

INSPECTION REPORT

**HARWICH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY**

Harwich

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number:114843

Headteacher: Mrs H Allen

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Cole
3369

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th February 2002

Inspection number: 222570

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Fr E Buchanan

Date of previous inspection: 20th March 2000

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
003369	Mr M H Cole	Registered inspector	Science Design and Technology Geography Religious education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
001112	Mr P Oldfield	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitude, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30821	Mr J M Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs	
12261	Ms R Adams	Team inspector	English Art and design History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17710	Ms M Sillifant	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average size primary school of 213 boys and girls aged four to eleven, together with a further forty-nine children aged three to four who attend a nursery class part-time. Inspectors judge the social and economic circumstances of the area from which pupils come to be well below average. There is much low-cost rented housing in the area where families often stay for relatively short periods. As a result the turnover of pupils is exceptionally high. For example, only a minority of pupils leaving the school at age eleven last year had also begun at the school aged five. The general level of attainment of children starting at the school is also exceptionally low. The high level of deprivation in the area and the history of low educational attainment has led to the establishment of an education action zone which supports this and other local schools in raising standards. A very small proportion of pupils (about five per cent) is of minority ethnic background. Some of these have learnt English as an additional language but only a very small number needs and receives extra support in acquiring basic competence in English. About one third of the pupils, an above-average proportion, is identified as having special educational needs. Three pupils, a typical number, have statements of special educational needs. The present headteacher began at the school only five weeks before the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school which currently shows a satisfactory level of effectiveness. It tackles energetically the challenge of pupils' low attainment on entry, the high level of special needs, the high turnover of pupils and the personal and social difficulties many pupils experience. Pupils' work is generally below the national standard but in view of their very low levels of knowledge, understanding and skills on starting school, pupils achieve well. Pupils also make good gains in their personal development as they move through the school, attaining by the age of eleven satisfactory standards in their attitudes and behaviour. The quality of teaching and of leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well, their standards of work and behaviour improving significantly as they move through the school.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them make good progress.
- The teaching and curriculum provided in the nursery and reception classes are good.
- There is good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
- Parents are kept well informed and they have positive views of the school.
- The new headteacher is providing strong leadership to school improvement.

What could be improved

- The allocations of time to writing, numeracy skills, information and communication technology and special needs provision across the curriculum are not appropriately balanced.
- The programme of personal, social and health education needs further development to improve pupils' poor social and communication skills.
- Subject co-ordinators' checks on teaching and learning and their planning for improvement, though improved, are not sufficiently thorough.
- Use of assessments of pupils' progress to set targets for them is not sufficiently precise.
- Resources of books and equipment to support learning are generally inadequate.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At its previous inspection in March 2000 the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The school no longer has serious weaknesses. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is judged to be satisfactory. The most significant weakness identified at the previous inspection was in the quality of teaching, which was unsatisfactory from the nursery class through to Year 3. Teaching in these classes accounted for the twenty per cent of all lessons judged unsatisfactory. Significant improvement has taken place so that teaching at the Foundation Stage¹ is now good and in Years 1-6 it is satisfactory. Only one lesson (representing about two per cent) was judged unsatisfactory during this inspection. The proportion of lessons with good teaching has risen markedly. The full impact of improved teaching has yet to be felt but standards have begun to rise in the last two years. Improved teaching reflects a corresponding improvement in school management in the rigour with which teaching is checked by senior staff and external advisors and in the necessary support and training given to help teachers improve their performance. However, the role of subject co-ordinators generally in checking teaching and learning has not improved sufficiently. Other weaknesses at the previous inspection have also been resolved: the quality of development planning; the provision for spiritual development, the opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to experience the full curriculum and governors' fulfilment of responsibilities in checking the standards achieved and publishing information. All of these aspects of the school's work are now satisfactory. Improved management processes and the new headteacher's strong leadership now give the school a good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools ¹	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	E	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	E	E	C	
science	E	E	D	B	

¹ Similar schools are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

Work seen during the inspection in English and science supports the view from the test results that pupils aged eleven achieve standards in these subjects which are below the national standard. However, in mathematics the work seen shows that standards are improving and are also below, but no longer well below, average. Although their work in all of these subjects is below the national standard, pupils are judged to have achieved well. This is because their attainment compares favourably with that in similar schools, they have made good progress from their very low attainment in their early years and an above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs. Despite the dip in results in 2000 shown in the table, the long-term picture is of a steady rise in standards over the last four years. The school's official long-term targets for whole school test results are not valid in a situation where there is a high turnover of pupils, but most individual pupils achieve the result the school targets for them. Work seen during the inspection was in line with the attainment expected nationally in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In religious education work meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.

¹ **Foundation Stage**: education before pupils enter Year 1, i.e. in the nursery and reception classes

Pupils aged seven taking the 2001 standard National Curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics scored well below average results. There was some improvement in reading and writing in the last two years but results in mathematics have fluctuated. Teachers' own assessments in science in 2001 showed the standard to be well below average. Work seen during the inspection gives a more positive picture of attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science, though attainments remain below the national standard. Again, however, pupils' attainment generally compares satisfactorily with that in similar schools and it compares favourably with the exceptionally low attainment pupils show on entry to the school. Pupils' achievement is therefore judged to be good. In most other subjects work seen during the inspection was broadly in line with the levels expected for pupils' ages. However, work in art is below the standard expected. There was too little evidence of attainment in design and technology for a judgement to be made. At the Foundation Stage, pupils begin with particularly low attainment but progress well; however, at age five their attainment is still well below the national goals for the age-group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Almost all pupils enjoy school and wish to please the teachers. Levels of interest and enthusiasm in schoolwork are average.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Pupils almost always respond well to teachers' direction and obey school rules and routines, but a good many show weak self-discipline when not constantly supervised.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Although many start out very reliant on adult help and direction, most pupils leave the school with a sound ability to act independently and take responsibility. Younger pupils' social skills for sharing, negotiation and dealing with disagreements are weak.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level has improved and is quite close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Consistently well-planned and well-organised teaching is found in the nursery and reception classes. A good and consistent approach to the planning of lessons is also a strength of teaching in Years 1-6. Teachers are clear about what pupils are intended to learn and they help pupils to be clear, too. Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory in lessons devoted to these subjects so that pupils progress well in basic skills. Work in other subjects, though, gives pupils too little practice in writing. In most subjects too little use is made of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. Teaching meets the wide range of pupils' abilities and needs so that all progress appropriately. Provision for pupils of low ability or with special educational needs is thorough. Pupils are soundly managed so that they generally get on with their work and behave satisfactorily.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, but across the curriculum too little time is given to writing and information and communication technology, and some time devoted to special educational needs is not used in the most effective way.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall; there is detailed planning of pupils' work and plenty of staff support for pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils concerned are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall with the strengths in provision for moral and social development. The school council is a very positive feature in helping pupils become responsible members of the community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactorily. Encouragement for, and monitoring of, attendance is a particular strength.

Care for pupils is supported by the good relations the school has with most parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The new headteacher has a good understanding of the school's qualities, a clear vision about how it can improve and evident determination to lead staff in a united drive to achieve improvement. Subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently active in promoting improvement in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors are aware of the school's performance and showing an informed concern about planning for the future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory and improving checks on teaching, learning, pupils' progress and standards are made by senior staff.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses 'best value' principles soundly in attempting to gain the best possible benefits for pupils from the money spent.

