

INSPECTION REPORT

PLUMBEROW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hockley, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number:115273

Headteacher: Mr Graham Tarte

Reporting inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th May 2000

Inspection number: 220349

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hamilton Gardens Hockley Essex
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Simpson
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Douglas Hayward	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
Christine Laverock	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? Equal opportunities
Gail Robertson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children under five History Music	How well is the school led and managed?
Robert Isaac	Team inspector	English Information technology	How good are curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
Susan Metcalfe	Team inspector	Special educational needs Physical education Religious education	How well the school cultivates pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
John Griffiths	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils? (assessment)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Plumberow Primary School is a very large primary school for pupils from four to eleven years of age. It is situated in an established residential area in Hockley, Essex, about five miles from Southend. Currently there are 488 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (5.95 per cent) is below the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language (0.2 per cent) is low. The number of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of special educational need is below the national average. The attainment of children when they start at Plumberow Primary School is slightly higher than expected nationally.

Children whose fourth birthday is between 1st September and the end of February start school at the beginning of the autumn term in one of the reception classes. Those with birthdays between 1st March and 31st August are admitted to an additional reception class at the start of the spring term. At the time of the inspection there were three reception classes. Two classes contained pupils who were nearly all five years of age and another contained 21 children under the age of five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Plumberow Primary School is a very good school with many strengths, such as the high quality of teaching and pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to school. It is very popular and very well managed. It provides a very good standard of education for its pupils and very good value for money.

What the school does well

- It helps pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards by the time they are seven and eleven years of age.
- It provides very good teaching. Teachers are very enthusiastic and work very well as a team. They put a great deal of effort into making their lessons challenging and enjoyable. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give them lots of help and encouragement.
- It makes excellent arrangements for children when they first start school. It helps them to make a very good start to their education.
- It places great importance on teaching pupils excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to their work. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers, concentrate extremely well and enjoy coming to school.
- It helps pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress. Their work is very well planned and they have lots of very good support in classes and in small groups.
- It teaches a wide range of interesting and varied subjects.
- It forms excellent links with parents and values the support they provide. Parents feel very welcome in school and play an important part in their children's education.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by staff. The governing body is very knowledgeable and provides a great deal of expertise in the running of the school.

What could be improved

- Teachers' marking to ensure that pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- The use of information technology in other subjects.
- The way in which the school monitors pupils' attendance.
- The part subject co-ordinators play in monitoring standards of teaching and pupils' work.
- Planned opportunities for older pupils to take more responsibility for their own 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 May 1996, when it was judged to provide satisfactory value for money. Since then there have been improvements in many areas. Pupils' standards of work, attitudes, behaviour and attendance have all improved since that time. The school's provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and its links with parents have also improved. Perhaps the most significant change since 1996 has been the outstanding improvement in the quality of teaching. The school has successfully addressed all the key issues identified in the previous inspection, including the development of existing strengths and improving pupils' attainment, particularly that of more able pupils.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	C	C	E
Mathematics	A	A	A	C
Science	A	A	B	C

Key

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

Comparisons with the results of similar schools are made on the basis of the number of pupils taking free school meals. Pupils nationally are expected to achieve Level 2 at the age of seven and Level 4 at the age of eleven. The school has maintained results in national tests that are above or well above average in mathematics and science over the last three years. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 in English has been in line with the national average since 1998. Pupils' reading has been better than their writing. The reason for the school's 'E' grade compared with similar schools in 1998 was because there were few pupils who achieved Level 5 (above average) in the English tests. During the inspection it was judged that standards are above average in English, mathematics and science for eleven year old pupils. The difference in grades between last year and the current year is because this is a different group of pupils and also the school has been working successfully to improve its results in English.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are very proud of their school. They are very interested in their lessons and keen to answer questions and settle quickly to all work. They have great respect for other pupils and adults.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to each other and to adults. They are very well behaved in lessons and around the school at other times, such as lunchtimes and playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work very well together in lessons and grow up to be mature and reliable. They organise themselves very quickly and treat resources and equipment very well. Older pupils do not always have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Attendance is better than the national average for primary schools. Punctuality is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very 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.

During the inspection 106 lessons were observed. Only two lessons were unsatisfactory. Of the remainder 85 per cent were at least good and 42 per cent were very good and sometimes excellent. This is very high-quality teaching and it is found throughout the school. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is consistently very good and has a significant impact on the attainment of pupils of all abilities. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and helps them to make progress in reading

and writing. The teaching by ability groups for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 is very successful. It enables teachers to plan their work very carefully for pupils of all abilities so that they are stretched and lessons are well paced. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They use very good questioning to find out what they know and give them lots of encouragement and praise in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school rightly emphasises the importance of English and mathematics. It also teaches a wide range of other interesting subjects and pupils achieve good standards, for example in design and technology, history, art and music. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good. The school has made a good start on using computers to help pupils' learning. As yet there are few links between information technology and other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Work is carefully planned in English and mathematics to match pupils' needs. They receive very good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes sound provision for the very few pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' development, including their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Pupils are very well aware of right and wrong and take their responsibilities seriously. They have many opportunities to work happily together. Trips to places of interest and visitors to school help to develop pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after pupils well. It does not monitor pupils' attendance carefully enough. The school has excellent links with parents. They play a valuable part in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He is very highly regarded by parents. He is decisive, knows his pupils very well and ensures that the school continues to provide a very good education. All staff provide very good support. Subject co-ordinators currently play little part in monitoring teaching in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very knowledgeable, enthusiastic and hardworking. They support the school very well and play an important part in monitoring its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is continually looking for ways to improve the quality of education it provides. It considers carefully how it can teach pupils a broad range of interesting subjects and how it can further improve their results in tests when they are seven and eleven years of age.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget very well to provide a very good building, very good teaching and many resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All parents agree that the school is well led and managed.• Almost all parents think that behaviour is good.• All parents think the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.• Most parents think that there is a wide range of extra curricular activities for pupils to enjoy.	

In their questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting parents were very positive about the school. There were many things about it that they liked and hardly any parents expressed dissatisfaction about any aspect of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. On entry into the reception classes most children attain at or slightly above the level expected nationally for children at this age. Children have well developed literacy, numeracy and social skills. Standards at the end of both key stages indicate that the school works hard to consolidate what children already know when they start school and extend their knowledge and understanding.
2. Children under five make good progress. All children benefit from caring and supportive teachers and classroom support assistants and from their well planned lessons and activities. By the time they are five years of age their attainment in all areas of learning, namely language and literacy, personal development, social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is at least in line with that expected nationally and in many cases it is above average.
3. The results of the 1999 tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2¹ and above was well above average in reading and writing, above average in mathematics and in line with the national average in science. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was well above average in reading and science and above average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with those in similar schools results at Plumberow were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. During the inspection standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be above average in English, mathematics and science. The differences in judgements regarding attainment are because this is a different group of pupils to those in 1999. In the previous inspection report standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be above average in English and mathematics and average in science.
4. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading was very high in comparison with the national average. In writing and mathematics it was well above the national average. There has been no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls between 1996 and 1999 and this was judged to be the same during the inspection. The overall trend in all three subjects shows a very slight downward trend in test results at the end of the key stage, but this is in the context of the school achieving results that are at least well above average.
5. The results of the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that the progress and attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 had improved in mathematics, were sustained in science, but had fallen in English. In those tests the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was in line with the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was well below average in English, above average in science and well above average in mathematics. The comparatively high percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 in mathematics and science raised the school's performance level in comparison with that of all schools nationally.
6. In comparison with those in similar schools results at Plumberow were average in mathematics and science and below average in English. The main area of weakness in English has been the pupils' written work. The school has recognised that this is the case and has worked very hard to try to address its concerns. It has compared the range and content of written work with those in schools that have pupils with similar attainment on

¹ Levels – By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Those who achieve Level 3 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

entry but better results at eleven years of age. It has requested the help of local authority advisers to try to identify areas of weakness in its provision and has organised in-service training for its staff and monitoring of the literacy strategy to try to improve teaching. The steps it has taken to try to improve pupils' writing certainly seem to have been successful. During the inspection standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were judged to be well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. The difference in judgements is because of the differences in ability between different year groups. The school is also providing more challenge for higher attaining pupils. Already there are clear indications that the percentage of pupils working securely at Level 5 is higher than in 1999 and the school entered more pupils this year for Level 6 papers in all three subjects than it has done in previous years.

7. The school has set up various strategies to help speed up pupils' progress and improve their results at the end of both key stages. They are also intending to increase the accuracy of their predicted targets for the percentage of pupils attaining results in line with and higher than the national average at seven and eleven years of age. To do this it has introduced a number of assessments to form a view of the ability of each group of pupils and to monitor their progress as they move through the school. Some of the assessments, such as those carried out in the reception classes, are carried out under the auspices of the local education authority and suggest how well pupils might do in future. Others, such as end of key stage tests, reading and standardised tests and teachers' assessments of written work are school initiatives to note the progress pupils have made.
8. The standards attained in literacy by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. The school's strategies for implementing the National Literacy Strategy have been very effective in helping to sustain high standards at Key Stage 1 and in establishing a consistent approach to writing at Key Stage 2. The shared planning that teachers have undertaken since the introduction of the literacy hour has been complemented by observations carried out by the headteacher and deputy head. This monitoring aspect of the school's work is soon to undergo considerable expansion with subject co-ordinators involved on a regular basis for the first time.
9. The contribution of literacy to pupils' work in other subjects is good. Their literacy skills are clearly apparent when they read for pleasure. Although they do find information from various sources, including non-fiction books, they have very limited skills in retrieving the books from the library. Their improving literacy skills are also apparent in the written work they do, which often overlaps several subjects. For example, as part of their science work pupils in Year 1 have been able to write diaries of *'broad bean growth'* over an extended period of several months. In week eight a pupil wrote *'The plant has to have a stick to hold it up straight. The plant is tall because it has been watered and looked after'*. In week 13 she wrote *'Where the flowers died some pods grew. In the pod are some beans. You can plant the beans again in soil and they will grow'*. Pupils' diaries contained colourful crayon and pastel illustrations of the different stages of plant growth. In Key Stage 2 pupils linked their English with their history work on *'The Ancient Greeks'*. Pupils wrote 'prayers' to the appropriate gods; for example, one pupil wrote to Athena *'Please help me to learn and to be a good worker. I want to be the cleverest in the class'*. Another linked their geography topic about rivers with interactive displays of rivers and the evocative description,
*'As the river opens it will trickle down like a cascade,
collecting leaves from the trees on its way,
as it gathers up dirt and grass like a rain maker'*.
10. Standards in numeracy are above average. Pupils' work in using and applying mathematics is particularly well developed at both key stages. They have rapid recall of

number facts and use them well to solve problems. They use a wide range of strategies to work things out in their heads and their understanding of mathematical processes is very good. They have a wide mathematical vocabulary that they use precisely and accurately. They have become increasingly aware of mathematical patterns and use mathematics confidently to solve problems in other subjects, for example in reading temperatures and recording data in bar graphs and using Newton meters in science to measure force.

