

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Romford, Essex

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102835

Headteacher: Mrs Debra Webb

Reporting inspector: Ms Ruth Frith  
OIN: 2490

Dates of inspection: 25 – 28 February 2002

Inspection number: 198600

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 Years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Chadwell Heath Lane  
Chadwell Heath  
Romford  
Essex

Postcode: RM6 4XS

Telephone number: 020 8590 3611

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Arthur Leggatt

Date of previous inspection: 10 - 13 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2490	Ruth Frith	Registered inspector	Design and technology Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
26292	Helen Mundy	Team inspector	English Art Music	
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team Inspector	Mathematics History Physical education English as an additional language	
28200	Paul Stevens	Team inspector	Geography Religious education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31029	Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Special educational needs	

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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Grove Primary School is a community school for boys and girls of all abilities aged 3 to 11 years. There are 458 pupils on roll, including 52 children who attend the nursery part-time. There are more boys than girls across the school with a significant imbalance in some years. The school is situated in the north-east of the London Borough of Redbridge in an area of mainly owner-occupied housing. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is broadly average. On entry to school most children display levels of attainment which are similar to those seen nationally. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is slightly below the national average and seven pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most of the pupils with special educational needs who require regular additional support have specific learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. There has been a rapid increase in the number of pupils who come from homes where English is not the first language. There are now sixty-two pupils who speak English as an additional language, seventeen of whom receive specific support. The school has recently received recognition of its work through the award of Investors in People. Similar to other schools in the area, Grove Primary has experienced difficulty in recruiting and retaining permanent teachers.

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

Grove Primary is a good school with many strengths and is well placed to improve further. It has adapted well to an increase in size and is popular in the local community. Standards of pupils' attainment in Years 3 to 6 have improved at a rate above the national trend and in 2001, eleven-year-olds reached good standards in English and science. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and enjoy their learning. The headteacher's leadership and management are very good and manifest themselves in a strong commitment to raising standards while also offering a broad and interesting curriculum. The school provides good value for money.

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

- In the 2001 national tests, pupils aged eleven reached standards in English and science which were above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good across the school and pupils achieve well. Teaching is enhanced by the work of support staff.
- The school supports staff very well and quickly encourages new staff to become part of a team with shared aims and expectations.
- The school has a strong commitment to inclusive education and makes good provision for gifted and talented pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and social education is good and provision for their moral development is very good. This results in pupils' good behaviour and personal development and very good relationships.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school.
- The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school uses the local community well to enhance pupils' learning and has good links with local schools and colleges.
- The headteacher provides very good management and leadership, and other key staff and the governing body ably support her.
- Staff promote good links with parents who in turn have positive views about the school.

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

- The organisation of the curriculum to ensure that every subject is taught regularly and allocated sufficient time to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a systematic way.
- Rates of attendance.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues identified in the report following the last inspection in November 1997. Staff have developed a comprehensive teaching and learning policy which clearly highlights good practice and the school offers a good range of professional development opportunities. These two developments have proved to be significant in raising the overall standard of teaching. Staff have improved the quality of the curriculum by developing schemes of work and following national guidance but the school still needs to review how often, and when, subjects are taught to ensure a balanced curriculum. Improvements have been made in the way teachers assess pupils' work and they have a clearer understanding of the expectations contained in the National Curriculum. Significant progress has been made in the way staff monitor pupils' attainment and progress and use the information gained from this to set realistic targets. Management and leadership have also improved. The role of co-ordinator has developed well and staff and governors are now more fully involved in the school development planning process. Improvement since the last inspection has been good even though difficulties have arisen through frequent changes in staffing. Staff and governors demonstrate a clear commitment to further improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	B	A
mathematics	A	A	C	C
science	A	B	B	B

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

Children make good progress with their learning in the nursery and reception classes and by the time they are ready to start Year 1, most are expected to reach the national standards in all areas of learning. Results of the 2001 standard assessment tests for seven-year-olds indicated an improvement in writing while standards in reading, mathematics and science were maintained from the previous year. Staff have developed strategies to improve standards overall in Years 1 and 2 and early indications are that they are beginning to work. Results of the 2001 standard assessment tests for eleven-year-olds indicated a significant improvement since the last inspection. Over the last five years the school's rate of improvement overall in English, mathematics and science has been above the national trend and in 2001, the school achieved its realistic targets for English and mathematics. Evidence from this inspection indicate that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are reaching average standards in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. Standards are above average for science and below average for geography and religious education. Pupils with special educational needs and the higher-attainers are appropriately challenged and achieve well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress and reach standards in line with their capabilities. No significant difference was noted in the progress and achievement of boys and girls during the inspection although there have been some differences over the last three years. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, boys did better than girls in English and mathematics and girls did better than boys in science.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Most enjoy their work and demonstrate interest and enthusiasm in their learning. A few of the older pupils lack self-discipline and rely on the teachers to keep them working.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Most pupils are polite and courteous to each other and towards adults.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good and relationships between all members of the school community are very good.
Attendance	In the last full reporting year, attendance was slightly below the national average and unauthorised absences were above.

The pupils' very good relationships, good attitudes, behaviour and personal development provide a good basis for their learning and make a positive contribution to the levels of attainment that they achieve.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching, and the learning which it promotes, are good. This reflects the importance placed on supporting teachers, for example, through a good programme of professional development and the school's focus on monitoring teaching so that teachers' strengths and areas for improvement are identified. Staff are valued and encouraged to give of their best. The teaching of children in the nursery is particularly effective in developing their communication, personal and social skills and their attitudes to learning. These strengths are built upon successfully in the reception classes. Teachers throughout the school have satisfactorily adopted the National Literacy Strategy but have been more effective in raising standards in Years 3 to 6 where teaching is good. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Teachers have introduced the National Numeracy Strategy well and this has helped to raise standards in numeracy, particularly in Year 6 where they are now above average. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is generally good. The school allocates valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs and consequently they make good progress towards the targets set for them. Learning support assistants and classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well met through good class teaching. Higher attaining pupils are usually appropriately challenged.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. The school offers a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for other pupils but needs to make improvements in its organisation of the curriculum. Provision for activities outside formal lessons is excellent.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs receive a curriculum that is appropriate and overall provision is good. They make good progress to the targets set in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully involved and make similar progress to their peers. Their needs are well met within the mainstream class teaching.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual and social development is good and provision for their cultural development is satisfactory. The school establishes clear expectations of good behaviour and encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know their pupils well and take appropriate account of individual needs. Pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored well.

The school's partnership with parents is good.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership is provided by the headteacher. She has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the aim to raise standards. She is particularly effective in motivating a team with a shared sense of values and priorities. The deputy headteacher and other key members of staff ably support her.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are fully involved in school development planning and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems are used to monitor pupils' progress and evaluate the quality of teaching. Staff and governors have established a culture of monitoring and target setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is thorough and takes full account of the cost of implementing the school's plan for development. Correct financial procedures are followed and staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending.

In line with some other schools, Grove Primary has experienced substantial difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers. Currently, there are sufficient suitably qualified teachers to ensure that class sizes are not too large. Support staff are effective and the good support they provide is a contributory factor in the pupils' learning. The accommodation is satisfactory. Resources are good overall and used well to support learning throughout the school.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils enjoy school and make good progress.</li><li>• Behaviour is good and pupils are encouraged to celebrate their own successes and those of others.</li><li>• Teaching is good and pupils are encouraged to work hard.</li><li>• Staff create an environment which is conducive to learning.</li><li>• The school is well managed and significant improvements have been made since the last inspection.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provision of homework.</li><li>• Some parents would like a closer working relationship with the school and more information about the progress their children are making.</li></ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents. Evidence gained from the inspection indicates that the school has an appropriate homework policy and generally the provision of homework is satisfactory. In some cases, however, particularly when there has been a change in teachers, the provision of homework is not consistent. Also, the marking of homework is not consistent and pupils are not always clear about how well they have done. The inspectors consider that the school provides ample opportunities for parents to find out about their child's progress. This is confirmed by the parents who stress how willing staff are to listen and help.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children are admitted to the nursery after they become three. They have a broad range of abilities and experiences but most display average skills in language and communication and personal and social development. An increasing number of children are entering the school speaking English as an additional language. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes due to good teaching and the provision of a good curriculum. In the current reception classes, the children are displaying standards expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Children often make very good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills and standards are often above average. This helps to support their learning in other areas.
2. Results of the 2001 standard assessment tests for seven-year-olds indicated that in comparison with all schools, pupils' attainment was average in writing and mathematics and below average in reading. When compared with pupils from similar schools they attained average standards in mathematics, below average standards in writing and well below average standards in reading. Results of the 2001 teacher assessments in science indicated that the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age (Level 2) was above average. These results show that the school has maintained standards from the previous year in reading, mathematics and science and improved standards in writing.
3. At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in the 2001 tests was above the national average in English and science and average in mathematics. When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, attainment in English was well above average, in science it was above average and in mathematics it was average. These results indicate a significant improvement in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. Over the last five years the school's trend of improvement in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged 8 to 11 was above the national trend and the school reached the realistic targets it set last year. The school is working hard to reach the challenging targets set for 2003.
4. Throughout the school, pupils' progress and consequent levels of attainment have been affected by the frequent changes in teaching staff. The school has done all it can to recruit and retain permanent teachers but some classes have had to adjust to a number of teachers with different expectations. The negative impact of this has been lessened by the good structures in place in the school, which support new teachers well and indicate what is expected of them. Consequently, most pupils make good progress overall.
5. A significant number of pupils have either left the school or others have arrived part way through their primary schooling and this also affects their continuity of learning. For example, in the current Year 6, only 59 per cent of pupils have been in Grove Primary since reception age. In some years, such as Year 4, this falls to only 50 per cent.
6. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. The national strategy for literacy is well established and staff have adapted this to meet the needs of the pupils, for example, by allocating additional time for guided reading and additional writing. Pupils' progress is better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2 and overall standards have fluctuated with the younger pupils over the last few years. However, pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Senior management have recognised the need to raise expectations of the younger pupils and have introduced greater literacy support in the reception and Year 1 classes. This is beginning to impact positively on pupils' standards.

7. Standards in mathematics for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those expected nationally but standards for numeracy are above those expected for pupils in Year 6. This represents good achievement for most pupils. Improvements in standards since the last inspection reflect the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the overall increase in good teaching and the range of positive strategies adopted by the school. There is now an emphasis on mental computation, setting for pupils of different abilities and better monitoring and planning which ensure a closer match between the work set and pupils' needs.
8. Standards are good in science for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and this indicates good improvement since the last inspection. This improvement reflects the better science curriculum, which is now in place, and the better quality of teaching. Also, the results of national tests are analysed carefully and the results of this used to plan future work. An example of this is how the school has placed a greater emphasis on the teaching of experimental and investigative science in order to raise standards further.
9. Currently, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are reaching average standards in art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education. Standards are below average in geography and religious education.
10. The pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers and as a result of good teaching in class lessons, achieve well. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, most of these pupils attain standards that are expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. A significant number attain standards above those expected. This reflects how successfully class teachers provide for these pupils.
11. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and enables them to make good progress. Individual education plans have appropriate and manageable targets that pupils are able to meet, mostly through small group and individual tuition, where learning opportunities are well focused on their particular needs. Within lessons, particularly when supported by learning support assistants, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and generally reach standards in line with their capabilities.
12. No significant difference was noted in the progress of boys and girls during the inspection although there have been some differences in national test results for eleven-year-olds over the last three years. For example, boys did better than girls in English and mathematics and girls did better than boys in science. More able pupils are appropriately challenged and reach standards in line with their abilities.