The school has adequate resources of staff. The general level and quality of resources of books and equipment for learning is unsatisfactory. The school's present accommodation is unsatisfactory but construction of a completely new school building on a new site is expected to begin in the next few months.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>That their children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like school • make good progress • behave well at school • become more mature and responsible <p>That the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is well led and managed • provides good teaching • expects pupils to work hard • is approachable with questions or problems 	<p>A small minority of parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would like a different amount of homework • would like the school to work more closely with parents • would like more activities outside lessons

Inspectors' judgements support most of the positive views of parents. They find the school is performing at least satisfactorily and sometimes well in the areas praised by parents. The school's arrangements for homework are judged to be satisfactory but inspectors recognise that some inconsistencies and irregularities arise in setting of the work. Inspectors find that relations between school and parents are generally good but note that the new headteacher shares the view of some parents that a closer partnership should be developed. The activities provided outside lessons are judged to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Attainment and achievement of pupils at age eleven as they leave the school

1. In the summer of 2001 pupils aged eleven took standard National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. Compared with the national picture, their results were below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. Detailed analysis of results shows that, in all three subjects, results in recent years have steadily improved at a faster rate than the national improvement. This is also borne out by the more recent evidence from the work seen during the inspection. Recent work in mathematics shows an improvement in standards. This means that in all three subjects of English, mathematics and science pupils' work now achieves a standard which is below the national average. Most pupils achieve the National Curriculum level of attainment (Level 4) expected at age eleven, but the proportion failing to do so is higher than nationally, and the proportion exceeding the expected level (by reaching Level 5) is lower than nationally.
2. Although pupils' attainment is below the national standard their results represent a good achievement. This is because pupils start at the school with exceptionally low attainment and because a high proportion of pupils have special educational needs. The extremely high turnover of pupils at this school also means that many pupils experience some disadvantages when their schooling is interrupted. Despite these factors the school succeeds in helping a majority of pupils to reach the levels of attainment expected nationally of eleven-year-olds. When the school's test results are compared with those of similar schools they are found to be above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. The substantial gains in knowledge, understanding and skills pupils make as they pass through the school are achieved through effective teaching, through the full support given to pupils with special educational needs, and through the school's caring support for pupils. Effective provision for social and moral development also helps pupils to develop attitudes, behaviour and relationships conducive to their learning.
3. Work seen during the inspection was in line with the attainment expected nationally in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In religious education pupils' work meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.

Attainment and achievement of pupils at age seven

4. When seven-year-olds in Year 2 took the 2001 standard National Curriculum tests, their results were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with those for similar schools, the results were average for reading and mathematics, and below average for writing. There was some improvement in reading and writing results between 1999 and 2001, but results in mathematics have fluctuated. The school's own teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in science in 2001 showed the standard of science to be well below average. The work of present Year 2 pupils seen during the inspection paints a more positive picture of attainment than previous test results or teacher assessments. Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving though still below the national standard. However, pupils are judged to be achieving well because of the extremely low level of their earlier attainment and the high proportion

who have special educational needs. Pupils make substantial gains during Years 1 and 2. As with older pupils, effective teaching and the thorough support for pupils with special educational needs are key factors in pupils' achievement.

5. In geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education, work seen during the inspection was broadly in line with the level of attainment expected nationally. In religious education pupils' work meets the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Work in art and design is below the standard expected. There was too little evidence of attainment in design and technology for a judgement to be made.

Attainment of pupils in the reception class (the Foundation Stage)

6. Children start school with exceptionally low attainment, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their personal development. Many are uninterested, unresponsive, isolated and very reluctant or unable to converse with other children or with adults. Good teaching helps pupils make substantial gains and achieve well when their earlier attainment is taken into account. Nonetheless, most children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals for children at age five defined in national guidance for this age-group. Their attainment at age five is well below that typical for the age group.

Comparing groups of pupils

7. Taking several years' test results and inspectors' observations into account, there are no clear and consistent differences in achievement between pupils from different social or ethnic backgrounds, between pupils of different ability levels or between boys and girls. The very few pupils for whom English is an additional language are achieving well.

Progress of pupils with special educational needs

8. Pupils make good progress toward the individual targets set for them. They progress especially well when they receive specific support individually or in small groups from the special needs teacher or support staff. In class lessons where they are not supported individually some pupils are unable to progress toward all of their individual targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to school and this has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils like school and the great majority show interest and involvement in activities. They respond with a positive attitude to the good encouragement and praise which teachers and learning support assistants often give. The school works hard to create a warm learning environment and to make all pupils feel welcome. Support for very young children is strong, which helps them feel very secure. The attitudes in the reception class, described as unsatisfactory at the previous inspection, have improved and are now satisfactory. Although children at the Foundation Stage show limited interest and have difficulty maintaining attention to activities they respond co-operatively to the direction of staff. The majority of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school show a positive attitude towards their work both within the class and when withdrawn to work with the special needs co-ordinator.
10. Behaviour generally is good from the great majority of pupils. Most pupils are happy to follow instructions and respond well when answering questions, showing courtesy and good manners. They often work co-operatively together, for example when sharing

computers in a Year 2 information and communication technology class. Occasionally though, there are some squabbles, as a few pupils in the same class showed, when sharing science equipment.

11. Pupils usually play well together in the playgrounds, which allow young children to have a separate area from older pupils, and provide plenty of space for pupils to develop relationships with friends and conduct their own games. At lunchtime pupils wait their turn for service patiently and behave well as they talk with a friend over their meal. Lunch in the dining hall is, like school assembly, a pleasant and orderly occasion.
12. Pupils show respect for feelings, values and beliefs, such as during assemblies. They reflect silently on matters and generally take part in prayers. A few pupils sometimes are insensitive in their behaviour but there is no evidence of continual oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism. A very small number of incidents is well controlled by the close proximity of assistants and teachers. It has been necessary to exclude, temporarily, only one pupil for poor behaviour in the last school year.
13. There are good relationships between the majority of pupils. Sometimes pupils' poor social skills strain relationships, not all pupils realising how their actions may upset others. There are a very few pupils who are not always able to forge harmonious relationships nor welcome visitors to the school in a responsible manner. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities for duties such as acting as register monitors and classroom monitors. They are sometimes referred to as 'special people', raising their self-esteem. The majority of pupils are polite, open doors for others and stand aside for visitors. In lessons, pupils do not always use their initiative or develop satisfactory independent learning strategies. They are often very reliant upon adult direction and support. This aspect was of concern at the last inspection.
14. The best of pupils' independent thinking and action was demonstrated by the activities of the school council, where a tradition of good support to the elected members has produced good results and allowed them to take an active interest in many areas of school life. During the inspection week, this included the organisation of a Valentine's disco, with the proceeds going to purchase 'wet play' games and equipment.
15. Attendance, whilst still slightly below the national average, has improved consistently. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and has good liaison with the education welfare officer. The number of pupils gaining one hundred per cent attendance certificates each term is quite high. This shows that poor attendance is confined to a small number of pupils whose parents do not support them, and the school, as fully as they should, hindering their children's learning. Attendance has clearly improved since the last inspection. Pupils are punctual.
16. Generally the satisfactory behaviour, attitudes and relationships of the great majority of pupils contribute positively to their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory for pupils aged five to eleven and good at the Foundation Stage. There are examples of good and occasionally very good teaching in all parts of the school but the consistent quality of teaching at the Foundation Stage justifies the view that teaching here is good overall. At the previous inspection teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory from the nursery through to Year 3, and 20 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory. Present evidence shows teaching to be

significantly improved overall, and the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons to have reduced to about two per cent (that is, one lesson of the 48 seen during the inspection). In the school as a whole nearly two-thirds of individual lessons seen during the inspection were of at least good quality. However, the further evidence, for example from examination of pupils' past work, points to some weaknesses and inconsistencies that detract from the overall effectiveness of the teaching. Hence, teaching is judged satisfactory overall.