11. Standards in science are above average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have good opportunities to develop an analytical approach over a sustained period of time, for example their study of growth patterns of broad beans. They also have good opportunities to develop a broad scientific vocabulary and make an early start to developing an awareness of 'fair testing'. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have well developed scientific skills. Their skills of investigation have been carefully developed through a series of well planned experiments from Key Stage 1. They are well aware of the impact of 'variables' in their experiments, make logical predictions based on sound scientific knowledge and record the results of their investigations in a neat, clear format.
12. Standards in information technology are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress in learning and developing their levels of skills in information technology, although it does not make a significant contribution to other subjects. Pupils in both key stages successfully use word-processing skills to write accounts and stories. They experience control technology and modelling through the use of spreadsheets. Many pupils have well-developed computer skills that they have learned at home and are used to far more advanced hardware than in school.
13. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in religious education is above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils are familiar with the stories and characters from the Old and New Testaments such as Jesus, Moses and Joseph. They know about some religious celebrations of Christians, Jews and Hindus and are becoming increasingly aware of the concept of 'miracles' in faiths. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. They know about the world's major faiths and compare their own friendships and relationships with those described in Bible stories.
14. In almost all the foundation subjects pupils in both key stages make good progress. In physical education they reach nationally expected levels in most aspects, although pupils at Key Stage 1 make better than average progress in swimming and pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in athletics. This is a very positive picture throughout the school and reflects the amount of time devoted to planning foundation subjects and the good links between the core and foundation subjects that the school intends to strengthen still further.
15. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good overall across the school. Pupils benefit from detailed education plans which set clear targets for their development. They make good and sometimes very good progress when supported in withdrawal groups and when working on tasks specifically matched to their needs and abilities in class. With support pupils identify different letters, sounds and blends and use them to construct a variety of words that they use in sentences. They use such words in games and puzzles and use computer programs specifically designed for their needs. They are able to take down a simple sentence as dictated and read it back to the teacher. Pupils consolidate their listening skills in sharing a text and use full stops, commas and speech and question marks in their writing. Pupils make good progress in evaluating their own work, self-correcting and developing presentation skills. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress, although they generally

attain lower standards than those achieved by other pupils in their respective key stages. Pupils receive good levels of additional support in withdrawal groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes to the school are excellent. They are very eager to learn and tackle every task enthusiastically. Pupils enjoy all the opportunities presented to them in lessons, assemblies, school clubs and activities. They try their very best in all they do. Ninety nine per cent of parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school.
17. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. This was observed in assemblies, around the school, at break, at lunchtimes and in lessons. Pupils' excellent behaviour contributes to the very smooth running of the school and the very good progress that they make in their learning. For example, in an information technology lesson the excellent behaviour of pupils in Year 3 enabled them to make the best possible progress as they moved between teaching sessions on the carpet to practice sessions on their computer. Pupils behaved extremely sensibly and as a result not a moment was lost. Ninety nine per cent of parents agree that pupils' behaviour in school is good. At the pre-inspection meeting they were extremely positive about the behaviour of Plumberow pupils in and around school and on school trips.
18. The calm movement of pupils between classrooms in Key Stage 2 for literacy and numeracy sessions takes the minimum of time. In lessons pupils quickly settle to work. They move between activities, groups and whole class sessions with no fuss. Entire classes move between different parts of the building without causing any disruption to other classes they pass along the way. Pupils are very polite to visitors and hold doors open without being asked. They happily and confidently talk about their work and the school. Pupils treat their surroundings with respect and displays, plants and equipment are valued. They report that they work and play in an atmosphere free of harassment. They are very aware of the impact of their actions on others. There have been no pupil exclusions.
19. Relationships with other pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils work well together in classes and play harmoniously together in the playground. Older pupils encourage and help to look after younger ones. Only one incident of unkindness was observed and according to conversations with pupils this was very unusual. Pupils show great respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs.
20. Pupils are very good at showing initiative and are willing to undertake responsibilities around the school, in their classes and for their learning. Children under five and pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing as very competent, independent learners and teachers actively promote this through their planning. However, in Key Stage 2 opportunities for independent learning are limited and although pupils have the capability they are not often given the opportunity to extend this; for example, pupils rarely carry out independent, unsupervised research in the library or on the Internet.
21. When pupils with special educational needs are supported within their classes or in withdrawal groups they respond very positively. They concentrate well, listen carefully and take appropriate care of the presentation and quality of their work. Because of the quality of support offered they are able to develop the personal skills of co-operative and collaborative learning, for example sharing resources, taking turns and valuing and respecting the opinions of others. They are keen to work with the support teacher, arriving ready to start lessons and to enjoy themselves.

22. Attendance is good overall when compared with the national average and there are few unauthorised absences. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils have very good attendance and arrive at school punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching promotes good and frequently very good standards. In ninety eight per cent of lessons the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. In fact, in over eight out of every 10 lessons teaching is at least good, in almost half the lessons it is at least very good and in almost one out of every 10 lessons it is excellent. This is very high quality teaching that was found throughout the school and was maintained over a high number of lesson observations.
24. The very high quality of teaching represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. In that inspection strengths such as subject knowledge, lesson planing and relationships with pupils were identified. These have all been maintained. Nevertheless, in the previous inspection only one out of every 10 lessons was identified as containing very good teaching and approximately the same percentage was judged to be unsatisfactory. The marked improvements in teaching are due to some changes in staffing, the development of a shared approach to planning and an increase in the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
25. Some of the most apparent strengths during the inspection were the dedication, commitment and teamwork of all the staff. Teachers have succeeded in making the school a very attractive, stimulating place in which to work. Considering that there have been 11 staff changes since the previous inspection and major disruptive building work that has only recently been completed and that the school occupies a large split site there is a tremendous sense of support amongst the teachers for each other. All parents in their pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that the quality of teaching was good. At the pre-inspection meeting too they spoke of the commitment shown by teachers to the school and their children.
26. Another major strength of teaching during the inspection was the way in which teachers' high expectations were made clear to pupils of all abilities. Work was very well planned to match pupils' abilities and interests. In many lessons pupils were often grouped according to ability for part of the lesson and slightly different work was set for them. In others such as literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 separate teaching groups are organised according to ability and taught by different teachers at the same time. This does not mean that work presented to lower attaining pupils was easy. Work was suitably challenging but at the same time content was modified sufficiently to be realistically achievable for them.
27. Almost no teaching time is lost during the school day. This is due to a combination of teachers' good organisation and their high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Although there is movement between classes in Key Stage 2 as pupils move from ability group to ability group, a minimum of time is lost. Teachers expect pupils to move quickly and quietly with a minimum of disturbance and this is invariably what happens. Lessons start with a well-planned introduction that makes the most of teachers' ability to assess what pupils have learned and remembered. Teachers know that pupils will be attentive and receptive to what they say. Teachers also expect that during the course of lessons pupils will settle to work quickly and will whenever necessary work without direct teacher supervision. In all lessons at both key stages pupils responded well to these expectations. This approach was evident even with young pupils in Year 1 when most of them were engrossed in painting and model making while their teacher worked for lengthy periods with another group. It means of course that teachers are able to spend

time teaching rather than controlling behaviour and pupils are able to learn more.

28. Although teachers' daily plans differ slightly in content and format, their medium-term planning gives them clear guidelines. Teachers within year groups share in the planning process and there is no doubt that the shared planning in literacy and numeracy has helped them to have a shared focus which in turn has helped to improve standards. This 'shared approach' was evident in many subjects and a common thread to many good and very good lessons was the teachers' consistency of approach. This was particularly evident in different classes within the same year where pupils benefited from high quality teaching regardless of who the individual teacher was. This ensures consistency of very good provision between parallel classes.
29. Teachers have clear objectives for lessons and many of them make the '*intended learning objectives*' clear to pupils by writing them down and referring to them during the course of or at the end of a lesson. Where this did occur it helped to focus the main points of the lessons for pupils to assess how well they were doing and for the teacher to make further teaching points whenever necessary. For example, in a very good art lesson the teacher brought pupils together during the course of the lesson to make a joint assessment of how well they were managing to mix the colours that had been specifically referred to in the lesson introduction. This gave pupils the opportunity to learn how others had overcome difficulties and provided an incentive for them to continue. In a very good mathematics lesson the teacher allocated sufficient time to the plenary session to make it an important and integral part of the whole lesson. During that session the teacher revised the new mathematical terminology learned during that lesson, set targets for pupils' attainment by the end of the week, informed pupils of work to be carried out the following day and discussed with them whether or not the '*intended learning objectives*' had been achieved.
30. Teachers' very good use of questioning is a major strength of their teaching and forms a very important part of their short-term assessments. Lessons invariably start with a brisk question and answer session in which teachers pose searching questions to find out what pupils know; for example, teachers were constantly heard asking open-ended questions such as '*Why do we have to do that? Has anyone any ideas? or 'Are you sure?'*', '*Shall we all check that?'* Lively lesson introductions set the tone for the remainder of the lesson. Teachers make them enjoyable through using a range of different strategies, for example by asking girls to count in fives in low voices and boys to count in twos in whispers. In the best lessons teachers rarely give a direct answer to a question. Usually one pupil's answer will be followed by a teacher's supplementary question that sets all the pupils thinking. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson pupils eagerly answered the teacher's 'quick-fire' questions. At one point in the introduction just when pupils were desperate to provide the answer the teacher told them to '*Get into threes and discuss whether you can come up with another answer to the same question*'. This has the immediate effect of maintaining pupils' interest and motivation in the lesson.
31. Teachers were never heard to tell pupils that they had given the '*wrong*' answer. Teachers are so good at using questioning as a means of assessing what pupils know that they are far more interested in getting pupils to explain how they arrived at their answer, than in the accuracy of the answer itself. They make very good use of praise to urge pupils on. '*Excellent! Good girl! Well done!*' were frequently heard in lessons. They use lesson introductions and plenary sessions very well as part of their assessment techniques. They invariably include an element of reflection and self-evaluation and are well linked to objectives. They know their pupils well and what they discover invariably influences their planning for the next lessons, as well as the course of the current lesson itself. Their deployment of classroom support staff is very good and they make a significant impact on the quality of teaching. They play a full part in assessing the

ongoing work of the pupils and give high quality support, without over-directing pupils. The quality of teachers' marking is a weak link in the assessment process and does not reflect the quality of oral praise and encouragement from teachers in lessons. There appear to be few purposeful links between marking and setting explicit targets for the next stage of pupils' learning. Most examples of marking are restricted to a word or two or a short phrase. Teachers' comments give pupils no clear idea of what is right or wrong or how to improve.

