

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**WILLIAM MARTIN CE(C) JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Harlow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115100

Headteacher: Mr P Wilton

Reporting inspector: Mr G D Timms  
21038

Dates of inspection: 12-15 February 2001

Inspection number: 218704

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Quinlan
Date of previous inspection:	18 January 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19320	Mrs B Attaway	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Finance and efficiency
23453	Mrs C Cressey	Team inspector	English Art and design Music English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30000	Mr J Tresadern	Team inspector	Science Geography Religious education Equal opportunities	
30211	Mr P Meehan	Team inspector	Information and communications technology Design and technology History Physical education	
21552	Mr B McAlpine	Registered inspector	Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

William Martin Junior School takes most of its pupils from the local area in the new town of Harlow. The majority are from local authority housing although a significant proportion are from private housing. The school is about the same size as average primary schools although it is a junior school with pupils age 7 to 11. There are 261 pupils on roll. They are mostly taught in single age classes, although the pressure of numbers has resulted in one mixed Year 3 / 4 class. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 are grouped by ability for most of their English and mathematics work. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly satisfactory, as shown by the teacher assessments at the start of Year 3. The national tests at the end of Year 2 for most pupils starting at the school show good standards but these are not reflected fully in the pupils' abilities as indicated by the Year 3 assessments made in September.

There are 68 pupils (26 per cent of the number on roll) on the SEN register; this is above average. Six pupils have statements of special educational needs and this is broadly average. A broadly average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are a higher than average percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language but none are at an early stage. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than normal times has no significant bearing on standards. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

This is a good effective school, which has improved since its last inspection. Standards have improved steadily and at a faster rate than that found nationally. The quality of teaching is good and the leadership and management are very good. Following these improvements the school now gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff ensures a very clear educational direction to the work of the school.
- The quality of teaching is good and the effective use of learning objectives for lessons is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good; their behaviour and relationships in the school are very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good, as are the systems in place for assessing pupils' academic progress.

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

- Standards in writing are not high enough and the library is not used effectively.
- Standards in geography are too low.
- There is not enough liaison about the curriculum between the infant and junior schools.
- Parents are not involved enough in their pupils' learning.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 1999, when serious weaknesses were found. An interim inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in February 2000 found that there had been good improvement. The findings of the current inspection are that this good improvement has continued. The key issues from the first inspection have largely been addressed successfully; this has been achieved in only two years and with the same management team and largely the same staff. In particular the leadership and the quality of teaching have improved. The spiritual and cultural development is now very good. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision has improved and pupils are now making good progress, although this can still be improved, especially in Years 3 and 4. Standards generally have improved, although in geography they have fallen.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	B	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	B	B	A	
Science	D	A	A	A	

The 2000 national tests represent an improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science since the HMI interim report. Since the previous full inspection, results in all subjects tested have improved significantly. In English, standards in 2000 were broadly in line with the typical school nationally; in mathematics, standards were above average; and in science, they were well above average. In English, the amount of high attainment is typical of most schools, whereas more pupils exceed national expectations than is typical in mathematics and science. The school achieved its targets for 2000 and the targets for 2001 are realistic. Those set for 2002 are suitably challenging and there is an appropriate action plan aimed specifically at improving standards in this year group. The present Year 6 is on course to achieve the national average in mathematics and science but are likely to fall below average in English because of standards in writing. Overall, standards in the present Year 6 are lower than in 2000, reflecting lower overall standards on entry four years ago. In religious education, history, music, and physical education, standards are above those expected. In information and communications technology, art and design, design and technology, standards are broadly in line with those expected. In geography, standards are below those expected and have not been maintained at the level found at the last inspection.

Pupils' achievement, which measures the progress they have made since starting school, is satisfactory overall and good in religious education, history and physical education. Although boys have tended to achieve better than girls in mathematics over recent years, there is no evidence of any present difference in achievement. This is also true of English and science. There are a number of pupils from ethnic minorities but very few have English as an additional language and there is no evidence of any significant difference in their levels of achievement. Although the majority of the pupils begin school with good test results from the end of Year 2 tests, early testing in Year 3 shows that much of this learning has not been retained over the summer. Further tests after one term show that steady progress is generally made in English and mathematics. All pupils with SEN are making good progress.

When they are compared with schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in English in the 2000 tests were broadly in line with the average, and in mathematics and science they were well above average. The trend over time shows that English, mathematics and science have all improved at a faster rate than that found nationally.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils' attitudes towards school have a positive impact on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this enables the pupils to work within a clearly understood framework of what is permitted and what will not be tolerated.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work and play well together, and have good relationships with the adults in the school.
Attendance	Good. This has improved since the last inspection and is now above the national average.

The friendly, working ethos created by staff encourages pupils to have a very good attitude. The high expectations and clear role models provided by both teaching and non-teaching staff have enabled the very good standards of behaviour to be maintained. Pupils are very polite and friendly. The relationship between pupils is very good, with many examples of pupils working and playing together well regardless of gender, race or special educational needs; no racism is evident and none is reported. Bullying is rarely a problem, but is dealt with sensitively and very effectively if it does arise. Good opportunities are created to advance pupils' personal development resulting in pupils leaving Year 6 with confidence and good learning skills.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The overall quality of the teaching is good. This has improved since the last inspection when there were serious weaknesses in the teaching. It has further improved since the HMI interim inspection when it was found that good progress had been made in addressing the weaknesses. Only eight per cent of the teaching is now unsatisfactory while 92 per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better. Twenty-five per cent is good, 32 per cent is very good and 12 per cent is excellent. The teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 and this has had a clear impact on the improved standards achieved by the eleven-year-olds. All teachers had at least one lesson where the teaching was very good, usually due to their particular subject knowledge and expertise. The provision for pupils with SEN is very well coordinated and this is leading to teaching for these pupils that is good overall. Learning support staff are very well prepared and trained. The quality of their work is very good, as is the quality of their questioning of pupils.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively introduced and these have led to real improvements in standards, especially in mathematics. The teaching of the basic skills is good. Subject knowledge is sound in most subjects and year groups although there are weaknesses in science and geography. Teachers' expectations are higher than they were two years ago. The key objectives are very clearly shared with the pupils at the start of lessons and returned to at the end, leaving pupils in no doubt as to the purpose and context of their learning. Teachers manage pupils well. The behaviour in lessons is nearly always good, and this has a positive impact on their learning. Although good overall, there are aspects of the teaching which require further improvement. There are not enough opportunities for extended writing provided, to enable pupils to put into practice the skills they learn during literacy lessons. The marking policy which has been recently introduced is not yet fully in place in all classes, and the marking does not always make clear to pupils how well they have done and what they still need to improve. The very best lessons are characterised by high expectations, a good pace and the clear involvement of all pupils in the objectives for the lesson.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The staff have worked hard to introduce the literacy and numeracy strategies and to ensure that the recent curriculum changes have had a positive impact on the curriculum offered to their pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. An in depth assessment of the provision in the school shows that it is effectively focused on helping pupils access the full curriculum and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The Christian ethos has a positive effect on the daily life of the school. The moral and social development has been improved through initiatives such as the school council. The evidence shows that cultural development is strong through a variety of subjects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour and assessment are very effective.

Overall, the partnership with parents is satisfactory. The quality of information is good. Most parents find it easy to approach the school with any problems. It is not made clear enough, however, how parents can help their children's learning. Through the home-school agreement, pupils are expected to do their homework on time but the agreement places no expectation on parents to support their children's learning. Parents need to know what is expected of them, together with clear guidance on how they can help their child at home. The school meets the needs of its pupils, helping them to develop through the provision of a very good range of good quality learning opportunities. The curriculum is well-planned, broad, balanced, stimulating, and challenging. Provision for the development of ICT skills has improved since the last inspection. However, the curriculum for geography has weaknesses and lacks the depth to ensure that pupils are developing sound skills, knowledge and understanding. Although the provision of extra curricular activities is less extensive than it was a few years ago, staff still provide a good range of clubs, trips and visits to enrich and extend pupils' experiences.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very Good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. A number of changes have recently altered the make-up of the governing body. They are very supportive of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The analysis of data is detailed and has provided staff and governors with a clearer picture of how successful the school is, and where weaknesses remain. This work has not yet been extended to include any analysis of gender or ethnic background.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning, day-to-day control and administration are good.

The leadership exhibited by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has ensured a very clear educational direction for the school with a strong focus on improving standards in the basic skills. This has been successful. The school's vision statement reflects its strong Christian ethos. The intention is to create a caring ethos where all pupils are valued and these aims are very largely met, although there is still some underachievement to be addressed. There is a very secure management structure in the school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff meet regularly and, together with the governing body, have a clear strategic role. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is good. This represents further very good improvement since the last inspection, and also good improvement since the HMI interim report. The effectiveness of the special needs coordinator is good; she has considerable expertise and uses her knowledge well. Statutory requirements in respect of pupils with statements of special educational needs are met.

The financial control and management of the school is good. Best value is obtained through the decision making process. The governors' finance committee monitors the spending throughout the year, with the support of local authority advice and the efficient office manager. The school is staffed and resourced adequately, and the accommodation is satisfactory. Good use is made of the available resources and staff are deployed effectively.