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

13. The previous inspection reported that the pupils had positive attitudes towards their work, to each other and to adults at the school. Inspection evidence supports the parents' view that pupils continue to be generally well behaved and to have good attitudes, although this is less apparent in some of the older pupils. The school's success in achieving its aim to value every child, contributes greatly to the development of these attributes. These, in turn, have a beneficial impact on the pupils' progress and standards of attainment. Parents say their children like going to the school and are proud of Grove Primary. The enthusiastic way pupils participate in extra-curricular activities is further evidence that they enjoy school and all it has to offer. Many enjoy learning, which they approach with interest and enthusiasm. This was evident, for example in the pleasure pupils in a Year 1 music lesson showed as they learnt to make long and short sounds using a variety of methods.
14. In most lessons pupils take an interest in their classroom activities and want to do well although few take real care over the presentation of their work. Many pupils talk willingly with visitors about what they have done. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They are keen to answer questions and take turns when doing so. Some have the confidence to participate in discussions and make thoughtful contributions appropriate to their age and ability. In the nursery,

reception classes and Years 1 and 2, pupils settle quickly to their tasks and sustain concentration. This is not always the case in Years 3 to 6, particularly in lessons that lack pace or where pupils have not been well briefed or sufficiently challenged. In such lessons, some pupils lack the self-discipline to apply themselves consistently. This results in wasted time and hampers progress. In general, the pupils' independent learning and research skills are underdeveloped because not enough lessons are based on the key elements of enquiry and interpretation. The school has begun to address this issue.

15. Because they are taught the importance of friendship and of consideration for the feelings and needs of others, relationships amongst pupils and with adults at the school are very good. Pupils mix well, working and playing together harmoniously. Several instances of them working constructively in small groups and pairs were seen. A good example was observed in a Year 1 physical education lesson when pupils collaborated very well to produce a 'gentle and slow' dance sequence. Parents particularly applaud the pupils' mutual concern and the way they so positively celebrate each other's efforts and achievements. This was apparent when pupils spontaneously clapped a girl who played a flute solo in the weekly sharing assembly. Pupils also relate well with staff and are open and welcoming towards visitors. Through the strong and supportive ethos of the school, pupils learn to respect the values and beliefs of others. They are tolerant and accepting. They listen attentively and with great interest to stories and information about other people's faiths.
16. Pupils generally behave well throughout the school day. In many lessons, particularly in the nursery, reception classes and Years 1 and 2, they understand and follow set routines and codes of conduct. This, together with good teaching, ensures that their behaviour is good. Pupils also behave very well in assemblies. The quiet and orderly way they conducted themselves throughout the whole school sharing assembly was impressive. Behaviour at playtimes is satisfactory. This is, at least in part, due to the wide range of small and large apparatus available, enabling pupils to engage in constructive play. Although most pupils also behave appropriately in the dining hall, noise levels often become too high. Some pupils show little understanding of appropriate social skills and a few rush about with little regard for the needs of others. In the year before the inspection, six pupils were excluded for fixed periods for unacceptable behaviour. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. Parents say that bullying is not a major problem at the school and any incidents are dealt with speedily and well.
17. Pupils respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility. They keenly volunteer for messenger and monitoring duties, which they perform conscientiously. Older pupils have some opportunities for taking greater responsibility, for example, helping the younger ones at lunchtimes, but these are limited. The school is aware that it does not fully realise the pupils' potential for showing initiative, and a priority is the setting up of a school council in order to give pupils some autonomy.
18. Overall, attendance is lower than at the time of the previous inspection and there are more unauthorised absences now. In the last full reporting year, attendance was slightly below the national average for primary schools and unauthorised absences were above the national average. Most absences are due to common childhood ailments, but a significant minority are for holidays during term time, some of which extend beyond two weeks. Other recorded absences are for children whose parents withdraw them without letting the school know straight away, and for children being educated 'off-site'. The above average level of unauthorised absence is mainly due to the school not discovering the reason why some children are absent. Not all pupils get to school on time and usually up to about eighteen arrive after the start of the school day at 9.10 a.m. A few pupils are fairly often late. However, pupils quickly return to classrooms after breaks, and lessons start very promptly. This is a strong feature of the school.

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

19. The school has addressed the issues identified in the last inspection and the quality of teaching

and learning has significantly improved. There has been an increase in very good or better teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. A key factor in this improvement is the development and implementation of a comprehensive teaching and learning policy which outlines good practice. This is particularly important in a school such as Grove Primary which has experienced a high rate of teacher mobility and where new members of staff need to understand what is expected of them. Teachers are also supported well through a good programme of professional development which helps to identify their areas of strength, and those areas which they made need to develop further.

20. Teaching is good. The good quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is an important factor in the way children develop good personal, emotional and social skills, attitudes to learning and behaviour. Lesson planning is good and reflects the national guidance for teaching children of this age. Appropriate attention has been placed on settling children into school and a good range of activities is provided which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. The children's knowledge, skills and understanding are successfully extended in the reception class where they continue to develop confidence and are well prepared to start the National Curriculum, when appropriate. The support staff give valuable help to the children and this is a key feature in making children feel secure in their learning.
21. Throughout the school, teachers' knowledge and understanding are generally good and they use these to plan work which is usually well matched to the pupils' needs. Planning has improved since the last inspection and is now based on schemes of work taken from national guidance. Teachers have used the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to improve teaching and learning but have been more successful in raising standards in mathematics than in English. The school is now at a stage where it needs to continue to implement the recently introduced additional literacy strategies with the younger pupils and focus on raising standards in literacy in Years 1 and 2. Early indications are that these strategies are proving to be successful but are unlikely to bring about a significant rise in standards until 2004.
22. The relatively limited experience of some of the new teachers sometimes impacts on their expectations of pupils. Although never less than satisfactory, a significant minority of teachers do not have particularly high expectations of pupils' work and what they can do. This seems to have contributed to the lower standards in Years 1 and 2 in the past. Senior management have recognised this issue and are beginning to address it.
23. In the best lessons, teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share that with them. They provide appropriate support and challenge which ensure that pupils of all abilities maintain a good pace in their learning and build systematically on their previous learning. A key feature of raising pupils' attainment is to highlight clearly the next stages in learning through effective assessment and to use this information to plan a series of lessons. The best teachers do this well.
24. Support staff work well and are instrumental in encouraging pupils' progress and the standards that they achieve. In some cases, they are instrumental in keeping the continuity of teaching and learning when there has been a change in teachers and this helps to support the children's learning. Overall, teachers use time, resources and the expertise of support staff well.
25. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good and has a significant influence on how staff successfully manage the pupils in their care. Teachers are encouraging and supportive, which results in most pupils becoming confident. However, there are a significant minority of pupils who lack confidence in their abilities and are overdependent on the teachers. This is seen mostly with the older pupils. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils appropriately in most lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder. In contrast, some do not comment enough on pupils' work through their marking and consequently, pupils are not always clear about how they can improve. Provision of homework is satisfactory overall and supports the work done in school, particularly in English and mathematics. However, some inconsistencies arise when there is a frequent change of teaching staff.
26. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years

3 to 6. Across the school, it is good in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music and satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, history and physical education. Teaching is unsatisfactory in religious education because sometimes teachers' expectations are too low in relation to pupils' written work. Insufficient evidence was available to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching in geography.

27. The following comments reflect the school's commitment to inclusive education. The school has improved its work with higher attaining pupils who are in most cases being appropriately challenged. The teaching for these pupils is managed well and a variety of strategies adopted to ensure that they receive an appropriate curriculum and teaching. Some lessons are set so that groups of pupils with similar abilities can be taught together and some pupils receive additional opportunities to develop their talents and abilities.
28. Class teachers are aware of the specific needs of pupils with English as an additional language and are kept well informed by the co-ordinator. The school's strong commitment to inclusion ensures that these pupils are fully included in lessons and in all aspects of school life. Due to the generally good teaching they make good progress and reach levels of attainment in line with their abilities and levels of English acquisition.
29. Good, well-focused learning opportunities are provided for pupils with special educational needs in withdrawal sessions, allowing them to meet individual targets, particularly those related to literacy. These lessons are well structured, with a variety of activities that help to keep interest and concentration and provide for success. Good relationships between teachers and pupils make these enjoyable yet worthwhile sessions. Learning support assistants are well trained to carry out their support role in lessons.

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

30. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the local syllabus for religious education. The curriculum covers what is required in all subjects and is relevant to the needs of its pupils. It therefore provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. Schemes of work based on national guidance are now in place. The main strengths are in provision for special needs, numeracy and extra-curricular activities and in the links made with local community and educational institutions. However, the school needs to make improvements in its organisation of the curriculum, because it adversely affects standards of attainment particularly in religious education, geography and history. This means that the school has not yet adequately addressed the key curriculum issue identified in the last inspection.
31. Since the last inspection, the structure of the school day has improved. The school has appropriately placed great emphasis on developing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. It also gives pupils opportunities to develop long pieces of writing. The school uses up much of the weekly timetable covering these two subjects as separate activities, but rarely develops their skills through other subjects. This has given rise to problems which affect pupils' learning. First, the time allocated over the year is below average for religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music. Pupils also have too few opportunities to develop independence in learning and to be creative. Secondly, the school teaches many subjects in yearly blocks. This means that pupils do not revisit aspects frequently enough to retain and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. Thirdly, the balance of subjects in any week and over a day is often inappropriate to sustain learning. There are days when pupils spend little time working for themselves. There are examples of literacy lessons where pupils learn independently for only a short period of the time. Consequently, pupils lose interest and are less motivated to learn.
32. The school's curriculum prepares pupils satisfactorily for secondary school, although some older pupils have not fully developed the ability to work independently and rely too heavily on the



teachers for support. The school organises its classrooms and working areas so that pupils have easy access to resources. It further supports their learning with interesting displays, for example, of high quality religious artefacts. There is a very good programme of visits to enrich the curriculum. This includes visits to the National and Tate Galleries, the theatre, Verulamium and the Science Museum.

33. The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. It includes clubs for computers, art activities, storytelling, drama, mathematical games, chess, music and sport. Pupils have equal opportunity to participate and clubs are well attended. These activities thoroughly enrich pupils' learning.
34. The school includes all pupils in its approach to the curriculum. This is reflected in its values and teaching practices. It takes into account the particular needs of its own intake and identifies those who are most at risk. The inspectors did not observe any significant differences in the achievement of pupils with regard to gender or ethnic background. Good management of behaviour ensures that all pupils spend their time in learning. There are no biased attitudes towards gender or race.
35. Teachers keep appropriate records of pupils who need additional monitoring and support, and the plans drawn up for those with special needs or for whom English is an additional language are always to hand in classrooms. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good. The support given within groups and classes generally allows pupils with special educational needs full access to the learning opportunities provided. The school's commitment to inclusion ensures that pupils learning English as an additional language have full and equal access to the curriculum. Overall, teachers use methods and resources which meet the needs of all its pupils, and there are varying appropriate degrees of challenge.
36. Provision for personal, social and health education is currently satisfactory but developing well as the school completes its policy. Pupils participate in a broad programme of lessons where they explore issues such as friendship and leadership. There is scope for higher expectations of pupils in contributing to discussions. Good teaching takes an imaginative approach. For example, in a series of sessions on alcohol abuse, the teacher showed that what people like is not necessarily good for them. The ensuing discussion led to some valuable role-play where one person tried to persuade the other not to drink too much. In addition, the school provides a clear framework in which pupils develop personally and in their relationships with others. Adults provide good role models, and the school expects pupils to 'tell' on bullies. The school has appointed a co-ordinator for personal, social and health education who liaises closely with the local education authority.
37. The school has worked very well with the local community in establishing links which benefit the pupils. It takes advantage of schemes to raise funds for equipment and taps local resources. For example, it has received framed art prints from a large supermarket. The local police and fire officers visit regularly to keep pupils aware of important safety issues. Leaders from different ethnic backgrounds have taken assemblies and made important contributions to the curriculum. Teachers encourage pupils to raise money for a wide variety of local and international charities. They also arrange for them to participate in local events related to sport and the arts.
38. Links with other educational institutions are good. Local colleges work with the school in training teachers. The school has established appropriate links with local secondary schools, and with others via the Internet. In addition, there is a good link with a local school for the disabled.
39. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good, overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Provision specifically for spiritual education is good. Sometimes teachers plan opportunities for pupils to experience and explore deep feelings. For example, in one year group, the teachers wanted to stimulate pupils' sense of wonder prior to writing an imaginative story. They 'planted' a golden egg outside the classroom and feigned amazement. This captured pupils' interest and imagination and enhanced the quality of their work. Teachers further capture pupils' sense of mystery through studies of myths and legends. Religious education makes a good contribution to this aspect. Pupils discuss mutual tolerance and have designed an inter-faith building. They developed their understanding by thinking hard for

themselves and being creative. Pupils develop a good sense of empathy through seeing examples of what is special to others. They make detailed studies of festivals in a range of faiths in order to explore other people's values and beliefs. However, although moments of reflection occur in assemblies, they tend to be added on rather than growing out of what preceded them. Sometimes moments of wonder occur spontaneously. One example was the delight shown at the ice inside a balloon and the fascinating effects of splashing dyes on it: 'Is that really all ice?' The school has high expectations of pupils by asking them to consider ideas such as love, grief and compassion.