32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and often very good. The teacher of special educational needs has a very good knowledge of the curriculum required for all her pupils to make good progress. She has good knowledge of the pupils and their specific needs. She plans tasks that are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils, tasks that will challenge and extend their skills and abilities. In class teachers are very aware of their pupils with special educational needs and in most subjects they plan challenges that are appropriate to particular pupils. Teachers have good behaviour strategies to encourage pupils to learn and make progress, planning an appropriate curriculum to offer maximum opportunities to learn. The special educational needs co-ordinator uses continuous assessment well to plan the next phases of work, ensuring continuity and progression for pupils with special educational needs. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Work is carefully planned and additional support in the form of teaching in small groups withdrawn from the class is especially effective.
33. Teachers set homework that clearly supports the work that pupils of all ages have done in school and that provides good preparation for work to be carried out in future. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 91 per cent of parents agreed that the school set the right amount of homework. They were very positive about the school's approach to homework; that is, although it regards homework as important it reminds parents that learning takes place in a variety of ways and that children should not feel pressured by too much homework. The school provides very good information about the homework it sets and the role parents are expected to play in supporting their children.

HOW GOOD ARE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES?

34. The previous inspection report noted that the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision made a significant contribution to the educational standards achieved by pupils. Despite the increased attention to literacy and numeracy the school continues to provide a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum for its pupils, which meets National Curriculum requirements. The quality and organisation of the curriculum are good with some very good features, for example the provision for pupils with special educational needs, opportunities for swimming lessons and the teaching of French. The range of the curriculum is a strength of the school. Teachers not only provide pupils with a good grounding in literacy and numeracy, but also ensure that the other foundation subjects are well represented in the school timetable. In response to the previous inspection the school has also developed opportunities for further challenge for more able pupils.
35. Since the previous inspection the school has continued to review policy documents and refine or develop schemes of work. As a result all subjects now have good policies and schemes of work and these provide a good guide for teaching and learning throughout the school. Generally, subject planning provides a strategic overview of the teaching of subjects and skills. The school makes very good use of the literacy and numeracy strategies and subject guidelines provided by the government to support the teaching of the National Curriculum. The school makes good arrangements for the teaching of English and mathematics. In Key Stage 2 pupils of different abilities are taught in sets and have good opportunities to extend their skills or receive additional support.

36. The school provides well for the teaching of personal, social and health education. This includes a suitable programme for sex education and an awareness of drug abuse. Curriculum planning takes appropriate account of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the school meets the requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
37. The school's broad curriculum is further enhanced by very good extra curricular provision. There are opportunities to take part in sporting and musical activities, to participate in an inter-school science quiz organised by the secondary school and there are classes for pupils to learn needlework and to use computers. Ninety-one per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. Teachers provide a range of good opportunities to go on educational visits and to use the local environment to help pupils learn. During the inspection pupils from both key stages used the school's wild area to observe and sketch plants and creatures such as slow worms, newts and pond skaters. The provision of French teaching for pupils in Key Stage 2 by a teacher from the adjoining secondary school is a further enrichment of the school's curriculum.
38. Pupils with special educational needs are supported with a challenging curriculum when withdrawn by the specialist teacher. In classes all pupils follow the full curriculum for their age group. Teachers adapt tasks or offer extra support and extension activities in line with individual educational programmes for pupils who need them in core subjects and frequently use mixed ability groupings in foundation subjects to give peer support as necessary. Pupils with special educational needs take part in the full range of extra curricular activities in line with their particular interests. This gives them opportunities to develop their social skills, especially when playing as members of a group in a sporting activity.
39. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall. There is a positive, caring school ethos and a commitment to moral and social development underpins much of its work. At the time of the last inspection spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was considered very good and a strength of the school.
40. The provision for spiritual development is good. The religious education programme provides pupils with knowledge and insights into people's values and a wide range of religious beliefs. Some good opportunities exist for pupils to reflect on their experiences in a way that develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge, but these are not consistent across the school. Little planning takes account of these elements to ensure that they are featured across the curriculum, although when they are planned for they are very effective. For instance, when pupils in Year 1 were considering miracles the teacher deliberately planned for the children to experience a sense of awe and wonder. Acts of collective worship focusing on specific themes such as *'being special'* give opportunities for reflection and prayer and are supported by music carefully selected to enhance the spiritual atmosphere. Other curriculum areas also support spiritual development, although they are not always intentionally planned to do so. For example, in music when composing as a class pupils were delighted and filled with wonder when hearing compositions from their graphic scores. In information technology using an art programme to study the work of Kandinsky and Klee pupils used the controls successfully to create their own artwork in a similar style. In science there was real awe and wonder when pupils lifted a sheet of corrugated iron in the wild area to reveal a nest of slow worms. The care with which teachers display pupils' work and use posters, photographs, artefacts and colour also contributes to a sense of awe and wonder for pupils.
41. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. They are very well aware of right and wrong and take their responsibilities seriously. The behaviour policy makes clear the

values, standards and attitudes of the community and encourages the development of self-discipline and a clear understanding of right and wrong. The school rules are few but appropriate, mainly being concerned with treating people as you would like to be treated. The school uses 'circle time' to encourage pupils to discuss problems and consider the effects of actions on others. Members of staff provide good role models for pupils and involve them in devising class rules which are for the good of all class members. Strong relationships and support and positive management of pupils in lessons give pupils a good basis for the development of moral understanding. Pupils are aware from their physical education lessons that playing games and using resources according to the rules are not only enjoyable but also keep everyone safe and provide an equal opportunity for all to take part, so developing a sense of fair play.

42. Social development is very well promoted. Pupils have many opportunities to work happily together. They are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own actions and work in harmony as members of a community. Within lessons they frequently work in pairs or groups and have the opportunity to report on their work to the rest of the class. Within classes pupils are given a range of responsibilities such as giving out resources, keeping the room tidy and generally helping to ensure the smooth running of the school. Social skills are further developed by a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. In the playground older pupils support and care for younger ones and there are opportunities for younger and older pupils to work together in different curriculum areas such as sharing books and in extra curricular activities. The school aims to develop pupils' awareness and involve them in the wider community by visits to local day centres, charity fundraising and taking part in music and dance festivals, sports and harvest festivals. The school is actively considering the establishment of a school council in order to further enhance social development.
43. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school works hard to ensure that pupils take advantage of local cultural opportunities and they make trips to places of interest and attend community concerts, museums and study centres. A good range of visitors is encouraged to visit the school to provide cultural diversity and interest, including artists and musicians. Through the curriculum pupils have visited the British Museum, Colchester Castle and Cressing Temple as well as the local synagogue. Besides celebrating Christian festivals the school has also enjoyed Divali and the Chinese New Year. Displays round the school give evidence of pupils' awareness of living in a multi-cultural society, for example the costumes, customs, housing, climate and life of people from diverse areas such as Africa, China, Mexico, India, the Caribbean, Europe and America are on view. These experiences enable pupils to develop tolerance and acknowledge the cultural diversity of the society in which we live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. Work in both key stages is regularly assessed. The assessment co-ordinator is experienced and works closely with the headteacher and members of the senior management team in order to collate the information that the school obtains on pupils' attainment in relation to local and national standards. The previous inspection report noted information from tests and teacher assessments was used effectively in lesson planning.
45. The school still keeps extensive records of results and analyses in order to follow trends in pupils' standards. Teachers in the early years make good use of assessments made on entry to school to plan work suited to children's needs. Throughout the school teachers make good use of tests to check pupils' reading as well as using national assessments throughout Key Stage 2. The school undertakes extensive analysis of its results in order that the appropriate subject content is planned for each year group. The

process of analysis also includes a comparison of how well boys and girls do in tests.

46. In Key Stage 2 this analysis is used to help determine ability groupings for English, mathematics and science, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6. This practice is also being developed to include pupils in Year 3 and Year 4. Towards the end of the academic year teachers meet in order to set targets for the next set of year group teachers. The results of tests, assessments and teachers' records are used well for this process. In both key stages teachers work together and meet regularly in order to assess pupils' work and how best to meet the needs of pupils. These discussions are used to guide subsequent lesson planning. This is evident from the planning of lessons and the way teachers recap previous lessons, highlighting any areas of difficulty and explaining them before embarking upon new work.
47. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school career and offered appropriate support from the school staff and outside agencies as appropriate. The assessment of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is recorded in detail and carefully matched to their individual education programmes. Individual education plans are discussed with teachers, parents and teaching assistants. The thoroughness of the school's procedures for these pupils is one reason why provision is so good. Provision for the very few pupils with English as an additional language is regularly monitored.
48. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall. This has deteriorated since the last inspection when provision was described as good. Staff know pupils well and take good care of them. Despite the large size of the school the headteacher knows the name of every child and parents value this. Very good attention is given to the health and safety of pupils in lessons. For example, in an early years class when children were collecting insects to study they were all asked to wash their hands on their return to the classroom.
49. First aid is administered appropriately and records are kept of accidents that occur. However, these do not include the details of treatment administered. Fire drills are carried out termly but these have not logged as required. Staff and governors have been involved in carrying out regular risk assessments and have identified some major issues such as the uneven playground surface and the condition of outside toilets. Lunchtimes are well managed and a very pleasant social occasion.
50. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher is the designated teacher and the school follows appropriate procedures when concerns are identified. However, lunchtime staff lack awareness of the importance of reporting any concerns they may have directly to the designated teacher.
51. The school's systems for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. There is no system for ensuring that all attendance registers are returned to the office at the beginning of each session. Nobody has specific responsibility for checking registers to ensure that codes are being used consistently, that registers are totalled each day and that each session is completed. Practice varies between classes. Whilst registration is carried out efficiently and pupils are given a friendly welcome on arrival to school each day, not all registers are completed accurately. In a few instances it is not clear whether a child has been marked present or absent. It is not possible to check patterns or reasons for absences from looking at registers. A separate file is maintained which contains notes received from parents, but this requires cross-referencing and there are several absences which are not explained and these have not been investigated. The procedures relating to registers were identified as a concern in the last inspection and this has still not been satisfactorily addressed.

