planned and well taught. Music is particularly well developed. Although provision for developing manual dexterity is appropriate, provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory as there is no direct access to the playground or garden from the classrooms. Teachers do their best by timetabling periods for outdoor play that is for the class as a whole, rather than free play by individuals and groups. Equipment for outdoor play includes a variety of wheeled toys, and there is some agility apparatus, but this is not fixed and, therefore, its use is infrequent. Resources for indoor and outside play are insufficient.

34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school operates a policy that allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to have access to the entire curriculum. For pupils who have statements of special educational need, the provisions of their statements are met very well. The special educational needs co-ordinator plans very well. Furthermore, there has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

35. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The time allocated is appropriate and the implementation has raised standards of attainment across the school. The National Literacy Strategy is in place and has raised standards in writing but opportunities to develop reading are not fully exploited.

36. A significant number of parents believe that there are insufficient extracurricular activities. The findings of the inspection are that a very good range is available for pupils in Key Stage 2, which enrich pupils' learning outside the school day but they are poor at Key Stage 1. Pupils participate in football, netball, gymnastics, hockey, running, rounders and basketball, and have opportunities to be in teams for these sports. They take part in competitions against most other schools and enjoy success. Music clubs include orchestra, choir and instrumental groups. There is a computer research club, a book appreciation group, chess club and a breakfast club. There are no extracurricular activities for Key Stage 1 pupils. Educational visits and school visitors are important and regular features of the curriculum and the school makes a good effort to provide a rich variety of experiences for pupils. Year

6 pupils take part in a residential visit and all classes have planned opportunities to visit places of interest beyond the school.

37. The school has a commitment to equality in education. There is sound planning on a day-to-day basis for the needs of all pupils, including those with English as a second language and for those who have special educational needs. Higher achievers, however, are not sufficiently challenged in reading, where there are too few opportunities to develop more advanced reading skills such as skimming and scanning texts and developing their research skills because of the poor library provision. Pupils who are taken from assemblies for extra reading do not have the spiritual contribution of the act of worship, shared with their peers.

38. The personal, social and health education programme makes a very positive contribution to pupils' development. Assemblies, lessons and 'circle time' offer good opportunities for pupils to consider and discuss important aspects of health, family life and the environment. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils had a lively discussion on reasons for rejecting drugs. Year 4 classes talked about sharing. A Key Stage 2 assembly on helping one another brought out some good discussion on co-operation and support. There is some good input from outside agencies, such as the school nurse and the annual "Crucial Crew" visit, where safety and "stranger danger" are explored. The input to the programme from local police has been less this year. The system for monitoring the effectiveness of the delivery of the programme is not sufficiently developed.

39. There are good extensive links with the community, through a wide variety of lettings to clubs and musical groups. Pupils participate in local music festivals and inter-schools sports competitions. A good number of parents help with extracurricular clubs and attendance at these is good at Key Stage 2. The local rector visits regularly. The school has set up several good initiatives such as the family support group. This is now run by social services, but staff continue to make a good contribution. Links with the local playgroup are good, especially now that the school has made space on the site available. There is a good consortium of feeder schools, which meets regularly with the local secondary school to ensure continuity in the curriculum. Transfer to the secondary school is well organised. Pupils visit in Year 5, as well as Year 6, and they feel confident about the next stage of their education.

40. In the Reception year, provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriate. Spiritual development is sound and is stimulated by stories and poems, music, investigative experiences, and attending some assemblies. Moral development is given a high profile, together with social development, and day-to-day issues form an important part. Stories and rules of behaviour provide a valuable structure. Opportunities for developing social skills include role-play, group work, and learning to take turns. Cultural development is satisfactory. It is promoted through stories, rhymes, music and art, visits and walks, including a visit to the local church. Pupils celebrate not only Christian festivals but those of other faiths and traditions. They have fun with special games on the Chinese Dragon Boat festival day and, make rachis for the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan.

41. Across the school as a whole, provision for pupils' spiritual development is now satisfactory, an improvement from the last inspection. Some assemblies now comply with legal requirements and religious education lessons provide good opportunities for learning about other faiths. On many occasions, several pupils are withdrawn from assemblies for additional reading work and this is against the statutory requirement for compulsory worship. There are missed opportunities in assemblies and lessons to allow pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs. However, some good practice is developing in religious education lessons. For example, in one Year 4 lesson, pupils helped to prepare food for a Jewish festival meal for Shabbat. They lit a candle, closed their eyes and, in silence, thought about their own special festival and times at home. In music, there are spiritual moments when pupils sing. In other areas of the curriculum, teachers are not so well aware of how to make moments of learning very special to pupils.

42. Moral and social development is good. The school's personal, health, safety and behaviour education is good and makes a positive input to pupils' moral and social development. Provision is well planned and based on clear aims and strategies. Social development is especially effective through participation in the residential week, school visits and the 'class rep' system. Furthermore, within these activities, pupils develop a sense of moral responsibility. Awards are presented to pupils for their hard work and good behaviour. The presentation of these awards is warmly applauded in assemblies and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to right and wrong. The school council is still in its early

stages, but promises to provide a good forum for pupils' social and moral development. Staff set their pupils high standards of courtesy and honesty and thus act as good role models. Parents are very pleased with the moral development of their children.

43. In the last inspection, provision for cultural development was sound. The findings of the present inspection show a decline from these standards to unsatisfactory. However, the last report made no reference to any aspects of multicultural work, which is the area which this inspection finds unsatisfactory. Multicultural work is developing slowly, but without overall co-ordination. However, there is evidence of some good insights into how to develop this in the displays and planning of the co-ordinators for children under five. Across the school, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to appreciate the work of a broad range of artists, for example, through displays or visits to art galleries. There are few opportunities for listening to, and appreciating, a wide variety of composers and music. There are no musical instruments from other cultures and few artefacts for use in the teaching of religious education. Moreover, the library has insufficient books that reflect different cultures. There are few opportunities for pupils to explore the richness and diversity of other cultures within the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the school has made some good developments in broadening pupils' historical knowledge and their understanding of different faiths. Work in geography is successful in helping pupils to make comparisons about the differences in life between Halstead and Keshapur in India. One of the strengths is the Year 6 German teaching which is helping to lay good foundations for secondary education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school has generally effective procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. However, a number of concerns have been communicated to the governing body concerning non compliance with statutory requirements for formalised written risk assessment and with some wider safety issues. This is unsatisfactory and is a weakness. The Local Education Authority's guidelines on child protection have been adopted and the deputy headteacher has shared her training with staff. Health and safety practices are good for child protection and in daily health routines. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions and the level of first aid cover are satisfactory. The level of supervision at playtimes is barely satisfactory.

45. Children in the Reception year feel safe and secure, and relationships between adults and children are good. The pastoral care of children is good. The programme of teaching and learning is well planned to meet the varying needs of young children. Assessment and monitoring of academic performance are very good in the Reception year, with very good structures in place. Daily notes are made on individuals and groups, and evaluations of lessons are also done daily, in order to secure the next steps in planning effectively. Assessments, undertaken when children start school, are used to plan suitable programmes of work. Individual targets are set and these are reviewed termly to check children's progress. Monitoring of personal development is also conducted carefully. Induction procedures are appropriate and help to ease the settling in process when children enter school. Both the educational and personal support provided in the Reception year are good as they are caring, sensitive and informed.

46. Across the whole school, teachers know their pupils well and are concerned for their welfare. Personal development is monitored and supported well through log sheets, class records, reports and attractively presented personal attainment targets for all pupils as individuals. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Boys' achievements are well monitored; girls' attainment is not tracked so carefully, but is nevertheless recognised. There are missed opportunities to track pupils of all abilities in their independent learning skills.

47. The school has made good progress in developing assessment in line with the key issue from the 1997 inspection. The school is developing effective arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress overall, although some subjects do not have clear and helpful procedures, for example, in information technology. This information is being used to identify pupils who need additional support to reach average levels, but it does not identify support for higher achievers, although this is developing very well in mathematics. The two assessment co-ordinators have worked very hard to improve procedures. Assessment information is now analysed effectively and is used to identify areas for development for raising levels of pupils' attainments in the core subjects, particularly in mathematics and English. Following analysis of national test results, writing was successfully targeted and there

has been an improvement in standards. In addition to the statutory assessments, the school is currently using national test materials to make annual assessments. The school also makes ongoing, informal assessment and keeps appropriate records of pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English. In mathematics, assessment arrangements against the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy are very good and inform future planning very well. In English, these procedures are helpful. The information is used appropriately to identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties and to set targets. This target setting with pupils is a very useful development that is already beginning to improve standards through the provision of effective support and advice to pupils on their academic progress. In science, assessments at the end of each unit show what pupils have learnt and give information for future planning of work. Nevertheless, the tracking of higher achievers is less well identified in what is otherwise good practice. In other subjects, assessment procedures are not as effective. There is effective assessment to identify pupils with special educational needs and this feeds appropriately into the individual education plans. These plans are sufficiently specific to allow accurate assessments to be made.