40. Provision for moral education is very good. The school establishes a clear framework for behaviour which supports its aims and values. It expects pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. Consequently, they develop a clear sense of right and wrong. The school provides good opportunities to discuss difficult issues such as injustice and prejudice. Pupils write sensitive poetry and prayers in response to world-wide issues such as terrorism. Assemblies and literature provide a good basis for discussing moral themes such as forgiveness, respect, honesty and sharing.
41. Provision for social development is good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to collaborate, and they respond well. This is shown in the computer suite, for example, where boys and girls work alongside one another and generally take turns without the need for adult intervention. The school emphasises that each individual is part of the school community and has a contribution to make to it. For example, in one lesson the point was made that everyone has the potential to be a leader in some way, depending on their own talents. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to live together at the residential course for Year 6. Pupils are currently discussing the establishment of a council so that they can bring attention to social and other issues which affect the school community. Pupils' work for charity adds to their awareness of the wider community.
42. Provision for cultural development remains satisfactory. Teachers make good use of artists and composers to stimulate poetry, art and music. However, resources are heavily biased towards European arts. Pupils come into contact with composers such as Vivaldi in assemblies, but do not discuss the music. There are a few examples of pupils developing their understanding of other faiths through art, such as making Rangoli patterns or a variety of masks. The school appropriately acknowledges the festivals in different religions. It also takes a few opportunities to look at cultures in history. There is scope for developing resources which illustrate role models in a variety of cultures.

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

43. Most teachers provide pupils with good pastoral support. They know them well and take appropriate account of individual needs. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect between adults and pupils. Caring and friendliness pervade the school ethos and parents confirm that pupils feel happy, secure and valued. This is reflected in the confidence with which they approach staff and the positive attitude most show towards school.
44. Over the last few years the school has invested considerable time and resources into developing strategies for promoting good behaviour. These have proved to be successful. A behaviour policy that is based on a positive approach and the development of the pupils' self-esteem is now well embedded throughout the school. Most teachers apply discipline firmly but fairly; they make explicit why certain behaviour is not appropriate. They consistently praise good work or behaviour, which is further reinforced by the judicious use of rewards such as stars, certificates or acclamation in a sharing assembly. The provision of an adventure trail and other large outside play apparatus has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour at break times because they can now engage in constructive play. Strategies for dealing with poor behaviour are also well applied. To emphasise that it will not be tolerated, pupils are excluded for a fixed period if they exhibit particularly unacceptable behaviour. Those with especially challenging behaviour are supported well by teachers and special needs assistants. Parents applaud the school's 'this is a telling school', anti bullying policy. They believe it works well and say that bullying is not a major

problem at the school.

45. With an increased number and more diverse range of pupils the school is now less successful at promoting good attendance than it was at the time of the previous inspection. A number of sound strategies are used, For example, parents are frequently reminded of the importance of good attendance, and through the home school agreement they contract to send their child to school regularly and on time. Late pupils have to report to the office and are recorded in a book. The education welfare officer checks registers each week and contacts the parents of any child whose attendance or punctuality is a real cause for concern. However some attendance procedures are not consistently applied. For instance, whilst the school brochure states 'it is the parents' duty to let the school know why, on the first morning' if their child cannot come to school, a recent newsletter stated 'a quick phone call on the first day helps'. Because of this some parents may not be entirely clear about what is expected of them. The school has also been lax about telephoning parents of any children away without reason, on the first day. This practice has only recently been re-instated.
46. Governors are concerned about these issues and have started to address them. They have agreed a target of a one per cent increase in overall attendance with the local authority, and have begun to analyse registers for any patterns of absence. However, they have not yet fully reviewed their attendance policy and procedures or considered all possible strategies for improving attendance and punctuality.
47. The effective arrangement for ensuring the pupils' well-being and safety reported in the previous inspection have generally been maintained. The headteacher continues to be responsible for child protection and she ensures that staff are aware of the issues and procedures involved. They, in turn are quick to alert her of any concerns. There is first aid cover throughout the school day and a dedicated medical room where this can be administered. Parents are always told if their child receives a bump to the head and all incidents resulting in injury, however slight, are logged in the accident book. Pupils with special medical needs are catered for well. Fire drills are held and logged, each term. Fire exits are well signed. All necessary equipment and apparatus are checked regularly by outside specialists. The local authority oversees the school's arrangements for health and safety. The authority carries out an audit every four years and makes sure that the school undertakes a formal health and safety check every 6 months. There are usually sufficient adult supervisors at break and lunchtimes but the school needs to ensure they are always vigilant so that pupils who need help, are dealt with quickly.
48. Pupils' bags and coats, and school equipment lying around on floors often impede free passage in classrooms and corridors, and could trip. The school is aware of these and a few other health and safety concerns noted during the inspection.
49. The previous inspection reported that practice in day-to-day assessment and record keeping was inconsistent across both key stages. This meant that assessment data was not complete enough to inform planning of future work in order to help pupils make progress. The school has made significant improvements in tackling this issue particularly with regard to English, mathematics and science. Procedures for assessing pupils are now good in mathematics and English and satisfactory in science. Marking is more consistent and test results more systematically recorded. Assessment information is effectively used to inform curriculum planning both at the individual and larger group level. For instance in science, analysis of test results showed that pupils' investigative and experimental skills were weak and the school is now making better provision for them to develop these skills. Appropriate targets are now set in reading, writing and mathematics, for all pupils including above average achievers. Similar good assessment practice is not yet being applied to other subjects.
50. Assessment data is well used in planning the effective delivery of the curriculum for pupils who have English as an additional language. The specific needs of these pupils are carefully identified and are well used by class teachers to plan their work.
51. Baseline assessments for pupils starting school are analysed carefully. From this analysis and

Careful observation of pupils in class, pupils with special educational needs are identified and individual education plans drawn up by the class teacher, with any necessary help being given by the co-ordinator or special needs teacher. Realistic and manageable targets are set, which are reviewed termly. Careful ongoing records of pupils' progress are kept, together with samples of work. Language development groups have recently been started to meet the needs of an increasing number of pupils with communication and interaction difficulties. Those with behavioural needs are well supported, often with strategies that go beyond the school's behaviour management policy. Daily one-to-one counselling is provided and individual playground support is given for named pupils. Annual reviews of pupils with statements are carried out thoroughly. The help of outside agencies is sought as required.

52. The pupils' personal development is also well monitored. Teachers discuss personal and social goals with pupils at the start of the school year. These are recorded in the pupils' individual profile and are reviewed each term. Teachers make written comments about pupils' development in this area in the annual report to parents.

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

53. The school's effective partnership with parents reported in the previous inspection has been strengthened, with parents now expressing higher levels of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. They consider the school to be well managed with good teaching. They like the work ethic it promotes; they see their children as happy and making good all round progress. Inspection evidence generally supports these positive views. Some parents express concern about the amount of homework given and a number say the school does not work closely with them particularly with regard to letting them know how their child is progressing. Inspectors found these opinions to be only partially justified. The school now has a clear homework policy specifying appropriate amounts and types of homework for pupils in each year and all parents are given a copy. Inspectors accept that there is some inconsistency in the application of the policy particularly with respect to the 'usefulness' of the marking. The school gives parents ample opportunities for learning about their child's work and progress. There are formal consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms, and parents are encouraged to approach staff at any other time to share concerns about their child's education. Parents stress how willing most teachers are to listen and to help. An open day, when pupils' work is on display and parents can 'sample' lessons is held in July. In addition, when used well by teachers, pupils' reading records and homework books provide ongoing feedback. The pupils' annual reports give a good general overview of the individual's achievements and sometimes of their progress. However, except in mathematics and English – and this is variable- there are no precise details of the pupils' attainment in terms of the National Curriculum or targets for improvement. The school meets its statutory requirement to provide information about attendance on the reports and to give parents Year 2 and Year 6 assessment results. A synopsis of the curriculum topics covered during the year is included with every report. However, it is not made explicit to parents that they may discuss their child's report with teachers should they wish.
54. The school's concern to keep parents well informed about its work is patent, and its openness in this respect is impressive. It uses a good range of methods to ensure parents are kept up-to-date. The governors' annual report and prospectus both contain much useful information. A particularly good feature of the report is the detail it provides about progress made with issues raised at the previous governors' meeting for parents. Regular newsletters give diary dates and reminders about such things as attendance. In addition, they always include very clear details of any changes in school organisation or the curriculum. A brief but clear overview of the curriculum is given in the prospectus and parents have access to greater detail. Curriculum evenings, when topics to be covered and approaches are explained, are held for parents of each class at the beginning of the school year. Some teachers also display their plans on classroom windows or send details in the pupils' homework book though these practices are not consistent across the school. Curriculum meetings on such topics as standard attainment tests are held from time to time. Regrettably, these are sometimes very poorly supported by parents. For example only two attended a meeting about reading for parents of children in the reception class. Because it fully appreciates the role of parents as the 'consumer', the school takes care to consider their views when developing plans and policies. For example, the school plans to hold Literacy and ICT workshops soon, and has obtained parents' views about what they would like to gain from these, via a questionnaire. Although an increasing number of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, the school has not identified the need to provide written communications in appropriate community languages.
55. The school considers it important that parents support their child's education and encourages them to become involved. Most do so, for example by helping their child with reading at home or monitoring homework. Many also enjoy attending special assemblies and musical events with their children. However, relatively few are more actively involved with the life of the school. About six, including a grandfather, give valuable classroom support on a regular basis by listening to 'readers' in Years 1 and 2. One or two give occasional help with cooking, art and puppet making. Others help on trips or with Christmas parties. Some were involved in the recent landscaping project to develop the outdoor play area. Recently, in an effort to get more parents to participate in such ways the headteacher suggested a 'directory of expertise' but no parents responded.

56. The school continues to enjoy and much appreciate, the support of the active parent teacher association, the 'Friends of Grove School'. The association works hard to raise funds and engender a community spirit through bazaars, raffles, theatre trips, a regular newsletter and a range of social events. The money raised is used to purchase 'major' items such as classroom computers, library furniture and a playhouse for the nursery. Association members also make a valuable contribution by running end of year discotheques, and taking children on trips on staff training days.
57. Parents are kept well informed of children with special educational needs and the progress they are making. They are invited to attend reviews. If this is not possible, copies of review notes with the new individual education plan are sent to parents. The co-ordinator and special needs teacher make themselves available to parents who wish to discuss issues concerning special educational needs identification and provision. The school encourages participation of all parents in curriculum events, including those whose children are learning English as an additional language. Parents are clearly informed about their children's progress and the work of the school.