52. The school has very good measures to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils very rarely have to be corrected and praise is used extremely effectively. Around the school a harmonious atmosphere is very successfully created and pupils can be trusted to behave responsibly. As a result the school is an extremely pleasant place to be in.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents' and carers' views of the school are extremely positive in all areas. Ninety-nine per cent of parents in their questionnaires agreed that the school has excellent links with parents. They are happy to approach the school with any concerns they might have and feel well informed about their children's progress. The inspection confirms parents' positive views. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when links were described as good. Excellent links start in the reception classes when teachers make home visits and quickly involve parents in the life of the school. Every effort is made to ensure that parents have access to their children's class teacher at the beginning and end of each day and additionally through 'surgeries' and termly consultation evenings. A very good rapport is established and parents value this. Reading records in Key Stage 1 include a column for messages between school and home, which contributes to the high quality of communication.
54. The impact of parents' and carers' involvement with the work of the school is also excellent. A large number of parents assist with lessons, educational visits and swimming and this makes a valuable contribution to the work of the school. The parent teacher association is very supportive in raising funds for additional resources, for example parents have recently contributed towards the cost of the swimming pool changing rooms. Parents are very involved in assisting their children at home with reading and homework tasks. In the last inspection homework was described as inconsistent and this restricted parents' involvement. This is no longer the case. Homework tasks are explained well and an appropriate home - school agreement is in place. Parents know what homework their children are due to receive and how they are required to assist. From the first identification of need parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in all discussions, reviews of progress and the setting of targets in their children's individual educational programmes.
55. The information that parents receive is good overall. General information is of a very high quality and parents feel very well informed about school life and practice, as well as their children's progress. An excellent booklet is provided for parents of new children in the reception classes, which advises parents on how best to help them with letter formation and learning phonetic sounds, as well as sharing books. The prospectus and governing body's annual reports to parents are very informative and well written.
56. Annual reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory overall and meet statutory requirements. They clearly identify strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics, but in other subjects comments are often brief. In some subjects comments only relate to what the whole class has been taught and how much an individual pupil has enjoyed lessons rather than the progress they have made within the subject. Targets are included for English and mathematics, but these are often vague and consequently do not give much assistance to parents or their child about how future progress can be made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The leadership and management of the school are very effective and provide a clear sense of purpose, which is a major factor contributing to the school's successful development. The headteacher is an excellent leader and is very highly regarded by all parents. Every parent responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed. The school has clear and appropriate aims which are strongly reflected in its daily life as well as being evident in documentation and development priorities. The school is successful in achieving its aims. The school has improved the strong leadership found in the previous report and has successfully addressed all the key issues for action.
58. The governing body is excellent. It is very supportive and successfully fulfils its role as a *'critical friend'* to the school. It is well organised and carries out its legal responsibilities by means of a very effective committee structure. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have made excellent use of their experience and skills in management in the wider world outside education in building, personnel, financial and legal decisions. There is excellent communication between governors and the headteacher and governors provide advice of the highest quality. Together they have a strategic view of the school, as expressed in the school development plan. The governors' role in the school's new building project was crucial in the successful outcome. They formed a committee to project-manage the process that remained fully active until the new wing was completed. They are justifiably pleased with the finished result.
59. The headteacher inspires a strong sense of loyalty and motivation in staff and enables all to make a positive contribution to the school's development. The deputy headteacher and senior managers ably support the headteacher. Together they are very effective in promoting communication and consultation and in monitoring progress and implementing change, for example the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. The professional partnership and dialogue between teachers and senior managers and governors reflect the school's excellent capacity to move forward and sustain further improvement.
60. There is a fairly recent programme for monitoring classroom practice that is at an early stage of development. The governing body is fully involved in the process of monitoring the teachers, as are the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The subject co-ordinators monitor the teachers' plans and to a lesser extent the pupils' work, but have not yet undertaken monitoring of teaching. This is an area the school is aware of and has already made plans to address by increasing staffing levels for the new academic year to allow subject co-ordinators non-contact time to monitor teaching. The special educational needs policy is in place and is subject to frequent review to ensure that it matches the requirements of the Code of Practice². A governor with specific responsibility for this area liaises regularly with the school. The co-ordinator provides strong leadership and ensures that this provision is a strength of the school. The headteacher and governor with responsibility for special educational needs monitor the school's support for pupils and ensure that allocated funding is appropriately spent.
61. The school is making the best possible use of all available resources to achieve the good standards of work and the very good provision provided. The school is very well managed and financial resources are most effectively deployed. The school plans effectively for new developments. Active financial management is supported by detailed

² Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

costing information which enables expenditure to be closely controlled. Financial planning is very well linked to long term priorities and to school improvement. Target dates are set and success criteria identified to judge cost effectiveness. Prudent financial management has produced a financial reserve that has been identified to improve lavatory facilities for the pupils and many other projects.

62. The highly competent school administration staff help prepare budgets for review by the headteacher and governors. Accounts are rigorously reviewed and monitored by the headteacher and a very competent finance committee. Funds from alternative sources such as the parent teacher association are greatly appreciated and used effectively. The last external audit was completed in March 1999 when the school had Grant Maintained status. It was an excellent report without recommendations for action.
63. The headteacher and governors apply the criteria for best value in terms of the recruitment and retention of staff, the quality of services and all other areas of expenditure. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve pupils' attainment in comparison with that in all schools nationally and in similar schools. It regularly consults with parents through its parent governors as well as through parental surveys, for example the home - school agreement paper. The school ensures that additional funding in the form of grants, such as money for literacy and smaller sized classes in reception, is spent wisely. Subject co-ordinators have their own budgets to prepare and manage. Funds for staff training are well spent on supporting in-school initiatives and personal development.
64. The school is generously staffed and teachers have appropriate qualifications to teach in a primary school. They are part of a strong team that offers mutual support. The arrangements for the induction of newly qualified staff are very good and provide a programme of monitoring and non-contact time for professional development. Classroom support staff are deployed very well. Many of them have undergone voluntary training to specialise in areas that will be of particular use in their work with pupils with special educational needs. They make a significant contribution to the attainment and progress of all pupils in school.
65. The school occupies a large and pleasant site, although hard playground surface is at a premium during whole-school lunchtimes. The accommodation is well maintained by the caretaker and cleaners. The good quality school meals are cooked on site by a team of able and enthusiastic catering staff. Classroom space is used very well to provide sufficient areas for learning. The recently completed 'wing' offers spacious classrooms and a computer suite. Currently the hardware installed in the suite is outdated and does not match the quality of hardware in other areas of the school. The two halls are used effectively for physical education, acts of collective worship and concerts. The quality and range of resources are very good. The new library offers a great deal of potential but is not yet fully stocked and was hardly used by pupils for reference purposes during the inspection.
66. Taking into account a wide range of indicators, including the very good quality of teaching, the very good improvement since the last inspection, the very good management of pupils and good achievement, the school is most effective and provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In the context of its many strengths, in order to maintain and improve the high quality of pupils' learning and the standards they attain, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) review the quality of teachers' marking to ensure:
 - a. that greater consistency is achieved between teachers in their marking of pupils' work;
 - b. that marking offers advice about how work can be improved and that it forms part of the target setting process for pupils to follow in order to raise their attainment further;**(paragraphs 31, 47, 92 and 112)**

 - (2) ensure that full use is made of information technology, as already identified in the school development plan, by:
 - a. extending the use of information technology in other subjects to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are used in other subjects;
 - b. ensuring that the use of the new information technology suite is monitored to ensure its optimum effectiveness;**(paragraphs 12, 65, 99, 117 and 137)**

 - (3) ensure that procedures are put in place to:
 - a. monitor pupils' attendance on a regular basis;
 - b. standardise the way in which all teachers complete attendance registers;
 - c. return registers promptly to a central point after each morning and afternoon registration;**(paragraph 51)**

 - (4) ensure that the school provides opportunities for:
 - a. subject co-ordinators to monitor the teaching of their subjects on a regular basis;**(paragraphs 8 and 60)**

 - (5) ensure that the school provides opportunities for
 - a. pupils to take greater responsibility for their own work, including its pace and direction, through a problem solving approach;
 - b. pupils to have regular access to resources, such as the library and computer suite, where they can access information.**(paragraphs 9, 20, 84 and 111)**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	106
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
9	33	43	13	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	488
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	35	37	72

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	32	34
	Girls	36	37	36
	Total	68	69	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	96 (94)	97 (98)
	National	82 (81)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	31	31
	Girls	36	36	35
	Total	69	67	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (97)	93 (98)	92 (97)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	37	28	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	30	30
	Girls	24	22	24
	Total	49	52	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (67)	80 (59)	84 (69)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	26	27
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	44	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (60)	74 (72)	74 (80)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	418

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

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

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	270

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 / 2000
	£
Total income	834,389
Total expenditure	876,376
Expenditure per pupil	1,801
Balance brought forward from previous year	131,534
Balance carried forward to next year	89,547

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 25.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out	488
Number of questionnaires returned	124

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	28	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	27	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	34	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	40	8	1	0
The teaching is good.	75	24	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	27	3	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	18	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	19	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	34	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	33	5	1	3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. The quality of education for children under five is good and provides them with a very good foundation for the next stage of their education. There are excellent induction arrangements, which include a home visit by the teacher, many visits to the school for the children, a meeting for parents and a most informative parent handbook.
69. Children are admitted into school during the year in which they are five. Children whose fifth birthday is between 1st September and the end of February start school at the beginning of the autumn term in one of the reception classes. Those with birthdays between 1st March and 31st August are admitted to an additional reception class at the start of the spring term. At the time of the inspection two classes contained pupils almost all of whom were five years of age and another contained children under five years.
70. The curriculum offered is good. It is broad and balanced, comprehensively covering all areas of learning, and it includes parts of the literacy and numeracy strategies where appropriate. The emphasis is on good quality experiences in children's learning. The parents are fully informed of their children's work through the home-school links record.
71. Although children have a wide range of abilities, their attainment on entry shows a higher percentage of above average levels than expected of children at this age. The results of early assessments carried out on children within the first seven weeks of entry are shared with parents. They are fully involved in supporting their children's learning from the very beginning. Overall, all children make good progress, including those with special educational needs. All children benefit from the caring, supportive environment and well thought-out, structured learning opportunities provided. By the time children are five years old nearly all have attained the desirable learning outcomes³ in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development.

Personal and social development

72. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and by five years of age they achieve standards that are well above those expected for children of this age. Children are happy and confident and are able to establish effective relationships with other children and adults. They work well as part of a group and independently. They concentrate well and persevere in their learning. Children use their initiative and solve problems, seeking help only when needed. They are willing to help each other, for example when working in paired activities. Children are interested in the activities they are set and are eager to explore new learning. They demonstrate independence in selecting an activity or resources and in dressing and personal hygiene. They are most considerate of others, they take turns, share fairly and understand the principle of standing in a queue. The teachers and support assistants make good provision for personal and social education, particularly by establishing consistent routines and expectations of behaviour. Teachers and class assistants provide good role models and the necessary support for children to grow in confidence and learn the skills of independence.

³ Desirable learning outcomes – these are goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory schooling at the age of five. They refer mainly to literacy, numeracy and social skills.