18. Teaching at the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers work industriously and imaginatively to prepare and resource stimulating activities to help develop pupils' very low levels of knowledge, understanding and skill. Good collaboration with support staff and good co-operation with parents add to the effectiveness of the teaching.
19. The teaching for pupils aged five to eleven is satisfactory in most subjects of the curriculum. This is true of English and mathematics where lessons devoted to these subjects use guidance from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies soundly. However, too few opportunities are taken across the curriculum to give pupils practice in their writing or in their numeracy skills. In history and geography, for example, little writing is done and although a certain amount of writing is undertaken in science it largely consists of copied material. In subjects like science and geography, which can provide good opportunities for pupils to practise measurement and present results as graphs, too few activities of this kind are planned. A notable exception to the general pattern, however, is in Year 4 where both number skills and writing are practised in a range of subjects. Here, science investigations involve some good mathematical work and a design and technology lesson, for example, ends with a good opportunity for pupils to construct their own sentences in which they evaluate what they have made.
20. Teaching across the curriculum also makes too little use of information and communication technology (ICT) both to support learning in the range of subjects and to consolidate pupils' ICT skills.
21. Planning of lessons is generally good and is the most consistently effective aspect of the teaching throughout the school. Planning shows a clear sense of what pupils are intended to learn. The lesson objectives are almost always shared with pupils at the beginning of the lessons and lessons end with a class review of the success with which objectives were achieved. Throughout the school pupils become used to the teachers' references to 'WALT' (*We Are Learning Today*) and 'WILF' (*What I'm Looking For*) as a consistent strategy for highlighting what pupils should be aiming at. These are useful measures which are helping many pupils to start developing a responsible attitude to their learning. An additional strategy recently introduced is to give pupils personal targets set for them to achieve in their work. The headteacher recognises this strategy needs further development to ensure that targets are sufficiently precise and short-term for pupils to understand what is expected and to be keen to succeed, and to ensure that pupils are given frequent feedback when their work is marked on their progress towards their targets. Pupils' work is satisfactorily marked, sometimes with encouraging comments or reward symbols, but clear pointers to improvement are not often given.
22. Although the work given to pupils is usually satisfactorily matched to their level of attainment, there are some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently very high in Year 4, leading at times to some very good progress. Occasionally, expectations in Years 5 and 6 are not high enough, particularly in the setting of investigative work in science. Expectations of the standard of pupils' writing and presentation of work generally are too low in Year 3. Occasionally a small number of the most able pupils in classes are not fully challenged by their tasks.

The school is aware of this, has taken advice and begun to devise a policy for providing more consistently for the most able pupils.

23. The planning of appropriate and challenging work for pupils is helped by the satisfactory assessments of pupils' day-to-day progress which teachers make. Teachers know individual pupils' abilities and needs well and can thus provide for them. Work is suitably adapted and presented to meet the needs of less able children. The school shows a clear commitment to giving pupils, including those with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language, the individual help needed to make proper progress.
24. Support for pupils with special educational needs is based on a close analysis of their needs. Consequently, these pupils are well taught when they are withdrawn for specialist help. As at the time of the last inspection, the specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils take part in carefully chosen activities that engage them mentally, physically and emotionally. As a result, these sessions are productive because pupils realise they are making good progress. Individual education plans are appropriate and very detailed. Sometimes plans contain too many targets to allow the class teacher to focus specifically on the most important priorities within the classroom situation. Consequently, when special needs pupils are taught within the whole class, the teaching does not always take account of all of the targets within individual educational plans. Learning support assistants are well involved in class planning, and they play a valuable role in giving these pupils appropriate help and support. Communication between teachers and support staff is effective and this enhances pupils' learning.
25. Lessons benefit from the sound range of teaching methods which teachers choose to suit particular objectives for the learning. In most subjects, teachers show good knowledge of the subject which leads to clear, confident and sometimes enthusiastic presentation, explanation and demonstration of ideas. Enthusiastic presentation of the work led to very good learning by pupils in Year 5 in science and design and technology lessons; pupils were interested, keen and concentrated well. Skilful and sensitive handling of questions of personal emotion made for very good learning in a Year 6 religious education lesson. A Year 2 science lesson promoted very good learning through an investigation very well designed to help pupils discover the relationship between metals and magnetism, with the challenge suitably varied to the range of abilities in the class. However, tasks such as investigations and problem-solving are not often tackled whole-heartedly and instead there is a tendency for teachers to dominate lessons through direct instruction. This tendency is understandable in that many pupils in this school find difficulty in working on their own, in pairs or in groups; they soon lose concentration and occasionally squabble rather than co-operate. However, a relative lack of opportunity, encouragement and reward for pupils to develop the attitudes and skills of working independently means that these shortcomings are perpetuated.
26. Teachers throughout the school generally manage pupils satisfactorily. They make their expectations clear and use rewards to show pupils what is expected and to give them an incentive to comply. They avoid confrontation and negotiate calmly with pupils. Most pupils respond with good behaviour. Pupils almost always comply with teachers' directions and corrections. On some occasions some pupils fidget during class discussions or become distracted from written or practical tasks. Such behaviour is not deliberately naughty but reflects the fact that many pupils come to this school without an inherent interest in schoolwork and with particularly limited abilities to sustain interest and concentration. A significant number have identified special needs in relation to emotional and behavioural difficulty and there are others, too, whose lives outside

school are sometimes troubled. In meeting the particular challenge that pupils present, teachers and support staff are individually effective but the school lacks a fully consistent set of strategies for managing pupils' behaviour that would make it easier for each member of staff to be successful. The consistency that is proving successful in lesson planning is not so apparent in managing pupils. Individual teachers and pupils have benefited from external advice and support in relation to behaviour but this has not resulted in a detailed policy of shared strategies which all teachers and pupils can understand and respond to.

27. There is a sound published policy for provision of regular homework, with appropriate emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy skills, but the policy is not consistently implemented. Most pupils respond to encouragement to read at home and parents or carers record this in pupils' reading diaries. Most parents value the homework arrangements but some parents and pupils are aware of some inconsistencies and irregularity in the setting of homework.
28. The overall effectiveness of the teaching in the school is reduced by the number of inconsistencies found, for example in the level of challenge in the work, in marking of work, in managing pupils and in using homework. This reflects the fact that monitoring of, and support for, the teaching since the previous inspection has focused mainly on supporting individual teachers, particularly in the younger year groups where teaching was judged unsatisfactory. This activity has been successful in improving the quality of teaching in these year groups and largely eliminating unsatisfactory teaching. The headteacher recognises that monitoring and support for teaching requires further action to remove inconsistency and to disseminate the pockets of good practices so that all teaching adopts them.