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

58. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the provision of high quality teaching to ensure good standards. Despite significant difficulties with the recruitment and retention of teachers, she has been successful in uniting a team of professionals who are well motivated and display a determined will to succeed. An important feature of management is her high expectations linked to the provision of appropriate procedures and structures, which support the quality of teaching and learning even when there are frequent changes in staffing. Her vision and drive have proved to be significant factors in how the school community has continued to develop the quality of provision and brought about recent improvements in what is a popular, expanding school.
59. There is a strong senior management team and the skills, expertise and experiences of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are complemented well. The senior managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development and ably assist the headteacher. The role of subject co-ordinator has improved since the last inspection and continues to develop. Although a number of the current co-ordinators are recent appointments, they share a clear understanding of what should be achieved. Established co-ordinators are well informed and effective in promoting their subjects and in monitoring standards. A good feature of staffing is the strength of united teamwork that is noticeable in school.
60. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good understanding of the pupils' needs and how they learn. This is reflected in the school's practice, which encourages learning through a range of activities. These features are well demonstrated in the school where an ethos of care and concern, together with high expectations, are encouraged. By the time pupils leave school, most show positive attitudes and are sensitive to the needs of others. There is a good degree of mutual tolerance and respect and racial harmony is self-evident. Staff and governors display a clear commitment to inclusive education which underpins much of the school's work.
61. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work. The school development plan indicates priorities which are clearly matched to the needs of the school, and it is now the result of a good consultation process with parents, governors and staff. It sets a clear agenda for improvement. The school has successfully addressed the issues resulting from the previous inspection although more still needs to be done in terms of organising the curriculum. Governors give full support to the school and they are now well informed and more involved in school development. They have good levels of knowledge and this helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and have trust in the headteacher and staff. The governors, headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement and have developed a system of monitoring and setting targets that keeps the school moving forward towards

achieving its aims. Targets are realistic and reviewed appropriately. Improvements in the systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning have resulted in staff having a clearer understanding of pupils' progress and what they can do. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.

62. The major hindrance to the school's ability to develop and improve practice has been the difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers. Senior managers have worked hard on these issues which have taken up a considerable amount of their time. In addition to bringing about some instability in teaching, there have also been frequent changes in middle management as staff have left and this has led to a slowing down of subject development. Despite this, senior managers and governors have done the best that they could in the circumstances and continue to see the stability of staffing as a top priority.
63. The school currently buys into the service provided by the local education authority for supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. It has appropriate plans to strengthen provision and to use funds more efficiently in relation to these pupils who are increasing in numbers. The headteacher has a good understanding and experience in this area. The co-ordinator is well trained and offers good advice to teachers.
64. The school fulfils the requirements of the Code of Practice in having a special needs register, consulting with parents and holding reviews. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. She has a very clear picture of the pupils' needs within the school and how they are being met, and is conversant with the newly published Code of Practice and its implications for special educational needs provision. She meets regularly with learning support assistants, who are well trained, to discuss provision and to provide further specific training. Funding for special educational needs is used fully and appropriately.
65. The staffing establishment of the school is good. It allows for a non-class based senior teacher and dedicated special educational needs staff as well as class teachers. This makes a major contribution to the school's successful inclusion of a wide range of pupils. Difficulty with recruiting and retaining staff over the recent past has proved to be a significant hindrance to the school's development. Despite this, the headteacher has taken care to appoint only suitably qualified teachers so that the needs of the curriculum can be fully met. She has ensured all classes are covered, by employing two staff from overseas on long-term temporary contracts. Teachers are hard working, committed and supportive of one another. They are ably assisted by a team of experienced support staff who work very effectively with individuals and small groups of children, particularly those pupils with special educational needs, and children in the nursery and reception classes.
66. The school views the staff as its most valuable resource and staff development is a priority. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is good. Targets are agreed and personal development opportunities are linked appropriately to whole school needs identified in the School Development Plan. Staff who attend courses, subsequently share the knowledge and skills gained with their colleagues. The provision for professional development is good and teachers new to the school are supported very well. Newly qualified teachers speak highly about the quality of their induction programme. The school has recently received recognition of its work in this area through the award of Investors in People.
67. The accommodation has been considerably enhanced since the previous inspection. A nursery unit was completed and opened in 1998 and there is now an information and communication technology suite. The six 'new' classrooms, which were previously open-planned, have been made fully discrete so that pupils are no longer adversely affected by bustle and noise from adjoining rooms. The outside environment has also been much improved by landscaping, the fencing off of a designated area for children in the reception classes, the development of an attractive bog garden and pond, and by the provision of large play apparatus. Overall the accommodation is adequate for supporting delivery of the full curriculum. However because of the increased number of pupils at the school, a class in Year 3 is now based in a rather cramped area that is also a through route. This means that the pupils are frequently disturbed and this is detrimental to the quality of their learning. This unsatisfactory arrangement will continue until full

access to the mobile classroom can be arranged or new classrooms built. Some of the classrooms for the younger children are also rather cramped.

68. The school has ample, good quality resources to support the teaching in all areas of the curriculum. Resources are accessible and are generally used effectively to support the pupils' learning. Resources from outside school, such as the community policeman, galleries, museums and a residential centre are used well to enrich the pupils' learning in a range of subjects, and for their personal development.
69. School developments are carefully and appropriately prioritised, and are carefully costed. All grants are used fully for their designated purposes, with the school adding further funding for special educational needs from its own undesignated budget. The school applies the principles of best value well. All interested parties, including staff, parents and pupils, are consulted on school development; standards are compared with those of other schools and careful consideration given to required improvement. Office procedures are very efficient. There were no issues arising from a recent audit. Accounting is carefully carried out, with regular checks being made with the headteacher and governors. The apparent under-spend is explained because money is needed to cover priorities identified in the School Development Plan. New technology is well used, for example in accounting, recording registration figures and keeping records of pupils' assessments and tracking their progress. The school provides good value for money.

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

70. Staff and governors should work together on the following areas to improve the quality of provision further and raise standards.
- Improve the organisation of the curriculum to ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in a systematic way by:
    - ensuring that every subject is taught regularly;
    - allocating sufficient time to each subject studied;
    - ensuring that sufficient focus is placed on developing pupils' independent learning skills.  
(Paragraphs 30, 31, 32, 133, 134, 135, 164)
  - Raise levels of attendance and improve punctuality by:
    - continuing to work with parents to ensure that they are aware of the importance of bringing their children to school regularly and on time;
    - systematically recording and monitoring those pupils who are absent and late and taking further appropriate action, when necessary.  
(Paragraphs 18, 45, 46)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	100
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	20	38	38	0	0	0
Percentage	4	20	38	38	0	0	0

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

### 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)	26	406
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	74

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	51

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	32	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	27	29
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	47	52	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (82)	90 (86)	93 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	29	31
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	48	54	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (82)	93 (89)	97 (84)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	33	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	24	32
	Girls	21	19	25
	Total	47	43	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (82)	74 (82)	98 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	22	30
	Girls	20	18	23
	Total	46	40	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (76)	69 (79)	91 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	20
Black – African heritage	19
Black – other	4
Indian	26
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	207
Any other minority ethnic group	39

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	218

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	25
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	805,989
Total expenditure	788,638
Expenditure per pupil	1,997
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,726
Balance carried forward to next year	74,077

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	407
Number of questionnaires returned	101

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	40	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	66	3	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	37	22	10	9
The teaching is good.	43	47	5	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	51	17	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	46	8	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	34	55	3	1	7
The school works closely with parents.	25	50	18	1	7
The school is well led and managed.	31	52	6	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	54	6	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	43	12	1	15

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the meeting said they were happy with the school and the way it was developing. Some parents stated that the school had improved beyond recognition and had a good reputation in the local area.

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

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

71. The school has maintained the good practice in the reception classes which was indicated in the last inspection report and has improved facilities overall by providing nursery education. The new nursery offers excellent facilities and children make a good start with their learning. The good quality of teaching in both the nursery and reception classes is characterised by a good understanding of how young children learn, high expectations, and the systematic development of children's good attitudes to learning and good behaviour. This results in children quickly developing confidence and the ability to get involved in new experiences. The recent focus on developing progressive provision for pupils in the nursery and reception classes has been successful and is continuing to be developed. All staff work well together and work hard to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Support staff play an important role in developing the children's learning and supporting their achievements. The curriculum takes into consideration the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and staff adapt this to meet the needs of the children. Staff plan the work appropriately and use assessments of the children to inform their planning. Records are kept to monitor the progress that children make in all areas of learning. Staff provide a calm, secure learning environment which encourages children to develop good attitudes to school.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is usually good. The pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language participate well and made good progress as a result of effective teaching and good support. Children currently in the reception classes are likely to reach the standards expected for children of that age by the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical, creative and physical development. Most children have already reached these standards in personal, social and emotional development.

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

73. The school is successful in creating positive relationships with parents before their children start school and has developed a good induction programme. Staff use a range of strategies to encourage children to play together in the nursery and they develop relationships quickly. Also, staff are effective in creating a caring and stimulating learning environment in which children quickly understand the routines and structure of the day and develop good attitudes to learning. Children were observed playing well together and sharing resources, for example, when acting out roles in the nursery greengrocer's stall and in the reception veterinarian surgery. Children learn how to share resources and take turns, as a result of the expectations of the teachers and support staff, who make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation, for example in the nursery when playing outside with ride-on toys and in the reception classes when sharing the computers. Children recognise the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of personal hygiene issues. Their independent skills are developed when they are encouraged to help clear away after activities in the nursery and reception classes.
74. A good balance is created between teacher-directed activities and those when children are able to play without direct adult supervision. This develops the children's confidence and a growing independence and initiative when presented with choices. Children fully understand what they are expected to do and can give clear reasons for their choice of activity. They are encouraged to be polite and sensible and move easily from work undertaken as a whole class to group and individual activities. Staff act as good role models and the children's skills are continually developed through the positive interactions between staff and children. Consequently, children are well behaved and form very good relationships with each other and with adults. The good gains



made in pupils' personal, social and emotional development are a key feature in children feeling secure and learning well in other areas of the curriculum.

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

75. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed well across all areas of the curriculum, for example when small groups of children in the nursery sit with the teacher using pastry and when the teaching assistant encourages children to develop their writing in a reception class. Children's speaking skills are also systematically developed through the provision of specific activities such as the imaginative play areas when children pretend to be customers and stall holders in the nursery and 'vets' in the reception classes.
76. Children like to choose books in the nursery reading area and sometimes settle down to 'read' alone or with a friend. They handle books carefully and know that print carries meaning. Most follow and recall a story by looking at the pictures and some higher attaining children enjoyed talking about books with the inspector. Children were observed thoroughly enjoying a story time when the nursery assistant captured their attention when reading *The Enormous Turnip*. Her good use of voice and good questioning encouraged the children to respond to the text and maintained their interest. In the reception classes, children receive regular opportunities to read with an adult and listen to stories as a whole class activity. Regular sessions on phonics support children well in their recognition of letters and the sounds that they make. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home, which has a significant impact on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve. Reception children were also observed in the storytelling club where they listened intently and predicted what would come next.
77. Children in the nursery develop their writing skills by learning how to hold the pencil correctly and recognising and writing their names. They quickly become aware of writing for different purposes, for example one child continued to 'write' in a notebook as she moved from one activity to another. She was obviously aware of people writing in a diary to record what they had done. These skills are developed further in the reception classes when children were observed completing sentences indicating what they liked best in the story of *The Rainbow Fish*. Children receive good support from staff, which encourages the development of their handwriting and use of vocabulary. Overall, a good range of resources to encourage writing and communication is available and results in the youngest children making marks on paper and the oldest drawing a picture and writing a sentence about it.

### **Mathematical development**

78. The children's skills and understanding are regularly developed and consolidated in the nursery through daily play activities and through specific sessions. In one good session observed, children quickly got involved in counting money when playing the roles of customers and owners when buying fruit and vegetables. Children understood the concept of some purchases being expensive and consequently more money was needed. Children were also encouraged to develop their understanding of size, through reading *The Enormous Turnip*, and capacity when playing with water. Display in the nursery developed the children's understanding of big and little, curvy, straight and zig-zag lines and some four-year-olds could recognise a circle, square and rectangle. The children's skills are developed further in the reception classes by the provision of a variety of activities which develop their skills in number, shape and space. The teacher in one lesson observed had a very clear understanding of what she wanted the children to learn and offered a range of appropriate activities to develop their mathematical skills when understanding short, medium and long. The children were encouraged to consolidate their learning by drawing flowers of different lengths or by using a construction kit to make different lengths. Other children were supported well by the class assistant who encouraged them to identify a range of 2-dimensional shapes and make a fish from them. All children enjoyed this activity and made good progress, particularly the higher-attainers who could name a good range of shapes, including a hexagon and suggested that two triangles could be made by cutting a square in half diagonally. In another good lesson, the children were encouraged to order numbers correctly. Higher-attainers could do this to

20 and lower-attainers to 10. Some children experienced more difficulty when answering the teacher's question 'How do we know this box is full?' After making suggestions such as shake it to see if it makes a noise, one pupil states 'There's no space to put any more in so it must be full'. The good knowledge of teachers and support staff is used well to question children and develop their mathematical thinking and understanding in both the nursery and reception classes.