48. Procedures to monitor attendance are poor, as they were in the last report. Pupils' lateness is still not recorded centrally and is not always recorded in registers. Reasons for absence are not always recorded. The high unauthorised absence figure is due to a small number of parents who do not inform the school of the reasons for their child's absence. The school now makes efforts to address this by telephoning the families of absentees and by rewarding pupils with good attendance records with certificates. Punctuality is generally good and registration periods ensure a calm and orderly start to sessions.

49. In the last report, the behaviour policy was not applied consistently and there was no formal monitoring of poor behaviour. The school has approached this with a series of practices, which have had marked success. This is a considerable strength of recent developments. The extensive and well thought out behaviour code is applied consistently and there is good monitoring of instances of oppressive behaviour. There is as yet little monitoring of whole groups of pupils to give a wider picture as the school has rightly focused on individuals. The school has conducted a series of surveys among year groups to find out their response to its behaviour code. There is a good scheme of awards and certificates for good behaviour and hard work. Focus groups help pupils with behavioural problems tackle their difficulties and weekly meetings are held with the parents of these pupils. Log sheets monitor behaviour in class. There is a good system of cards for pupils and letters to parents. Parents are satisfied that behaviour problems and instances of bullying will be handled well by the school. These findings represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. As in the last report, the school's relationship with parents is good. Parents are satisfied with the improvement that the school has made. They feel very comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or problems. Some parents expressed concerns about behaviour. Although most felt the school worked closely with them, some did not feel well informed about their children's progress. A substantial minority of parents are not satisfied with the range of activities outside lessons. The findings of the report support the parents' comments about extracurricular activities: the range and number for Key Stage 2 pupils are very good. However, there are no activities for Key Stage 1 pupils. Communication with parents about their children's progress was felt by the inspection team to be satisfactory.

51. The information provided for parents is good overall. The prospectus complies with requirements. The governors' Annual Report to parents does not include a section on improvements to school security. Newsletters are regular and friendly in tone. Each class teacher provides useful advance information on the curriculum. Reading and homework diaries provide a useful vehicle for dialogue between home and school, although these are not used extensively by parents. Reports give helpful guidance for parents and give opportunities for pupils to assess their own strengths and weaknesses. There is a good range of consultation and curricular meetings, which are well attended and appreciated by parents. Home/school agreements have been issued, but not all parents have signed them and the school has not analysed the results. Induction arrangements for new pupils are satisfactory. There are very good links with parents concerning those pupils with special educational needs. Parents are kept very well informed about the individual plans that the school produces. These individual plans do not contain a specific section detailing activities that parents could oversee at

home. For the pupils who have a statement of special educational need, annual review procedures are carried out well and parents are involved appropriately. Links with parents in the Reception year are strong. When children are ready to start school, parents receive invitations to visit with their children, and to meetings with staff. They also receive a starter booklet, explaining details relevant to beginning school. Baseline assessment results are discussed with parents, and the outcomes of this procedure that form the initial individual targets are also discussed.

52. Parents are involved with their children's learning to a satisfactory standard. A good number of parents help in the school at Key Stage 1, with reading and other class-based tasks. Few parents help at Key Stage 2. No central register of parents is kept, but good guidance is given to them. A good number of parents help with extracurricular activities and on trips. The Home/School Association is very active and provides a good range of social and fund-raising activities. It has contributed good amounts towards equipment to enhance children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The last OFSTED inspection in 1997 found that there were serious weaknesses in the school, many of which concerned aspects of leadership and management. Since then, the school has been visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors, who found that it had made satisfactory overall improvements by 1998. This inspection finds further development since 1998 and that, since 1997, improvement has been good.

54. The leadership and management of the headteacher and staff with management responsibility are good overall. Throughout the school, there is a strong sense of team work. The headteacher and deputy headteacher clearly care for the school and the pupils within it. A particular strength is the way in which the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff have worked as a team to inspire and support other members of staff in the process of change. Senior staff have been very reflective and have embarked on a wide range of courses for their professional development. Moreover, they have worked very hard through some periods of great difficulty with uncertainty and changes in teaching staff. Across the curriculum, leadership is satisfactory in science, information technology, music, geography and physical education. Currently, art does not have a specific co-ordinator and, as a result of this, the senior staff are undertaking responsibility for the subject. Leadership is good in English, religious education, and history and for children under five. In design and technology and mathematics, leadership is very good. Monitoring of teaching is developing effectively, but has focused on mathematics and English in particular. Monitoring is not consistent enough between classes as the headteacher and senior staff do not always use consistent criteria to evaluate where teaching is good or less successful.

55. Special educational needs provision is very well led and organised and the legal requirements regarding annual reviews are being met. Overall improvement in the management and provision for special educational needs has been very good and this is a particular strength of recent developments. Much work has been done since the special needs co-ordinator's return early in this year. The general deployment of support assistants is good, but on the few occasions when the assistant leaves before the end of a lesson, the pupils who have special educational needs are left unsupported, and occasionally cause difficulties for the teacher. This is unsatisfactory. Sometimes, support staff are not sufficiently well deployed to give to assist teachers in a few lessons where behavioural difficulties are likely. At present, support assistants are not appraised. However, this is planned as part of the school's "Investors in People" award and is intended to start in the next school year.

56. The leadership and monitoring for pupils with English as an additional language are broadly satisfactory. Pupils are supported by an assistant and most are fluent in English. However, where pupils are not completely fluent, the school is missing opportunities to monitor and track development. Resources which recognise the other languages and cultures of these pupils are insufficiently available.

57. There has been good progress in developing a clear management structure, with definite roles and responsibilities. Both of these features were weak in the last inspection. A particular strength is the very good delegation and contribution of all staff with management responsibilities, many of whom have had to take on several subjects as other staff were too new to have the additional responsibility. They have all acted as very good role models in developing high quality teaching. Consequently, standards have improved in behaviour and pupils' performance in mathematics, writing at Key Stage 1,

religious education, design and technology and many aspects of special educational needs provision. The work of children under five receives good leadership.

58. There is good clear leadership for the future development of the school. This is supported by a detailed development plan, which addresses appropriate areas for development up to 2001. This plan fully reflects the aims and values of the school as noted in the recently updated school prospectus. However, planning does not go beyond 2001 and this is a weaker aspect of written planning. In addition, some of the targets for improvement are very broad and it is difficult to track and plan the development in short measurable steps. The headteacher recognises this. However, teachers' individual, short-term plans are better at breaking down improvements into small activities. Overall, the budget is set to support the development plan very effectively although project costings are often too broadly based. The priorities for development are good overall and reflect the need, as also identified by this inspection, for the development of information technology and the improvement of the accommodation. However, the development of cultural awareness and the attainment of higher achievers have not been sufficiently recognised. The school clearly recognises that it is not making effective use of wider information technology resources as there has been a delay in building work which has resulted in a delay in improving the provision of information technology.

59. The governing body has worked hard to develop its role since the last inspection, especially in expanding its monitoring role and in working successfully to make good improvements on the former key issues. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is satisfactory and they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses throughout the school. However, the governing body is not completely fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, as the current requirements for health and safety are not complied with. These are noted in an earlier section of the report. Also, governors are not ensuring that the full information technology curriculum can be met. Although the school has developed aspects of assemblies, there is still some inconsistency in meeting the statutory requirements. This is largely due to the fact that pupils are too often withdrawn for other curricular work. There are missing elements in the Annual Report to parents concerning a broad statement on security and attendance is not sufficiently well monitored.

60. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are satisfactory and senior staff and governors are taking effective action to improve standards. The senior staff have worked hard to develop this aspect of their work. Currently, the systems are developing well, but, occasionally, they miss the opportunity to make the very best possible use of the information from pupils' test and assessment results, for example, in identifying those pupils who need to be pushed on to reach the highest levels of achievement. Nevertheless, the school has been very successful in recognising and supporting the average pupils who may need just a little extra push to achieve their full potential. This is one reason why pupils have achieved average results in mathematics in Year 6, despite the 36 per cent special educational needs.

61. The school uses resources, including funding, effectively to raise standards. The governors have a suitable role in setting and monitoring the school's budget. The school was audited in 1999. Since then, most issues have been acted on. However, in addition, this raised the lack of detailed costings on the school's development plan, which is also identified as an issue by the findings of this inspection.

62. The number and qualifications of the teaching and support staff are appropriate to the demands of the curriculum. Support staff make a good contribution to the work of the school, although they are not consistently well deployed to support some lessons where pupils' behaviour may detract for the overall quality of the lesson. The school's appraisal system is satisfactory and is resulting in improvement in the quality of teaching. This is an improvement on the 1997 inspection report. The recruitment and retention of high quality staff have been of paramount importance to the development of the school and are well recognised in written development planning. Nevertheless, the school has still not fully resolved the retention issue. However, good planning and support of newly qualified teachers are having a positive effect on standards of teaching, curricular development and whole-school improvement. The office staff contribute well to the efficient running of the school, especially the newly appointed administrator.