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

29. The curriculum for all the pupils meets statutory requirements, as does the teaching programme for religious education. Health education is incorporated into science and taught throughout the school and in two 'health weeks' in the autumn and summer terms. Sex education and drug awareness is taught as part of the science curriculum for the older pupils. In the last inspection a satisfactory whole school curriculum plan was in place and the school was preparing to implement the pending National Curriculum changes that are now in place. The school continues to make satisfactory progress in providing a relevant curriculum. Curriculum provision for the younger pupils has improved and the school has adopted detailed national guidelines. A whole school curriculum plan sets out how the elements of the curriculum subjects are covered across the year groups. Subject policies have very recently been reviewed and the school uses the national guidance from Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work to identify what is taught. This approach has enriched the curriculum but many of these changes are at a very early stage of implementation. Overall the planning still lacks sufficient detail for the older pupils to ensure that teachers set suitably challenging activities for the full range of ability and extend pupils' skills and understanding.
30. The school correctly places emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading, writing and number and the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been very positive in raising standards. However, whereas the high proportion of time allocated to teaching English has raised standards in reading it has not been as successful in writing, speaking and listening. Opportunities to use basic reading, writing,

speaking, number skills, information and communication technology and problem-solving in all subjects are not systematically identified at a whole school level. Teachers' expectations of reading and writing beyond the English lesson are inconsistent. This often results in the standard of pupils' writing in English being significantly higher than in other subjects of the curriculum. Similarly not all teachers pay sufficient attention to the application of number and scientific knowledge to solve problems and this has a negative impact upon pupils' progress. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is underdeveloped and opportunities are missed for pupils to apply their information and communication technology skills to enhance learning opportunities.

31. The work to be undertaken for pupils with special educational needs is defined in considerable detail in individual education plans. The last inspection found that when pupils with special educational needs were withdrawn for support they sometimes missed lessons such as mathematics and science to which they are entitled. The amount of time for the withdrawal of pupils has been significantly reduced since the last inspection and pupils are now supported for mathematics in class and withdrawn for English support only within literacy lessons. The latter arrangement sometimes results in pupils being withdrawn from the entire lesson so that they miss the whole class introduction and concluding sessions and the opportunities they provide to learn, practise and review taught skills. This is unsatisfactory.
32. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported and have full access to the curriculum.
33. Planning is in place to introduce a programme of personal, social and health education in September 2002. Currently all pupils from the age of eight upwards have personal and social education lessons where relationships are explored and interpersonal skills developed. Teachers provide some opportunities at registration and other times in the school day for pupils to take responsibilities. The school council continues to provide very good grounding in citizenship and the recently introduced play leader scheme has helped pupils understand that negotiation is an important skill when learning to get along together harmoniously. However, it is apparent that the pupils require a more systematic whole school approach that sets out expectations of their personal development as they progress through the school so that they develop appropriate personal and social skills.
34. School visits and trips are planned as part of the curriculum and good use is made of local museums and places of interest to extend pupils' learning experiences. The older pupils take part in a residential school trip every other year. This provides excellent opportunities for pupils to experience living and working together on a curriculum project. For many pupils it is the first experience away from home and makes a positive contribution to widening their horizons. A satisfactory range of activities outside lessons successfully enriches the curriculum. The school is able to augment its limited physical education facilities and widen learning opportunities through their membership of the education action zone. There are musical activities and a range of sporting activities for pupils to meet and compete against other schools in football, netball, cross-country running, rounders, cricket and swimming. However there are only limited opportunities for much needed study support for pupils to develop interests and a love of learning. The Round Table has agreed to provide financial support to the chess club so that new equipment can be purchased.
35. The school has good links with the local community, including a local church, which add to pupils' learning opportunities. There has been generous support from a number of local and national firms, including the opportunity for some pupils to make a sea voyage

to Europe. Support has been forthcoming from business organisations to pay for a pond to be constructed to enrich learning, and to create the aesthetically pleasing rest areas of the older pupils' playground. The school has a satisfactory relationship with partner institutions. The school has cross-curricular links with the local secondary school and enjoys annual events for all feeder primary schools including a book week and a mathematics trail.

36. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and successfully achieves its aim to develop a school where care for others is valued and co-operation is positively encouraged. Good provision for moral and social development and satisfactory provision for cultural development has been maintained since the last inspection and opportunities to develop spiritual awareness, unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, are now satisfactory.
37. The spiritual development of pupils is supported through assemblies, religious education and circle time, when pupils sit in a circle and are encouraged to speak about their own thoughts, feelings and concerns. There are links with local faith communities and Year 3 visit a local Anglican church as part of their work in religious education. Children are given the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and are encouraged to understand human feelings and emotions. This was clearly seen during Year 5 and Year 6 religious education lessons where pupils considered milestones in life and discussed with maturity and sensitivity issues such as birth, death and marriage. In one class the discussion was effectively concluded with all pupils lighting a candle, reflecting on special occasions in their own lives and saying a personal prayer giving thanks for people special to them. Nevertheless, as during the previous inspection, the school does not always take full advantage of opportunities across the curriculum to enable pupils to appreciate the exciting nature of the world in which they live or to reflect on their own feelings. Where this is encouraged, as was seen in a Year 1 science lesson on growth, encouraging a sense of awe and wonder has a positive impact on pupils learning. Assemblies, which are sometimes led by pupils, provide opportunities for reflection, celebrate achievement and successfully create a sense of community. The variety and quality of assemblies has improved greatly since the last inspection and are appreciated by parents and children. In contrast to the last inspection pupils sit quietly and sensibly during acts of worship and show a sense of reverence when stories are told or when prayers are spoken. This was clearly seen in a whole school assembly led by the chairman of governors who is a local Anglican minister. The daily act of worship fully meets statutory requirements.
38. The school's approach to improving the moral understanding of pupils is very effective and plays a strong part in their personal development. The very good relationships that exist, and the good example set by all who work in the school, effectively support pupils' moral development. Pupils think staff are fair in their treatment of them and inspection evidence confirms this. Themes used in assemblies and 'circle time', when pupils discuss personal views and issues together, enable pupils to consider and assess moral issues such as honesty, trust, fairness and tolerance and this has a positive effect on the pupils' behaviour. A recent initiative run in conjunction with the local police, 'Rhyme against Crime', allowed the pupils to discuss moral and social issues. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Because they enjoy coming to school and feel secure and valued there, they learn to respect school rules and the needs of others in the school community.
39. The provision for the social development of pupils is good and is closely linked with their moral development. Pupils are encouraged to relate to one another positively and treat each other with respect and understanding. Staff show concern for the physical and

emotional wellbeing of the children and encourage pupils to develop moral and social skills. Teachers strive to show care, patience and respect for pupils in the way they manage them, avoiding aggression and confrontation and offering reward and encouragement. The school values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. Older children for example, act as playleaders and organise games and activities for younger children. They undertake their responsibilities in a sensible and conscientious manner and are often approached to resolve minor conflicts in the playground or can be seen talking to individual pupils if they appear to be worried or upset. The recently introduced play leader scheme seeks to encourage pupils to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. This is already having a positive impact on relationships at playtime and lunchtime. The school council successfully represents pupils' views and has been responsible for raising money to purchase games for wet playtimes, initiating improvements to the local environment by developing garden areas and organising social events. The work of the school council together with activities in personal, social and health education and discussions during circle time helps pupils to acquire the skills of citizenship. The school helps pupils understand their wider social responsibilities through supporting many charities. Children are currently collecting foreign coins for the Christian Aid charity and throughout the year have raised money for the Royal British Legion and the local Homestart charity. A study in geography by Years 5 and 6 pupils has caused the pupils to reflect well on the importance of water in countries where it is scarce, thereby developing an understanding of world citizenship.