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

79. Children in the nursery and reception classes develop an understanding of the roles of familiar people through imaginative play and reading stories. In one very good session, the nursery teacher was very effective in developing the children's understanding of how things are made and cooked when encouraging them to play with pastry. She introduced the idea of making Indian bread by relaying her own experiences which, in turn, encouraged the children's imaginative play. This resulted in the children working together to make food for a birthday party. Later in the week, children were encouraged to make and taste mashed potato. Pupils develop appropriate knowledge of the world by, for example, being encouraged to see how things grow. Nursery children are encouraged to learn the names of vegetables and fruit and following the reading of a story cut the tops off turnips to see how they would grow if given or not given water. They responded well to this and linked it to growing cress seeds. They were encouraged to take photographs to record their findings and responded to this challenge well. In the reception classes, children identify parts of plants and the body. Children have a good understanding of the uses of everyday technology. Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and disassemble simple models, using a variety of construction kits. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children's skills in using the computer are well developed and they reach standards above those expected for their age. Children in the reception classes confidently use the mouse to work through a program which encourages them to create an alphabet frieze by choosing a letter, writing this in lower and upper case and drawing a picture which reflects the initial letter sound. Children enjoyed this activity and a significant number completed the task unaided.

### **Physical development**

80. In the nursery, children get regular opportunities for physical education through playing outside where they learn to balance, climb and run. They also develop their skills through playing with balls and by riding bikes. Reception children have regular formal physical education lessons and opportunities to use the equipment in the nursery and main school play area. In a good lesson for the reception children, they responded well to the teacher's instructions and developed their skills well by dribbling a ball. The teacher built up the children's skills well by planning a good range of activities which kept the children's attention and interest. They enjoyed the activities and worked well together in pairs and groups. One talented child was well challenged to further extend his skills and played an important part in supporting his team when participating in the final, competitive part of the session. The children's use of small objects, such as pencils, construction equipment and paintbrushes, is satisfactory, and they handle them safely and appropriately. Although the reception children have satisfactory opportunities for outdoor play, staff have planned to improve provision.

### **Creative development**

81. The children's creative development is successfully fostered through a range of activities. In the nursery, children were observed printing and had obviously enjoyed using glitter, sticky paper and paint to make butterflies. Older children could name the petal, leaf and stem of plants and developed their observational skills well when drawing flowers. In the reception classes, children enjoyed making their own 'rainbow fish' and worked well, mostly unaided, for significant periods of time. They also enjoyed using a range of materials to make their collages and gave appropriate reasons for their choices. Creative work is also linked to the development of children's spiritual, social and cultural development when they celebrate the Chinese New Year and make masks and lanterns. The children's responses are also developed through specific music sessions and through singing rhymes and songs. In one reception lesson, children responded well to the

teacher's instructions and developed a good understanding of pulse. The teacher discussed how music made people feel and by the end of the session, the children couldn't help but move in time to the music. One child said 'It makes me feel that I am driving a car'. Each week children from the nursery join those in the reception classes to develop their singing. High expectations of staff result in very good behaviour and attitudes and all children seemed interested and involved in the activities. They sang a number of songs from memory and enjoyed the actions. This session created a good sense of community and developed children's self worth. It made a significant contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The role-play areas in both the nursery and reception classes provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own.

## ENGLISH

82. In Year 2, national test results for 2001 in reading were below average and in writing average, when compared with all schools. Compared to similar schools, standards in reading were well below average, and standards in writing were below average. In reading, the performance of girls in 2001 was significantly better than the performance of boys. After analysis of the results, the school placed additional emphasis upon pupils' study of texts. Since 1997, standards of reading and writing have fluctuated in Year 2 and pupils are not making as much progress over successive years as pupils nationally. However, inspection evidence shows standards to be satisfactory. Significant improvement is likely through the current programme of additional literacy support in the reception and Year 1 classes.
83. In Year 6, pupils' standards in English are satisfactory, and are similar to the standards identified in the previous inspection. National test results for 2001 confirm that standards were above average when compared to all primary schools, and well above average when compared to similar schools. A significant number of pupils achieved Level 5: above the expected level for their age. In the tests, the performances of boys and girls were similar in all aspects of English. The improvement in standards over the past four years has been satisfactory, and slightly better than the average improvement in primary schools. However, during their education at Grove Primary, the current Year 6 classes have experienced an unusual number of changes to teaching staff. In the circumstances, pupils' attainment is good, and those with special education needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. Currently, Years 2, 5 and 6 are placed in attainment sets for English. Teachers carefully observe pupils, and maintain progress by frequently moving them between sets in each year group.
84. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 quickly develop their speaking and listening skills. They speak confidently in class discussions and, in the best lessons, listen with interest and respect to the contributions of others. Their speaking skills are reflected in their writing, where average pupils have satisfactory vocabulary, and higher attaining pupils have good vocabulary.
85. Pupils in Years 3 – 6 have satisfactory discussion skills, but few opportunities for debate or public speaking. When teaching is good, they listen politely to each other and to their teachers, and evaluate each other's work. Teachers speak clearly and fluently to their classes. In the best lessons, pupils are attentive to instructions, and they move quickly and quietly in classrooms, particularly when changing activities. Where teaching is less effective, instructions are sometimes misheard or ignored.
86. In Years 1 and 2, standards in reading are satisfactory. By the age of seven, a few higher attaining pupils read enthusiastically from a variety of books and magazines. During the inspection, one child explained how she had used a computer to research air raids. Pupils of average attainment read expressively, but do not always recognise speech marks. A small number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 have below average attainment in reading. They do not confidently sound out unknown words, and sometimes make wild guesses from recognition of the initial letter. Pupils of average and below average attainment are learning many strategies to help

them become independent readers. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in reading. Teachers guide pupils' reading, diagnose the early reading difficulties of individuals, and maintain good records. Consequently, pupils make good progress.

87. Standards in reading are satisfactory in the current Year 6. Pupils read long texts silently, and with good concentration. Higher attaining pupils talk fluently about their favorite books. Pupils of average attainment in Year 6 read confidently, but do not always fully understand the vocabulary in their reading books. When questioned about everyday reading, they accepted passively that some words in books would not be understood. Pupils do not habitually refer to dictionaries. Higher attaining pupils use reference books to advance their learning, but their research skills are limited. For example, during the inspection, a pupil said that he did not see the necessity to explore more than one source of information. A pupil of average attainment suggested that a dictionary would be a good source of information about World War 2. Their knowledge of how to locate books in a library is satisfactory. Attainment in reading is assessed frequently, and teachers focus on individual and group strengths and weaknesses. Pupils take home their school reading books, but they rarely read other books or magazines, and the school has inadequate procedures for encouraging wider reading. For example, teachers do not stimulate pupils' interest by recommending specific authors or by discussing the wide variety of literary styles available for the age group. Pupils with English as an additional language, and pupils with special education needs, make good progress in class. Additionally, pupils with special educational make good progress in withdrawal sessions supervised by the special education needs co-ordinator.
88. Reading in Years 3 - 5 is satisfactory. In a good guided reading session seen in Year 3, a group of higher attaining pupils discussed the feelings of characters in a book, and made sensible predictions about the story. In this class, a group of average pupils was required to 'find out' about Vikings and Anglo-Saxons. The objective was not adequately focused, and they browsed a good selection of history books without discussing topics or making notes. Pupils of average attainment in Year 4 read a variety of books but have little knowledge of authors, and are not motivated to read at home. In Year 5, average pupils have some understanding of the science fiction genre. During the inspection, in a satisfactory lesson, they were encouraged to read extended comments written by the teacher in their workbooks, and respond by immediately improving sections of their work.
89. In Year 2, pupils' writing is generally satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities re-tell popular stories in their own words, and show understanding of a variety of story endings. They express ideas clearly, and sometimes write independently at length. Pupils of average attainment write book reviews and letters. A few pupils in Year 2 are likely to achieve the advanced Level 3 in national tests. Standards of presentation in English are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although handwriting style is often erratic in workbooks. Handwriting is good in work selected for display in classrooms and in the public areas of the school. Marking is often too generous, and unsatisfactory work is sometimes accepted uncritically. The handwriting of most pupils in Year 2 is correctly formed but, in a literacy session seen during the inspection, some pupils gripped their pencils close to the writing point, obstructing their views of the words. Left-handed pupils were beginning to grip their pencils incorrectly. In older year groups, similar grips were noted to be an impediment to progress.
90. Repeated mistakes in spellings and punctuation are a weakness in the writing of average pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teachers remind pupils to proofread their work, but miss opportunities for immediate corrections when work is shown to them, and sometimes accept second-best work from pupils of all attainments.
91. In Year 6, pupils' standards in writing are satisfactory. In English, they write confidently, and at length. In other curriculum subjects, their writing is limited because, in all attainment sets, extended writing sessions are focused too narrowly on the English curriculum. Pupils of above average attainment write fluently in a variety of genres. In a very good lesson seen, they used thesauruses confidently to expand their vocabulary in letters to the local council expressing views about the proposed development of a theme park. They were less confident when using

dictionaries for spell-checking, often failing to match the third or fourth letter of a word. They used some complex sentences, and had good understanding of prefixes, suffixes and adverbs. The teacher provided good examples of language, and reminded them of the power of emotional language when used in moderation. Generally, higher attaining pupils paragraph decisively, but their presentation is often unsatisfactory. In all sets, and all year groups, teachers do not establish clear rules for presentation, or comment critically upon untidy work in workbooks. Presentation is good when work is displayed in classrooms and open areas of the school. Pupils of average attainment do not often paragraph their work. Their vocabulary is satisfactory, but rarely advanced or embellished. Spelling is erratic, and is not always corrected. For example, they learn to spell technical and long words, including *microbe* and *microscope*, but often misspell simple words, such as *rabbit*. They improve their work by drafting and proofreading. Pupils of below average attainment make satisfactory progress. Their stories, letters and occasional book reviews are marked regularly .

92. The quality of handwriting is erratic in all attainment groups in Year 6. Handwriting is neat when practised in handwriting books, but deteriorates in workbooks in all subjects because pupils are not reminded that 'best' work is required. For example, pupils are not challenged when a completed sentence or paragraph includes, randomly, some words printed and some joined.
93. A good range of writing in Years 3 – 5 includes letters, descriptions, poetry, stories, play scripts and book reviews. Most work is of adequate quality. Teachers' marking is regular, and their comments extensive.
94. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities word-process stories. In an excellent lesson seen in Year 2, a pupil accurately punctuated a story including dialogue, and printed and read the story expressively to the class.
95. In all lessons, boys and girls work to similar standards. A selection of fiction matches the interests of boys. Pupils cooperate well, and relationships are good but, during the inspection, few opportunities were provided for collaborative work or for class discussion. During the inspection, behaviour was at least satisfactory in all English lessons, and was sometimes very good or excellent.
96. The quality of English teaching was always satisfactory or better. In Years 1 and 2, teaching during the inspection was satisfactory overall. One lesson was excellent. Teaching in Years 3 – 6 was good overall. Three lessons were very good. In the best lessons, teachers had good knowledge and expertise, and lesson objectives were clear to pupils. Behaviour management was very good, and lessons developed at a good pace within specific time limits. However, some teachers do not write neatly on the board, and some have inadequate knowledge of grammar and spelling.
97. Writing activities are always interesting, and teachers have high expectations of the quantity of work required from pupils in English. Their expectations are lower in other curriculum subjects. In some English lessons seen during the inspection, where teachers talked for too long in introductory sessions, pupils became restless, and the pace of the lessons deteriorated. In all classes, specific targets are written inside the front covers of workbooks. Targets are relevant, and are known to pupils, but are sometimes ignored by them, and by their teachers. Throughout the school, the provision of English homework is satisfactory. Learning support assistants and classroom assistants are used effectively in most classes, enabling pupils with special educational needs and lower attainment to make good progress.
98. All teachers are confident in teaching the National Literacy Strategy. Most teachers are skilled in reading aloud. Their good use of voice and gesture holds pupils' interest, and invites good responses. The recommended timing of the literacy hour is followed closely, and additional time is allowed for guided reading and extended writing. Teachers generally use the final session of the literacy hour to give encouragement to pupils, and review the work covered.
99. Assessment procedures are good. Reception baseline assessments are analysed, and teachers

focus on improving specific weaknesses. Pupils' work is rigorously assessed in all year groups, and teachers use the information to plan carefully for pupils' needs. Teachers plan collaboratively, and planning overall is good. However, similar lessons vary greatly in quality, dependent upon teachers' individual skills. Although teaching is monitored, the examples of best teachers are not used to improve the quality of teaching overall.