## 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>• The quality of the teaching is good.</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• Children's behaviour is good.</li><li>• Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with problems or concerns.</li><li>• The children like school and they make good progress.</li></ul>	<p>A minority of parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• feel that the school doesn't work closely with them and that they are not kept well informed about how well their child is getting on;</li><li>• feel the school should provide a more interesting range of activities outside lessons;</li><li>• that children do not get the right amount of homework.</li></ul>

Five parents attended a meeting with the inspectors and seventy-three returned the questionnaires. The findings of the inspection largely support the parents' positive views. The team also agrees that the school could work more closely with parents and that the homework provision is not consistent enough. However, the range of extra-curricular activities is good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards among eleven-year-olds have improved steadily since the last inspection although there is still some variation between cohorts of pupils. For example, the present Year 6 is unlikely to quite match last year's best ever results in the tests this summer, although the provision of extra classes in English and mathematics is intended to have a positive impact over the next few months, as it did last year. However, the school's testing and tracking systems show the present Year 5 is a greater cause for concern. A good action plan has been produced to address the weaknesses and this is already having some benefit in raising standards.
2. The present Year 6 is in line to achieve the national average in mathematics and science, but they are below average in English, especially writing. In religious education, history, music, and physical education, standards are above those expected. This represents an improvement in religious education and history, and the maintenance of good standards in physical education. In ICT, standards are satisfactory and this also represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection when the subject had serious weaknesses. In art and design, and design and technology, standards are broadly in line with those expected. In geography, standards are below those expected and have not been maintained at the level found at the last inspection.
3. Pupils' achievement, which measures the progress they have made since starting school, is satisfactory overall and good in religious education, history and physical education. In English, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 that are on course to attain the expected national level by the end of the present year is smaller than last year and smaller than found in the typical school. Even so, all of the pupils in that year group have made good progress in the subject compared to their attainment four years ago when aged seven. Although boys have tended to achieve better than girls in mathematics over recent years, there is no evidence of any present difference in achievement. This is also true of English and science. There are a number of pupils from ethnic minorities but very few have English as an additional language and there is no evidence of any significant difference in their levels of achievement. Although the majority of the pupils begin school with good test results from the end of Year 2 tests, early testing in Year 3 shows that much of this learning has not been retained over the summer. Further tests after one term show that steady progress is generally made in English and mathematics. There is not enough liaison about curriculum issues between the staff in the infant and junior schools to enable the effective building of new learning on prior attainment.
4. About two thirds of the pupils with SEN have short-term needs in literacy or numeracy; they are mainly twelve to eighteen months behind national expectations for their age. A further one quarter of the pupils with SEN have moderate learning difficulties and are two years or more behind national expectations in literacy and numeracy; their difficulties affect attainment in most subjects. A small number of pupils experience speech and communication or physical difficulties.
5. All pupils with SEN are making progress and overall effectiveness in learning for pupils with SEN is good. The extent of individual progress varies according to the difficulties faced. The majority of pupils with SEN are identified early and placed on the register at age seven, soon after entry to school. The effectiveness of the provision is such that those with short-term needs generally catch up on national expectations within two years and are removed from the SEN register before the age of nine. A very small number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties that are additional to the other difficulties they face. Occasionally, such pupils are excluded. The procedures followed are appropriate. Specific plans are made when pupils are excluded for their return to full time education as soon as possible. Good use is made of expertise on the governing body to promote inclusiveness and the successful management of the few disaffected pupils.
6. The 2000 national tests represent an improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science since the HMI interim report. In English, standards are broadly in line with schools nationally. In 1998 they were well below average. In mathematics, standards were above average in 2000 while in 1998 they had been below average. In science, standards were well above average in 2000 and they had also been below average in 1998. In English a broadly similar proportion of pupils reached the higher levels as occurred nationally. In mathematics a higher than average proportion reached the higher level, while in science a much greater proportion reached the higher level. These improvements are due to the more focused teaching in literacy and numeracy, the extra training teachers have received since the last inspection, and the provision of extra teaching such as 'booster' classes and additional literacy support. The school achieved its targets for 2000 and the targets for 2001 are realistic. However, those set for 2002 are challenging, although based on pupils' earlier attainment and the existence of an appropriate action plan aimed specifically at improving standards in this year group.
7. When they are compared with schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in English are broadly in line with the average, and in mathematics and science they are well above average. The trend over time shows that English,

mathematics and science have all improved at a faster rate than that found nationally. In English, standards have risen to the national average from a very low level in 1996. In mathematics, the standards attained in 2000 have overtaken those found nationally, since a low point in 1996. In science, standards have returned to a level above the national average which was evident in 1996, but which dipped to a low point in 1998.

8. In English, all areas of weakness highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed with considerable rigour and enthusiasm. Literacy is given a high priority throughout the curriculum and in relation to their prior attainment most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills. The school has enthusiastically implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this is having a very positive effect on raising standards. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations. Role-play, drama and discussion encourage pupils to develop confidence and to use interesting and appropriate vocabulary. Teachers are aware of the vocabulary needed in each subject when introducing a new topic. All staff, including learning support assistants, ensure that pupils understand the vocabulary being used and encourage them to use alternate words to add interest to their conversations. The school provides a wide range of high quality and challenging books and texts to foster all pupils' love of books and develop their independent reading skills. By the age of eleven pupils are confident readers of a range of texts. Staff ensure that individual pupils who are particularly skilled in reading have a challenging range of books to read and are not limited to the reading schemes. Handwriting is given a very high priority. Writing is almost always neat and well formed and by the age of eleven most pupils have developed a neat, flowing and legible style of handwriting. Pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes using a range of styles. Writing is well organised and by the age of eleven most pupils show an awareness of spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, although pupils now have the opportunity to redraft and edit their work the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent extended writing and this has a limiting effect on the standards they attain.

9. In mathematics, the less able Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the multiples of 6. About half of them can find pairs of numbers that add up to a multiple of ten. They are beginning to be able to order both positive and negative numbers and to use this knowledge to read scales accurately. Almost all of the higher attaining pupils know the differences between obtuse, reflex and acute angles. A scrutiny of their work shows that the higher attaining pupils are comfortable with long multiplication. The middle ability pupils can multiply using 10 and 100 and the lower attainers can multiply with single digit numbers. Their learning over time is good and they have made clear progress since the start of the year. In Year 3, pupils have a very basic understanding of weight and mass and they know that the units used are grams and kilograms. The presentation of work is satisfactory and, especially that of the lower attainers, it has improved since the start of the year. By Year 4, pupils are able to use money in calculations to solve problems, and to round sums to the nearest pound. The higher attaining pupils in Year 5 are able to work with equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. They work out percentages from tenths but are less secure using fractions such as twentieths. The middle attaining pupils can find fractions of numbers using simple fractions such as one third and one fifth. The less able need extra support through using apparatus to work out fractions of lengths, using halves and quarters. Overall, pupils' learning in all year groups is at least satisfactory and often good, due to their positive attitudes and the quality of the teaching.

10. In science, eleven-year-olds have a broad knowledge of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. This knowledge has been acquired steadily over the four junior years. Eleven-year-olds with typical attainment can carry out investigations into the separation of materials and use appropriate scientific vocabulary. They make predictions and observations, recording using diagrams and producing explanations for their findings. Through earlier studies on classifying living things and food chains pupils know the relationships between predators, consumer predators and prey. They have conducted a woodland survey and used ICT, including a digital camera, to present their findings as graphs and pictures. Analysis of pupils' work shows satisfactory progress between the ages of seven and eleven years. Teachers also place an appropriate emphasis upon pupils undertaking their own enquiries but this highlights weaknesses in the ability of some pupils to record what they find.

11. Learning in ICT and religious education has shown a good level of improvement since 1998. In religious education standards are now good and pupils study a range of cultures and beliefs. In Years 3 and 4 pupils know about symbols, ceremonies and stories from Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. By Years 5 and 6 the work has progressed to the exploration of festivals and ceremonies in these faiths, using comparison, analysis and reflection. In ICT, by the age of eleven, attainment is in line with national expectations. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress. An analysis of pupils' work shows that they have developed the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding using a variety of information sources including desktop publishing, multimedia, the Internet and e-mail. By the end of the key stage the children have made good progress. Work in pupils' folders and on display shows that the children have learnt to use databases, the Internet and e-mail effectively.

12. In physical education and history pupils' learning is good and they make good progress. In most other subjects it is satisfactory. However, progress in geography is unsatisfactory and needs to be improved. By the age of eleven, pupils have studied many topics with too small an amount of time allocated to them and their learning is very superficial. Such a lack of depth makes it very difficult for pupils to learn how to enquire and undertake fieldwork. Over the four years from age seven to eleven, pupils spend a relatively small proportion of the time allocated to the subject studying within the context of areas

about the size of the catchment area of the school. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to explore real places in depth, learning about what they are like, why they are like they are, how they are changing and how they compare with other places. It also reduces the opportunities to use enquiry into real places as a vehicle for the development of skills such as the use of large-scale maps.

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

13. The friendly, working ethos created by staff encourages pupils to have a very good attitude. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was described as "positive". The very good attitudes are demonstrated especially when lesson pace is brisk and objectives clearly defined. Pupils' enjoyment was demonstrated in a Year 3 science lesson about human teeth when they were able to examine plaster casts of teeth and identify incisor, molar and canine teeth. This had a good impact on the children's learning and they said they wanted to learn more about their own teeth. Pupils' contributions to the governors' annual report to parents illustrate well the enjoyment they have of learning and how satisfying they find their achievements.

14. The high expectations and clear role models provided by both teaching and non-teaching staff have enabled the very good standards of behaviour to be maintained. One pupil has been excluded permanently after temporary exclusions; other pupils have been excluded temporarily. These exclusions were carried out correctly and for the benefit of others at the school. Pupils are very polite and friendly, with, for example, many instances being observed of pupils opening doors for others as well as for adults.