40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own culture is developed across the curriculum through subjects such as history, art and design, geography and music and is enhanced through a programme of educational trips. The study of other cultures has been promoted through the school's teaching of religious education and the study of faiths other than Christianity. During an assembly, for example, the children enjoyed a visit from a member of the Islamic faith community who helped pupils appreciate the beliefs and culture of Muslim people. Opportunities for children to appreciate the richness and diversity of non-European cultures have been enhanced since the last inspection, particularly through the revised programme for religious education, and provision is now satisfactory. Children are beginning to have a greater awareness of the multicultural society in which they live and are able to discuss similarities and differences between different faiths other than their own. Some opportunities continue to be missed however to develop pupils' understanding of non-European cultures and their multicultural society through, for example, access to books, artefacts or examples of non-European music. The range and quality of library books is inadequate and the presentation of the library does too little to generate interest in, and an enthusiasm for, books.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. School staff are committed to providing for the often considerable needs of its pupils for care and support. They are caring and helpful in the relationships they make with pupils and their parents. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory and the school generally has a high regard for matters of health and safety. There has been appropriate checking of electrical appliances and fire equipment, and regular fire drills are held. The school has good procedures for dealing with minor accidents, including staff who are suitably qualified in first aid. The school is safe and secure.
42. There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Class teachers mark the registers clearly and work closely with the school clerical staff to ascertain

reasons for all absences. Despite the good procedures and good liaison with the local authority's education welfare officer, a few parents condone regular absences and despite continual requests do not provide explanations to support absences. The high incidence of unauthorised absences does not support the hard work of all concerned in raising attendance levels and reduces the learning opportunities of some pupils.

43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. Occasional instances of poor behaviour are well managed. Many of the pupils give few causes for concern but a few pupils do not control their behaviour well in informal situations like the playground at lunchtime. This is not helped by the fact that management of behaviour in the playground is inconsistent and the response to problems is often to direct the pupils to see the busy headteacher. Such matters can be very time consuming. The school's behaviour code was initially prepared with the pupils' school council but school staff as a whole have not agreed a detailed policy of strategies for managing behaviour that can be consistently applied. There are sometimes differences in expectations of behaviour between staff members and variations in class rules. This confuses pupils and hinders each staff member's management of behaviour. A positive feature, though, is the system of house points for good work and effort which leads to a weekly celebration assembly. Those pupils who receive points and certificates show pride in their achievements. The work of a visiting behaviour support team is having a very positive effect on pupils with challenging behaviour.
44. Procedures for keeping a check on pupils' progress have improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. However, some shortcomings remain. Effective procedures include a programme of annual reading and mathematics tests which are used well to judge pupils' from year to year. Implementation of the local education authority's pupil target tracking programme is beginning to be used by the new headteacher to analyse assessment results to identify areas where pupils do well and where they need to improve. The information is also used effectively to plan additional support pupils may need to meet individual learning needs. All pupils have a personal record of their academic progress and personal development that is used to monitor their progress over time. Assessment of progress is best in English and mathematics. In most other subjects some assessments are made but they are not usually precise enough to show teachers and pupils the exact next steps in learning each individual needs to take. Some teachers evaluate what pupils have learned each day concentrating on what precisely pupils know and can do. Where this happens, teachers use the information effectively to plan the next step in learning to promote progress. But the practice remains inconsistent across the school and inhibits continuous improvement. The use of setting clear and specific targets in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection and targets are sufficiently focused to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. But the effectiveness of the strategy still varies as a few pupils are working on targets that are over three months old while other have targets that concentrate simply on presentational skills such as writing on the top line of a page.
45. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. The teachers and all the adults know the pupils very well. There are good opportunities provided in the personal and social and health programme to develop pupils' self-esteem. New children in the nursery are helped sensitively, and with good co-operation with parents, to settle into an unfamiliar environment. Throughout the school, all pupils are helped to feel valued and included. Where needed, a 'concerns box' is maintained and this indicates where personal support is needed.

46. The school cares well for those of its pupils who need particular attention in their learning and behaviour. There is good and appropriate liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, classroom teachers, classroom support assistants and outside agencies, such as the behavioural support unit. The special needs governor is fully involved in this area of the school's provision, meets regularly with the co-ordinator, and keeps the governing body fully informed. The special needs co-ordinator maintains a register of special educational needs pupils and there are good procedures for placing pupils on the register, for keeping parents informed, and for reviewing progress regularly. The school fully meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of educational needs.
47. The small number of pupils in public care have personal education plans prepared by the special needs co-ordinator which give careful thought to pupils' personal development requirements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents think well of the school. They fully support its work and are appreciative of the good efforts made by the staff and governing body to provide an adequate education in the face of problems presented by the poor accommodation and by the personal, social and economic disadvantages of many pupils. A number of parents felt there were insufficient activities outside lessons. Inspectors disagree with this view.
49. Many parents expressed full satisfaction with the opportunity the school provides for them to meet class teachers on any Wednesday afternoon, after school, to discuss any concerns. Some parents do not feel the school works closely with them but inspectors find that the school does provide good opportunities for parents to fully understand progress and personal issues of their children. Older pupils have homework set every night, preparing them well for secondary school. Homework is not set every night for other pupils but most take a reading book home and a diary in which parents record pages read with their children and insert comments.
50. There are satisfactory links with parents which support the school's work. The school values these links and tries to meet parents' needs and expectations. The school welcomes parental involvement and a small number of parents regularly help in school. The active parent and teacher association provides good opportunities for staff and parents to meet socially and holds regular fund-raising events to purchase resources.
51. The quality of information provided for parents is good overall. Parents regularly receive good quality information from the school and the school brochure has been revised to contain all information required by law. Parents of very young children entering the nursery are provided with good information about the life and work of the school. The governing body's annual report omits some minor details of required information. Annual reports on pupils' progress are of good quality. They explain clearly how well pupils are doing in relation to what the National Curriculum expects and state targets that tell parents what their children need to do to improve their work. Relevant comments about pupils' personal development are also made. The school provides good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress, through open evenings held in each term.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The overall quality of the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory but a particularly positive feature is the strong leadership which is being provided by the new

headteacher. In the few weeks since her appointment the headteacher has introduced a number of valuable changes. She has been quick to gain a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, a clear vision of the school's future and the support of her staff in striving for improvement. Already the new headteacher is formulating detailed and appropriate plans for the further improvement of the school.