63. The accommodation is poor overall and this is reflected in the planned development of the site during the year 2000. At the time of the inspection, the physical education curriculum was hampered by

the constraints of the small hall and uneven surfacing on the playground. Pupils can not make best use of information technology resources, as they cannot work in the isolated building without supervision. As a result, these resources are not supporting independent project work. Children under five do not have adequate play areas for the demands of their curriculum. In music, group teaching restricts the access to the library. Currently, the library is unattractive and does not motivate pupils to engage in reading or personal enquiry work. The school hall is not large enough to accommodate the whole school. The fabric of the building is very shabby overall, despite the school's ongoing improvement planning. The building of the new school hall is to begin very shortly. When this is completed, the governors and senior staff have good plans to develop a new and attractive library area and a centrally located computer area.

64. Resources are unsatisfactory overall. There are limited information technology resources for the demands of the information technology curriculum. There are insufficient library books and artefacts in religious education. Overall, there are insufficient resources for the wider development of cultural appreciation in English, art and music. The range of instruments and multicultural resources is too limited. In geography, there are insufficient atlases and globes for the requirements of the subject. Overall, the development of resources shows insufficient improvement since the last inspection, when many of these issues were also identified. Many of these issues are clearly identified in the school's development planning, but improvement since the last inspection has been slow. Resources for children under five are generally adequate apart from play resources

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to build on the existing standards in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Raise standards in information technology as identified in the school's development plan by:

- increasing opportunities and resources for pupils so that the full National Curriculum can be covered;
- giving pupils more opportunities to use information technology as part of their class lessons;
- developing a systematic way of monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, so that work can be planned which accurately matches pupils' needs.

Paragraphs 6, 28, 31, 59, 63, 105, 127-131, 137.

(2) Building on the improvements already made in assessing pupils' work by:

- using assessment information to identify, plan for and track the development of higher achieving pupils, so that they achieve their full potential in English and science in particular;
- using assessment information to improve standards of presentation in writing at Key Stage 2.
- using assessment information to develop greater consistency between classes for the overall improvement in pupils' spelling and punctuation at Key Stage 2;
- developing simple assessment procedures where they do not exist across the curriculum.

Paragraphs 5, 9, 26, 37, 46, 47, 60, 79, 91, 98, 110, 119, 146.

(3) Improving the range and quality of the reading opportunities by:

- improving the library environment;
- increasing the number and range of books;
- ensuring that pupils know how to use the library effectively;
- providing planned, daily opportunities for pupils to read their own books;
- devising systems to identify and track the development of reading skills throughout the school;
- planning the curriculum so that pupils can develop independent research and learning skills.

Paragraphs 3, 13, 17, 26, 28, 35, 46, 63, 79, 83, 90-92.

(4) Develop opportunities for pupils to broaden their cultural appreciation by:

- planning opportunities for pupils to widen their awareness of different western and non western cultures;
- increasing resources in religious education, art, music and the library to support this area of work;
- developing the range of visits and visitors to the school to support multicultural work.

Paragraphs 8, 13, 17, 43, 56, 58, 64, 110, 137, 146.

- (5) Ensuring that the governors fulfil their full statutory requirements by:**
- improving the provision for information technology as noted above;
 - updating risk assessment procedures;
 - ensuring that all reported safety issues, as reported by the registered inspector, are acted upon;
 - developing better monitoring of attendance;
 - fully complying with the requirement for corporate worship;
 - adding the missing elements about security to the Annual Report to parents.
- Paragraphs 6, 41, 44, 48, 51, 59.
- (6) Further improve the accommodation as identified in the school's development plan by:**
- continuing with the plans to develop the facilities for physical education;
 - developing a secure outside play area for children under five in the Reception classes and ensuring that it is resourced to extend children's play.
- Paragraphs 15, 33, 43, 67, 74, 145.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- ensuring that support assistants are consistently deployed to the best effect;
Paragraphs 18, 21, 29, 55, 62.
- producing a long term school development plan, with carefully costed small targets for development;
Paragraphs 58, 61.
- monitoring the language acquisition of pupils with English as an additional language;
Paragraphs 13, 56.
- purchasing more globes and atlases for the geography curriculum.
Paragraphs 8, 64, 117, 119.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	89
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	82

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	19%	42%	31%	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		398
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		80

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		139

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.3	School data	1.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	29	26	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	25	27
	Girls	25	25	24
	Total	52	50	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (79)	91 (87)	93 (90)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	27
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	51	52	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (84)	95 (88)	95 (89)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	22	17	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	14	18
	Girls	20	11	12
	Total	27	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (52)	64 (46)	77 (60)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	14	17
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	29	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (54)	67 (50)	77 (60)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	394
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	10	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	[]
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	[]

Total number of education support staff	[]
Total aggregate hours worked per week	[]

Number of pupils per FTE adult	[]
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	683422
Total expenditure	660615
Expenditure per pupil	1762
Balance brought forward from previous year	7500
Balance carried forward to next year	30307

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	398
Number of questionnaires returned	79

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	9	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	62	16	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	51	13	1	3
The teaching is good.	44	46	5	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	52	13	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	34	5	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	58	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	51	10	6	4
The school is well led and managed.	25	58	5	5	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	49	10	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	35	15	11	20

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. When children enter the Reception year in school, their overall attainment is generally lower than that expected for their ages particularly in personal and social development and in the foundations for reading and writing. However, most children make good progress in learning and reach similar standards to those found in most schools by the time that they are five. This matches the findings of the previous report. This good progress is due to consistently good teaching which was also the finding of the school's previous OFSTED report. In the present Reception classes, there are far more boys than girls and their attainment is monitored to ensure that they achieve their potential and have equal opportunities.

Personal and Social Development

67. Children attain suitable levels in their personal and social development by the time they reach the age of five. The quality of teaching and learning is good in personal and social development and the pupils make good progress as this is one of the weaker elements of their pre-school attainment. Well-organised procedures help the children to develop self-confidence and assurance, and to take care of their own basic needs. They learn to listen to each other, and start to realise the need for taking turns. The children demonstrate their independence by selecting an activity or toy and are eager to explore new learning. They enjoy playing alongside others and exchanging comments and conversation, and some already engage in co-operative play. However, the lack of a well equipped, fenced and attached play area for children under five hampers their further improvement. This is because these children are not developing co-operative play quickly enough as limited opportunities mean that they are often playing alongside others rather than working together in a game. Resources are too limited to support this aspect of young children's learning. The puppet theatre and the shopping centre provide good role-play opportunities that encourage this type of interaction well. Children are able to make good relationships with the adults who work with them, and feel safe and secure in their classroom. Their behaviour is good for their age. Teachers and classroom assistants encourage independence, and value each child. Personal and social development is strongly promoted, and children are helped to understand that others have similar feelings to themselves, and that care and respect for each other are important values. They are enabled to discuss ideas such as making friends, helping, and special things, places and people in their lives. Children respond to relevant seasonal and cultural events and festivals, including some multi-cultural celebrations, such as the Chinese Dragon Boat festival, and the Hindu Raksha Bandhan festival for which children made rachis, simple decorative bracelets in the Hindu tradition, to give to friends or relatives.

Language and Literacy

68. Children attain appropriate levels of achievement in language and literacy by the time they reach the age of five. This is good progress as they enter the school year with below average attainment in language and literacy. This matches the finding from the last report that development in language and literacy was good.

69. Children are eager to comment and to contribute to discussions, and they speak confidently and usually clearly. Most are able to speak in short sentences and to express their ideas and meanings appropriately for their age. They usually listen attentively, and are interested in stories, rhymes and songs, and are eager to join in familiar sequences. Children like books, have book handling skills, and can talk about events depicted in the illustrations. Approaches to reading are carefully taught, and achievement is at average levels. The effective strategies used in teaching enable most children to realise the correspondence between letters and sounds in words, and to recognise the letters of the alphabet. Most are beginning to decode elements of simple words, and have an awareness that some sounds are represented by more than one letter. Children can write their own names, and make good attempts at spelling words they need to express their ideas and thoughts. Handwriting develops gradually, and some children are able to write with evenly formed letters and make a few simple legible phrases or sentences. Role-play areas support the development of speech, and the plenary sessions of literacy hours encourage speaking to the class.

70. Teachers use the methods of the National Literacy Strategy well to build effectively on the children's learning step by step. The literacy work is well structured and closely linked to the enjoyment of stories, and spelling is taught with reference to meaningful contexts of words and

sentences. Children are encouraged to listen carefully, and the use of fingers to denote the number of sounds in a word is a useful strategy for checking the children's understanding of different sounds. Role-play areas encourage play writing, and games such as a sequencing activity promote thinking while making it fun. Teachers encourage children to think and respond by the skilled use of questions. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good.