Language and literacy

73. Children attain the expected standards of five year olds and often exceed them. They make good progress. They listen very well and with increasing understanding and talk confidently in formal and informal situations; for example, children retell events in their lives with fluency. They take note of the individual or group they are talking to including the teacher, support assistant, visitor to the school or other children and respond appropriately. Children speak clearly and have a good vocabulary for their age. They enjoy reading whether to themselves, to an adult or in a group. Most children read simple text accurately and a few read with confidence and expression. Children are developing a good awareness of the sounds letters make to help them read unfamiliar words. The teachers use the introductions to literacy sessions well to reinforce basic literacy skills and book knowledge. Children share books most effectively during these sessions. They know authors, titles, illustrators and front and back covers and enjoy using the technical language of literature. Many are beginning to form upper and lower case letters with a reasonable degree of accuracy. The majority communicates meaning in pictures, letters and words and they copy write simple sentences well. Children with special educational needs are well supported. The use of computers and tape recorders encourages children to enjoy reading and writing.

Mathematics

74. Nearly all children greatly exceed the outcomes expected for five year olds in mathematics. They make very good progress. Some children count to 10 and many count and order numbers to 20 and beyond. They develop an awareness of patterns in number and identify one more and one less than a given number. Some higher attaining children have a good understanding of addition and subtraction and solve problems. They form numbers accurately, match and sort colours, shapes and pictures and compare size, finding things that are the longest or shortest. They use correct vocabulary including '*heavier than*', '*lighter than*', '*shorter than*' and '*longer than*'. Children enjoy the challenge of mathematics.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Most children exceed the expected outcome for their age in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They talk about where they live, their environment, their families and past and present events in their lives. They talk confidently about celebrations such as birthdays and Christmas. The staff provide good opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world through well chosen topics such as '*minibeasts*'. Children can correctly sequence the life cycle of a frog and butterfly. They are encouraged to observe, explore and describe the world around them. Children go on a minibeast hunt in the school grounds and find many creatures. They demonstrate curiosity and a keen interest in spiders and the newly created wormeries in the classrooms. They have daily opportunities to explore the outdoor environment and show an awareness of the purpose of some features in the area in which they live, for instance children correctly place vehicles on roads and people on pathways during free choice activities with small world toys. The computer and programmable toys such as the Roamer are used regularly to good effect. Children are familiar with the keyboard, mouse and control buttons on the tape recorder when listening to a taped story.

Physical development

76. Children make sound progress overall and attain expected standards for their age. However, progress in their swimming lessons is very good. They are confident in water and some are beginning to swim. Not all children have immediate access to outdoor play

areas where they can play using a range of equipment. The outside, enclosed area is at present unimaginative for young children and has a predominantly hard surface. There is nowhere for them to dig and plant, learning further physical skills. Staff have to look for opportunities to take children to the playground with tricycles and other wheeled toys. Children enjoy physical education in the hall, learning how to change speed and control their body movements confidently. They show good control of tools, small equipment and larger apparatus. They are taught how to use scissors correctly and cut, colour and paint with good control. During play times they run, jump, turn and show good spatial awareness and co-ordination. Children enjoy physical activity and perform well.

Creative development

77. In creative development children attain the expected outcomes, except in music where their progress and attainment are very good. They use a variety of media when they print and make collages. They use a quick drying clay and develop skills in making three-dimensional models, for example the snails on display in the make believe garden. They use paint and enjoy matching the colours when they are painting from direct observation as could be seen in their fruit and vegetable pictures. In role play children enjoy taking part as the *'butterfly family'* in the *'Butterfly Cave'*, taking nectar tea and fluttering to the shops. Children attain a very high standard in their music making and creating sound effects with the percussion instruments for their *'Hungry Caterpillar'* story of the week. They know the names of the instruments, how to play them and exactly when to play them by following carefully the teacher's instructions. They have learnt the basic principles of being part of an orchestra and the importance of the conductor.

Teaching

78. Teachers know their children well. The quality of teaching is never less than good. It is supported by a very well planned programme which ensures that the curriculum for children under five is taught in full. The school has very good standards of care. The three teachers work well co-operatively planning what is to be taught. Learning objectives are clearly identified. The children's activities planned are focused well on the full range of their abilities. Teachers' expectations are high, but not over challenging, as were found in the last report. Teachers' assessments through observation, discussion and tasks are good. Parents receive a detailed report and are offered many occasions to discuss their children's progress. Teachers expect parents to support children with their reading immediately after they enter school. However, the comments teachers make on the reading record do not always give parents ways in which they could help children further.
79. The hard work and commitment of the teachers ensure that resources and materials are fully used and that children are provided with an interesting and stimulating range of appropriate experiences and learning situations. They make very good use of classroom assistants in all aspects of school work. Time is made available for classroom assistants to plan work with the teachers, to receive appropriate training to increase their effectiveness and to understand the importance of their role with young children.

ENGLISH

80. Standards of attainment are above average at the end of both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in reading and writing was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was well above average in reading and above average in writing. Standards have been well above the national average for the last three years. In comparison with those in similar schools standards in Plumberow in 1999 were above average in reading and average in writing.
81. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was below the national average. In comparison with those in similar schools results at Plumberow were well below the national average. The school has sought innovative ways of improving attainment in pupils' writing and standards have now begun to improve as a result. The reason for the difference between test results in 1999 and judgements made during the inspection is that they refer to different groups of pupils with differing abilities.
82. Standards of attainment in speaking and listening are above average by the end of both key stages. Pupils listen carefully and sometimes intently to one another and to their teachers and respond appropriately to the instructions they are given. Their very good listening skills make an important contribution to the school's ethos for learning. Pupils' good progress in speaking and listening is underpinned by the way in which teachers value their ideas. During lesson introductions and plenary sessions teachers praise them for their responses. They value the willingness of pupils to take part in class question and answer sessions rather than their ability to give '*right*' or '*wrong*' responses to questions.
83. Pupils in Year 2 understand and use words and expressions such as '*doubling*' and '*halving*' in mathematics and '*circuits*' and '*fair tests*' in science. They can pronounce and understand the meaning of words such as '*oxygen*' and '*genus*'. In Year 6 they understand the difference between more technical terms such as '*opaque*' and '*transparent*.' They extend their vocabulary further and can pronounce the word '*onomatopoeia*' and know that it means that '*the sound of a word echoes its sense*'. Pupils in Key Stage 1 respond well to the encouragement of their teachers in their speaking and listening. They are confident and happy in the good learning environment. In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to adapt their speech to suit formal and informal occasions; for example, pupils sharing poetry in literacy sessions with their peers show good standards of presentation by reading clearly and expressively and by being aware of the needs of their audience. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their standards in speaking and listening through, for example regular drama sessions.
84. Standards in reading are above average by the end of both key stages. Most pupils, including the less able pupils, enjoy reading books. Many read confidently and with good expression and comprehension. Many pupils know the works of different authors, but have had only limited access to the school library, which has recently been opened. The most enthusiastic pupils in Year 6 are voracious readers. They are able to discuss and compare texts and authors and describe plot and characters with understanding. Pupils with less ability in reading use appropriate strategies such as picture clues. Generally, they adopt an approach closely based on the teaching of phonics.
85. Pupils show satisfactory standards in their non-fiction reference skills. They are able to use a book index, contents page and glossary to locate and use information for their topic

work. Many pupils use skimming and scanning techniques to find information in non-fiction books. Most pupils understand how to use a dictionary to seek out the meaning of words and help with their spelling. They learn new spellings regularly and teachers test and record their progress assiduously. Teachers focus upon the improvement of pupils' spelling and extend their vocabulary with well-chosen terminology in a range of other subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use dictionaries and thesauri effectively to enrich their good written work. A significant minority of pupils have, however, only a limited understanding of the classification of books in libraries, particularly the Dewey Index, or of how to search for particular books.

86. Standards in writing are above average at the end of both key stages. The school has worked very hard to identify how pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 can attain higher standards in writing. The contribution that writing makes to other subjects is often good, for example in history, geography and design and technology. It is less apparent in mathematics and science where older pupils have fewer opportunities to write unaided accounts of their mathematical investigations or their personal descriptions of their science experiments. Older pupils are often restricted in the development of extended descriptive writing in these subjects by the constraints of a set format that is decided by their teachers. When given the opportunity pupils demonstrate their good grasp of the written word in descriptions about testing the strength of materials. *'I think the material we pull the box with will make a difference to the amount of Newtons, because the stronger the material, the easier it will be to pull the box'*. Standards in literacy are often good in other subjects such as in work on the Tudors in Year 5 and through the use of mathematical terminology in Year 6 such as *'hexagonal and rectangular prisms'*. They learn to use new words such as *'embellish'*.
87. Standards in writing are now good by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils write stories and poems that show individuality and demonstrate their ability to handle the conventions of writing effectively. They can, for example, write in complete sentences using capital letters and full stops. More able pupils use inverted commas to denote speech effectively in their writing and set out their writing in paragraphs. Pupils use personal writing to savour events and feelings and share them with their readers. For example, pupils in Year 4 wrote vivid accounts of the disruption caused by new building work to construct new classrooms, a library and computer suite.
*'The people were smashing,
Clashing and banging
The nails.
We are the builders hard at work.
The lorries were roaring,
Beeping and hissing,
Rumbling along.
We are the builders hard at work.'*
88. Older pupils have made high quality book-diaries about an *'Island Adventure'*. They had to imagine that they had been shipwrecked on a remote island and had to devise a survival plan to keep themselves alive by choosing four items from a list. These books communicate meaning through the use of complex sentences with several clauses. Much of this work shows a developing literary style with an imaginative vocabulary and good use of figurative language, for example, *'It is the 8th day and the nights are getting colder so I have decided to make a shelter. It is going to be hard work with the limited materials I have. First I shall find a suitable tree and make a temporary shelter from plastic sheeting.'*
89. Pupils write well for a range of purposes. Creative writing about myths and legends is compelling when pupils write that there were *'Carvings of mermaids, grotesque ogres and*

radiant princesses'. Pupils show skill in catching the reader's interest when they write 'A torn Union Jack billowed in the breeze and on the side of the boat a brazen name plate stood gleaming in the sun'. Pupils are able to draft and redraft their writing. They are taught the importance of using adjectives and adverbs to give their writing interest and colour. By the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils have an extensive vocabulary.