53. The school has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection when it was found to have serious weaknesses, especially in the quality of teaching and in the role of senior management in checking the quality of teaching and learning. These aspects are now satisfactory. The previous inspection gave the school a long and challenging list of matters requiring attention. The school's response has been to give appropriate emphasis to the main priorities of improving teaching and raising standards in literacy and numeracy. A good measure of success has occurred here. This has been achieved during a period of some instability resulting from the retirement of the previous headteacher, which was followed by a term during which the school was led by the deputy headteacher as acting headteacher. Some other areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection remain to be fully resolved, in particular the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators and the use of assessments of pupil progress.
54. Since the previous inspection the school has been well supported by the local education authority and by the Clacton and Harwich Education Action Zone set up to help schools in the area raise standards. Personnel from both organisations have made many visits to the school to monitor the quality of teaching and provide teachers with advice, training and support where necessary. The school has valued this aid which has helped to raise the quality of teaching alongside the school's own appraisals of teachers and the considerable amount of training organised to help teachers and support staff develop their skills. Two teachers, new to teaching as well as to the school, have been well supported and guided.
55. External support, and the work of the deputy headteacher and the new headteacher, has improved the processes for keeping a check on the quality of teaching and learning. Many subject co-ordinators, however, are not yet sufficiently active in checks on the teaching and learning in the subjects for which they are responsible, or in using the insight gained to plan improvements. They have an imprecise appreciation of strengths and weaknesses in the subjects and this means a lack of clarity about the action necessary to bring about improved teaching and learning and higher standards. This was a concern at the previous inspection. There has been some improvement, particularly in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science, but further development in subject co-ordinators' effectiveness remains a necessity.
56. Improvement since the previous inspection has been particularly evident in the planning of lessons which now shows a good degree of consistency in practice throughout the school. This has been especially beneficial in improving teaching. However, in some other areas of teaching and the life of the school, inconsistencies are found, which reflect past shortcomings in school management. There are, for example, inconsistencies in the management of behaviour, in setting of homework, in the marking of pupils' work and in setting targets for pupils. The new headteacher has already recognised that such inconsistency is diminishing the school's effectiveness and has plans to tackle it. She understands that in the past members of staff have operated in a somewhat independent way and that further improvement demands that staff work more closely together to share their expertise for their mutual benefit and to agree whole school approaches to all of the school's work.

57. In a school where many pupils experience personal difficulty, social disadvantage or have special educational needs the leadership of the school gives appropriate emphasis to the need to ensure all pupils are equally included in opportunities to learn and to prosper personally at school. This concern is expressed, for example, in the good provision where the needs are greatest, with the youngest pupils and with pupils with special educational needs. The work of the Foundation Stage and the provision for special educational needs are well managed. The management of the provision for special educational needs fully meets the requirements of the national statutory Code of Practice. However, the special needs co-ordinator, whilst providing very good individual and small group teaching, is insufficiently involved in monitoring the provision for special educational needs within the classroom situation.
58. Members of school staff are united in their caring approach to pupils, many of whom have considerable need for personal as well as academic support. Senior staff give much time to counselling pupils and parents about their difficulties, both within and beyond school, and to meetings with agencies from outside the school. The deprivation in the area, the troubled lives of many pupils and the extremely high turnover of pupils lead to demands on the staff's time considerably greater than in the typical school. External agencies, such as those of the local authority, give good support to the school within their resources of time. However, it remains the case that the extra burdens on the school imposed by its challenging situation make excessive demands on the time of senior staff, especially the headteacher, and encroach on the time available for managing and improving the school. Currently the demands of managing the school are met only because of the willingness of the headteacher to devote personal time to these tasks.
59. At the previous inspection school governors were considered to make too little use of statistical information in keeping a check on the school's performance. Training and advice from the local authority have helped improvement here. Several governors are very new to the role but the chairman and a few other longer-established governors now have a sound appreciation of data measuring the school's performance. Governors now visit the school regularly, and individually take interest in the work in particular subjects. Governors have a satisfactory sense of appropriate priorities for the development of the school.
60. School governors carried out the important task of appointing their new headteacher systematically and effectively. At first, the vacant post attracted few candidates, none of whom were judged suitable by governors. Governors therefore decided to postpone the appointment until further applicants had been sought and to appoint the deputy as acting headteacher in the meantime. This illustrates a general difficulty facing the school's attempts to improve – the few teachers applying for vacant posts.
61. The school has an adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers and a good number of support staff to give the much needed help required by the many pupils with low attainment and with special educational needs. Both teachers and support staff have benefited from a good deal of recent training which accurately reflects both the school's specific needs, individuals' particular responsibilities and appraisals of staff needs for development of their skills. One learning support assistant has received special training for helping pupils with English as an additional language.
62. One consequence of considerable expenditure on staff training has been a corresponding lack of expenditure on learning resources in recent years. As a result, the school's resources of books and equipment are generally unsatisfactory. In no subject are the resources any more than barely adequate and in several subjects there are

shortages, including library books, science apparatus, musical instruments, physical education equipment and resources to help Foundation Stage pupils gain knowledge and understanding of the world.

63. The present very old buildings allow for all aspects of the National Curriculum to be taught, except in the case of physical education where there is no suitable space for storing or using large gymnastic apparatus. However, the building provides a poor environment for learning. The cramped classrooms, low ceilings along some corridors and poor state of some areas of the building mean that a move to a new building is of some importance. The library area is inadequate for a school of this size. The playing field of the school is some distance from the main buildings across a busy main road. This area is considered a public walking space, with the consequence that games have less than satisfactory facilities. The school currently tries to make careful use of its present space. A recent alteration has allowed reception class pupils to use the young children's play area so that they can play away from older and sometimes boisterous pupils.
64. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources of funds, staff and materials. The governing body's finance committee is effectively managed by a knowledgeable chairman and exercises an appropriate oversight of the school budget. The most recent audit found procedures for financial management to be good and the school has already acted upon the minor recommendations contained within the report. Finances are carefully managed and the effects of spending decisions are closely monitored. Issues of 'best value' are well understood and pursued. Specific grants received by the school for additional support for pupils with statements of educational needs are used effectively for that purpose. Additional grants received for other special purposes are also correctly applied. The hard working office staff efficiently manage the day-to-day administration of the school and play a wider role by establishing a caring and sensitive ethos when dealing with parents and visitors.
65. Taking account of pupils' academic and personal gains, the quality of their education, the challenging context in which the school works and the level of available funds, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1) Adjust the use of time within the curriculum to ensure all pupils have sufficient opportunity to develop essential skills by:
 - giving more time across the subjects of the curriculum to opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate or develop skills in:
 - writing their own sentences and paragraphs,
 - numeracy,
 - information and communication technology;
 - ensuring, when groups of pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from classes for work in literacy, that they do not miss elements of literacy lessons covered in classes.
(Paragraphs 19, 20, 30, 97, 105, 110, 111, 135)
- 2) Further develop the programme of personal and social education to improve pupils' personal development and their social and communication skills so that they:
 - listen well,
 - share co-operatively,
 - negotiate and resolve disagreements effectively,
 - work productively and behave well independently, in pairs or in groups.
(Paragraphs 10, 12, 13, 26, 33)
- 3) Improve subject co-ordinators' effectiveness in promoting improvement in their subjects by:
 - developing understanding and use of processes for checking the effectiveness of teaching and learning through direct observations and through assessments of pupils' work and progress;
 - using close analysis of the results of their checks to plan and implement effective action for improvement;
 - supporting senior management in extending good practice in teaching and reducing inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, management of pupils, marking of pupils' work, and setting of homework.
(Paragraphs 28, 44, 55, 97, 106, 113, 116, 120, 125, 129, 137, 144, 154)
- 4) Increase the precision with which assessments of individual pupils' progress are used to set and review targets for further progress by
 - making targets sufficiently clear, concrete and short-term for pupils to understand;

- giving frequent feedback to pupils on their progress against these targets during lessons and in marking of their work.