Mathematics

71. In mathematics children make good progress and attain standards similar to those found in most schools by the age of five. This is the same as the findings of the previous inspection, where the attainment in mathematics was judged to be sound. Most pupils can count to 20, understand the values of numbers to ten very well, and do simple addition and subtraction processes in practical terms, recording these by tallying. They are able to count forwards and backwards in twos, and are learning about odd and even numbers. Children can recognise and write figures for numbers to ten.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and staff take every opportunity to enable children to apply their developing knowledge and understanding. Mathematical learning is set well within the context of practical activities, using actual objects that children can manipulate. For example, children sort man-made and natural objects, fill containers with sand or water, play or make pictures with different shapes, and thread beads to form patterns or sequences. Planned play activities, such as playing with teddies and putting their socks on, promotes learning, in this case, about pairs and counting in twos. Number rhymes and songs add to the enjoyment of mathematical learning. Teachers use the methods of the National Numeracy Strategy effectively, and build step-by-step on previous learning. Children are encouraged to describe the mental strategies they have used in solving their problems and games, such as "Kim's Game", help them to learn to visualise items and numbers.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

73. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them increase well, and, by the time they reach the age of five, the good progress they have made enables them to attain average standards. The quality of learning in this area is good, and is well based on first-hand experience. Children have brought photographs of themselves as babies, and have talked about themselves growing and about their families. They have learned about the life cycle of the frog, and have made attractive pictures, showing the different stages, for display. They have visited a farm and seen a variety of animals and their babies. Children have been on a walk in the locality of the school, and have observed features such as the church, the swimming pool and the river. They make some drawings and colour features they have seen on a simple map. They learn to use the computer in a simple way, becoming familiar with the keyboard and with the mouse. In a lesson on texture, man-made items were contrasted with natural ones, and these were sorted into rough and smooth surfaced objects. Children enjoyed searching the playground and garden for items to add to the collections. Extending this experience, the use of different textures became the focus for art and craft, when some of the junk materials collected were used to form a collage, later to become part of a totem pole with faces on each side. Teachers use language skilfully, alongside first-hand experience, to develop children's understanding and retention of new learning. This was especially demonstrated in the two lessons on texture, where children's learning and attainment were good. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the careful planning of a wide variety of experiences by teachers provides a stimulating and valuable programme.

Physical Development

74. By the time they are five, children reach average standards for their age in physical development. Many opportunities allow them to practise and develop dexterity with their hands, such as playing with small construction toys, jigsaw puzzles, cutting and sticking, bead-threading and sewing, and the use of pencils, crayons and brushes. They are also able to manipulate materials such as sand and play dough. They make good progress during the Reception year in this area of development. Where larger movements are concerned, children run, jump, skip, throw and catch when using small apparatus, and ride or push and pull wheeled toys with skill appropriate to their age. Although there is an outdoor space where wheeled toys and some low-level clambering apparatus can be used, the area is not separately fenced from other use of the playground and does not have direct access from classrooms. Thus, opportunities for easy in and out play at different times of the day are

denied to the children. Despite this, their general movement and related skills are appropriate for their age. Use of clambering apparatus is infrequent, as it cannot be left in place, and erecting it takes time. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are well organised and carefully watched during physical development sessions and teaching ensures that all children have opportunities to make progress.

Creative Development

75. The children make good progress in developing their creative and expressive skills. They mostly reach similar standards to those found in most schools by the age of five, but, in some aspects of music, they reach higher standards than this. Children enjoy learning new songs and singing familiar ones. They listen to music and enjoy some taped music programmes. They clap and tap when joining in rhythms to accompany songs and music, and understand when asked to sing, play or clap loudly or softly. They are able to understand that music can represent ideas, by the changing of mood and expression, as in a recent lesson when a class made up a sequence of sounds to represent the different features of a storm. The rain-maker instrument gave rise to excitement and wonder in this lesson, and was part of the different effects chosen for the storm composition. Children were introduced to simple forms of using symbols to score the music, and together made a "score" for their storm composition, a good attainment for their age. Children have plenty of opportunity to draw, paint and use crayons, and malleable materials such as play dough. There are good examples of paintings representing spring blossom, and going to the farm. Drawings of the church seen on a walk, despite the early stage of drawing, showed good attempts to represent texture. Collage techniques are used in the pictures that children have displayed of the life cycle of the frog, and in the giant faces made for the totem pole. Role-play opportunities are provided including dressing up clothes, puppets and hat collections. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Experiences are well planned and the good use of language accompanies the teaching.

ENGLISH

76. The school's national assessment tests for 11 year olds in 1999 show that, compared with all schools, standards were average but, compared with similar schools, standards were above average in English. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those of the previous three years, they show an improving trend in standards which is broadly in line with the national trend. The combined data for 1997, 1998 and 1999 show that the attainment of boys in English was around the national average whilst that of girls was below average. The school has set formal targets for 72 per cent of its pupils to reach or exceed the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests and assessments in English in the Year 2000. This target represents a good degree of challenge for the present Year 6.

77. The findings of this inspection are that pupils in Year 6 achieve standards that are below those found in most other schools. This is a fall in standards from the 1999 national tests, and reflects the high number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, many of whom have particular difficulties with their reading. Nevertheless, the value-added analysis undertaken by the school shows that these pupils have made satisfactory progress since their national assessment tests at Key Stage 1. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls overall, although the number of girls reaching the higher Level 5 is lower than the national average and it is the higher achieving pupils who are not reaching their full potential in aspects of English work. The judgement on English represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection in October 1997 when standards at Key Stage 2 were reported to be above average. At Key Stage 1, pupils achieve average standards in reading and speaking and listening and above average standards in writing.

78. In Year 6, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening. Many pupils readily engage in discussions, talk confidently and offer ideas and relevant information. A few pupils take part in drama productions outside school, and speak with considerable confidence and clarity. Pupils listen well, and show by their responses an average degree of understanding of what they hear

79. Overall, standards in reading at Key Stage 2 are below average. A limited number of higher achieving pupils read with accuracy, fluency and relevant expression. They are undeterred by difficult words and text and draw on a range of techniques to decipher them and clarify meaning. However, they do not read a sufficiently challenging range of books and have difficulty when asked to express personal preferences about authors and reading experiences. Most pupils accurately read an

appropriate range of texts, have a broad understanding of the main points and can discuss some aspects of characters and plot. Lower achieving pupils use their knowledge of sounds when reading unfamiliar words but cannot always build up words successfully. They express some preferences in their personal reading and briefly discuss key events. Reading skills are not sufficiently assessed to show progressive development. Nevertheless, the school has worked hard to address aspects of reading development in recent years. This has been successful in raising the attainment of average and lower achieving pupils. Across the key stage, pupils' research skills are weak: few pupils skim texts quickly to gain information and their library skills are poorly developed. However, the school has recognised the need to provide library visits and has worked very closely with the Halstead library and the librarian; this is a very positive initiative.

80. At Key Stage 2, standards in writing are below average. Pupils write for a satisfactory variety of purposes and readers, for example, diaries, poems, note-taking, myths, play scripts, recipes, postcards and story settings. Most pupils write in an organised way, put their ideas into an appropriate sequence and choose apt vocabulary. Their writing is often thoughtful and imaginative, as was shown by pupils writing humorous passages in the style of estate agents trying to sell a poorly decorated house. Pupils' output, however, is frequently small and ideas are not sustained consistently enough. Although many pupils use punctuation appropriately in grammar exercises, they often miss out full stops when writing stories. The work of higher attaining pupils shows a lively sense of style and an increasingly innovative and adventurous choice of words. Writing as a displaced child in the last war, one pupil wrote '...and she would be lonely and afraid. When she got to Holland, she would have mixed emotions'. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their use of correct grammar, but often their creative work is littered with spelling errors. Throughout the school, planning of written work takes place and there is appropriate emphasis on drafting, editing and refining. Handwriting is generally well-formed but, in some cases, presentation is unsatisfactory.

81. The school's test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that standards are average in reading and above average in writing compared with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, standards are well above average in both reading and writing. The findings of the inspection show a similar level of attainment to that shown in last year's national assessment tests. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for the school in reading and writing for 1999 are compared over the past three years, they show a rise in standards in writing, whilst, in reading, they have remained static. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.

82. The findings of the inspection show that, at Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils listen attentively to stories, rhymes and explanations and make simple and appropriate responses in class. Some pupils have a limited range of words and indistinct pronunciation, but higher achievers express their thoughts confidently and clearly, and use a wide vocabulary.

83. Standards in reading at Key Stage 1 are average although there is evidence of higher attainment. Nearly all pupils read simple texts with accuracy and enjoy reading sessions with their teachers and parent helpers. Through their work in the literacy hour, they have a good understanding of how books are organised. Higher achievers confidently tackle relatively difficult words, using their phonic knowledge, and use appropriate expression. Lower achieving pupils draw on their knowledge of sounds to read simple, regular words, and although they often need considerable support, they make good progress. Only higher achieving pupils know how to locate information from non-fiction books.

84. Pupils' writing at Key Stage 1 is above average. Many pupils write interesting sentences with accurate spelling of simple words and correct use of capital letters and full stops. Some of these pupils have a lively sense of language and their longer pieces show a good awareness of the structure of a story. They are gaining a good understanding of how to link ideas in their writing using more interesting words such as 'and finally', and 'although' instead of using 'and' all the time. The work of lower achieving pupils conveys meaning reasonably well, and simple words are spelt correctly. Handwriting is usually carried out carefully but, size and shape are not always consistent, and few pupils move on to joining their letters.

85. All teachers are committed to developing fully the language skills of pupils whose first language is not English. These pupils are well-integrated in mainstream classes and make good progress in their acquisition of English as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards relative to their previous attainment.

86. All through the school, standards in literacy reflect those found in English. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities to broaden the range of pupils' writing experiences, with tasks such as book reviews, job descriptions and imaginary newspaper reports.

87. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning in English are good throughout the school. The previous inspection reported teaching to be 'good at Key Stage 1, and sound at Key Stage 2', where the management of pupils' behaviour was a problem, as was inadequate planning. The planning of lessons is now good, and all teachers respond well to the demands of the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons have a good structure overall, but occasionally teachers spend too long talking to pupils at the start, and more restless pupils start to fidget and chatter. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well, using lots of praise to encourage them to respond quickly to instructions.

88. In the infants, teachers plan exciting lessons, which motivate pupils very well. In the best lesson, for example, the teacher told a story about a chocolate cake, and encouraged the pupils to discuss which words could describe it most effectively. Building on pupils' enthusiasm, the teacher moved on to a role-playing game, acting out a scene where a boy was accused by his mother of eating the cake. All pupils were enthralled by the plot, and their responses showed how much they had listened as they put forward many ideas about how the story could develop. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, and this makes the most of the time available for learning. They teach the basic skills of reading and writing effectively, so that in Year 2 nearly all pupils attain average standards.

89. In the juniors, the strengths of the teaching lie in its focus on the technical aspects of English, which enable pupils to write with confidence. Teachers convey to pupils the importance of using imaginative words, and then build up their understanding of spelling and grammar so that they can produce interesting stories and poems. In one of the best lessons, pupils in Year 4 were given an imaginary estate agent's commentary on a house, and asked to 'decipher' the language. This worked well, and pupils learned much about how words can be used to convey different messages. The teaching of speaking and listening is equally as strong. Teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils to air their views, and consider those of others. An excellent lesson saw pupils in Year 4 discussing the importance, and sometimes the pain, of sharing. Following a sensitive introduction, when the teacher explored pupils' initial thoughts, she asked them to consider when it would be hard to share, linking the lesson usefully to the literacy lesson previously about a divorced couple's children. The teacher valued each pupil's contribution so highly that even the most reticent of them spoke movingly about how circumstances can affect the way you feel about possessions, and all pupils made excellent progress in their speaking and listening.

90. The teaching of reading is satisfactory, but it lacks the sharp focus enjoyed by writing. Whilst the basic skills of reading unfamiliar words are taught sufficiently well, the school provides too few occasions when pupils sit with a teacher and read. In addition, pupils are not taught sufficiently as they get older how to use research skills, or to skim and scan texts, and this restricts the development of the highest achieving pupils.

91. The curriculum in English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The format of the literacy hour has been established well, and teachers show confidence in managing its different components. The framework of the National Literacy Strategy provides a good basis for the scheme of work and ensures progression in the teaching of skills and knowledge. Assessment procedures in English are effective but lack focus for identifying reading skills and higher achievers' development. Overall, the assessments available are used well by teachers to plan new work. Some of the most effective assessments are comments written on teachers' lesson plans, which identify the tasks pupils managed well, and which may need to be revisited. Pupils' work is marked promptly, and often with helpful comments at the end, such as '...a very good story, and worth reading, but you must explain yourself in more depth, and use more full stops'. Homework is used effectively across the school to reinforce and extend class work.

92. The co-ordinator is committed and conscientious, and has a clear idea of issues for the subject and how to address them. The school, for example, has focused strongly on writing recently, following the co-ordinator's monitoring which identified weaknesses, and this is now much improved. The co-ordinator monitors teaching effectively, and provides clear guidance on how teaching can be improved.

Resources in English are satisfactory in the classrooms, but the library is poor, and provides little to encourage or enable pupils to browse or conduct their own research.

MATHEMATICS

93. The findings of this inspection indicate that in Year 6, standards are broadly similar to those found in most other schools. This judgement shows, that although this is a different group of pupils, with a significant number who have special educational needs, standards have been maintained, since the last inspection, which is in itself a good achievement by teachers. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been effective and the work is challenging the groups of higher achieving pupils, as well as caring well for those who have special educational needs. In the end of key stage national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, compared with all schools, the pupils' results in mathematics were close to the national average. When compared to those of similar schools, the results were above average. There are some differences in the performance of boys and girls, but this does not have a pattern that can be identified and addressed, although the school has tried. Trends in performance over the past four years indicate that standards have been well below the national average, but clearly there has been improvement recently. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive well targeted support and are making good progress, as do all pupils. The school monitors pupils' progress very well.

94. In Year 6, most pupils handle numbers well although multiplication tables present difficulties for some. Pupils explain their mental strategies well and can convert percentages to fractions and use addition, subtraction and multiplication appropriately. They work in numbers up to thousands, and Year 6 were seen tackling long multiplication moving from simple examples to more complicated numbers. They use mathematics in everyday life situations such as shopping and calculating prices and change to be given. Some work on percentages used value added tax returns as the problem. Pupils handle data and produce graphs and charts to express the findings of surveys, often using information technology to produce these charts. Year 5 pupils were busy finding out about Carroll diagrams and how to record data given more than one set of facts. They work on probability and estimates and find square roots and numbers squared. Most pupils at the age of 11 use mathematical terms appropriately and understand the terms they are using. They find perimeters of shapes and understand the various forms of triangles.

95. In Year 2, pupils attain standards in mathematics which are similar to those found in most other schools. The implementation of the daily numeracy lessons is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and they are achieving well. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' results were close to the national average for Level 2, but were well below the national average for Level 3. The difference between these results and the findings of this inspection is explained by the implementation of the numeracy hour. Trends over time show that pupils' attainment in mathematics was close to the national average, and that girls outperformed boys.

96. In Year 2, pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 and they can use their knowledge of numbers in mental "shopping" problems. They recognise and sort two dimensional shapes successfully, and use simple bar charts to record data. They show knowledge of odd and even numbers and give times using both digital and 'hands' clocks. Pupils handle money from pence to pounds successfully and can give change when they are working out problems. Most pupils know and use the terms 'longer than' and 'shorter than' and they are developing their ability to say how they work out the problems in mental mathematics.

97. The quality of teaching and learning across both key stages is good, ranging from satisfactory to excellent. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection when some teaching was judged to be poor. This good teaching, together with the organisation of Year 6 classes for mathematics, is having a positive effect on pupils' learning of mathematics and skills. Teachers plan their lessons well and make the pupils aware of what they are expected to learn by the end of the lessons. Most initial mental mathematics sessions move along briskly with teachers setting a good pace. "Let's have a few more brains gurgling," said one teacher in a very lively start-up session. In Year 6, the lesson began with mental mathematics "Bingo". Pupils had to solve problems in their heads, such as 35 divided by 7, add 16, and write their answers on the card, calling out when they had a "full house". Teachers set very good challenges in most lessons, especially for older pupils. One class had their mathematics lesson set in "Zogland" and when the teacher failed to get the required

response, he said, " Hello Earth, Zog calling, respond please." Pupils were delighted to join in this lively setting and learnt well as a result. In Year 4, the teacher, recognising that some pupils were confused by the complexities of Carroll diagrams, patiently took them through a very good exercise of simpler sorting. "I was confused before, now I understand," said one pupil afterwards.

98. The mathematics curriculum fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils of all ages and all abilities. The subject policy and planning are good and all classes have introduced the National Numeracy Strategy into their lessons so that there is an hour of numeracy daily. A strong feature, due to the very good leadership of the subject, is the commitment of all teachers to this numeracy hour. This is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and progress. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed to high standards in mathematics throughout the school. Assessment procedures are now very good and help the future planning of the subject very well. Teachers are able to re-visit topics where pupils are still unsure and do more work on them. Good guidance is given by the co-ordinator to other teachers and full use has been made of an advisory service external to the school.

99. The improvements since the last inspection are very good, especially in teaching assessment and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The full impact of these improvements may not be seen fully yet but the subject is strong and the indications are that mathematics is improving all the time.

SCIENCE

100. The findings of the inspection are that the standards attained by the pupils in Year 6 are below those found in most other schools. This finding is in line with the school's results in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests. The percentage reaching the average Level 4 was slightly below the average compared with all schools, the higher Level 5 attainment was below the average. The findings for both years are below the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection, when they were judged to be satisfactory. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average in 1999. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Over the past four years, standards show an improvement in 1997 from a very low base but indications are that, this year, performance is lower than last year, because of the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers generally plan work which is well matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language but it does not always challenge higher achieving pupils.

101. In Year 6, the pupils use the resources that they are given for experimental work but lack skill in devising their own experiments to investigate their activities. The recording skills of many pupils are often impaired by their low language skills and the quality of presentation. They describe the functions of some important plant and human organs and explain why various conditions give rise to micro-organisms. Pupils are aware of methods such as filtration for separating simple materials and identify reversible and irreversible changes. They can classify materials as solids, liquids or gases. Pupils have a sound knowledge of magnetism and use symbols accurately to draw an electrical circuit. They have conducted investigations into whether the thickness of the wire affects the brightness of the bulb.

102. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, standards are broadly similar to those in most other schools. This finding is also broadly similar to the assessments made by teachers at the end of the key stage in 1999 and as found at the school's previous inspection in 1997.