15. The relationship between pupils is very good, with many examples of pupils working and playing together well regardless of gender, race or special educational needs; no racism is evident and none is reported. Bullying is rarely a problem, but is dealt with sensitively and very effectively if it does arise. Teachers know the pupils very well and pupils talk confidently to teachers.

16. Good opportunities are created to advance pupils' personal development resulting in pupils leaving Year 6 with confidence and good learning skills. For example, pupils from all classes return registers. Pupils prepare and present assembly reports on inter-schools sports results. Year 5 pupils tidy bookshelves. Year 6 pupils help run the school tuck-shop. One pupil was highly successful in ensuring that at the Christmas concert the music ran to a strict schedule. A school council, formed last September with representatives elected from each class, has enabled pupils from all years to develop an understanding of democracy, debate, the rights of others and that some may hold different views. As a result of this council, a school referendum was held to decide how money should be spent on improving the playground.

17. Pupil initiative was observed during the inspection. For example, one Year 3 pupil, unable to see the slides displayed, moved to the front of the class and other pupils from the back followed him; the teacher praised this initiative. A learning support assistant reported that pupils with special education needs had prepared the resources and were ready and waiting when she arrived; the teacher present in the classroom had not requested them to do this.

18. Attendance is good and unauthorised absence is below the national average, maintaining the levels achieved at the last inspection. In the last inspection report, about 40 per cent of absence in the second half of the autumn 1998 term was due to pupils taking holidays. In the last two years this has fallen significantly to about 10 per cent.

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

19. The overall quality of the teaching in the school is good. This has improved since the last inspection when there were serious weaknesses in the teaching. It has further improved since the HMI interim inspection when it was found that good progress had been made in addressing the weaknesses. Only eight per cent of the teaching is now unsatisfactory while 92 per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better. Twenty-five per cent is good, 32 per cent is very good and 12 per cent is excellent. The teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 and this has had a clear impact on the improved standards achieved by the eleven-year-olds. All teachers had at least one lesson where the teaching was very good, usually due to their particular subject knowledge and expertise. Equally, the small number of unsatisfactory lessons was found throughout Years 3, 4, and 5, and was usually the result of less effective understanding of the content of the lesson.

20. The provision for pupils with SEN is very well coordinated and this is leading to teaching for these pupils that is good overall. The learning needs of pupils with SEN are accurately stated by the special needs coordinator and fully communicated to teachers, learning support staff, parents, and the pupils. Short-term targets are specific. Additional resources and teaching arrangements to achieve the targets are identified in detail. Teachers' lesson planning to meet the needs of pupils with SEN is very good in literacy and numeracy; it effectively provides for good general provision of learning at different levels, with the specific needs of SEN pupils identified clearly and implemented rigorously. Pupils are taught in ability sets in literacy and numeracy, an arrangement that is proving very effective for pupils with SEN. Learning support staff are very well prepared

and trained. The quality of their work is very good as is the quality of their questioning of pupils, and this leads to good, appropriate levels of challenge for the pupils they work with. Assessment procedures are thorough, with close monitoring of progress towards individual curricular targets in their individual education plans. Progress is reviewed each week and the evaluations influence appropriately what pupils are taught next.

21. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively introduced and these have led to real improvements in standards, especially in mathematics. The teaching of the basic skills is good. It consists of a good range of teaching methods used appropriately to meet the objectives of the lesson. For example, mixed ability groups were used deliberately in one art and design lesson to enable small groups to share their skills, and work well together making Victorian hats; the pupils' academic and practical skills were thoughtfully combined. Subject knowledge is sound in most subjects and year groups although there are weaknesses in science and geography.

22. Teachers' expectations are higher than they were two years ago and are now satisfactory. The key objectives are very clearly shared with the pupils at the start of lessons and returned to at the end, leaving pupils in no doubt as to the purpose and context of their learning. The introduction of these objectives has strongly focused the teaching on specific aspects of the topic covered and this in turn enables easier measurement of the progress made. This is also aided by the recently introduced and very effective assessment system, including the method used for encouraging pupils into self assessment using 'traffic lights' to show whether they feel they have completely understood, partially understood or need further direct teaching. In addition, the use of grouping by prior attainment in Years 5 and 6, in English and mathematics for part of the week, has enabled teachers to focus lessons at a narrower range of ability.

23. Teachers manage pupils well. The behaviour in lessons is nearly always good, and this has a positive impact on their learning. Resources are used effectively, and teachers often prepare good self-made resources to back up commercially produced ones where necessary. Good use is made of overhead projectors to illustrate teaching points, especially in mathematics. For example, in one excellent lesson in Year 6 the teacher was able to show clearly how to use a protractor for measuring angles. In addition, very good use was made of the computer to put the learning about angles into practice through programming a screen turtle to draw shapes.

24. Although good overall, there are aspects of the teaching which require further improvement. Teachers' subject knowledge in geography, and to a lesser extent in science, would benefit from better and clearer guidance about the delivery of the schemes of work. There are not enough opportunities for extended writing provided to enable pupils to put into practice the skills they learn during literacy lessons. The marking policy which has been recently introduced is not yet fully in place in all classes, and does not always make clear to pupils how well they have done and what they still need to improve. The provision of homework is not yet fully in line with the national recommendation, although some good examples of appropriate homework are evident. For example, in Year 3 as part of their work on weight, pupils were asked to check the contents of their kitchen cupboards and note down a variety of packages of food and their weights.

25. The very best lessons are characterised by high expectations, a good pace and the clear involvement of all pupils in the objectives for the lesson. Teachers are fortunate in being supported by very able learning support assistants who are deployed effectively and have a very good impact on the pupils' learning. They are an important part of the teaching team and communication between them and the teachers is good. However, they are almost always used to support the less able pupils; higher attaining children do not receive the same opportunities. The Year 5 Victorian Day provided an example of excellent teaching and learning, where the teachers, support staff and pupils all dressed as Victorians. They moved in and out of role and discussed aspects of Victorian life as they occurred. The whole experience became a real learning experience rather than just a fun, end of topic event.

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

26. The curriculum provision has improved since the previous inspection. The school now effectively meets the needs of its pupils, helping them to develop through the provision of a very good range of good quality learning opportunities. A well-planned curriculum ensures that all aspects of all subjects are taught and the curriculum framework ensures that skills, knowledge and understanding in most subjects are effectively developed across the school. Careful curriculum planning and detailed lesson plans now make a very good contribution to pupils' learning by identifying clearly how the learning will be continuous in all classes, including the one catering for mixed ages. The curriculum has been reviewed to take account of the Curriculum 2000 and policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. All statutory requirements are met. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are also fully met. The school has a broad and balanced curriculum, which is stimulating and challenging. It places considerable emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills and this has a positive effect on pupils' achievements and their attitudes to learning. Provision for the development of ICT skills has improved since the last inspection. However, the curriculum for geography has weaknesses and lacks the

depth to ensure that pupils are developing sound skills, knowledge and understanding. The range and depth of the curriculum is reflected in the high quality of display, both in classrooms and the more public areas of the school.

27. Through the use of carefully chosen resources and a detailed programme of staff training, effective strategies are in place to teach the basis skills of literacy and numeracy. In addition, a well-organised system is in place for the effective deployment of all teachers, including the headteacher and classroom assistants. This makes the optimum use of staff expertise and has a positive effect of producing a favourable adult to pupils ratio, which gives those at different levels of attainment more targeted support for their learning. Arrangements for pupils' personal, health, drugs, and sex education are now good, and the needs of boys and girls are taken into account. Governors and staff have recently agreed a new policy. The school has a clear commitment to these areas of the curriculum, involving medical practitioners and police in delivering, teaching and learning.

28. The development of citizenship and the responsibilities of the individual and the group are apparent throughout the curriculum and in the sensitive way the school is organised. Pupils have many opportunities to work together as a whole school, in year and class groups and the school council. Pupils' use the Internet to develop their understanding of being a member of the world community. During the 2000 Olympics, pupils kept the school informed of the successes of the British team through daily access to the Internet. Pupils have also established e-mail links with a school in Canada.

29. The school has a very clear commitment to equality of opportunity and this has a positive effect on the self-esteem of all pupils and the progress they make. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. There is effective inclusion of pupils with SEN into the work of the school. The pupils with SEN experience broadly the same curriculum as pupils without SEN and are fully integrated into shared work in literacy and numeracy lessons. There is no withdrawal of pupils with SEN from lessons, other than for occasional assessment purposes. The documented policy for SEN is satisfactory, although nothing is stated about access for pupils in wheelchairs. The policy is fully implemented. Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

30. The staff give generously of their own free time to provide the pupils with a varied programmed of extra-curricular activities. These are open to boys and girls and are well attended. Clubs include football, netball, country dancing, singing and mathematics. During the inspection a 'Victorian Day' greatly enhanced pupils' understanding of history as the subject was brought alive as pupils and staff, dressed in Victorian costumes, experienced the harshness of life as Victorian school children.

31. The school's links with the community are good. The use of visitors and visits to museums, concerts, theatres, galleries and eco-centres promote pupils' interest and extend their knowledge and understanding. Links with a local pharmaceutical company are developing pupils' understanding of science. There are very good links with local artists, authors and theatre groups. Links with local secondary schools are sound. Before pupils transfer to the high school information on pupils' progress is exchanged and pupils are able to enjoy time at their new school to familiarise themselves with routines and staff to ensure a happy and secure transfer. Although the school has positive relationships with the adjoining infant school there is insufficient sharing of information on the curriculum and standards, which results in a mismatch in assessing pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3.

32. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved considerably since the last inspection. The unsatisfactory features identified have all been addressed and provision is now very good. The school's Christian values and principles are very apparent and have a very positive effect on the quality of the teaching and learning.

33. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Assemblies provide pupils with very good opportunities to consider important issues such as poverty, the place of families, the effect of famine, disease and natural disasters. A recent earthquake in India was used successfully to focus pupils' attention on what really was of value to individuals. Music is particularly effective in creating reverent atmosphere for worship and there are moments for quiet reflection on the issues discussed. Within lessons, staff are aware of the many opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of their place in the world; their relationship to God; the wonders of creation and the impact of this awareness on their quality of life. Successes in both academic and personal achievements are recognised and valued by all.

34. Provision for moral development is very good. Emphasis is placed on developing a mutual respect between staff and pupils. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in the context of how it will affect other people. The sensitive issues of drugs and bullying are handled well through personal, health and social education, and support from other local agencies such as the police and local doctors. In assemblies, issues such as kindness, friendship and caring are taught well through stories and parables.

35. Provision for social development is very good. The pupils are aware of their responsibilities to the school and their local community. Pupils have opportunities to develop responsibility, self-confidence and independence through well-planned lessons and the routines and structures in place, such as the school council. The school council has been very effective in

persuading staff and governors of the need to improve the facilities in the playground. Staff plans to extend the adventure playground were abandoned after the school council arranged a referendum which voted in favour of an alternative scheme which provided pergolas and a seated area. The very good relationships apparent in lessons ensure that pupils feel comfortable, discussing issues that concern them and asking for help and support in their learning. The organisation of lessons provides many opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate. A sense of citizenship is developed as pupils take part in local sport, music festivals and health initiatives. Older pupils support fundraising events to collect money for world tragedies and local charities.

36. Provision for cultural development is now very good. Pupils have opportunities to learn and appreciate the richness of their own and other people's culture through literature, music, art, geography and history. Through religious education lessons pupils study the major world religions and all pupils are made aware of important festivals such as Christmas, Diwali, and the Chinese New Year. A recent cultural day introduced pupils to the music, dance, art and cuisine of India enhancing their understanding of the way other people live.

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

37. The safety and care of all pupils is very good and is reflected in the school's Christian ethos. Child protection procedures are clearly stated in the school's policy and are in place securely. All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, have had first aid training that is updated regularly. The school nurse supports the teaching of sex education, but the school acknowledges that its sex education policy is in need of review. The school is clean and a credit to the caretaker and cleaning staff. Health and safety assessments are completed regularly and appropriately. Repair to the skirting of a temporary classroom is required and arrangements are already in hand for this to be done by a contractor.

38. The importance of good behaviour is regularly reinforced both at class and whole school level. The strategies for dealing with any incidence of poor behaviour are clearly defined and aim to develop children's self-discipline, self-control and an understanding that they are responsible for their own actions. Behaviour in almost every lesson observed was very good, raising the quality of learning for all pupils.

39. Rewards are seen as an integral part of everyday school life and praise is used as a powerful tool for learning. Some awards are class based; others are public acknowledgements in assembly for good work and behaviour. The achievement assemblies are treated as mini 'speech days'. Held termly, attended by governors, and to which parents and grandparents of recipients are invited, they place significant emphasis on achievement in good work and outstanding behaviour. External successes receive verbal praise in assembly.

40. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory, any concerns are discussed with the parent/carer and, if necessary, the educational welfare officer. Parents are called the same day if children do not arrive at school and there has been no prior warning. The late book, which pupils sign on arrival, enables monitoring to take place leading to a reduction in lateness. Letters are sent to parents where persistent lateness occurs and in most cases these are effective, although there remains a small core group that does not recognise the importance of their child arriving before the start of school.

41. The assessment of pupils' academic progress has improved greatly since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher has worked very hard to produce a coherent and practical format, which enables staff to clearly record how much pupils have learned, and how good their progress is. A particular strength is the effective promotion of pupils' self-evaluation using a system of traffic lights to show how well they have learned something. This is also used by teachers in their evaluation of how successful a lesson has been. This improved assessment clearly enables teachers to plan work based on a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do.

42. Pupils with SEN are identified early after admission and the systems for identification are rigorous. The five-stage assessment model used is fully consistent with the code of practice. The progress of pupils with SEN is assessed and monitored in more detail than other pupils. Appropriate screening and diagnostic tests are in place and used at the initial identification stage. Weekly assessments are conducted, linked to the curricular targets identified in the individual education plans.

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

43. Overall, the partnership with parents is satisfactory. Although labelled as good at the last inspection, most aspects have been maintained at a similar level. The quality of information is good. For example, the annual reports have been redesigned to give parents a clearer understanding of their children's achievement and areas for improvement although there are no clear targets set for improvement; comments by parents are invited and have been more positive than they were about the previous system. Consultation evenings are held termly. The head is usually available at the start of the school day and staff

are always willing to discuss any problems with parents. Parents take part in the annual review process through a questionnaire. Most parents find it easy to approach the school with any problems.

44. Support for special education needs children is good and parents are involved closely at all stages, including reviews. The learning process is viewed as a team effort, with the learning support assistants making an important contribution.

45. Ninety-five per cent of parents have signed the home-school agreement, confirming that almost all parents take a real interest in their children's education. Only 28 per cent of inspection questionnaires were returned, making judgements on its results less secure. However, every question received a minimum 80 per cent positive response.

46. Regular, informative newsletters are issued, but do not include enough information on curriculum areas; for example, forthcoming topics and guidance on how parents can help their children at home, both before and during the topic. This would enable many pupils to begin the topic with some understanding and offer teachers the opportunity to explore additional areas of the topic. The school prospectus does not contain the required information to tell parents that they are entitled to withdraw their children from sex education lessons.

47. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is unsatisfactory. The school prospectus gives a very broad outline of areas covered in school in individual subjects, government guidelines on homework and activities that may feature on the school's homework programme. Through the home school agreement, pupils are expected to do their homework on time but the agreement places no expectation on parents to support their children's learning. Parents need to know what is expected of them, together with clear guidance on how they can help their child at home. A small amount of homework was observed being set during the inspection. Improved links in this area would accelerate pupils' progress in school.

48. No curriculum evenings have been held since the last inspection and there have been no literacy or numeracy evenings to help parents have a clear understanding of these more recent introductions to the curriculum. However, a numeracy evening is planned for the summer term.

49. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory. The parental help in classes observed at the last inspection rarely happens now; no parent was seen helping in school, although some do so on trips. Grandparents have spoken to pupils on World War II; a parent who is a falconer visited and demonstrated the skills of falcons and tawny owls. During the inspection a number of parents, including some who had helped in the past, expressed willingness to help, but had not been asked for some two years. The school considers days are now more structured, but the reintroduction of these links would provide an additional resource, contributing to and supporting children's learning. The home-school association is combined with the infant school, and has made a good impact on the pupils' education. The association is very well supported and events are considered to play an important role in filling gaps in local social events. Local people join in the summer and Christmas events enabling the association to provide a range of resources, most recently adventure and play equipment.

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

50. The leadership and management demonstrated by the headteacher and key staff is very good. This represents a very significant improvement since the last inspection when the school was found to have serious weaknesses in this area. It has also further improved since the HMI interim report, which found that good progress had been made by 2000. Since that time the headteacher, governors and staff have worked extremely hard to raise standards, keep up with a variety of local and national issues and greatly improve the level of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The leadership exhibited by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has ensured a very clear educational direction for the school with a strong focus on improving standards in the basic skills. This has been successful as is indicated by the consistent rise in standards over the past three years.

51. The school's vision statement reflects its strong Christian ethos. The intention is to create a caring ethos where all pupils are valued, the curriculum is appropriate and children are encouraged to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. A further aim is to encourage children to make a positive contribution to the wider community. These aims are very largely met, although there is still some underachievement to be addressed.

52. There is a very secure management structure in the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher meet regularly, as does the senior management team. They have a clear strategic role, together with the governing body, and this has ensured a good overview of the work of the school and an improved recognition of appropriate priorities. Staff work closely together in year group teams and this enables the curriculum planning and provision to be consistent. Staff meetings are regularly held and contain a combination of business and curriculum issues. In addition, the headteacher meets with the learning support staff, with a good agenda involving diary dates and school development issues particularly relevant to their role. This



ensures they are fully aware of what is happening in school, and they also have a valued place and genuine status within the management structure. Midday supervisors have the opportunity for a similar but less regular meeting.

53. The headteacher has a great deal of data from test results and assessments available. The analysis of this is detailed and has provided staff and governors with a clearer picture of how successful the school is, and where weaknesses remain. For example, one set of statistics shows the improvement of the Year 2000 cohorts of Year 6 pupils measured against their attainment in Year 2. This work has not yet been extended to include any analysis of gender or ethnic background. The role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school needs to be clarified to give them a better picture of strengths and weaknesses. However, they have had a good role in helping shape the direction of the school through the recent changes and they fulfil all of their statutory duties.

54. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is good. This represents further very good improvement since the last inspection, and also good improvement since the HMI interim report. Regular monitoring is now common in the core subjects. Most is carried out by the senior management team, which looks at planning and samples of pupils' work and observes lessons. In addition, all subject coordinators sample pupils' work and the literacy and numeracy coordinators have visited lessons to work alongside and advise colleagues. There is a plan to extend coordinator visits to science, religious education and ICT in the near future. Good feedback is provided for teachers and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have resulted. For example, the importance of emphasising the learning objectives for each lesson, and returning to them at the end has clearly helped pupils to have more understanding about their learning and is a direct outcome from action points raised through the monitoring process. The targets set by the school are appropriately challenging.