(Paragraphs 21, 44)

- 5) Improve resources of books and equipment to support learning by conducting a full audit in each subject of the sufficiency of resources to teach the full curriculum and by making good the shortages identified.

(Paragraph 62)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improving work in art and design in Years 1 and 2 by widening the range of learning opportunities;

(Paragraphs 114, 115)

- making individual education plans for pupils with special needs more helpful to teachers in planning lessons by highlighting a manageable number of high priority targets;

(Paragraphs 24)

- paying more attention to investigation and problem-solving in mathematics and science;

(Paragraphs 100, 108, 111)

- ensuring support and supervisory staff join with teaching staff in a consistent use of agreed strategies for managing behaviour;

(Paragraphs 26, 43)

- further developing partnership with parents to strengthen teamwork in supporting pupils' learning.

(Paragraphs 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	22	17	1	0	0
Percentage	0	17	46	35	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents just over two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	213
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	80

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	74

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	66
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	51

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	1.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	12
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	20	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (67)	72 (77)	86 (87)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	21	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (67)	79 (90)	83 (70)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	5	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	9	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (61)	50 (50)	94 (69)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (61)	56 (50)	89 (67)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. *Too few pupils to be significant.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	202
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1
Average class size	30.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	501,803
Total expenditure	477,991
Expenditure per pupil	2,310
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,460
Balance carried forward to next year	28,272

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	269
Number of questionnaires returned	82

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	24	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	34	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	48	6	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	29	11	4	18
The teaching is good.	60	34	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	34	9	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	34	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	40	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	50	35	12	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	45	39	7	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	1	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	37	21	7	16

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

66. The children enter the nursery either in September or January at three years old and attend either a morning or afternoon session for between two and five terms before transferring into the reception class when they are in school full time. At the time of the inspection there were forty-nine part-time children in the nursery and twenty-eight full-time reception children. Less than 20 per cent of children entering the school at three years old have any previous playgroup experience. Before the children are admitted the nursery, staff establish some links with the parents and send them a 'Welcome to the Harwich Community School' booklet. There are plans to improve this booklet for next year by adding more illustrations and making it easier to understand. Relationships with parents and carers, who all come into the nursery to bring and collect their children, is good. There is always a member of staff, usually the nursery teacher, ready to talk to them and answer any queries.
67. During their first week in the nursery the children are assessed individually using the Essex early years assessment and this is repeated later in the year to check progress. This year the initial test identified 25 per cent of the children to be put on the Essex register for special educational needs. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally very poor. They make good progress in all areas of learning while in the Foundation Stage. However, at the end of the reception year children's attainment is still well below average. This is confirmed by the school's most recent formal assessments at the end of the reception year which showed that no pupils demonstrated the average level of attainment for their age.
68. The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. The quality of teaching is good overall; lessons are properly prepared and resourced, and often supported by the teachers' own made equipment. The experienced nursery nurse and all other ancillary staff make a full and valuable contribution to the work of the nursery. As far as it is possible children with special educational needs are included fully in all activities.
69. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is closely linked to the nationally recommended six areas of learning although this is not identified in the whole school planning outline. Planning and assessments are good. A timed daily outline plan ensures the best possible use is made of the time the children are in the nursery. The planning sheets establish some good links between areas of the activity-based curriculum. Information from day-to-day assessments is transferred onto a profile of each child and all observations and assessments are used to inform planning. Now that they are well established in the school the teachers plan to increase the liaison between the nursery and reception classes. At the present time some nursery children go into the reception class at the end of the morning and all children join in a twenty minute singing and rhyming session each week. Nursery and reception children are not given the opportunity to play together in the specially designated playground.
70. The staffing of the nursery is satisfactory. There are two experienced teachers in their first year at the school, a full-time qualified nursery nurse and three learning support assistants, two of whom job share. There is no extra support for the large number of children with special educational needs. One volunteer parent gives some well-appreciated help. There is good liaison with the local agencies including health visitors and the school nurse who is often in the school.

71. The accommodation for the nursery class is satisfactory. The toilet facilities and the large, securely fenced and attractive outside play area are accessible directly from the nursery classroom. The reception class children also have direct access to the playground but their toilet facilities are situated too far from the classroom and this is unsatisfactory. All the reception children stay at school at lunchtime. They have to walk some distance to the dining hall accessed directly from a playground. The children have their own lunchtime play area and some provision is also made for them to have contact with the older pupils.
72. The resources for the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. Outside play equipment and the provision for sand and water play is good but there are few storybook visual aids and too few collections of people, animals, vehicles and natural objects. There is a shortage of matching and sorting games and of furniture and equipment for the home corners.

Personal and social development

73. The pupils enter the nursery with poor social skills. They are not curious and do not interact with their peers. After six months in the nursery they still find it difficult to settle to any activity unless there is support from an adult. In the reception class, when given a choice of activities they usually choose water or sand play or go into the home corner. They have very little self-confidence and their poor language skills mean they do not acquire enough knowledge from an activity unless there is an adult constantly explaining and reinforcing verbally what they are doing.
74. The children's social skills develop slowly. There is very little aggression but the children are isolated in their play. They do not share their achievements with each other, turning automatically to a member of staff. Towards the end of their time in the Foundation Stage some children have a reasonable knowledge of what is right and wrong and are beginning to develop an understanding of simple moral values. They show an interest in anything new but their interest is very short-lived. Children are unwilling to take turns playing with an object such as a hoop. They do not want to relinquish any object they have in their hands. Children who are five years old still find it difficult to dress and undress themselves, they are very slow and often require adult help. At least half the time allocated to a physical education lesson is taken up with changing clothes and shoes and getting the children to and from the hall. Children do not help each other. They appear happy to be at school but right through the Foundation Stage there are several children who find it difficult to sit still or pay attention for longer than a few minutes.
75. A small number of children are unwilling to conform in any situation and would prefer to just wander around all day. These children are very demanding of adults' time. The staff, who show patience and fortitude, manage these and all the other children well. They follow a good, well thought out and brisk daily programme in an endeavour to develop the children's social and personal skills. This includes a 'snack time' when all the children sit around a table with an adult and partake of food and a drink. The parents pay for this. In spite of many months practice many children in the nursery find it difficult to name a choice from two drinks on offer.
76. Teaching is good. All staff understand the children well and they endeavour constantly to improve the children's skills in this area of the curriculum. Nevertheless the majority of the children will be well below the expected levels at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Communication, language and literacy

77. When they enter the school children have poor communication skills. Some children are unable to talk and find it very difficult to respond to, or follow, spoken instructions. The progress they make is good. Most pupils, before they leave the nursery class speak in single words or short phrases. By the time they are in the middle of the reception year some can speak in full sentences and offer information to their teacher. However, there is still a number of children who have a very limited vocabulary.
78. Listening skills are poor. Children are unsettled and do not listen well to a story. In the reception class most appear to be listening but no child could think up imaginary names for two bears even though the teacher provided stimulating visual aids. The children respond best to very fast moving, short lessons such as one on the spelling of two letter words where the teacher says and spells the word and this is then repeated by the children. This simple repetition was too difficult for about a quarter of the class. When the children are given the opportunity to choose an activity they never look at books although there are attractive ones easily accessible. Occasionally two or three children, with encouragement, will look at a book with an adult, and the teacher sometimes directs the whole class to sit on the carpet and look at a book for a few minutes while they are waiting for everyone to change their clothes.
79. The majority of children in the reception class are reluctant to write although some can copy their name. In one lesson, few children chose to follow a spiral shape with a felt pen but with encouragement from the teacher they assembled in groups to try. The resulting work was poor. The children find writing too difficult and although they have some pencil control, marks are erratic. Many cannot draw between two lines accurately. Some children have coloured in owl shapes but the colouring is thin and uneven.
80. Teaching is good and lessons well planned with interesting books and support materials. Generally the teachers develop the children's language well. However, in all areas and aspects of language and literacy the children's attainment will be well below the expected levels at the end of their reception year.