100. The co-ordinator has written a good whole school policy for English. Management of the subject is good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good knowledge and expertise. She monitors lessons, and gives written feedback to staff. She carefully analyses tests results for patterns of strengths and weaknesses. Following the 2001 National Curriculum tests, the school is currently succeeding in raising boys' self-esteem as creative writers.

101. Resources for reading are good for all year groups, and for pupils with special education needs and English as an additional language. The library stock is satisfactory, but some reference books are significantly out of date. This deficiency was noted in the previous inspection report. Use of the library is currently unsatisfactory because the room is also the school base for information and communication technology. Timetables are to be re-written to allow library access to all classes. Teachers are developing their use of information and communication technology when teaching English and this is bringing about improvements in pupils' attainment and progress.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. Inspection evidence shows that standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected for their age. However, standards in numeracy are above those expected for pupils in Year 6. These standards represent a very significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils were then attaining levels that were below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and well below those expected for pupils in Year 6. Given the disruption to their learning caused by frequent staff changes and the high number of pupils who have joined the school other than at the normal time, present standards represent good achievement.
103. The results of last year's national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds were close to the national average and to the average for schools having a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Girls did not achieve as well as boys in the tests for eleven-year olds. The school is developing strategies to redress the balance. While some girls do not readily offer to answer questions, there was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In good lessons, teachers are careful to challenge all pupils to answer questions, and groups are mixed, with girls and boys working together at all levels of attainment. Results have largely followed an upward trend since the time of the last inspection in 1997.
104. A key issue of the last inspection was to improve the standard of teaching by producing and implementing an agreed policy for teaching giving specific expectations of all teachers, and providing support in identified areas of weakness. The school now has very good procedures in place for the induction and training of teachers new to the school. This is one of the main reasons for improved standards in mathematics, despite the frequent changes of staff over recent years. The structure and content of the National Numeracy Strategy are now firmly embedded and most teachers use it well to ensure a good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. The subject co-ordinator, with help from the local authority's numeracy consultant, who also helps with teaching the higher attaining Year 6 pupils, monitors teaching, planning and pupils' work, and offers good advice to teachers. The school now closely monitors all test results to identify any weaknesses in provision. Analysis of the most recent tests has indicated a weakness in using and applying mathematics and there is now an increased emphasis on this area of pupils' learning. These initiatives, together with a strong emphasis on mental computation and the introduction of setting arrangements, are successful in raising standards.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there is little significant difference between the teaching of different age groups. Of the fourteen lessons seen, teaching was very good in four, good in seven and satisfactory in three. Common features of all lessons are clear planning, teaching of the correct mathematical terminology, management of pupils and good relationships. Common features of the good and very good lessons are teachers' high expectations, crisp, clear introductions to tasks and good use of assessment to ensure pupils are challenged at appropriate levels. In these lessons, teachers do not spend too long on lengthy explanations, but set pupils to work quickly, and continue rigorously to teach and challenge pupils as they work on individual or group tasks. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were investigating general statements by finding examples to prove it. The teacher was very well focused on what she wanted pupils to learn, and used questions very effectively during all parts of the lesson. In lessons where teaching is otherwise satisfactory, lessons are not so well structured or interesting, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher, and

there is not a good enough balance between direct teaching and independent learning. In consequence, pupils lose interest and the pace of learning slows. In a small number of lessons where expectations were not high enough and where teachers were not engaged well enough in active intervention, a few pupils spent precious time in idle chatter.

106. Pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons, and they generally make good progress in understanding mental strategies. In the most successful lessons, teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved. They use a good range of resources, such as white boards and digit cards, to allow pupils to answer and to check each answer. Where teaching is good or better, teachers use carefully targeted questions to challenge all pupils, encouraging the reticent to play a full part. In one very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher made very good effective use of number cards to consolidate pupils' knowledge of the six times tables and the associated division facts. Pupils were highly motivated because the teacher ensured that all were involved through very effective questioning and a stimulating range of interesting teaching strategies. As a result, pupils made very good progress in their learning. In a few lessons seen, teachers failed to question those who did not volunteer to answer, and some teachers did not give pupils enough time to consider their answers. However, most teachers use their teaching assistants well to ensure that all, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are fully included in whole class sessions.
107. Lesson observations and an analysis of pupils' work show that all aspects of mathematics are given due attention. There is now a good emphasis on developing pupils' problem solving skills and pupils gain a sound understanding of data handling and of shape, space and measure. By the end of Year 2, pupils have been taught to identify 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes and they produce Venn diagrams to show which shapes can slide and those that can roll. By the end of Year 6, pupils know the angle sum of a triangle, and they have been challenged to move from finding areas and perimeters of simple shapes by counting squares to discover and apply formulae for doing this. Data handling skills are appropriately developed and these are used effectively in meaningful ways. Teachers are aware of the importance of getting pupils to explain the conclusions demonstrated by line graphs and diagrams including pie charts. As a result, by the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils have gained a good understanding of how to compare two simple distributions, using range and one measure of average. Most others have a good understanding of how to group data, such as temperature change, in frequency diagrams, and interpret this information correctly.
108. Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work and to monitor learning. Individual targets are set and lesson objectives are shared so that pupils are aware of their own learning. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is good and makes a significant contribution to their learning. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language and provide well for them in their planning. This allows these pupils to make the same progress as other pupils of similar abilities. Higher attaining pupils are identified and are regularly assessed to ensure that they too are making the progress of which they are capable.
109. The leadership of mathematics is strong and ensures clear educational direction. Resources are good and teachers are making increasing use of information technology to support pupils' learning. Good mathematics displays are a prominent feature in the classrooms. The school is well placed to achieve its targets for the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

110. Standards in science are good. Teacher assessments for seven-year-olds and the results of national testing for eleven-year-olds, along with the predictions for the current Year 6, show above average standards, which are reflected in the work that pupils do in class. The school is committed to raising standards. Investigative science was identified as a weaker area, which has clearly been given attention over the last year. These standards are the result of good teaching and learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional



- language, make good progress. Improvement since the last inspection, when standards in Years 3 to 6 were below average and teaching was satisfactory, is good.
111. By the age of seven, pupils understand forces as pushes and pulls. They investigate how surface materials effect the distance travelled by toy cars down a ramp and they carefully measure this distance and compare results to confirm their ideas. In their work on plants and animals they identify the features of living things, such as growth and reproduction, and investigate the factors that influence growth, such as water and light in plant growth. They start to know the effects of heating and cooling on materials, observing, for example, that ice melts, and that this can be speeded up by raising the temperature or by adding different substances, such as salt. In all of their investigative work many are able to make sensible predictions, and start to see the importance of fair testing.
112. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of science through investigative work, sometimes planning their own investigations. For example, they look at how the number of bulbs in an electrical circuit affects brightness, the rate at which puddles evaporate, how sound can be muffled, and how exercise increases pulse rate. They understand the need for accurate measurements and that results should be checked carefully, taking readings from instruments such as stopwatches, thermometers and newtonmeters. When investigations are written up well they contain carefully labelled diagrams, and charts and graphs to show and compare their findings. Higher attaining pupils have some opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding further. For example, in Year 6 they are able to explain the relationship between exercise and blood flow to the muscles.
113. From the lessons observed and an analysis of pupils' past work, teaching and learning overall are good. Teachers plan well together across year groups, sharing expertise and subject knowledge. There are clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to do. Where the marking of pupils' work is good it refers to these learning objectives, and clearly informs pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Although higher attaining pupils are often challenged with extension work, the work set initially in lessons does not always reflect the higher levels at which they could be working. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were learning the conventional symbols for circuit diagrams. The method was suitable for most of the class, but lacked sufficient challenge and pace for the higher-attainers. Tasks are interesting and well prepared, for example the ice balloons in Year 1 were a tremendous stimulus for work on ice and melting. They are well introduced so pupils are quickly able to get on with activities. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson where pupils made good progress in finding out if plants draw up water through their stems. Pupils are supported well in lessons. In better lessons they are encouraged to work independently, although support staff and teachers are on hand to offer guidance and to question. Through this approach, pupils are able to further their own understanding by talking about their learning. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, especially when classroom and learning support assistants are present to talk through their work, develop pupils' understanding and enable them to reach the learning objectives. Lessons are generally well managed. Teachers ensure that pupils pay careful attention and remain on task. In these lessons pupils display positive attitudes to science, and teaching and learning are more effective. However, in a few lessons, the evident lack of interest shown by a few pupils, despite reminders from the teacher, slowed the pace of lessons and the progress made. The summing up of lessons is not always effective due to inattention. The work produced is generally of a good quality, for example often containing carefully labelled diagrams. This reflects teachers' high expectations and pupils' positive attitudes.
114. There are good opportunities in science for pupils to use their writing skills, to record information and to write up the different stages of investigations. The use of writing frames matched to ability helps pupils in their recording, and prepares them for setting out their work in a systematic way. Within literacy lessons, a range of non-fiction texts, such as 'Tadpole Diary' and 'Everyday Forces', are helping to make relevant links between English and science. Expectations of handwriting and spelling in pupils' written work are variable. The opportunities to use numeracy skills are developing well, along with the school's emphasis on practical science, where accurate measurements are made, recorded and compared. The use of information and communication technology is being developed. Data from investigations is recorded and compared; pupils

explore computer simulations, finding out how heat, light and water affect plant growth; sensors are used to record varying light and sound. There are strong links with art and design, where pupils make three-dimensional collages of healthy meals, and do observational drawings of the soles of shoes as part of a study on friction.