55. The effectiveness of the special needs coordinator is good; she has considerable expertise and uses her knowledge well. The bulk of her time is spent assessing and evaluating the needs of pupils and coordinating their provision and liaising with teachers and parents; these aspects, and associated records, are very well managed. She has a detailed knowledge of each pupil on the register, their progress, and what they should do next. However, she spends very little time monitoring the provision formally and this has potential for problems to arise and go unnoticed. This is recognised and plans for improvement are built into the school development plan.

56. Statutory requirements in respect of pupils with statements of SEN are met, in the main. Statutory annual reviews have taken place on time and to a good overall standard. In all cases where equipment to meet physical needs are specified in the statement, the equipment is provided. However, one pupil is not receiving the provision for speech and language therapy specified in the statement and this is unsatisfactory.

57. The financial control and management of the school is good. Specific grants have been appropriately used. Best value is obtained through the decision making process. For example, following the last inspection it was clear that a substantial sum needed to be spent on computers. The school, together with the local authority, planned well to ensure that the arrangements made give good value for money and have provided a greatly improved resource for the school. The governors' finance committee monitors the spending throughout the year, with the support of local authority advice and the efficient office manager. Financial planning, day-to-day control and administration are good. Good use is made of the available resources and staff are deployed effectively. In particular very good value is provided by the use of learning support staff.

58. The school invests about 40 per cent more on SEN provision than it receives through specific grants and funding linked to statements of need. Nearly all of the funding is spent appropriately on learning support staff and on a part-time coordinator. A small amount of money is spent on learning resources and on staff training. Learning support time is allocated to classes according to a formula that is open to scrutiny and is fair. The school development plan contains relevant and achievable priorities for improvement.

59. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have attended a great many training courses since the last inspection. These have clearly had a positive impact on the work of the school and also reflect the effort staff have put into the school's improvement. The accommodation is largely well used. However, the library and computer suite have been created from one room and are too small for efficient and comfortable use. The library is under resourced and under used. Resources in other subjects are largely satisfactory and in science and ICT resources are good.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, and has also improved following the HMI interim inspection. Standards have risen, the quality of teaching is much better and the pupils' attitudes and ethos of the school has been maintained at a high level. In order to continue to improve, and to maintain the present good rate of improvement, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ❑ improve standards in English by:
  - providing more opportunities for independent writing;
  - improving the library resources and making more effective use of them to raise the level of pupils' research skills; (Paragraphs 8, 59, 65-66)
- ❑ improve standards in geography by:
  - ensuring the curriculum includes enough focus on a study of a real-life locality;
  - developing pupils' enquiry skills as an integral part of their knowledge and understanding of places; (Paragraphs 2, 12, 21, 24, 94-97)
- ❑ devise ways of creating more constructive curricular relationships with the infant school by encouraging better communication between subject coordinators and providing more opportunities to work together and share good practice; (Paragraphs 3, 31)
- ❑ improve links with parents by creating more opportunities for them to be involved in their pupils' learning. (Paragraphs 43 - 49)

61. In addition to the above issues, the governing body should consider including the following minor weaknesses in their action plan:

- ❑ ensure the full implementation of the school's marking and homework policies (Paragraphs 24, 69);
- ❑ improve the governors' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through clarifying their role in the monitoring and evaluation process. (Paragraph 53)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	31	25	24	8	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	261
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	45

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	68

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	32	32	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	30
	Girls	22	26	29
	Total	48	52	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (75)	81 (75)	92 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	26	30
	Girls	21	23	25
	Total	45	49	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (70)	77 (71)	86 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	251
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

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

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137.75

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	503318
Total expenditure	510844
Expenditure per pupil	1949
Balance brought forward from previous year	15100
Balance carried forward to next year	3623

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	260
Number of questionnaires returned	73

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	30	4	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	38	7	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	44	1	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	42	10	1	6
The teaching is good.	52	44	1	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	37	7	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	4	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	40	10	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	3	3	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	38	7	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	48	10	3	7

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

### **ENGLISH**

62. Test results have improved since the previous inspection. In the 2000 national tests, standards for pupils aged eleven were in line with those expected nationally and for similar schools. In the last three years the overall trend has been one of sustained improvement. Where standards have fluctuated this has been due to the decline in what pupils could do when they first joined the school. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the present Year 6 are below the national average. However, in relation to their standards on entry most pupils have made good progress and the number of pupils expected to achieve the expected levels is close to the national average. This is likely to be assisted by the planned extra classes for those pupils on the edge of achieving the expected level. Overall, the schools results since the last inspection represent good progress over time for the school and inspection evidence indicates that standards are set to rise again in the next two years.

63. All areas of weakness highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed with considerable rigor and enthusiasm. Literacy is given a high priority throughout the curriculum and in relation to their prior attainment most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills. The school has enthusiastically implemented a range of Government initiatives and strategies including the National Literacy Strategy, additional literacy and 'booster' classes. These are having a very positive effect on raising standards. Teachers are skilled at delivering these strategies and pupils are very aware of the skills they are learning and most lessons have an atmosphere of hard work and a commitment to raising standards. In Year 6, high quality teaching has a very positive effect on pupils' progress and a significant number of pupils exceed the targets set for them and make rapid progress towards reaching the expected level for their ages. The pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and most pupils achieve well. Provision for them is very good and tasks are always well matched for pupils' individual needs. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls, or of pupils from ethnic minorities.

64. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with national expectations. Role-play, drama and discussion encourage pupils to develop confidence and to use interesting and appropriate vocabulary. Teachers are aware of the vocabulary needed in each subject when introducing a new topic. All staff, including learning support assistants, ensure that pupils understand the vocabulary being used and encourage them to use alternate words to add interest to their conversations. Included in teachers' plans are opportunities to extend speaking and listening skills. This ensures that in lessons pupils have opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, evaluate their work and give reasons for their answers. In religious education lessons this was very evident as pupils expressed clearly their views on the crucifixion or explained how the lighting of a candle made them feel.

65. The school provides a wide range of high quality and challenging books and texts to foster all pupils' love of books and develop their independent reading skills. As well as reading for enjoyment pupils are encouraged to read for information, such as newspaper articles or Internet sites on current topics and events. By the age of eleven pupils are confident readers of a range of texts. Staff ensure that individual pupils who are particularly skilled in reading have a challenging range of books to read and are not limited to the reading schemes. A range of non-fiction books is used well within the classroom to support topic work and most rooms have an inviting reading area where pupils can choose a book during the day. Books are well matched to children's attainment and interest levels and carefully chosen to reflect different cultures and to interest boys and girls. Pupils show an understanding of different writers' styles and have preference for certain authors or types of books. JK Rowling, Roald Dahl and William Shakespeare are among Year 6's favourite authors. Higher attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation and are able to make deductions and inferences from their reading. Lower attaining pupils use a variety of strategies to help them recognise unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures. Pupils are now developing independent research skills as they use dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses, encyclopaedias, CD ROMS and the Internet to extend their learning. However, the school library is not sufficiently well stocked, or well placed to facilitate easy access for pupils and this limits the opportunities pupils have to use their library skills. Guided reading groups are used effectively to provide good support for pupils to develop their reading skills. Pupils read to their teachers and learning support assistants. Although reading books go home regularly not all parents and carers are consistent in hearing their children read and recording their progress to enhance their reading skills and progress. Pupils in Year 6 expressed great enthusiasm for poetry and were very keen to read their favourite one with expression and confidence. Pupils produce their own poems, which are very thoughtful and moving on topics such as the seasons or what makes them sad or afraid.

66. Handwriting is given a very high priority. Writing is almost always neat and well formed and by the age of eleven most pupils have developed a neat, flowing and legible style of handwriting. Pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes using a range of styles. Pupils of all attainment levels use their writing skills well in other areas of the curriculum such as RE, history and science. Year 5 pupils have produced diagrams to record the life cycle of plants while Year 6 pupils have created their own newspapers to report interesting facts about Ancient Greece. Writing is well organised and

by the age of eleven most pupils show an awareness of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Higher attaining pupils invariably use correct punctuation, complex grammatical structures and use bullet points, lists, paragraphs and notes to add interest and speed to their work. A love of poetry is fostered across the school. However, although pupils now have the opportunity to redraft and edit their work, for example in the writing of their own play about Rama and Sita, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent extended writing and this has a limiting effect on the standards they attain.

67. Behaviour is invariably good and often very good. Pupils show very favourable attitudes to learning and enjoy very positive relationships with their teachers. Relationships are very good and teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and attainment resulting in very good discipline and high standards. Most pupils are very eager to learn, stay on task and show good levels of independence and concentration, which has a positive effect on the standards of work they produce. Opportunities to work collaboratively and to develop personal skills are well used.

68. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and in most classes is effective in helping pupils achieve standards they are well capable of in their learning. Lessons are well planned and all the programmes of study are effectively covered. Teaching is very carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils and ensure that pupils are very clear about what it is they are expected to learn. Class and group targets provide focus for learning and move learning on. However, the consistent use of targets for individual pupils would further enhance progress and have a positive effect on raising standards. Plenary sessions and careful assessments effectively check that pupils have understood the lesson, are ready to move on to the next stage of learning or need further help to reinforce their learning. Speaking and listening is given a very high profile and staff ensure that pupils are listened to carefully and encouraged to express their views. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are given a particularly high priority. However, opportunities to use these skills in extended writing are limited. Teachers use humour, praise, comments and questions effectively to check understanding and extend thinking. When teaching is very good or excellent, expectations are high and the teacher's explanations and knowledge have a very positive effect on attainment and progress. In excellent lessons, pupils are constantly reminded of the strategies they need to improve their work such as good handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation. Pupils confidently offer answers to teachers' questions, knowing that even if their answers are incorrect the teacher will help them to discover for themselves the right answer. Where teaching is less than good, for example in classes at the lower end of the key stage, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are much lower than their national test results indicate and this has the effect of limiting progress.