90. Throughout the school pupils improve upon their standards in handwriting to perfect a neat, regular, style of cursive writing which enhances the quality of their work in many subjects. Pupils in Year 1 start to write in cursive script and by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils write with a pen in a fluent, stylish script. In withdrawal groups pupils with special educational needs concentrate on improving their use of language in order to help them to understand other subjects better. Although their writing has small spelling errors, their handwriting is good and the content is interesting.
91. Pupils' attitudes to English are very good. They are eager to learn and their behaviour in lessons is often exemplary. This plays a very important part in creating a positive ethos for learning. Pupils respond well to teachers' questions and they work well by themselves and in groups. At both key stages pupils help each other and give opinions, reasons and examples. Their very enthusiastic attitudes have a positive impact on their standards of attainment.
92. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their written and spoken work and that of their peers through, for example, paired discussions and group reading. Teachers use examples of fine writing from a good range of authors and playwrights to inspire their pupils. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are rarely disappointed. The teaching of literacy is consistently good throughout the school and the pupils' literacy folders are active, working documents. There is, though, an over dependence in some classes upon worksheets. Many teachers ensure that pupils evaluate the achievements made in lessons by holding useful plenary sessions. The literacy strategy is proving effective in driving standards up. Throughout the school pupils have sometimes been unable to improve the standard of their written work because marking does not identify weaknesses sufficiently or set detailed, individual targets for improvement. Classroom assistants provide very effective support in classes throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

93. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national expectations and at the end of Key Stage 2 it is well above national expectations. The inspection findings are in line with judgements made in the previous inspection at Key Stage 1 and above those for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.
94. The judgements in the current inspection match the school's results in national tests in 1999 for seven and eleven year olds. In those tests at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 (97 per cent) was well above the national average (87 per cent). The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 (26 per cent) was above the national average. In 1997 and 1998 the school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 were very high in comparison with those in all schools. In comparison with those in similar schools the 1999 Key Stage 1 results in mathematics were average. The 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 (80 per cent) was above the national average (69 per cent). The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was well above the national average. In comparison with those of similar schools results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 were in line with the national average.
95. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together pupils' performance at Key Stage 1 shows a

very slight downward trend, but remains above average overall. During the same period, apart from a slight downward 'blip' in 1998, the trend is rising at Key Stage 2. There is no apparent difference between the performance of boys and girls in mathematics at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 boys perform slightly better than girls, although girls at Plumberow still perform better than most girls do at this age nationally. In lessons there is no discernible difference between the performance of boys and girls.

96. The school's implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is clearly helping to improve attainment. At Key Stage 2 the school successfully uses the results of pupils' assessments in mathematics to place them in teaching groups according to their abilities. This has a positive impact. The emphasis given to *'quick-fire'* mental arithmetic activities at the start of each lesson plays a large part in very effectively developing pupils' understanding and use of multiplication tables and their rapid recall of addition and subtraction facts. So noticeable has been the improvement in pupils' ability to *'work out sums quickly in their heads'* that parents at the pre-inspection meeting commented on it and regard it as an area of improvement since the previous inspection. The structure of the numeracy sessions has also had a clear impact on pupils' confidence to try to solve increasingly difficult problems. It is accepted that all pupils' answers reflect a willingness to *'have a go'* and that the mathematical approach they use is more important than whether the answer is *'right'* or *'wrong'*. Pupils know that teachers value their mathematical reasoning and that makes them all the more willing to try to think of more than one answer to any question.
97. Pupils have above average attainment when they enter school and they use this ability very well to make good progress and attain high standards. For example, pupils in the reception class *'planning a route for their friends'* were able to count and record in 2s from 0 to 20, in 5s from 25 to 70 and in 10s from 25 to 55. Their good attainment is maintained in Year 1 when they use their ability to mentally add numbers to 20 in challenging problem solving activities. They learn very useful strategies that they are keen to put into practice; for example, when adding three separate digits they explain that *'You put the biggest number in your head first and then add the other two'*. They know how to double and halve numbers to make it easier to carry out mental arithmetic. In Year 2 they become quicker and more accurate and can handle larger numbers and more difficult mathematical processes. By the end of the key stage pupils can successfully use centimetres to measure body heights and circumferences of objects. They recognise and name three-dimensional shapes, tell the time and write it in numbers, draw lines of symmetry, recognise fractions and use them when measuring fractions of a litre, find out factors of numbers and use money confidently. They cover a very wide range of work accurately and present their findings neatly and carefully.
98. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' work shows the wide range of coverage that it does in Key Stage 1. Their ability to use very large numbers and to combine two or three different processes such as addition, subtraction and division in one sum is quite clear from their written work, which is consistently well presented. As well as regular practice with the four rules of number pupils carry out work on percentages, fractions and decimals. They are able to use their knowledge to work out the VAT on snacks in their tuck shop for their forthcoming journey to the Isle of Wight. They measure and draw acute and obtuse angles accurately, work out the diameter and circumference of circles, draw nets of three-dimensional shapes and calculate area and perimeter. Their ability to work out sums in their heads becomes gradually faster and they are able to see more relationships between numbers; for example, pupils in Year 3 gave six facts about the number 10 in the space of a few seconds. *'It is double five. It is half of twenty. It is a multiple of 5. It is an even number, divisible by two. If you halve it, it becomes an odd number.'* By Year 6 pupils in the above average ability group are able to cope with extremely challenging work in the oral section of the lesson. They can work out, for

example, how much should be added to a number to make it up to 100, including amounts such as 9.99, 0.19 and 1.90. They use the correct mathematical vocabulary to explain 'inverse operations', 'numerators' and 'denominators'.

99. Work at both key stages is well inked to many other areas of the curriculum so that pupils understand that mathematics has a practical application in everyday life; for example, they record temperature and understand that this can be recorded in straight line graphs. One area where links are few is in information technology. Younger pupils use programmable robots to plot right-angled turns. Older pupils occasionally use programs that display their findings in graphical form and sometimes use spreadsheets. However, there is only limited planned use of information technology to support and complement mathematics.
100. Progress for pupils at Key Stage 1 is good and at Key Stage 2 it is very good. Pupils' progress is well supported by teachers making accurate assessments of how well pupils understand their work and then planning work that is gradually more challenging and builds well on what they already know. Great care is taken to link new work with lessons previously taught. Pupils are grouped according to their abilities and are clear about what they have to do. They find their tasks demanding, but not unrealistically so, and make clear progress with their learning. The grouping system allows the added incentive for pupils who do particularly well to move to a more able group. Pupils' progress in being able to carry out mental calculations is clear at the beginning of lessons. There is clear evidence from pupils' books of the rate of progress throughout the school. The school consolidates the knowledge that pupils bring to school with them at the beginning of Key Stage 1. It builds very impressively on this as pupils move through Key Stage 2. The amount of work pupils complete gradually increases, the range of work they cover widens and the presentation and accuracy of their work improve. All pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their abilities. Pupils' individual education plans contain clearly identified mathematical targets with well-planned steps to achieve them.
101. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good overall and often excellent. They are interested and enthusiastic learners. They listen very well and respond to questions very quickly and enthusiastically. They quickly settle to their tasks and work very hard to complete them. They show very good levels of understanding and concentration, working independently, co-operatively and collaboratively as required. They enjoy problem-solving activities when they can use their very good number skills practically. The overall impression these pupils give is of confidence in their own ability and enthusiasm for the subject. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a tremendous impact on their mathematical prowess. They are willing to have a go at any mathematical problem with a fair degree of certainty that they know the appropriate strategy to use.
102. The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent and is very good overall. In the unsatisfactory lesson the pace of teaching was slow and pupils became distracted. The high quality of teaching has a marked impact on the high standards of work that pupils attain. The best features of high quality teaching throughout the school such as planning, high expectations and questioning are frequently apparent in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers enjoy the success of teaching the National Numeracy Strategy. They know that it has improved pupils' standards of work and they are very aware that it has helped to improve their own teaching and their knowledge of mathematics. Teachers plan very carefully to meet their pupils' needs. This planning clearly shows what should be learned and teachers share this with pupils at the start of lessons and check to find out whether it has been achieved at the end of lessons. The ways in which they pose open-ended and closed questions to find out what pupils know is often outstanding. For

example, in one lesson the teacher used very good questioning to assess how pupils worked out answers in their heads. *'Tell me your method!'* and *'Tell me why doubling 61 is easier than doubling 66?'* kept pupils thinking carefully about their methods. *'Are you sure?'* and *'Shall we all check that answer?'* were clever methods teachers used to ensure that pupils gave the correct answer without ever telling a pupil that he had given the *'wrong'* answer. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations of all abilities and use a range of resources very well.

SCIENCE

103. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are above average and represent an improvement since the previous inspection and the most recent national tests and assessments in science at seven and eleven years of age. In both key stages pupils express themselves well orally and in writing. The standard of presentation incorporating the use of clearly labelled diagrams is generally good. However, pupils have too few planned opportunities to use computers to word process information and to handle and present data.
104. In the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils who attained Level 2 and above was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was well above the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was above the national average. In comparison with those in similar schools science results for eleven year old pupils at Plumberow were in line with the national average. The difference between pupils' results in 1999 and the judgements reached during the inspection can be attributed to the difference in ability between groups of pupils.
105. Pupils in Year 1 can name the main parts of a plant and a human being. They record what they do and place labels on prepared diagrams correctly. They are beginning to understand the importance and meaning of *'fairness'* when growing seeds under different conditions. They use good measuring skills when recording how much these seeds have grown in a given time. Pupils in Year 2 can name the main bones in the skeleton and appreciate that the function of the skeleton is to give us support and shape. Investigation skills are further developed in Year 2 and pupils can predict outcomes well. In a previous investigation pupils correctly predicted the outcome when joining wires, bulbs and batteries together.
106. Pupils in Year 3 show that they have good knowledge of what makes a test *'fair'* when investigating where water goes inside a plant. They know that a control is an important process to which all other results must be compared. They also know that when testing they must alter only one thing at a time whilst keeping everything else the same. In Year 4 pupils can separate different solids through the use of sieves and more able pupils are able to investigate how they can retrieve salt that has been dissolved in water. Their knowledge of materials is good, they know what *'soluble'* and *'dissolve'* mean and they use the terms correctly when speaking and writing.
107. Pupils in Year 5 extend their recording skills when investigating food chains. They know that all chains start with a plant producer and most pupils know that the plants are able to produce food through using the sun's energy. They also know that animals often increase in size further along the chain. Higher attaining pupils produce a food chain with an important link missing for other pupils to identify. Pupils are good at being able to give reasons for their decisions. In Year 6 pupils further improve their ability to investigate when setting up an experiment on the effects of light on plant growth. They know and correctly use terms such as *'opaque'*, *'translucent'* and *'transparent'* when planting seeds

covered with various layers of coloured tissue. Another group of pupils investigating the effects of yeast in a sugar and water mixture show good knowledge of living things and understand that air contains oxygen and carbon dioxide. Their knowledge of all the factors that could alter the results of the investigation is good. They can explain with reasons why they are investigating and how they are going to record it. Higher attaining pupils show imaginative thinking when working out how to measure the gas given off from a yeast, sugar and water mixture. Throughout both key stages pupils know and use scientific terminology well. Their general application of literacy and numeracy skills in science is good. Evidence of pupils' scientific knowledge is good in their written work and in their oral work in and out of class; for example, during the inspection week a team of pupils from Years 5 and 6 came second in an inter-school science quiz organised by the nearby secondary school.