103. In Year 2, pupils compare materials and record their work in a simple tables and graphs. They make predictions and say whether happenings were as expected. They understand the importance of diet and exercise for good health, sort materials according to their properties and understand why some materials are useful for specific purposes. Pupils recognise and name a number of sources of light and can construct an electrical circuit to make a bulb light up.

104. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including that for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language, are satisfactory overall at both key stages and pupils make good progress. At Key Stage 1, all lessons are at least satisfactory with some good teaching in a Year 1 class. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory. This shows a significant improvement since the last inspection, when " a significant amount of teaching was unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2." A Year 5 lesson about pollination showed

teaching and learning at their best. The teacher's management of the pupils, some of whom could show challenging behaviour, was very good and promoted a good working atmosphere. The teacher had demanding expectations of the amount of work, which the pupils should produce and the effort that they should put in "Get your brains in gear". She had high expectations of the use of scientific vocabulary and extended their thinking by searching questioning. The high quality of teaching led to very good learning, good attitudes towards work and an above average understanding of reproduction in plants.

105. In the last OFSTED report in 1997 it was noted that this area of the curriculum required further development. Since then, there has been satisfactory overall improvement in developing the curriculum and management of the subject. However, the extension of the higher achieving pupils has not been sufficiently recognised. The subject is capably managed by two co-ordinators, who show awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in their own key stage but do not have a real overview of standards across the school. Pupils' work and teachers' planning are monitored but there is currently no programme to monitor classroom practice. Since the last inspection, a policy has been put in place and the school now follows national guidelines. There is more emphasis on investigative science and staff now have sound expertise. There is limited use made of computers to support the subject. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

ART

106. In Year 6, the pupils' attainment in art is above that found in most schools. Good progress is made throughout the key stage. In Key Stage 1, the two lessons seen in Year 1, displays and samples of work, indicate that progress is satisfactory and that the pupils reach standards that are similar to those found in most schools. This is a similar judgement to that of the school's last OFSTED inspection. Attainment and progress in Key Stage 2 show a good improvement compared with the last inspection when attainment was below that expected. The quality of drawing has greatly improved, and the variety of approaches to the subject has been increased. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress especially in Key Stage 2.

107. In Year 6, pupils confidently tackle water-colour painting, using specific techniques taught to them for this medium. They are able to use these to indicate distance and depth in their landscapes by changes of tone, and they produce attractive and mature paintings of scenes in Derbyshire during their residential visit. Drawing and sketch plans for paintings are careful and appropriately detailed. Pupils pay attention to line, proportion and composition, mix colours with confidence, and produce effective shades and hues for different tones and textures. They have used clay to model vases and masks in the style of the ancient Greeks, linking their art work to their history project. They have also studied the style of Kandinsky, producing abstract compositions modelled on his work. The range of work produced through Key Stage 2 includes observational drawing of a careful and accurate standard, charcoal portraits, colour mixing and pastel blending, still life compositions, vegetable prints, mosaic patterns, Mehendi patterns, and imaginative black and white pictures of witches. In addition, information technology is used for art activities, and in one lesson, following the work of Matisse, pupils were using this well to flood their compositions with different colours to gain exciting alternative effects.

108. In Year 2, pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards that are similar to those found in most other schools. Pupils' work includes observational and imaginative drawing, painting, collages and attractive holiday posters of the seaside. Sunset pictures, where shades of yellow and red had been carefully blended to give a good effect and, "twilight cats", attractive pictures showing a night-time scene using layers of different shades of grey with gold "windows" stuck onto the "buildings". The latter techniques were very effective, and pupils have learned how to blend different shades and colours well. Their drawings show an increasing awareness of line and attention to detail.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, but good at Key Stage 2, where two out of three lessons observed were very well taught. In Year 6, very good teaching of techniques in the use of water-colours was seen. Pupils were taught to achieve effects such as distance and depth and planning by making thumbnail sketches was included. Pupils were given the opportunity for critical appraisal of each other's efforts in a positive way in order to improve their work. Colour mixing is well taught, and good attention is given to observational drawing of different types. The quality of drawing and of using colouring media has improved since the last inspection, when it was said to be immature. Sketchbooks, as was mentioned in the last report, are not in use, although

the school is aware of the benefits these provide, not only in recording pupils' efforts, but also as a method of tracking progress. Teachers' planning is sound in weekly and daily plans, but the termly planning is brief and lacks sufficient detail. It also lacks a steady progression of skill development, where skills are carefully consolidated and extended. In the previous report, it was stated that steady improvement in skills was not ensured, due to the frequent planning of art as part of topic work led by other subjects. This situation has not sufficiently improved.

110. Currently, there is no art co-ordinator and the brief is being temporarily held by senior staff with key stage management roles. Documentation for the subject is weak, with no policy or scheme of work, and no whole-school approach to the development of skills or to assessment and evaluation. Planning is fragmented and relates more to topic work than to development in art, although some attempts to cover more of the national programmes of study have been made, and planning has been surveyed by senior members of staff. The art curriculum is satisfactory, however, sufficient three-dimensional work is lacking and there are not enough opportunities to appreciate the work of other artists, including those from traditions other than the Western culture. Despite mention of the work of Cezanne and Van Gogh in planning, and the current work on display connected with Kandinsky and Matisse, little work in this aspect of the subject was evident. Multi-cultural aspects of the subject are unsatisfactory. There is little or no input from visiting artists or visits to workshops and galleries. Resources are adequate for the practical aspect of the subject, but they are inadequate for the appreciation of the work of other artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards are similar to those found in most other schools in Key Stage 1 and above most other schools in Key Stage 2. There has been good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection. In Year 6, pupils are able to sketch ideas for design and put them into operation efficiently. They understand that structures need stability and know how to build this into a model. For example, Year 6 pupils were given a very good challenge: to support an egg on a structure made from pieces of A4 paper and tape. The winner was to be the tallest structure that supported the egg steadily. Pupils sketched ideas, rolled paper and knew that a tubular structure would be strongest. The winning model was a tripod construction and stood almost a metre high. Needless to say, pupils were enthralled with the challenge and responded very well. They worked successfully in groups and learnt how to share out responsibilities. Pupils shared ideas, some argued, but most pulled together well. This challenge was for all pupils in the year, including those having special educational needs, and they all made good progress. Year 5 were seen making cams and followers, teaching them the basic principles of a working machine, which can be used in later work such as toy making. They drew their work first and cut out the cams in various shapes from very thick cardboard. In this way, they gained useful experience of using a template. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve similar standards to others of the same age and overall, all pupils make good progress and achieve very well, especially in Year 6.

112. Pupils reaching the end of Year 2 also learn how to sketch ideas and list the tools, materials and fixings they will need. The very good examples of Victorian beach huts in Year 2 exemplify this well. These younger pupils also learn how to use appropriate tools in their work preparing food, noting the safety rules and how to hold the tools. They understand the rules for health and hygiene, and record their tastes, and the outcomes of their preparations. Pupils make good progress and achieve well for their age.

113. Strong features of the subject are that pupils are being taught how to solve problems and also to evaluate their work so that improvements may be made. In the egg challenge, each group talked about the design, and their thinking, and having made the tower, how they felt that it could be improved if they were to start again.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, with some that is very good. The high level of challenge, good planning, and exciting things to make, all combine to enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills well. Teachers share their enthusiasm for the subject and pupils, therefore, enjoy design and technology greatly, and learn well. They experience using a range of materials and tools, and the overall planning for the curriculum is good. It is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines, but teachers add their own parts to the planning,

bringing more interest and excitement, and often tying the work in with other subjects like history, for example, the beach huts, or masks and the Greeks topic.

115. At present, the co-ordinator is the headteacher who is very enthusiastic about design and technology, and has raised the standards and interest in the subject very well. There has been marked improvement since the last inspection when the subject had a low priority, and no real planning. This has been transformed into a subject that all pupils seem to enjoy, and one that presents interesting work and a continuing challenge, as well as teaching new skills and thought processes. Resources are adequate for the planned programme. Overall, design and technology especially in Key Stage 2, is one of the stronger points of the school.

GEOGRAPHY

116. In Year 6, pupils' work in geography is similar to that found in most other schools. This represents an improvement on the findings of the previous OFSTED inspection when standards were below average. Much of this improvement is accounted for by teachers' effective use of the residential school trip to Derbyshire. During this visit, pupils conduct good studies of the human and physical geography of the area, and their field work displays a thorough understanding of how rocks are formed, and the development of features such as caves and underground streams. Their follow-up work shows a sound knowledge of how stalagmites and stalactites grow, and the effect that heat has on rocks. Pupils know how tourism affects an area, and write knowledgeably about both its advantages, and the harm that people can do to the environment. Year 5 pupils conduct good surveys of Halstead, and produce accurate graphs of the professions followed by the local population. Pupils use an atlas successfully in Year 4 to find Kesharpur in India, and make good comparisons with their local town.

117. No teaching of geography was observed in the infant classes, but analysis of work shows pupils in Year 2 to be achieving standards similar to those in most other schools. Pupils in infant classes produce some good work in their local studies, and make sound evaluations about features of Halstead that are attractive or not. They read atlases with reasonable skill, but supplies are short throughout the school, and this limits their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress in geography and overall, all pupils achieve well for their abilities.