69. Teachers use a range of appropriate and high quality resources to support the teaching of literacy. Support staff are used very effectively to give additional help to designated individuals and groups of pupils. Their contribution greatly enhances the learning opportunities for the pupils. Assessment and record keeping are very good. National Curriculum Tests and a wide range of other tests and assessments are used very effectively to identify areas for school development, identify individual pupils' standards and to track their progress. Teachers mark work on a regular basis and there are some very good examples of how comments help pupils to improve their work. However, this is not always implemented consistently across the school. The curriculum leader is highly motivated, very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. Monitoring of lessons and planning has had a very good impact on the quality of the teaching and learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. The standards attained by eleven-year-olds in the most recent national tests were above the level achieved in most schools. A higher proportion of the pupils also reached the higher level than was the case nationally. The boys have performed better than the girls in the tests over the last three years but the evidence of the inspection did not indicate that there are any significant gender differences at present. When compared with schools with similar pupils, standards as shown by the tests were well above average. These results reflect a significant improvement from the last inspection, especially in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level.

71. The evidence of the inspection is that standards presently being attained by eleven-year-old pupils are satisfactory. Most of the pupils are likely to achieve the expected level by the time they take the national tests, although the planned extra classes and focused work for those bordering on reaching the expected level may well mean that they again exceed the national average. The school should reach its target for the proportion of pupils to reach the expected level in 2001. However, the target set for the present Year 5 pupils for when they take the test at the end of Year 6 is more challenging. The school has recognised this and drawn up an action plan to address specifically the perceived weaknesses evident in that group of pupils. This is a very good example of how the improved management of the school is resulting in specific measures aimed at raising standards.

72. The seven-year-olds test results indicate high levels of attainment but when they are assessed on entry to the school the indications are that a significant amount of the previous learning has not been retained. Assessments made after pupils have spent one term in Year 3 show that satisfactory progress has been made and this continues throughout the school.



73. In Year 6 pupils are taught in two ability sets for 4 days each week. The less able pupils have a good knowledge of the multiples of 6. About half of them can find pairs of numbers that add up to a multiple of ten. They are beginning to be able to order both positive and negative numbers and to use this knowledge to read scales accurately. Almost all of the higher attaining pupils know the differences between obtuse, reflex and acute angles. They use a protractor with increasing accuracy. A scrutiny of their work shows that the higher attaining pupils are comfortable with long multiplication. The middle ability pupils can multiply using 10 and 100 and the lower attainers can multiply with single digit numbers. Their learning over time is good and they have made clear progress since the start of the year.

74. In Year 3, pupils have a very basic understanding of weight and mass and they know that the units used are grams and kilograms. They understand how to balance items but their estimation skills are low. They have produced good bar charts to illustrate surveys on the movement around different parts of the school. Others demonstrate a sound knowledge of the key vocabulary for measuring time. They can estimate small amounts of time fairly accurately. The presentation of work is satisfactory and, especially that of the lower attainers, it has improved since the start of the year. In Year 4 pupils are able to use money in calculations to solve problems, and to round sums to the nearest pound. They can convert sums from pounds and pence to pence accurately, and also do the reverse, using the appropriate decimal notation. Higher attaining pupils are working at a level above that expected of them. They show good knowledge of equivalent fractions and can work out areas and perimeters, by counting squares. The pupils in Year 5 are put into three ability groups for three days per week, when they work on number, while on the other two days they work as classes, usually on more practical and problem solving activities. The higher attaining pupils are able to work with equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. They write them accurately and can convert from one to another. They are able to work out percentages from tenths but are less secure using fractions such as twentieths. The middle attaining pupils can find fractions of numbers using simple fractions such as one third and one fifth. The less able need extra support through using apparatus to work out fractions of lengths, using halves and quarters. Overall, pupils' learning in all year groups is at least satisfactory and often good, due to their positive attitudes and the quality of the teaching.

75. The pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very positive. They enjoy their work and show pride in talking about it with others. They are very well behaved and attentive when teachers are introducing new ideas and concepts, and when working in pairs or small groups they do so quietly and with concentration. During the whole class mental sessions virtually all are fully involved and interested, and many are keen to answer questions.

76. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In Year 5 it is good and in Year 6 it is very good. Although lessons are occasionally too short, all start with an appropriate oral and mental session. These are effective in improving pupils' speed of calculation and their manipulation of numbers. In addition, the pupils often find them very enjoyable. All lessons also have plenary sessions, where learning objectives are revisited and pupils share work they have done, although these too are often not long enough to be fully productive in reinforcing and consolidating the work covered in the lesson. The best lessons were characterised by a dynamic pace that kept all children fully involved. All teachers are using an appropriate number of specific learning objectives for each lesson, which they share with the pupils, ensuring that they have a good understanding of what they are learning, and which give clear purpose to the teaching. The effective teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy is ensuring pupils get a good grounding in the basic skills. Teachers' planning is effective and they make sure that the work provided is appropriate for the different groups in each class, even within those years that are grouped by ability. Where the teaching is satisfactory, the pace is slower and the teaching sometimes lacks a clear focus on a specific skill. For example, in one lesson, the purpose of the worksheets and the way they were to be completed was unclear to pupils. Throughout the school, the teachers deploy the good quality learning support assistants effectively, usually to support less able pupils, which they do successfully, enabling them to take a full part in the lessons. For example, in one lesson in Year 3, the support assistant worked well with a group of pupils using balances to compare weights, and to make up given weights using smaller units. Her good discussion and questioning skills enabled quick progress to be made and deepened their understanding of the units of mass.

77. The subject coordinator has worked hard since the introduction of the numeracy strategy, and since the last inspection, to raise standards and introduce some new ways of working to the staff. For example, a lot more monitoring now occurs, through sampling of pupils' books, scrutiny of teachers' planning and of assessments made of pupils' progress, together with a better analysis of the national test results. She now has an action plan for the future that contains appropriate priorities and should enable the school to improve its mathematical provision still further. The school has introduced an effective assessment system recently, and together with the increased analysis of test results, this is enabling the staff to target resources better and to plan lessons based more accurately on pupils' prior attainment and level of understanding. Very good use is made of computers in Year 6 to support and extend the pupils' work on angles. However, there is not enough specific software for mathematics and too often computers are not used fully during mathematics lessons.

78. In the lead up to the national tests a number of the Year 6 pupils are provided with extra lessons aimed at boosting their chances of reaching the expected level. This was successful last year in helping produce the school's best ever results and,

although the present Year 6, even though they have made satisfactory progress throughout the school, are unlikely to equal that, the extra classes may well improve their level of knowledge and understanding considerably.

## SCIENCE

79. Pupils in Year 6 attain the standards expected for their age in science. The 2000 test results identified that 92 per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected level or above, of whom 59 per cent achieved at a higher than expected level. The national test results indicate well above average levels of attainment. In comparison with similar schools the results are above average for pupils achieving the expected level and well above average for pupils achieving a higher level. Over the three years 1998 – 2000 standards of attainment were above the national average. There are no significant variations in attainment between pupils of different gender or social background. The school has maintained the standards reported in the last inspection.

80. Eleven-year-olds have a broad knowledge of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. This knowledge has been acquired steadily over the four junior years. Eleven-year-olds with typical attainment can carry out investigations into the separation of materials and use scientific vocabulary such as 'substance', 'dissolve', and 'insoluble'. They can plan how they intend to undertake solving a problem. They make predictions and observations, record using diagrams, and produce explanations for their findings. They reach sensible conclusions and make appropriate suggestions for improvements to their work. Through earlier studies on classifying living things and food chains pupils know the relationships between predators, consumer predators and prey. They have conducted a woodland survey and used ICT, including a digital camera, to present their findings as graphs and pictures. Through investigation they understand the impact of different conditions upon the growth of mould on bread.

81. Analysis of pupils' work shows satisfactory progress between the ages of seven and eleven years. Teachers place increasing demands upon the pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, in Year 3 pupils learn the names, location and uses of teeth and bones in the skeleton. In Year 4, this is extended to learning about the body's organs and muscles. By Year 5, pupils learn how the heart and muscles actually work and pupils make measurements of heart rate in different working situations and make records their results. Teachers also place an emphasis upon pupils undertaking their own enquiries but this highlights weaknesses in the ability of some pupils to record what they find.

82. All pupils enjoy investigative work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported by teaching assistants. For example in a Year 6 class the teaching assistant worked closely with four special educational needs pupils and enabled them to make valid observations about the nature of different substances with suggestions about how they could be separated.

83. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. It is satisfactory in 50 per cent of lessons and good or better in 50 per cent. The quality varies because some teachers are lacking in knowledge and expertise in aspects of the subject, and because the scheme of work is relatively new. There is not enough curriculum guidance for those teachers who are less secure in their own background knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is very good it is based upon good subject knowledge. Good subject knowledge enables the teachers to be clear about the demands of their lesson objectives and to appreciate how effective the learning tasks will be in helping pupils of different attainments to achieve those objectives. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on separation, the lesson objectives were shared with the class and linked to earlier work. Following good discussion, the nature of the tasks and the requirements of each task were explained in detail. The teacher then had clear targets and questions to raise with each group as they worked to ensure that the steps of observation, recording and explaining procedures were conducted with purpose, rigour and understanding. Good subject knowledge also enables teachers to ask probing questions that make the pupils think and share ideas that clarify their learning. This occurred in a Year 5 lesson about the earth, moon and sun where the teacher drew upon the knowledge of the class to assemble what they thought they already knew. She challenged their ideas with good questions that explored the validity and correctness of the ideas gathered, and which filled in gaps in their knowledge. Having built a sound base she then took them on to practical tasks that extended the pupils' learning.