108. Throughout the school pupils' progress in science is good. Higher attaining pupils progress well as seen by the number achieving the higher levels in assessments and tests. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They have opportunities to respond to the same range of work as other pupils and receive very good levels of help and support in their work.
109. Pupils have very good attitudes to science. They show a keen interest and enthusiasm and a real enjoyment of lessons was apparent during the inspection. Pupils are anxious to take part in the lessons and are eager to answer questions and contribute ideas for discussion. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent. They work extremely well together sharing both ideas and resources and treat equipment sensibly and safely. They have a good awareness of how important their behaviour is to the safety aspect of experiments.
110. Very good teaching was observed. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly across the year groups, which ensures that pupils of the same year group have similar experiences. They clearly identify what the children are to learn in the lessons. At the beginning of lessons teachers make pupils aware of these intentions by writing them on the board and sharing them orally in the introductory session. In most lessons teachers return to these intentions at the end to establish what has been learned and to make accurate assessments. Planning also includes the provision of tasks for the differing ability groups, including pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. This shows good improvement since the last inspection.
111. All teachers have a secure knowledge of science and in all lessons they emphasised the correct terminology where it was appropriate, which resulted in pupils showing that they understood these words when questioned. Teachers are very skilful in their questioning techniques. They make pupils think and explore and apply the knowledge they have. The attention to literacy and numeracy skills within a science lesson is good and teachers also draw attention to links with other subjects where appropriate. They teach pupils to use a good format for writing up their investigations. However, teachers do not consistently develop older pupils' skills of writing or recording succinctly when explaining what they have done and what happened in an investigation. There are also insufficient opportunities for pupils to use extended writing when they explain the findings of their investigations. In all lessons teachers give very clear instructions to pupils and they check that pupils understand what they have to do. However, some pupils have too few planned opportunities to develop their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in the classes of older pupils in Key Stage 2. There are insufficient opportunities to use information technology in science lessons, such as collecting and interpreting data or word processing reports.
112. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace and in many lessons pupils are given time targets in which to complete work. The management of pupils is excellent and the organisation

of lessons in science is very good. There is hardly any wasted time. All teachers mark work diligently, although there are insufficient comments to inform pupils of what they need to do next. Whilst teachers are good at making known to pupils what they will learn in a lesson there is insufficient guidance given on expectations of written work, including homework. Informative records of achievement are kept and this evidence is used to modify subsequent planning. A good example of the use of assessment occurs in Years 5 and 6 when setting occurs in order to meet the needs of the differing ability groups.

ART

113. Judgements on pupils' progress are made on a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school, discussions with pupils and a review of teachers' planning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in art. This is in line with the judgement made on pupils' progress and attainment in the previous inspection. Pupils' work includes sketching, observational drawing, drawing from imagination, painting, printing and clay work. Their artwork is often directly linked to pieces of written work on specific themes such as their *'Island Adventures'*, their topics about *'The Ancient Greeks'* and the *'North American Indians'* and their mathematics work on studying *'three-dimensional shapes'*. Pupils experiment with different media. They use with careful control pencil, chalk, pastels, paint and water colour. Pupils use the vocabulary of art correctly, for example *'texture'*, *'shade'* and *'tone'*.
114. Pupils successfully build up their knowledge and understanding of a variety of techniques. Pupils in Year 1 experiment very carefully when they transfer their sketches of flowers onto polystyrene squares in order to print patterns. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy a wide and varied range of art experiences that really challenge their understanding of different techniques. For example, as well as painting in the style of artists such as Hodgkin they have the opportunity to study and imitate non-conventional artwork such as that of Andy Goldsworthy, who uses natural objects to construct pictures. Their work also includes experience of more difficult techniques such as *'batik'* and *'camera art'*.
115. The development of pupils' skills is clear to see, for example, their clay techniques become more adventurous and sophisticated, as can be seen from the finished articles. Pupils in Year 1 make colourful and imaginative *'sunset'* pictures using paint and glue. Pupils in Year 5 also make sunset pictures to accompany written work about their journey to the *'Thames Barrier'*. These pictures, however, illustrate well the development of older pupils' skills. They are carefully shaded in pastel to produce soft tones and incorporate paper cutting to add detail. Although there are many examples of pupils' drawing on display around the school, many do not have opportunities to use sketchbooks to jot down various ideas and thoughts on an informal basis and to record the development of their ideas.
116. Pupils enjoy art lessons and talk with enthusiasm about their work. They remember well the different techniques they have used and are keen to explain what they have done. Pupils are interested and involved in their activities. They work purposefully and collaborate well. They persevere very well with tasks and use equipment sensibly and carefully. They listen very carefully and offer thoughtful and considered answers to teachers' questions.
117. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan their art activities very carefully to link in with other aspects of pupils' work such as English, history and geography. These links make the work much more meaningful for pupils and help to show that subjects can be linked without losing any of their individuality. For example, successful links were made between art, mathematics and English when pupils made very detailed sketches of three-dimensional boxes. They then wrote vivid descriptions of them using correct

mathematical vocabulary such as *'The box has two elliptical faces, both of which have a smooth texture. The edges of the box are gilded with a thin gold rim. The box, small enough to fit into the palm of your hand, opens with a tarnished, brass clasp and hinges.'* Currently there are only limited links between art and information technology. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' capability in art can be seen from the high quality of finished items and the care with which they are displayed. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and use praise well with clear, evaluative comments. Their questioning directs pupils' attention to the specific technique or detail they want pupils to concentrate on. They intervene in activities at just the right moment to offer technical advice and support. Art makes a positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. For example, through their awareness of the place of art in the culture of North American Indians, their visits to the school pond to sketch items of interest and the stunning use of colour and texture in some of the displays throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. This represents a considerable improvement in progress and attainment since the previous inspection. Bearing in mind the recent national initiatives for literacy and numeracy and the resulting pressure upon the remainder of the curriculum the school has achieved a considerable measure of success in its work in design and technology.
119. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 1 build on the wide range of experiences that they have had in the reception classes. They show good manipulative skills when making holes in card and joining them together with a split pin to make a lever. They also show good cutting and sticking skills. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have good design and making skills; for example, pupils in Year 2 design a plate of fruit as part of their healthy eating topic. They show good drawing and observation skills and their use of colour is appropriate and not over heavy for a design. Later when making up this plate of food from fruit they constantly refer to their design to ensure that the finished product is similar. In the making process they also show that they can use a knife safely to cut fruit. These same pupils also show that they can begin to evaluate their work when considering how they might improve it.
120. At the beginning of Key Stage 2 pupils extend their work on levers by constructing puppets that have both fixed and moveable joints. They have designed both the front and the back view. Most pupils are successful in converting their designs into models. Another class has designed and made blocks to use in a print design in an art lesson. Pupils' making and manipulative skills when printing are good. Work on display throughout the school shows a good development of skills using a wide variety of materials and construction kits. Topics on the planets have initiated good models of the moon's surface and pupils have used imagination and good knowledge to make moon *'buggies'* from construction kits. Pupils in Year 5 make good links with science in designing, making and evaluating a game using magnets. The oldest pupils in the key stage have studied and designed fairground machines that are quite complex. They have made good models using mechanisms in this study.
121. Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are very good. They are enthusiastic, show considerable pride in their finished items and talk proudly about what they have done. By Year 6 they have developed the ability to constructively criticise their own work. Pupils work very effectively alone and in groups, sharing their ideas and expertise with others. They work safely with persistence and accuracy.

122. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes very good. Teachers are secure in their understanding of the subject. Their planning is good and covers the full range of the design technology curriculum. Teachers are always mindful of health and safety issues when using tools and equipment. Their questioning techniques make pupils think and apply their current knowledge to the new task. The resources for design technology are plentiful, well stored and maintained.

GEOGRAPHY

123. All pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' attainment and progress were judged to be satisfactory. This has been achieved even with the pressures of time due to the language and numeracy initiatives.
124. Lessons were not timetabled in Key Stage 1. Judgements, therefore, are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them. Their work shows that they have a wide range of experiences and the work produced shows good attainment; for example, pupils in Year 1 draw routes around school and show good drawing and labelling skills. Pupils in Year 2 design a treasure island map which shows that drawing and careful colouring skills are further developed. These pupils also show good development in the production of a key for their maps.
125. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 have good observation skills when they look at old photographs of the school and the local environment. They are able to identify changes that have occurred. They show good learning when they apply their observations to predict what might happen in the future. They also have the ability to discuss well the development of the school and other aspects of the local environment. Pupils in Year 4 are good at using various maps to find the names of towns that may have Roman origins. They can also plot and describe routes accurately from one town to another. The oldest pupils in the key stage, preparing for a residential trip to the Isle of Wight, show good map reading skills. They know what a grid reference is and are able to accurately use a four-digit reference to find features on an Ordnance Survey map.
126. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is good overall. Teachers show good planning and use very good questioning techniques to get pupils to think about what they know and apply their knowledge to the new work. The management of pupils is excellent and gives a variety of approaches in lessons which maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers are good at introducing terminology and are very good at ensuring that pupils understand the terms when they are using them. Good links are made with other subjects, particularly literacy. In an excellent lesson in Year 4 history and geography were very closely combined, yet pupils were quite clear that they were concentrating on geography at that time. Whilst marking is always carried out it does not have sufficient comments to suggest how pupils can improve their work and attain higher standards.

HISTORY

127. Judgements on pupils' progress are made from the few lessons observed, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning documents and interviews with pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when attainment and progress were sound.
128. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good comparisons between Victorian hospitals and those of the present day. They illustrate their work well with pictures of cramped and rat infested wards. In their study of Florence Nightingale pupils dressed in period costume and acted

out her life, learning the facts and teasing out the fiction.