115. The school uses national guidelines to support its scheme of work, and to help ensure continuity and progression in learning. This has been beneficial, particularly where there has been a frequent changeover of staff. In some year groups there are terms when science is not on the timetable. Assessments are linked to the units of study, although not yet moderated or recorded in any formal way. The results of national testing are analysed carefully for strengths and weaknesses, and inform future planning. For example the school now concentrates more fully on experimental and investigative science in order to raise standards further. The co-ordinator looks at teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work, but currently does not observe teaching, with a view to raising the standards of teaching and learning. Resources have recently been audited. They are good and readily accessible. Visits, for example to the Science Museum and a wild life park, and visits by the Science Quantum Theatre, add to the curricular opportunities.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

116. Attainment in art and design is satisfactory throughout the school, and meets national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards were similar at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' knowledge of individual artists remains a weakness throughout the school. During this inspection, two lessons were seen in Year 5, and one each in Years 1 and 4. Additionally, pupils' work was evaluated in sketchbooks and displays.
117. In Year 1, pupils work with a variety of materials. They experiment with collage using tissue paper, card and textiles, and discover the qualities and limitations of each material. Pupils of higher attainment blend colours to accentuate three-dimensional effects. In Year 2, pupils of all abilities make good quality observational drawings of plants. They demonstrate improving collage skills in large displays, where outline objects are drawn by their teachers.
118. Pupils in Year 3 have some knowledge of pointillism. With computer *Paintbrush* and *Spraycan* programs, they have created good quality self-portraits showing graduations of colour density. Drawing skills improve significantly in Years 4 and 5. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils designed chairs for specific purposes, based upon a Van Gogh painting. Guided by the teacher, they experimented with shading effects produced by a variety of pencils, and pupils of all abilities made good progress. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson, pupils' still life drawings showed a developing understanding of perspective and proportion. Pupils in Year 6 have designed and made masks showing how emotions are depicted in theatrical traditions around the world. In discussion, they have some knowledge of the work of western artists, including Mondrian, Munch and Van Gogh.
119. In all year groups, the use of sketchbooks is unsatisfactory because teachers' objectives are unclear. Work in books includes unfinished drawings, completed drawings, and experiments with pastels. Work is usually dated, but rarely labelled. The content of many books is untidy, and standards of work are unsatisfactory. Teachers' marking is brief, and often too complimentary. Displays are good in classrooms and in open areas. Pupils' work is clearly labelled, and is often arranged to show progressive development from nursery to Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are fully involved in art and design activities, and their work is valued by all staff. The painting and drawing of gifted and talented pupils are developed in a lunchtime club, led by the deputy headteacher. Their work is of a high standard, and is prominently displayed to exemplify achievement.
120. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although the use of information and communications technology is underdeveloped. Weekly training sessions in art and design with a specialist instructor are improving teachers' skills and confidence, and raising standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers have made an attractive display of their own work.

121. Leadership of art and design is sound overall. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, and is monitored by the recently appointed co-ordinator. She has encouraged the integration of art with other curriculum subjects. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers assess the outcomes of lessons, and have started to gather samples of pupils' work to confirm progress over time. However, the value of this sampling is limited because work is not fully annotated. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, but has not yet fully assessed strengths and weaknesses in the subject.
122. Pupils have opportunities to develop cultural and aesthetic appreciation through occasional gallery visits and through classroom discussions. Their attitudes and behaviour are variable, but are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, pupils concentrate fully, and they make good progress. However, in satisfactory lessons seen, restless pupils were slow to settle and their progress was limited. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

123. Standards reflect those identified in the last inspection report. Pupils aged seven and eleven attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Overall, pupils are currently making satisfactory progress although older pupils have not benefited from a consistent approach to the teaching of design and technology throughout their time in school. For example, planning to ensure the systematic development of designing and making skills is now a priority for the school but has been unsatisfactory in the past. Pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers and reach standards in line with their abilities and levels of English acquisition. No significant difference was noted in the attainment and progress of girls and boys.
124. A scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils and observations of lessons show that designing and making activities have taken place and the curriculum overall has improved since the school has adopted the national guidance and scheme of work. All staff cover the appropriate units of work. Some choose to do this over blocks of time whilst others teach weekly. However, it is not clear how pupils' skills are systematically developed and practised, particularly if they do not have design and technology lessons for half a term. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have a clear understanding of the designing and making process and are learning to evaluate their work and the work of others, although standards in evaluation are lower than in designing and making.
125. Some design and technology work is related to other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 make stick puppets following their work on fables in literacy lessons. They also develop a good understanding of joining techniques when making houses from recycled materials. In Year 2, pupils developed their puppet making skills by making animal hand puppets from felt. Pupils were encouraged to develop designs and evaluate their work. The finished products were of a high quality for pupils of this age and reflected the designs well. Parents had been involved in supporting pupils in class and this had helped pupils to develop their techniques and finishes. In particular, the features on the puppets were well presented. Pupils in Year 2 also developed their designing and making skills well when using a computer paint program to design a moving vehicle. The finished models also reflected the designs well and were of a pleasing standard.
126. A scrutiny of pupils' work showed satisfactory coverage of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 3 made moving monsters which indicated a satisfactory understanding of pneumatics. In Year 4, good links were made with history when pupils designed and made model Tudor houses. They carefully looked at pictures before developing their designs and took note of the small windows, timber frames and overlapping roofs. The finished products indicated good observational skills and the model houses were used well for display. Pupils also made money bags following research using pictures and completed work to a satisfactory standard. Another group of Year 4 pupils responded well to a design brief for making a light to meet a specific person's needs. Designs were appropriately drawn and labelled indicating the materials required. Pupils used their knowledge of electrical circuits gained in science to produce work of a good quality. Year 5 pupils

developed their understanding of the working of cams by making wooden toys and by the end of the topic had a sound understanding of how to turn circular motion into linear motion. They also had the opportunity to evaluate different types of bread and make their own.

127. The quality of teaching and learning in the two Years 6 lessons observed was judged to be satisfactory. Provision overall was judged to be satisfactory based on teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and teachers, and a scrutiny of designs and finished products. Children in Year 6 had recently started to develop their ideas on making models for fairground rides during the time of the inspection. Teachers planned appropriate work and set tasks to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the use of electrical circuits when using a motor. From this, pupils were able to develop ideas about the speed and direction of movement and how to control them. The learning of lower-attainers was well developed as they gradually realised that the size of a battery was less relevant than the power contained within it. Pupils in both the lessons observed were far more interested in observing and investigating than they were in writing about their findings and ideas. In some cases, pupils were heavily dependent on the teachers who needed to remind them to complete their work and reaffirmed their expectations.
128. Teachers and support staff have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well. They encourage pupils to work together and this results in pupils sharing resources. Behaviour in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall with some pupils displaying good behaviour because they were interested in the tasks and wanted to complete the work. Although individual teachers use design and technology to further the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, this is not always planned in a systematic way across the school. Also, it is not clear how computers are systematically used to support pupils' learning in this subject.
129. The co-ordination of design and technology is temporarily being undertaken by a member of the senior management team. She is aware of the need to ensure appropriate progression of pupils' skills, and a more consistent whole school approach to assessing pupils' attainment and progress. She is also aware of the need to develop the use of information communication technology in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

130. Pupils' standards of attainment are below national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. This represents a decline since the last inspection. Although it was only possible to observe one lesson, pupils were interviewed and a representative sample of work was examined.
131. At the age of seven, pupils describe the natural and made features in the locality. The more able explain how they are used. Pupils cannot describe the changes that have taken place over time. They are clear about what they like and dislike about their area, contrasting access to parks and shops with the smoke and litter. However, they do not go into detail or have ideas for improvements. Pupils talk a little about caring for the environment, but are not aware of areas further afield. Their knowledge of weather and mapping is very limited.
132. At the age of eleven, pupils cannot distinguish a county from a country. Only the most able list the countries of the United Kingdom. Pupils are more aware of the names of continents. Their knowledge of the locality is very underdeveloped. They list few features and do not understand the relationship between the environment and the way people live. However, pupils are aware of the effects of extreme forms of weather, such as flooding. They also know that people have changed the landscape to meet their needs, and that this has had both advantages and disadvantages. Only the more able describe the differences between a village and a city. They have a broader picture, talking about such issues as tourism and technology. Pupils are able to draw out some of the contrasting features of different localities, and how changes have been made to avoid pollution. Pupils are more confident when expressing their opinions, such as about establishing an out-of-town supermarket.
133. There is little evidence that pupils in Years 2 and 6 have developed the ability to research independently, using a variety of first or second-hand resources. They have also not learnt to present their findings in an organised way, having drawn their own conclusions from questions

they have posed. Under close tuition, pupils in Year 4 use the Internet to research the news.

134. It is not possible to make a secure judgement of teaching. However it is clear that standards of attainment have declined since the last inspection. The school allocates only 40 per cent of the average time given nationally to geography. This seriously affects the development of skills, knowledge and understanding, so that pupils' learning progresses too slowly. In addition, it is very difficult to keep a check on progress, so that teachers are not well informed when they are planning. The co-ordinator has organised very good, up-to-date resources and is aware of the problems posed by the school's approach to the subject. She has a good action plan. This recognises the need to develop the activities the pupils carry out and the way they use literacy, numeracy and computer skills to reinforce learning.

## HISTORY

135. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements no lessons in history were observed in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection, so no judgement on the quality of teaching or learning in this key stage was possible. Four lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4 in which the overall quality of teaching was good so that pupils made good progress. This, together with thorough analysis of pupils' work and teachers' plans, as well as discussions with teachers and pupils, indicate that standards are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These sound standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Although the curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements, not enough time is given to the subject through the year, and it is not taught regularly enough to ensure the systematic development of skills, knowledge and understanding year-on-year.
136. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are offered interesting opportunities within their topics *Ourselves* and *Famous People from the Past*, to build on their knowledge of past events. They are encouraged to find out about the past by talking to older people, such as parents, grandparents and other people in the local community. Teachers provide them with simple sources of information such as books and pictures to stimulate their interest. Pupils' work on 'Holidays Past and Present' shows that they are taught to recognise changes in the lives of themselves, their family and others. Analysis of teachers' plans show that pupils learn about the lives of notable people, such as Florence Nightingale, as well as events from the history of Britain, as, for example, the Great Fire of London. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils show an increasing sense of chronology and start to perceive why people in the past acted as they did.
137. Of the four lessons seen, teaching was good in three and satisfactory in one. The key feature underpinning the teaching observed was good planning, with clear learning intentions which were shared with the pupils. Teachers focused well on what they wanted pupils to learn and pupils were aware of their own learning. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and this enables them to challenge pupils through interesting questioning. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 lesson where the teacher made effective use of probing questions, as pupils studied visual aids relating to their work on Sutton Hoo. As a result, pupils were increasing their knowledge of how to discover about events, people and changes, using a range of information sources, including information and communication technology. Another good example was seen in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher, using a portrait of Henry VIII, challenged pupils successfully to identify physical and intellectual characteristics of the monarch. This lesson was followed up by a dance lesson in which pupils responded to different stimuli, including the portrait and music of the time, to deepen their understanding of that period in Britain's history. Some useful links are made with other subjects, such as design and technology, art and literacy. An example of the subject's links with literacy is seen where pupils, imagining what it was like to be an evacuee, write letters home to their parents.
138. Lessons and discussions show that pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 continue to develop their sense of chronology, and are led to understand that the past can be divided into different and distinctive periods of time. In the lessons observed, although most pupils made good progress in their

learning, there were sometimes not enough opportunities provided for higher attaining pupils to carry out personal research. These pupils need to be stimulated by more opportunities for individual learning using a wide range of sources of information. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good, but some pupils lose interest when there is not a good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. Analysis of work and discussions with pupils show that by the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and other countries, as, for example, through their work on Roman, and Celtic Settlers, Ancient Egypt and Britain since 1930.