118. In the juniors, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well, to provide interesting work for all groups of pupils. They explain new work clearly so that pupils gain the necessary skills to work in group activities. Teachers make a point of using correct geographical language, so that, for example, pupils by Year 3 are using words such as 'directional' and 'anticlockwise'. Teachers' methods are effective because they provide a good range of practical experiences for pupils, and these help their learning. One teacher, for example, played a 'pass the globe' game to encourage all pupils to find places, whilst another cut an apple in half to explain the nature of a cross-section. In the best lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, but in one lesson, pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory. In this lesson, the teacher struggled to get everyone's attention in the introductory session, and this meant that when pupils had to work in pairs they were unsure of what to do and made too little progress.

119. The temporary co-ordinator of the subject is a conscientious manager who has overseen the introduction of the scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority capably. There is no assessment system for the whole school, and teachers have to make their own notes to record pupils' progress. Resources are generally adequate, although the school is short of atlases and globes. In view of the good teaching about life in other areas of the world, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

HISTORY

120. Standards in history in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found in most other schools. Pupils with special educational needs, and English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress, as do all pupils. The choice of topics for history enables pupils to cover a range of periods in some depth. For example, pupils in Year 3 have studied the Tudors and there is a good display in their classrooms showing three-dimensional models of Tudor houses they have made, time lines, and sketches of some of the main characters such as Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. In the previous

inspection, standards were said to be at an average level and this has been maintained. Other aspects of the subject have improved satisfactorily, namely planning, the curriculum, and teaching.

121. In Year 6, pupils have made and presented some work on the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. One booklet was particularly good, and was a very full account of the 'Swinging Sixties', done using a computer, and including fashion, jobs, music, leisure and technology.

122. Year 3 pupils have made a booklet about World War 2 writing about evacuees, rationing and the homes of the time. Year 5 have worked on Victorian Britain and studied schooling, then and now, children at work, and leisure and entertainment. They produced a chart about schooling today and their responses to schooling in Victorian times. They are gaining historical perspective and knowledge through the use of time lines and the research they do for their work. For example pupils, in Year 6 looked up facts about the Greek theatre and contributed well to the class findings on this topic. Several found different facts and figures and this added to an already lively debate. They understand 'acropolis', the Parthenon, and the idea of masks and actors in the theatres. They were fascinated by the discussion about acoustics in the amphitheatres, and the teacher added to this interest with a story about hearing a match being struck on the 'stage' from a point in the top row of the seats.

123. In Year 2, pupils have studied the history of rescues at sea, know the story of Grace Darling, and are able to make comparisons with modern practice and modern lifeboats. They understand how we know about times past and have suggested people who might feature in writings of today for people of the next century to read. They suggested Tony Blair, Prince Charles and David Beckham as suitably important people for this. They have read the story of Mary Anning and her fossils and they understand something of their formation. Some pupils have studied the Victorian era and this is when they made the beach huts on display in their rooms.

124. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall; however, it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Most teachers make many extra efforts in the presentation of good displays of pupils' work set in an overall display about the period studied. Teachers plan well and use teaching aids such as pictures, photographs and plans including those of the Greek period. They make every effort to teach their pupils the links of history with modern times. For example, in the work on the Greeks in Year 6, pupils were encouraged to talk about the Dome and how similar it is inside to a Greek theatre. Pupils have been taken to Kentwell to experience the themes of history presented there, and they see video clips about the periods they study. Occasionally, the school has a whole day dedicated to a period they are studying, such as the Roman day. Teachers have clear expectations for their lessons and share these with pupils at the start.

125. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it concerns management of pupils and the acceptance of too great a volume of noise. Where teaching is very good, pupils are challenged to find out facts for themselves and report on them, using, for example, a story board which would enable them to put their facts in order of happening.

126. The curriculum is good and follows the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. The co-ordinator has monitored resources and planning in every year in the school and has implemented curricular changes well. Resources are adequate for the work that the school does and more can be borrowed locally. Pupils are able to use the research books and this enables them to find out for themselves some of the facts about the times they are studying. Some of them combine history with design and making such as the beach huts in Year 2 or the Greek masks in Year 6. This gives them more of a 'firsthand' experience that, in turn, helps their learning in history.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

127. In Year 6, pupils' standards in information technology are below those found in most other schools. This judgement shows a decline in standards since the school's previous inspection, where attainment was judged to be average.

128. In Year 6, most pupils use information technology reasonably well to organise, reorganise and edit text to ensure their writing is clear, well presented and free of errors. Their work on the keyboard, however, is slow, and they often have to search around for keys such as the shift bar. They re-size text, change colour, save and spell-check their work with average skill, and have a basic understanding of how computers are used in everyday life. Pupils in Year 6 are just learning how to use a spreadsheet, and most use them to calculate the perimeters of shapes with fair accuracy. Pupils have

no opportunities to use the Internet to conduct research, but they use CD-ROMs competently to extract information to support their work in history and science. The school has no programs to develop pupils' understanding of adventure simulations, or to teach them how to frame questions to obtain a reliable response. There are no sensors or opportunities for pupils to control machines, apart from basic floor robots. As all the computers are in the computer suite, pupils have too few opportunities to use information technology as an integral part of their learning, and this explains why their skills are below those expected. Special educational needs pupils are well supported and achieve well for their abilities. All other pupils are not making as much progress as they could, due to the limited access and range of resources in lessons. This has an impact on pupils' learning and is unsatisfactory.

129. Pupils make a sound start in the infants, and in Year 2 their information technology skills are broadly similar to those in most other schools. They type in text confidently to support their literacy work on 'Bess's Story', use the spacebar to create spaces, the "caps lock" to create capitals, the backspace key to make corrections and the return key to insert line breaks in their poems. They collect data on their pets, and produce clearly labelled block graphs of their findings.

130. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but the breadth of pupils' learning is restricted by the shortage of computer resources. Lessons are taught by an unqualified teacher, who has good computer skills. They have a clear focus on developing specific skills, and pupils are then given good opportunities to practise their new learning on a computer. The teaching is lively, and pupils are given lots of individual attention. This works well, but with no chance to reinforce this learning between lessons, pupils' progress is slow overall. This is a similar problem to that identified in the previous OFSTED inspection. A strength of the teaching lies in the good match provided with pupils' work in other subjects. Class teachers tell the information technology teacher the topics that pupils need to research, and pupils are then able to use CD ROM programs to gain access to useful information. This is good practice, and teaches pupils how to use computers, and, at the same time, builds up their knowledge of history, geography and science.

131. The development of the provision of information technology is a main priority of the school. There are ambitious plans to relocate the computer suite, and give every classroom a computer. The co-ordinator has a basic knowledge of her subject, and has attended appropriate training to further her expertise. She has ordered appropriate computer software to cover all the National Curriculum requirements. Pupils' progress is assessed methodically at the end of lessons by the information technology teacher, but the school lacks a comprehensive system to track the progression of pupils' skills. This leads to the situation where the computer teacher tries to introduce work appropriate for pupils' ages, and finds that they lack the basic skills to tackle the new work. The school is using the scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, but only those aspects which fit the school's supply of computer programs. In view of the lack of computers in classrooms, the absence of monitoring devices and the shortage of software, the subject does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

132. There were limited opportunities to observe the teaching of music, as several lessons were planned following the last day of the inspection. Judgements are based on the three lessons seen, assemblies, hymn practice and the scrutiny of planning, including discussion with teachers.

133. In Year 6, pupils are achieving standards in music which are similar to those found in most other schools. This includes pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, when standards at the end of Key Stage 2, were found to be below those expected for the oldest pupils in the school. Progress is now satisfactory, as work is planned using a published scheme. Moreover, there are three teachers in the school who are contributing well to the improvement in singing in particular. Nevertheless, expertise is fragmented and, consequently, some pupils make better progress than others. Where progress is best, teachers make good evaluations following their lessons and use these assessments to plan for future lessons. There are 30 pupils who receive additional music tuition during school time from a visiting specialist teacher. These pupils are achieving above average standards in understanding musical compositions and performing work from a variety of classical and contemporary composers. Talented and gifted pupils are well supported in music overall.

134. By the end of Year 6, most pupils can sing tunefully. This is best where pupils know the song or have access to the words to follow. They are developing conducting skills as evident when three pupils conducted 'A Life on the Ocean Wave'. Opportunities for pupils to listen to a wide variety of music are considerably underdeveloped throughout the whole school. Nevertheless, when pupils listened to 'Song of Liberty' by Elgar, played by a talented Year 6 pupil on her clarinet, pupils responded sensitively in hushed silence and spontaneously clapped at the end. Pupils are able to describe the mood and character of different composers when the opportunity arises. The work in Year 5 for the music festival showed some above average quality singing, due to the high expectations of the teacher, and the pupils were developing a strong sense of performance. Overall, opportunities for pupils to compose their own musical pieces are limited, including the use of computer technology to support this work. The music co-ordinators recognise this as an area for development.

135. In Year 2, pupils attain standards similar to those in most other schools. When pupils leave the infants, they sing tunefully and have a growing understanding of how to compose and perform simple pieces of music. Their wider knowledge of music and composers is hampered by lack of musical appreciation in assemblies in particular. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are involved well in lessons.