84. Teachers use a wide variety of resources to capture pupils' interests. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on teeth the pupils were captivated by the excellent collection of teeth, jawbones and skulls from a variety of animals. The pupils were eager to explore them and undertake the tasks set.

85. Coordination of the subject is good. Planning is undertaken and monitored by the coordinator in conjunction with the senior management team. The long-term plans give good guidance for the work to be covered in each year group, and the medium term plans identify what is to be taught within each theme. The coordinator also acts as an adviser and facilitator to colleagues and support staff. However, monitoring of lessons by the coordinator has only just commenced and while there has been staff development with the local authority, the worries of some members of staff over subject knowledge and the implementation of national schemes are still to be addressed. Because of this there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching

and pupil attainment between lessons. The arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are good although there is no specific separate record of the development of pupils' enquiry skills. Resources are good and the school has good links with a local pharmaceutical company that has initiated a number of science ventures for schools in Harlow.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

86. Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, there was insufficient evidence available to make a full evaluation of teaching and learning in art and design. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and an examination of schemes of work and teachers' planning, indicates that standards are at least in line with national expectations and, as at the last inspection, there continue to be many examples of high quality work. There is an effective scheme of work in place to ensure progress and continuity across the school. Emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills, techniques, knowledge and understanding and work displayed around the school effectively demonstrates this.

87. Throughout the school, pupils study a wide range of different artists and are becoming skilled at using a range of materials to create a similar style and mood. There is a good range of two and three-dimensional work showing that pupils are developing good skills using a variety of materials and techniques. In one lesson, pupils worked together with considerable application to produce their own sculptures, using the work of local artists as their stimulus. Observational skills are particularly well developed across the school. In Year 6 pupils are able to produce very high quality pictures of 'sprats' showing a very good appreciation of tone and texture. In Year 5 they use a variety of papers to produce Victorian style hats, demonstrating good collaborative skills.

88. An awareness of art in different cultures is developed as pupils create Rangoli and Mendhi patterns as part of a cultural day. The subject is effectively linked to other areas of the curriculum including mathematics, religious education and history. For example, as part of their study of the Romans, pupils produced very realistic masks and detailed lamps using different modelling materials. They followed original designs carefully and attempted to use the skills and techniques of the Romans. The use of sketchbooks is very effective in developing pupils design skills and encourages them to evaluate how their work can be improved on. Through a well-planned curriculum and enthusiastic and confident teaching, pupils' natural creativity is fostered well. They work co-operatively, share ideas and appreciate the work of others. Teaching encourages pupils to think and act as artists, to consider purpose, form shape and space and to be able to appreciate art for its own sake. Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities, quality resources and a variety of exciting stimuli to catch pupils' imagination and interest.

89. Work is very well displayed indicating the value teachers place on pupils' work and generally adding to the ambience and attractiveness of the building. The curriculum co-ordinator's experience and enthusiasm has had a positive effect on the standards and progress pupils make.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

90. Due to the timetable only two lessons were observed throughout the inspection. Additional evidence was gained from the analysis of a range of pupils' work in folders and on display, including good examples of Roman candle holders, a Year 5 silhouette display and Year 6 purses, and by talking to staff and pupils. This evidence contributes to the overall judgement on the standards reached. The evidence also indicates that the progress made by pupils is similar to that found at the last inspection. Pupils reach similar standards to those expected nationally, although standards are higher in understanding the design process than in making. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall.

91. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the two lessons seen one was good and the other satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge but put too little emphasis on the process of evaluating and improving work and this is not sufficiently strong throughout the school. Although teachers assess pupils' progress, they do not consistently inform the children what they have to do to improve their levels of achievement. When the teachers set high expectations, and the tasks set match the pupils' needs, there is positive motivation within the class. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher set appropriate objectives to design, make and evaluate a sandwich. The pupils found this challenging and as a result the lesson made a positive impact and the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good. The teacher ensured that the pupils made good modifications to their work as they proceeded with making the sandwiches and the pupils made good adjustments to their sandwiches as they realised some of the practical problems involved. They produced work of good quality as a result of such modification. The teacher used very good questioning techniques to help the children think about the purpose for which their sandwiches were made and encouraged them to work collaboratively.

92. The pupils enjoy the subject and their positive attitudes encourage them to try to achieve high standards. When effectively challenged, the pupils gain a good sense of purpose and work very well together. They enjoy good relationships with each other, their teachers and other adults in the class, sustaining their concentration because of the good co-operation

and collaboration between all groups. They are motivated, taking care in construction and showing pride in their achievements. Pupils recognise that efforts made in developing skills improves the quality of their work. They take full responsibility for working safely with tools and show good co-operation with each other in clearing away equipment.

93. Curriculum plans incorporate nationally produced documentation providing teachers with good guidance. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and will be using this expertise to review the subject policy document. This needs to be undertaken in order to have its full effect on standards throughout the whole key stage. The impact of planning on the teaching and learning is assessed by the subject co-ordinator through the sampling of pupils' work. From this, an appropriate subject development plan has been created. The school is aware of the need to monitor teaching first hand in order to raise the levels of achievement. Time and resources are used well to give children sufficient inspiration to develop their own work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

94. At the last inspection standards were average. However, since then they have deteriorated and are below those expected for a variety of reasons, including the school's need to focus its efforts on other areas of its work. Weakness in teachers' subject knowledge is a key factor in the present standards, together with a scheme of work that inhibits the development of depth and rigour in certain areas of pupils' learning. Only a small number of lessons could be observed during the inspection but evidence was also gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' work and displays.

95. By the age of eleven, pupils have studied so many topics that some topics have too small an amount of time allocated to them and the pupils' learning is very superficial. For example, in a Year 3 class the local area study consisted only of a list of things to be seen in the environment. Such a lack of depth makes it very difficult for pupils to learn how to enquire and undertake fieldwork. Over the four years from age seven to eleven, pupils spend a relatively small proportion of the time allocated to the subject studying a locality. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to explore real places in depth, learning about what they are like, why they are like they are, how they are changing and how they compare with other places. It also reduces the opportunities to use enquiry into real places as a vehicle for the development of skills such as the use of large-scale maps. However, pupils do learn about events around the world and the location of major world features such as the continents and oceans. In some study units, innovative strategies are used to good effect. A display of work on St Lucia demonstrated what is sometimes achieved, as the pupils had devised tourist brochures in addition to maps and pictures to record their enquiries.

96. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall but the quality varies. Where it is good, knowledge and understanding and skills are developed through enquiry into a real place or issue. For example, in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class lesson on settlement studies, the pupils revised the use of map symbols in order to interpret a map of Harlow for their study of the town's development. Where teaching is less successful, poor subject knowledge makes it difficult for teachers to identify opportunities for the teaching of skills as they plan their lessons. It also makes it difficult for them to design effective learning tasks in relation to the lesson objectives.

97. Teaching guidelines need to be reviewed with respect to Curriculum 2000, and steps have been taken to obtain materials to support both topic and lesson planning. Other than attending a one-day course on use of the national guidelines, neither the coordinator nor other staff have had any recent staff development in the subject. The coordinator monitors a sample of pupils' work, end of year reports and planning forecasts but does not observe class teaching. Resources are adequate. Limited use is made of the local community and environment.

## **HISTORY**

98. By the age of eleven, standards are above those expected nationally and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning historical skills and knowledge. Discussions with them show that they clearly enjoy learning about life in past times and how it relates to their present life. They have a good knowledge of the themes that they have studied or are currently studying. They show a generally good understanding of the timing of different events, for example, pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of "ancient times" and talk about the lives of Ancient Egyptians, the Romans, as well as the Victorians. The scrutiny of work in topic books and folders shows that, by the end of the juniors, pupils understand the similarities and differences between the periods. Throughout the school, pupils show a good understanding of how historical information is gained from the work of archaeologists and from looking carefully at artefacts.

99. Where the teaching is good or better, the pupils' positive attitudes are supported by the teachers' organisation of interesting and stimulating learning activities. Pupils work well together to search for information from a variety of sources and then discuss their findings with each other in order to deepen their understanding. Where the teaching is good or better the children gain a clearer understanding of enquiry methods from using a variety of primary and secondary sources. Year 5

pupils benefit greatly from a 'Victorian Day'. This cross-curricular day is extremely well organised by staff. Pupils' parents also contribute a great deal through providing costumes. The children gain an excellent direct and personal experience of appreciating what life was like for children during the Victorian era. The children and staff enthusiastically participate in a range of activities led by teachers and learning support assistants. These activities included writing on a slate, physical training and games.

100. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers' enthusiasm for their history topic, supported by their good subject knowledge, encourages the pupils' interest and active involvement. Where the teaching is good or better teachers use resources effectively as a focal point for the pupils' attention and they manage their classes well to ensure that the pupils concentrate fully on the learning activity. Where the teacher had high expectations of the way in which pupils were expected to discuss and illustrate what they had found, they responded well and spoke in detail about their learning. Where the teaching was good or better, the teacher used questions effectively to challenge pupils to explain how they thought particular artefacts had been used. For example in a Year 5 class they were looking at Victorian school artefacts and pictures. Where the teaching is satisfactory the questioning is not always sufficiently challenging to help pupils improve their speaking and listening skills in order to describe artefacts.