139. The school's commitment to inclusive education is reflected in its teaching of history. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and fully included in lessons. National recommendations guide teachers' planning, but assessment procedures are not effective in determining what pupils know, understand and can do. As a result of this, as well as the irregularity with which the subject is taught, skills are not progressively developed as pupils move through the school. The school supplements its own range of books with loans from the local library to support pupils' learning. Visits to places of historical interest, such as St Albans, the Jeffrey and British Museums, as well as to the local area, are well used to enhance the curriculum and pupils' cultural development. Recent improvements made in provision for information and communication technology mean that the school is now well placed to continue to develop research skills that are so important to this subject.
140. The humanities co-ordinator is aware of strengths and weakness in provision, and has a clear action plan for the future development of both history and geography across the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

141. From the lessons observed and records of work, standards in information and communication technology (ICT), at the ages of seven and eleven, are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There is now a scheme of work based on national guidelines that is helping to ensure continuity and progression in learning, and that all elements of the subject are now being covered. Very well produced medium-term planning provides useful guidance for lesson planning and preparation. The school now has an ICT suite, recently enlarged to enable whole class teaching, along with classroom computers. Due to the school's strong commitment to ICT, pupils are now making better progress and standards are set to improve.
142. By the age of seven, pupils develop good mouse control. They select and drag text, matching it to pictures, and enter their own text. They edit their own work and add colour and different letters sizes for effect. When using paint programs they select the different options, add chosen images to their work and print it out. They input simple data and produce pictograms to compare information, for example their hair colour, gender and whether or not they walk to school. They use CD Roms to search for information, for example when looking for facts about different animals.
143. By the age of eleven pupils are becoming confident in using the Internet to search for information, saving and sorting relevant facts. They send electronic mail and some start to set up their own web sites. They demonstrate developing keyboard skills as they prepare documents with an audience in mind, for example by altering the size of font and using different effects to indicate relative importance. In their work on control and measuring they enter a series of instructions, for example to control a light and buzzer coming on and off, and use sensors to record and display variations in light and temperature. They use a computer to plan classroom and playground layouts, and spreadsheets to plan and cost a party.
144. Teaching and learning in ICT are good overall. All classrooms have their own computers, but all of

the teaching observed took place in the ICT suite. This now contains sufficient computers for whole class use. Where classes are taught as a whole learning is more effective. For example, in a very good Year 4 lesson an effective whole class introduction quickly enabled pupils to have 'hands on' experience, and to make good progress in creating text, altering it for effect and ordering it to show relative importance. In Year 5 lessons, where two activities were planned, due to lack of sufficient software for the whole class, learning was not as effective. Teachers found some difficulty in introducing activities for both groups and in keeping a good pace to lessons. Teachers use a projector well to introduce lessons. However the position of the screen makes it difficult for all pupils to see easily. In some lessons it encouraged a degree of restlessness and inattention that detracted from learning. The school recognises this. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Teachers have all received training in ICT, and generally ensure that they understand and are confident in the content of lessons before delivering them. Good support is given in lessons by class teachers and assistants, and the ICT technician, who is able to sort out any problems quickly. This support does not take over what pupils are expected to do for themselves, and helps to develop a confident, independent use of ICT. The conclusions to lessons do not always allow sufficient time for pupils to discuss and evaluate their own learning. Pupils are generally well managed, and as a result behave well and work closely with their computer partners, sharing tasks and ideas.

145. The School Development Plan focuses on the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. This is now happening. For example, Year 3 pupils researched the Internet for information on Sutton Hoo, to help in their studies on the Anglo-Saxons; Year 2 pupils researched animals using a CD Rom; in science pupils used a simulation program to see the effect of heat, light and water on plant growth; in mathematics and science ICT is used to record and compare data.
146. The co-ordinator for ICT provides good leadership and management. He has been instrumental in producing a new scheme of work, taking account of national guidelines, and preparing medium-term planning that effectively supports lesson planning. There has been some monitoring of teaching with a view to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Units of study are broadly assessed after use, but the need to develop assessment procedures, linked to specific skills, is recognised. A portfolio of work has been started, but work still needs to be linked to levels of attainment to provide useful examples of assessed work. The resources for the subject are good. The ICT suite is well used, and the school has budgeted for additional software to complement its increased size, and to develop the use of ICT in other subjects. Computer clubs for all ages add to the curricular opportunities provided.

## **MUSIC**

147. Attainment in music is satisfactory in both key stages and meets national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. During this inspection, five music lessons were seen, and a whole school singing assembly. Additionally, a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 performed instrumental and vocal pieces in preparation for a concert at the Royal Albert Hall.
148. In Year 1, pupils know the difference between long and short sounds. In a very good lesson they used a variety of simple percussion instruments to assemble a class 'orchestra' and played a series of simple rhythms. Year 2 pupils of average attainment understand that sound sequences represented by written symbols can easily be repeated. They know the meanings of some simple terms, such as 'pitch'. They perform confidently with a variety of simple instruments, and know that music adds atmosphere to a story. For example, in one lesson observed, they used cymbals and a xylophone to represent the noises of wind in a tree, and a tree falling.
149. In Year 3, small groups of pupils can sustain simple clapping rhythms to produce a complex whole class sound. In a good lesson, the teacher progressively introduced a variety of instruments to supplement, and then replace, the clapped sounds. The application of mood music is developed in Year 4 but, in an otherwise satisfactory lesson, too much time was used in



discussing a poem, and too little time was available for practising an instrumental accompaniment. In this lesson, led by a visiting music specialist, pupils' attitudes were satisfactory, but unenthusiastic. In Year 6, pupils of average attainment have satisfactory knowledge of technical terms, including *tempo*, *duration* and *dynamics*. In another satisfactory lesson, groups of pupils composed music to illustrate daybreak in a jungle. A wide variety of instruments was used in the lesson, but the teacher did not provide enough visual stimulus to enable pupils to focus on various aspects of the scene. Consequently, the performances of all groups were similar, and did not illustrate specific parts of the scene.

150. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall, and are excellent when motivated by public performance and high quality teaching. Singing is good throughout the school. Pupils know a good variety of traditional and modern songs, and are skilled in identifying mood, and matching it with tone and volume. They sing successfully in two-part harmony. In a very good after-school session, led by the headteacher, pupils in Years 5 and 6 sang a modern musical comedy selection tunefully, and with clear diction. They sight-read recorder music, and played their recorders accurately in the style of a swing band. Pupils had great pride in their performance, and the session contributed to their spiritual, cultural and social development.
151. Music is integrated with some curriculum subjects. For example, some teachers use it to create moods in art lessons. A good display of Year 6 art includes a model guitar, and detail of how air produces high and low sounds in organ tubes. However, information and communication technology has little influence upon the music curriculum.
152. Pupils have limited knowledge of composers. During the inspection, they were unaware that Vivaldi was the 'composer of the week' in assemblies, although the information was clearly displayed. Most pupils are fully involved in music, and those with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Specialist activities are arranged for pupils identified as being gifted and talented.
153. Teaching overall is good, although many teachers underestimate their ability in the subject. Lesson planning is satisfactory, but assessment of pupils' learning is not adequately developed to highlight individual strengths and weaknesses. The recently appointed co-ordinator was absent during the inspection. Currently she does not monitor teaching and learning through the school. Resources for music are good, and accommodation is satisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

154. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These standards have been well maintained since the time of the last inspection. Most pupils enter Year 1 having achieved the early learning goals for physical development, and they make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
155. The school provides pupils with a broad and interesting curriculum, which is designed to promote their physical development and social interaction. Lessons in games, dance and gymnastics were observed during the inspection. Year 5 pupils attend swimming at the local pool and they make good progress because of the good quality instruction they receive. As a result, most pupils meet expectations to swim 25 meters employing recognised strokes. Year 6 pupils attend sailing lessons and an annual residential trip is provided to allow for a range of outdoor and adventurous activities.
156. The quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory overall, and has improved since the time of the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection. Of the twelve lessons observed, teaching was excellent in one, very good in two, good in three and satisfactory in six. There was no significant difference between the teaching in different age groups. Strong features of the teaching are the way all adults are appropriately changed for lessons, setting good examples to pupils, and well prepared lessons and resources. Lessons begin with good warm up sessions but many outdoor games lessons are not structured well enough to keep pupils warm. Teaching in dance lessons seen was better than the teaching of games or gymnastics, because the pace of these lessons kept pupils involved and active. Skills were well taught and pupils were given good opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others. This resulted in pupils working hard to improve their own sequences to produce work of good quality.
157. By the end of Year 2, guided by knowledgeable and supportive teaching, pupils have increased their confidence in physical control and mobility. Because of the quality of teaching, pupils attain

standards in dance that are above the expectation for their age, both in the quality of their movements and their ability to evaluate their own and others' work. In an excellent Year 2 lesson, the class teacher ensured that pupils employed movements in an imaginative way, responding to music. The inspired teaching and the quality of relationships established, resulted in excellent progress and joy in learning. In games lessons, teachers and teaching assistants help pupils develop elements of play that include running, dodging, catching, striking and throwing. These skills are then applied within small-sided games so that pupils learn to apply simple attacking and defending tactics. No gymnastics lessons for this age group were observed, but planning shows that this aspect is also regularly taught.

158. Pupils enter Year 3 with an overall good basis for further development. In games lessons, they continue to develop satisfactory ball skills and apply these in tennis, football, cricket and tennis type activities. Although skills are appropriately taught, the pace of learning often slows when pupils take part in small-sided games because expectations are not high enough, and some pupils engage in silly behaviour. However, most pupils enjoy the lessons, work hard and relate positively to each other, showing a good awareness of the need for fair play. In the two dance lessons seen, teaching was very good in one and good in the other. As in other lessons, boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are fully included, and teachers are aware of the needs of less able pupils and those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Explanations are clear so that all can understand, and adults make good use of praise to encourage all. In the very good lesson related to pupils' work on Henry VIII, the pace was brisk and expectations were very high. As a result, pupils worked hard and applied skills, such as the effective use of different levels to enhance their work. Pupils' work in both these lessons showed good evidence of planned progression. However, disruptions caused to pupils' learning by recent staff changes as well as the significant number of pupils joining the school other than at the normal time, have impeded progress between Year 2 and Year 6. Although there were many good features in the gymnastics lesson observed, such as planning, control and use of pupil demonstration, the pace of learning slowed as pupils queued to use the apparatus.
159. A good range of extra-curricular sport such as football, cricket and country dancing enhance the curriculum and pupils' self-esteem. The skills developed by pupils in after-school football activities observed were above expectations because of the quality of coaching pupils receive from a highly skilled parent and the help provided by accompanying teachers. Effective links with the local Premiership football club also enrich pupils' experiences. The co-ordinator has good knowledge of the subject and provides enthusiastic leadership. She knows what needs to be done to achieve consistency of practice across all aspects of the subject. The action plan is detailed and clear, and self-assessment by pupils is identified. There is a good supply of resources and these are generally efficiently used. The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively and is well used for lessons and for extra-curricular activities. Inter-school competitions are well used to support pupils' social development and sense of achievement.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

160. Standards of attainment are below those expected for Year 2 and Year 6 in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection.
161. By the age of seven, only the more able pupils can retell a story from the Bible. Pupils have few ideas of what Jesus taught and what Christians believe. They know what Christmas and Easter are about but not in any detail. Their knowledge of the main features of a Christian church and their purposes is good. They have an early idea of the symbolism behind the Cross, bread and wine. Pupils take pleasure in discussing deep questions such as 'Who were the first people?'
162. By the age of 11, pupils still have a limited knowledge of the Bible. For example, they do not recall that there is an Old and a New Testament. Pupils know a little about what Jesus taught and Christian Festivals. However, their knowledge and understanding of faiths other than Christian is shallow, unless they belong to one of them. Pupils have a good idea of the ways people show

their beliefs. They enjoy exploring deep questions such as 'Who made God?' and 'Is there a hell?'

163. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall. This is because it has not sustained learning. Individual lessons range from satisfactory to excellent in what they provide for pupils. However, teachers' expectations are too low when pupils come to write about what they have been learning. Pupils' work is too brief, and they do not think very much for themselves. Teachers often allow pupils' presentation and accuracy of English to be unsatisfactory. Some pupils do not complete their work and there are important inaccuracies in teachers' own spellings of religious terms. There is a lack of challenge for the more able pupils, so that the level of their work differs little from that of the others. In lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is good and ensures that pupils learn accurate information. This is particularly useful to consolidate facts about churches, so that pupils learnt the correct terms for their features. Teachers' methods are good. They ensure that all pupils are included in being challenged. For example, in one lesson, they made Eid cards. The teacher encouraged them all to do their best, and the successful results boosted their self-esteem. Teachers manage lessons well, and so pupils are enthusiastic and co-operative. The excellent lesson featured very well prepared resources for learning about Seder which totally absorbed the pupils.
164. The school covers the expected content of the locally agreed syllabus, but gives too little time to the subject. The consequence is a lack of balance between teacher input and opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and use knowledge and understanding. Pupils respond well to visits and visitors. Pupils in Year 2 remembered a great deal when a Muslim spoke to them, for example. This resulted in some prolonged pieces of writing. Pupils respond most positively when they make individual and creative contributions, such as designing an advertisement for a guru on a computer. Procedures for monitoring teaching and pupils' work are inadequate to raise standards. However, the school has established a very good bank of high quality resources to support pupils' learning, and there is strong commitment in the staff to develop all aspects of the subject. The co-ordinator has established the necessary priorities, and knows how to achieve them. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.