136. The quality of teaching and learning in the three lessons seen was good overall, although other evidence indicates that teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school. The lessons observed were mostly taken by well qualified and knowledgeable staff, but where teachers lack the same degree of expertise, they make good use of taped lessons. Occasionally, older pupils spoil music lessons by swinging on chairs and calling out inappropriately. However, all teachers have strong management techniques and this ensures satisfactory learning. They use praise and set very clear boundaries and expectations for the pupils. Moreover, pupils usually quickly regain interest. This was very evident in the Year 6 lessons, in which the teacher worked very hard to keep the lesson moving, by interacting with individuals firmly but by also ensuring that pupils assessed their own performances to raise the overall quality of the singing of 'Campdown Races'. This lesson had good links with the 1900's history curriculum. Where teaching is good, as in the teaching of 'New Millennium Heroes', the teacher made the pupils listen and correct their performance. She sang beautifully and this inspired the pupils to try harder. She then asked for 'more sparkle', the pupils stood up, the teacher conducted energetically and the room was filled with a sense of spirituality. Pupils exhibit creative effort and in the two part singing, pupils hold notes and phrase the piece well. In this respect, standards are above average for Year 5 pupils. For younger pupils in the infants, the lesson on 'The Mini Beast Parade' was of very high quality. The pupils made a musical composition for a storm using a wide range of instruments. They followed a wonderful picture score made by the teacher on a huge roll of wallpaper. This lesson was built up systematically and resulted in very good progress for pupils in their understanding of notation. In hymn practice, the quality of singing was variable, as some pupils did not participate. This was because of the positioning of the piano and teacher meant that some children were excluded from the enveloping sound of music. However, for those pupils who were closer to the teacher, the singing was of a high standard, especially when singing 'You Shall Go Out With Joy'. Planning for lessons is at least satisfactory and often good. Recent developments to have aerobic movement at the beginning of lessons in Year 5, using contemporary pop music, is a very good feature of helping pupils to enjoy and understand rhythm. Moreover, it has a very good effect on pupils' behaviour and social development.

137. There is satisfactory leadership in this subject with good expertise in teaching from all teachers with specialist music qualifications and responsibilities. Developments since the last inspection are satisfactory and there is appropriate planning for continued improvement. The school has worked hard to develop singing skills across the school and its efforts have been rewarded in some delightful singing in readiness for a local music festival. However, teaching has not been closely monitored across the school, although this is planned for the next school year. The initiative of having additional visiting instrumental teaching is good. The extracurricular music work is progressing well although this does not include pupils in the infants. There is a music policy, but it does not take sufficient account of identifying composers or wider musical work to help pupils to widen their cultural knowledge. This was also identified in the last OFSTED inspection. The school has started to use a commercially produced scheme of work satisfactorily and it is 'blocking' some music study sessions, although these are not identified in the school's policy. The resources are broadly satisfactory, although there are insufficient links with computer technology and there is a poor range of instruments and recorded music from different cultures. The library does not have enough books to support the music curriculum.

Pupils have limited opportunities to see other musical performances. As a result, music is not having a sufficient effect on helping pupils to appreciate a wider cultural heritage. There were occasions when pupils became absorbed in the spiritual elements of music, but, in general, this is insufficiently developed. Curricular provision is appropriate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe games and swimming. In Year 6, pupils' attainment overall is similar to that found in most other schools and almost all pupils reach above average standards in swimming. At the last inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be average at both key stages, with good standards in dance.

139. In Year 6, pupils practise and improve their own performance, working alone, in pairs and groups, or as team members. They evaluate their own and others' performance, and apply it to improving their own variety, quality and accuracy. They sustain energetic activity over suitable periods of time and show they understand the effect of exercise on their bodies, and appreciate the need for careful warm up and cool down. Pupils generally achieved well in the lessons seen, although the poor accommodation hampers overall achievement.

140. In Year 2, pupils attain standards which are similar to those in most other schools. Pupils plan and perform simple skills with safety and control the linking of actions. They make simple judgements and discuss what they and others have done. They use space and change direction and level appropriate to their age. In Year 2, classes they show appropriate skill development of ball skills.

141. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is satisfactory overall at both key stages. Instructors at the pool provide good teaching. Teachers start physical education lessons promptly and in a well-organised manner. Warmup activities are appropriate and interest the pupils, who work at a good pace. The lessons are developed by challenging and varied activities which are appropriately related to the aims of the lesson and which encourage the pupils to work hard and to sustain concentration. Teachers show sound knowledge of the subject in the instructions and demonstrations that they give and these factors, along with their use of pupils to demonstrate, help to ensure that pupils understand what they are doing and acquire new skills. This was particularly evident in a Year 4 lesson, where enthusiastic teaching motivated all pupils to make good progress in practising throwing skills. In some lessons, teachers have to manage some challenging behaviour. Higher achieving pupils make good progress when taking part in school teams in inter-school competitions and many show a keen interest by participating in the extra-curricular sports activities and outside clubs.

142. The school still has poor facilities, both indoor and outdoor, but a new sports hall and playing field are part of the site improvement plan, which is about to begin. Resources are adequate but storage facilities are poor and hinder pupils' opportunities to set up their own apparatus. The school makes good use of outside coaches, for example, in hockey and soccer coaching. There is a very good range of sporting activities throughout the year for Key Stage 2 boys and girls, but nothing is on offer for younger pupils. There are teams for football, netball, cross-country, rugby and rounders. They take part in district swimming and athletics competitions. The school enjoys high levels of success against most other schools and sporting activities are well supported by parents. The subject makes a good contribution to the social and moral development of the pupils as they learn to understand the benefits of teamwork. They know the rules of the games and display sporting behaviour.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

143. In Year 6, standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 2 and very good progress in some lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6. Only two lessons were seen in this subject in Key Stage 1, due to timetabling, so no firm judgements can be made. However, pupils' work was surveyed, planning examined, and displays noted, and from all sources of evidence some indications may be drawn. These indicate that standards of attainment by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and that progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, in both key stages, make good progress against their capabilities and their previous learning. There is improvement in both key stages from the standards

found in the last inspection, where religious knowledge was judged to be weak at both key stages and progress was unsatisfactory.

144. A very good aspect of the quality of pupils' learning in lessons seen in Key Stage 2 is the empathy of pupils, when dealing with prejudice and persecution, and their reverence and respect for the traditions of other faiths. This was particularly noticeable in Year 6 lesson on the holocaust and "kindertransport", as part of the history of the Jewish nation, and again in a Year 4 lessons on the family rituals for the Jewish celebration of the Shabbat. Pupils recalled previous information well, and were interested to learn more. In a lesson on Christian denominations and church buildings in Year 5, pupils display very good levels of knowledge and understanding, and good recall from previous lessons, on the difficult notions of symbolism involved in this topic. Pupils are able to grasp ideas about celebrations and rituals in different faiths studied, such as Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism, and to notice some common themes as well as differences. Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand about special places and special books, in terms of their own special belongings and places at first, and then extending this comparison to the context of different faiths studied. They are aware of the Bible, and have heard stories from both the Old and the New Testaments. They have also had introductions to some of the festivals of other faiths such as Divali and Hanukkah.

145. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is very good. This is not only due to the good quality of information presented, but also to the mature understanding and shared feelings of pupils. Planning is thorough and detailed, and teachers have very good subject knowledge. They present material imaginatively, such as in the lesson about "kindertransport" which was introduced by displaying the contents of a suitcase from the 1940s, or in the lesson about Shabbat, where a table bearing the herbs, candles and wine was laid out for role-playing the celebration. Skilled questioning promoted thought and the use of carefully designed worksheets enabled assessment to take place. In Key Stage 1, teaching and learning in the subject are satisfactory. Planning is appropriate, teachers' understanding of the subject is sound, information is presented clearly and questions are used well to promote thinking and to monitor pupils' understanding. In the previous inspection report, no judgement was made on the quality of teaching.

146. In the report of Her Majesty's Inspector of 1998, insufficient attention to the development of religious education was reported. Since that time, more attention has been given to the subject, its co-ordination and management, and the curriculum and planning, and there has been significant improvement. A very good and well-structured policy now exists, together with a scheme in the form of curricular maps. These documents detail the way the school interprets and approaches the programmes of study set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. They reflect the syllabus well. Planning on a termly basis is detailed and shows development of knowledge and skills planned for throughout the school. All termly, weekly and daily planning is seen by the co-ordinator, who has excellent subject knowledge and understanding. Assessment is not fully developed. Although there are criteria suggested in the locally Agreed Syllabus, there is no structured whole-school approach, and teachers are left to interpret criteria themselves and make their own notes. There has been no observation of lessons in the subject, but the co-ordinator has surveyed work samples across the school to evaluate outcomes of teaching. There have been visits to the local parish church, but visits to other places of worship have not been undertaken. There has also been a visit by a Hindu visitor who featured in an assembly but generally, experiences to broaden the subject are infrequent. The school has an adequate supply of books and other resources when added to by loan services, but does not have sufficient resources within the school, particularly in the case of artefacts for different faiths.