101. There is evidence to demonstrate that assessment is positively used to improve pupils' level of achievement. For example, in Year 4 higher attaining children are given advice how to improve their work. In Years 4, 5 and 6 there is evidence of teachers using National Curriculum levels to discuss work with the children. This enables the children to develop their historical enquiry skills in greater detail and in a progressive manner. However, in Year 3, teacher assessment, whilst praising the children for their work, does not always offer constructive means for improvement.

102. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has very good subject knowledge and understanding. The impact of the subject on the pupils' learning is carefully monitored by the subject co-ordinator by thorough book sampling across the school, the classroom environment and class visits, the outcomes of which are discussed with individual teachers. This will be extended into the development of targets for all pupils and staff.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. By the age of eleven, attainment is in line with national expectations. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress. An analysis of pupils' work show that they have developed the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding using a variety of information sources including desktop publishing, multimedia, the Internet and e-mail. By the end of the key stage the children have made good progress. Work in pupils' folders and on display shows that the children have learnt to use databases, the Internet and e-mail effectively.

104. The teaching is good and some is very good. Where the teaching is very good, teachers have excellent subject knowledge. In general, teachers lead whole class teaching well and this promotes the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. For example the principle of using a database was explained well in Year 3 with clear use of good vocabulary and technical terms. The teacher gave a good explanation of the power of the computer in storing information and pupils gained skills quickly. This gives a good basis for the consolidation of ICT throughout the school. There is also excellent support from the ICT support assistant who helps the teachers to promote consistently higher levels of achievement. In one unsatisfactory lesson, the work did not sufficiently challenge the pupils.

105. The teachers' planning is very good and the implementation of long, medium and short-term plans have had a good impact on standards reached within the subject. There are some good examples of the use of computers in mathematics, for drawing angles and shapes, in history on the Victorians and in geography with work about earthquakes in Northwest India. Teachers assess the progress that pupils make during the lesson and this has a positive effect on their learning.

106. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and they obviously enjoy the subject. They are attentive to the learning objectives and take care of the equipment. They work hard to finish the learning tasks in the specified time and are proud of their work when they succeed. This is a reflection of the teachers' enthusiasm, planning and teaching methodology. The children's unfailingly eager and encouraging attitude to using ICT is a significant factor in enabling the promotion of higher standards. They are developing their independent learning due to the frequent opportunities offered and the regular use of resources to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding within the subject.

107. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic to develop the subject throughout the school. He has very good subject knowledge and uses this to help other staff develop their skills, making two nights per week available to staff to offer support. The monitoring of children's work and the teachers' planning assists him in identifying staff training needs including cross-curriculum development, the use of a network and how to use support staff. The subject development plan

has identified priorities but this now needs to be extended into the development of success criteria. Another area for development is the ICT suite, which is cramped and needs greater space to be fully effective.

## **MUSIC**

108. Standards in music are similar to the ones found at the last inspection and are above those expected nationally. Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and personal development. The playing and singing of an appropriate piece of music sets a very reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship. All pupils have opportunities to develop their singing skills through whole school singing lessons in which the focus is music for worship. Songs and hymns are challenging and pupils sing with enthusiasm paying attention to diction, dynamics and tempo. Staff are very effective in helping pupils improve on their singing by drawing their attention to the development of listening skills and in the identification of pitch, rhythm, dynamics and musical notation. Pupils are encouraged to sing with accuracy, expression, controlled phrasing and articulation.

109. Pupils are developing an appreciation of different composers as they listen to the 'Bolero' by Ravel or the 'Planets Suite' by Holst. Pupils identified how the composer used musical dynamics to add interest to his work. In Year 5 this was built on effectively as pupils worked together in pairs, using a computer program to create their own 'space' music. The resulting work was of a high quality and their use of different instruments, pitch and speed recreated a real sense of space. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills in composition and performance. In groups they compose their own piece of 'storm' music playing a range of percussion instruments. High expectations encouraged the pupils to regard themselves as performing musicians concentrating on improving their work through repeating phrases, adding texture and through the playing of different instruments at different times. Pupils used musical vocabulary accurately in talking about their work and in answering questions posed by their teachers. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their work and to evaluate their own and other's compositions in order to make improvements.

110. The quality of the teaching is always good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are very imaginatively planned, challenging and stimulating. They include a very good balance of performing, composing and appraising. Specialist teaching and the enthusiasm of teaching staff and support staff in formal lessons, assemblies and school clubs make a very positive contribution to pupils' attitudes and high standards.

111. The co-ordinator has specialist skills and these are used very effectively to develop staff confidence and raise expectations and ensure that the subject is enjoyable. This helps teachers to provide pupils with very good opportunities to extend their creative skills. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall but there are insufficient instruments from other cultures to extend pupils' skills, knowledge and appreciation.

112. The school choir and guitar clubs provide an added dimension to pupils' musical development. The high standard of singing in the school is reflected in the fact that the school has been selected to take part in the premier of a new composition, which is to be performed locally and which includes professional as well as amateur musicians. Pupils and staff are very proud of this achievement and the quality of their rehearsals demonstrates the commitment of staff and pupils to this venture.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

113. Since the last inspection the standards have been maintained at a good level. Children, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress. The well-structured policy, supported by the use of national guidance, provides a well-balanced teaching programme.

114. The teachers consolidate and develop the pupils' skills satisfactorily overall, although not always consistently throughout the school. Where teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence in teaching specific skills, this enables pupils to focus on aspects of their technique and improving the quality. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, regular prompts from the teacher, and the use of pupils as examples, ensured that they improved their pike jump technique and were able to put this in a sequence. In a Year 5 lesson, the children participated in a fitness session and the teacher's subject knowledge and teaching methodology enabled all children to participate fully throughout the lesson. The pupils clearly enjoy games and are keen to work hard in both competitive and collaborative activities. Their levels of concentration are good especially when the teacher keeps reinforcing the development of the skill and challenges the children to improve. The pupils listen attentively to instructions, for example when getting out equipment, and respond appropriately.

115. During the lessons observed the quality of teaching was good overall, with two lessons that were very good and only one that was unsatisfactory. Teaching was good or better when teachers manage their classes well to enable pupils to understand exactly what they are trying to achieve. Teaching was very good when the teacher planned the lesson well,

maintained a good, brisk pace by regularly consolidating and developing the skills being learnt and by setting the pupils targets for achievement and self-evaluation. Teaching was unsatisfactory when the teacher did not structure the lesson for skill development, and did not emphasise or demonstrate the correct technique, for example when aiming to hit a ball accurately, thus allowing pupils to reinforce poor technique. As there was no clearly understood learning objective and the teacher did not remind them what skill they were practising, or demonstrate how to improve its quality, little improvement was made in pupils' learning.

116. The school has a well-established programme for extra-curricular sporting activities. This includes football, netball, athletics, rounders and a swimming gala. These activities extend the range of learning opportunities for the children and also include a variety of sporting competitions with other schools.

117. The subject co-ordinator assumed this area of responsibility last year as a result of staff changes. Lessons are planned in the long, medium and short term with teachers collaborating in year groups. The headteacher regularly monitors these plans. However, there is no monitoring of standards of teaching by the subject co-ordinator, no subject development plan has been written and in-service training has not been seen as a school priority over the last year and therefore this has not occurred. This is a weakness within the subject and needs to be addressed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

118. By the time pupils are eleven, attainment is good and better than that expected for their age according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make good progress between the ages of seven and eleven. Since the last inspection attainment and progress have improved.

119. Four lessons were observed during the inspection and additional evidence was collected from a scrutiny of pupils' work, in books and on display, and discussion with the coordinator. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are planned to take account of pupils' prior knowledge and experience. Pupils study a range of cultures and beliefs. In Years 3 and 4 pupils learn about symbols, ceremonies and stories from Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. By Years 5 and 6, the work has progressed to the exploration of festivals and ceremonies in these faiths, using comparison, analysis and reflection. For example, the work of a Year 6 class showed excellent reflective analysis from a high attaining pupil of differences in the gospel stories and their representations of the Christmas story.

120. Teachers use a variety of approaches in the work to help maintain the pupils' interest. For example, children have produced 'heraldic' shields for Jesus to depict what they saw as his personal qualities. Teachers make use of their good subject knowledge, good resources and good questioning to engage the children. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used a book about feelings to help pupils add to a story about Jesus and develop this into an exploration of their feelings about one another. Children are involved in thought provoking discussions with delicate social and moral issues through good management. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on prejudice and persecution, ethnic minority children were consciously involved in the discussion following pre-lesson dialogue with the teacher. They were very willing to share their experiences with the class in a calm and mature way and the class responded in a like manner. In most lessons pupils are so engaged that behaviour management is hardly an issue. In a Year 4 class, sensitive and firm management by the teacher kept all the pupils engaged in developing ideas on the symbolic and spiritual aspects of light as a Christian image.

121. The marking of pupils' work is up to date but does not always show how it could be improved. Literacy skills are used well in writing stories and analyses of issues raised in lessons, and in labelling, but spelling errors in key vocabulary are not always corrected. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding through themes and activities with good moral and spiritual content, such as one seen during the inspection constructed around the story of the loaves and fishes.

122. The subject coordination is good although the coordinator is new to the post. The school is engaged in trialling materials from the final draft of a new Locally Agreed Syllabus. The coordinator takes part in the monitoring of class teaching as a member of the senior management team. Pupils' work is monitored on a termly basis for both syllabus curriculum content and level of attainment. Resources are adequate and include artefacts from other cultures, videos and books. Limited use is made of the local community. There is good staff development taking place through the trialling and evaluating of the proposed locally agreed syllabus.