129. Pupils in Key Stage 2 study the *'Ancient Greeks'* in Year 3 and correctly use Greek architectural terms when describing buildings. They understand that Greek Gods were prayed to for different purposes. Pupils wrote prayers to Athena, *'To be brave soldiers and to please break the wooden horse'*. One wrote to Apollo, *'please make winter summer because I want a hot birthday'*. Pupils successfully made Greek pots in the style of the geometric period and Trojan trolleys in design technology to carry the Wooden Horse. Pupils in Year 4 correctly label a Roman soldier's armour and through their research learnt that the Romans had an *'efficient fighting machine'* in their army. Pupils in Year 5 are aware of the break with Rome in Tudor times and in their newspaper headline wrote confidently *'Ann in - Catherine out'*. Pupils in Year 6 had made an in-depth study of the Victorians, successfully researching lives of famous people whose inventions changed our lives, for example Marie Curie and Isambard Kingdom Brunel.
130. In all lessons seen pupils understood the work well and successfully deduced information from the examination of sources such as artefacts, pictures and books. From the evidence they had pupils drew good conclusions about the lifestyle, social structure and working conditions of the period. Over time pupils make good progress in understanding chronology, for example through the use of time lines. They also successfully contrast past times with the present day, as was noted in their use of the class mini museum of Victorian irons, kettles and hot water bottles. They also develop historical skills such as the examination of evidence, the principle of cause and effect and the appreciation of bias.
131. Pupils listen well to their teacher's accounts and instructions. They are keen to contribute to class discussions and willingly exchange research information with each other. They talk about their work confidently and work together effectively in joint activities such as finding information or in drama activities.
132. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills as historians as well as extending their factual knowledge. They use resources very well and encourage pupils to find information from a wide range of sources. They set a stimulating range of tasks for pupils. The pupils visit local places such as Colchester when studying the Romans. The visit to Colne Valley Railway for pupils in Year 6 is memorable. All pupils dressed up in Victorian costume and were visited by *'Charles Dickens'* and *'Queen Victoria'*! These visits bring life into history. One pupil wrote of her experience of the old music hall, *'I enjoyed going to the music hall as much as I would enjoy going to the cinema'*.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

133. Attainment is above national expectations by the end of both key stages. The school has made good progress in improving its information technology provision since the time of the last inspection, for example in the improvement of standards and in the provision of better accommodation.
134. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are provided with opportunities to use a computer in their work and they use these regularly, often supported by the teacher or assistants. Their progress is good. They also use programmable robots to understand the sequencing of instructions and to measure and predict distances.
135. In Key Stage 1 pupils can use the computer mouse to move the pointer on the screen and to click on various icons. They are able to experiment with the space bar and the keyboard and quickly show fluency with these peripherals. They have completed some

sound work using a simplified word-processing program or generating computer graphics. They use correct terminology that many have acquired before they start school.

136. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use spreadsheets appropriately to model or record data, but not to simulate events. They have a good understanding of how to build a database and how to search it for information using agreed criteria. They show a good understanding of how to use graphics programs to simulate the work of world-famous artists and they can recall a good range of the tools available.
137. The quality of pupils' learning is good in both key stages in the lessons held in the new information and communication technology suite. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and use programs specifically designed to develop basic skills. More able pupils can use databases held on disk to search for information about entertainment in Ancient Rome. This is, however, a relatively isolated example of the use of information technology as part of their learning linked to other subjects and pupils generally are infrequently challenged in this way. Research work is limited because there is no access to the Internet. This is planned for in the near future. Computers with CD-ROM facilities are occasionally used by pupils to good effect but are not sufficiently accessible for individual research, for example, in the new library. The school's long-term information technology planning is sound. The subject policy and scheme of work provide a focus for the development of skills and the growth of the subject, but there is insufficient guidance about how the best use can be made of computers in other subjects.
138. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good in both key stages. They listen attentively to instructions, concentrate well, react with enthusiasm and handle resources with care. When moving to and from the computer suite they behave very well and no time is lost.
139. The overall quality of teaching in both key stages is good, but the preparation teachers have had in terms of in-service education and training is insufficient. A few teachers have had some basic in-service training to keep abreast of developments but the school acknowledges that training for teachers is urgently required. The procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Teachers already make regular evaluations of what their pupils have learned in information technology, but are intending to use a much more detailed assessment system in the near future. Teachers in some classes keep portfolios of pupils' work which assist the moderation of assessment and the monitoring of individual or group progress when they are rigorously marked. Pupils do not have the opportunity to evaluate their own progress.

MUSIC

140. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in both key stages. Music remains a strong subject, as was found in the last report. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn that instruments made from different materials make different sounds. They sort musical instruments into sets, for example wooden and metal, and then make very good observational drawings. Pupils are very good at listening and they identify tempo easily. Pupils in the reception classes learn to repeat short musical patterns with their percussion instruments, starting and stopping together on the teacher's signal. At the end of Key Stage 1 they listen to different pieces of music, identifying the speed and clapping the beat. They learn new songs and sing well. They listen to classical pieces of music such as *'The flight of the Bumble Bee'*.
141. In Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3 understand musical texture and gradually build a *'thick'* texture by clapping their chest and a *'thin'* texture by clicking their fingers. Pupils in Year 4 know about the pitch and explain scientifically that it is *'due to the varying vibration'*.

Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate a good appreciation of rhythm and are quick to successfully combine lyrics and rhythms. They demonstrate good control of instruments and perform accurately and confidently. Pupils' writing about pieces of music they listen to such as 'The Planets' by *Gustav Holst* contributes to the development of their literacy and also enables them to express feelings and emotions aroused by listening to music. Pupils in Year 6 show a good awareness of reading a musical score and an ability to develop a class composition after listening to gamelan music.

142. Pupils' response to music is good in both key stages. They enjoy music lessons, clap sensibly and sing enthusiastically. They are taught from an early age to treat instruments respectfully, to handle them with care and leave them alone when not actually playing. All pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to others whilst they are performing. They express their ideas clearly and collaborate very well in small groups. An excellent example of this was seen in Year 3 when pupils were discussing their composition of bird and slug music. They worked sensibly, maturely and enthusiastically and enjoyed music. They are proud of their achievements.
143. Good use is made of music as pupils enter and leave assemblies. During the inspection an ex-pupil, now in Year 9 at secondary school, played the piano in assembly and was well received and appreciated by all. The school is fortunate in having a separate music room with a very good stock of instruments, many of which are from other countries. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
144. The teaching observed was good overall in both key stages. In one excellent lesson in Key Stage 2 there were high expectations of task and conduct. The progressively developed lesson produced excellent responses from the class and excellent progress throughout. Teachers are generally confident with the subject, plan well, are very well prepared and have all their resources organised. They give clear explanations to the pupils, ask them challenging questions and listen carefully to their answers. The teaching has a direct effect on the quality of work that the pupils produce.
145. The school employs a specialist music teacher for one day a week. During the school year every class benefits from her musical knowledge and expertise. High standards are set in these lessons and pupils rise to the challenges. She is also responsible for the good quality of the school choir, orchestra and recorder ensemble. There are many opportunities to perform in front of audiences at school and in other events such as Southend Music Festival.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. The progress pupils make in both key stages is at least sound. Many pupils make good progress, especially in swimming at Key Stage 1 and the development of athletic skills in Key Stage 2. All areas of the curriculum, including gymnastics, dance, games, outdoor adventure, swimming and athletics, receive appropriate coverage. Pupils take skills from one area into another, for instance using balance skills from gymnastics and dance in athletics work.
147. During the inspection all pupils had the opportunity to swim in the school's heated, outdoor pool. Many pupils at the end of Year 1 achieve the expected level for Key Stage 2. They swim a distance of over 25 metres using a variety of recognised strokes and have basic skills of water safety. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke and work hard to improve their performance in each stroke. Most pupils can swim for some considerable distance. They are encouraged to watch and evaluate each other's performance in order to improve their own skills.

148. In games lessons pupils develop their ball control skills and make satisfactory progress. Children in the reception classes are able to identify a range of balls and predict what would happen if they bowl them underarm to a partner. They particularly enjoyed the challenge of rolling a rugby ball to a friend, investigating the angle needed to make the ball go to someone standing opposite them. Older pupils develop their ball striking skills, attempting to bat an underarm thrown ball and catch a ball hit by a bat in return. Besides learning the rules for specific ball games pupils also acquire the habits of playing games fairly, taking turns and developing the skills of good sportsmanship that will enhance their future activities.
149. In all lessons pupils are encouraged to be physically active, observe good sporting behaviour, work to improve their performance, follow instructions and be aware of safety procedures, including the rules for games and athletics. Their response to lessons is positive, with all behaviour being good or very good. Pupils concentrate on listening carefully to instructions and persevere to follow those instructions fully. When working in pairs or teams they encourage and support those whose performance is weaker, cheering on the slower runner and praising throwing and catching skills.
150. Teaching is very good overall. The best teaching is characterised by good lesson structures and clear, detailed planning, matched very well to teachers' knowledge of pupils' abilities. Lessons start promptly with no time wasted gathering resources. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so that all know what they are doing and why. Skills are taught in small stages at a pace that enables all to have the opportunity to practise, link together and develop further good practice. Teachers provide good role models, demonstrating skills and using correct technical vocabulary.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above that expected in the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make good progress. This maintains the level of attainment noted in the previous inspection. Celebrations and special events, including weddings and festivals such as Divali are investigated and symbols such as the Menorah at Hanukkah and the cross at Easter are considered. Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments, including those told by Jesus, the story of the life of *Moses* and the *Ten Commandments* are discussed. Key leaders of faiths such as *Guru Nanak* and *Mohammed* are identified. By the end of the key stage pupils are able to name and explain the use of some artefacts that belong to different faiths and especially how they are used in worship. During the inspection pupils in Year 2 were looking at the '*Puja tray*' and home shrines in the Hindu faith and comparing the respect given to them with how they treat their own special things. Pupils in Year 1 were considering miracles such as the change from a small acorn to becoming a beautiful tree.
152. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is generally in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents a lowering of attainment since the last inspection when attainment was above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school uses the '*Open Worlds*' scheme of work that deals with Christianity and other major religions, including Hinduism and Judaism. During the inspection older and younger pupils were considering the Gods of the Hindu faith, especially *Shiva, the Lord of the Dance*, and reflecting upon community and home worship. Pupils discussed the importance of trust in friendships and relationships, using the miracle of the wedding at Cana as an illustration.
153. The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good and is good overall. In the better lessons at both key stages teaching is characterised by clear and detailed planning. In these lessons the focus remained firmly on religious education rather than a

religious theme becoming an art or English lesson. Teachers use discussion well and make links across the curriculum into pupils' lives. Teachers in Key Stage 1 successfully plan opportunities for the youngest pupils to experience a sense of awe and wonder. Some older pupils found their teacher performing a 'miracle' and had the opportunity to discuss the difference between trickery, true miracles and the importance of trust in friendships and relationships, especially that trust is difficult to achieve but easy to lose. These teachers used appropriate resources to support work. They enjoyed very good relationships with pupils in their classes, maintained a good pace and kept lessons moving forward to achieve the objectives set for them.

154. All pupils respond well to their lessons. They behave very well, maintaining their concentration and persevering to complete written tasks. They are enthusiastic in discussions, listening carefully to the teacher and each other. They share their opinions and are prepared to disagree with each other, with clear explanations of their differences. If they are unsure about what they have to do they politely ask their teacher and settle without fuss or bother to written tasks.
155. The curriculum is matched appropriately to a good range of resources and ensures that pupils have the opportunity to visit places of worship in the local community. Members of religious faith groups in the community also visit the school to support the work in religious education and take part in collective worship. Religious education contributes fully to pupils' spiritual and multicultural development, with opportunities planned for them to experience a sense of awe and wonder and learn about the beliefs, faiths and practices of different communities in Great Britain.