Mathematical development

81. Teaching is good in mathematics and the children make good progress. Counting activities are provided throughout the day, and the teacher's constant incidental use of number vocabulary helps to develop the children's understanding. In the reception class practical materials are not always on hand to support the learning of the children with very poor vocabulary. Teachers plan their lessons well, often linking imaginative activities to another area of the curriculum such as the story of the Chinese New Year.
82. The children enter the school with poor mathematical skills and their achievement will be well below average in most areas of mathematics when they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. Their attainment in number and counting will be below average. Throughout the Foundation Stage all the children sing number rhymes and songs every day. Although not all children join in they listen to each other and most show understanding and some pleasure. Some children in the reception class responded well when the teacher endeavoured to bring an understanding of even and odd numbers using quoits placed in pairs, sometimes with an extra one added to make it 'odd.' The majority of the children counted the quoits and showed understanding of this concept by the end of the lesson. About half the children have difficulty naming numbers above ten accurately although they can count to above ten identifying the next number and take one away from numbers below five. Some pupils identify a number by pointing. The

children cannot identify shapes and their mathematical language is well below average. They cannot understand concepts such as 'same size' and 'similar' and do not understand when asked to count the sides of a cube. Number vocabulary is poor. In the reception class the teacher links positional language such as 'in front of' and 'beside' to physical activities and the children respond well to this, and although many have difficulty in understanding they watch and learn from each other.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children will be well below the nationally expected level in this area of the curriculum. Teaching is satisfactory. Individual lessons such as exploring the properties of ice and soapy water are well planned and executed. The adult working with the groups ensures all the children have a turn at the activity and she keeps a careful individual record of their knowledge and understanding. In order to improve the children's vocabulary she engages their interest by making the activities attractive and exciting, demonstrating what can be achieved and talking constantly. The children really enjoy these lessons and learn well from them. There are sand and water trays in both the nursery and reception classes. These are stocked with toys and apparatus and are well used by the children. The potential these activities have for developing language is not always fully exploited because there is no extra adult to help the children learn through play.
84. The resources for this area of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. There is, for example, just one set of farm animals shared by the two classes. Bringing understanding of the world we live in to the children is hindered by a lack of materials such as furnished dolls houses with play people or zoo buildings and animals.
85. There is satisfactory provision for information and communication technology. Some of the nursery, and most of the reception, children show they can control a computer mouse and make full use of suitable programs. The computers in the classrooms are constantly in use and the reception class is timetabled to use the computer suite. This is difficult because of the short attention span of many of the children. The programs are suitable and include a variety of matching and early mathematics activities, and simple word recognition games.
86. Outdoor play provision is good and links this area of the curriculum with creative and physical development. An adult is always with the children and she talks to the children, for example, encouraging them to draw with chalk and explain what they are doing.

Creative development

87. The children's creative development is poor when they enter the nursery. They do not have a sufficient knowledge of language to help them think creatively and most of their energy is used up in making sense of the world they find themselves in. All staff work hard to try and encourage creative activities and are constantly making suggestions and connections to help the children's thinking. Teaching and progress are good. Nevertheless the children's attainment will be well below average at the end of the Foundation Stage.
88. In both the nursery and reception classes displays are well thought out to link creativity and language development. Many displays portray a story such as an 'Elmer in the Snow' picture. In a nursery craft activity the children stuck coloured squares on an elephant outline. The children worked in groups with an adult and the activity also linked with colour recognition and personal development as the children were given opportunity

to choose their colours and name them. There are well thought out displays. One shows a birthday train. Another depicts night and day, with links to the weather, showing photographs of the children in summer or winter clothes. In the reception class all three main displays link to a story and show a large input from the children. A variety of techniques and materials are used including collages with tissue paper and wool, bats made of cellophane and finger-painted owls. The children sing every day and enjoy this activity, although several individuals do not join in.

89. Of particular note during the inspection was a visit to the nursery of a creative arts theatre group. They worked with both morning and afternoon children following a theme on 'growth.' The sessions were very valuable, linking through movement and art how a cocoon develops into a butterfly, an egg into a chick and a tree from a seed. Good social development took place during this day. A few of the identified special needs children could not sustain their interest for the whole session.

Physical development

90. Children enter the nursery with well below average physical development and during their time in the Foundation Stage they develop unevenly. Development is good in most areas of the curriculum but poor in mark making and drawing which require hand/eye co-ordination and a firm grip. Overall the children's progress is satisfactory but their development will be below average when they leave the Foundation Stage. When engaged in outside play or in physical education lessons in the hall, the children show an appreciation of safety measures and find their own personal space and make good use of it. They do not bump into other children and, sometimes through watching others, follow the teacher's instructions carefully. Physical development of the nursery children during the outside play is good. They are encouraged to climb, catch and throw and there is always an adult to encourage them and ensure their safety. Whenever the weather is suitable the children prefer this kind of activity. The reception children like to paint their own created models but their control of the paintbrush is uneven. The teacher allows for this by covering the children's clothes well and also the tables. Teaching is good. One good reception lesson in the school hall was very well thought out. Valuable links were made with language and mathematical language development throughout the lesson and children made good progress.

ENGLISH

91. Standards in English are below those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven, but they are steadily improving. The school's results in the 2001 reading and writing statutory tests show that, although the school has difficulty in getting about one third of the pupils up to nationally expected standards, particularly in writing, more able pupils do as well as pupils in other similar schools. Although the eleven-year-olds achieved standards well below the national average, the proportion of pupils attaining above national expected standards was close to the national average. Lesson observations and listening to pupils' reading during the inspection show a steady improvement in the standard of reading across the school. Pupils aged between five and eight make slow but steady progress in writing and slightly more rapid progress from eight to eleven years. By the time pupils go to their secondary school just over half achieve nationally expected levels or above. Standards in English for pupils aged seven and eleven represent a significant improvement since the last inspection and results in school have risen faster than the national rate. However the school has identified that the standards in speaking, listening and writing are still too low across the school.

92. Pupils' below-average attainment reflects their very low attainment at earlier ages and the high proportion who have special educational needs. In view of these factors pupils are achieving well. This is also evident in the fact that the 2001 test results were good when compared with those for similar schools. Many pupils enter the school only a year or two before they have to take the national tests at age eleven. Last year, only nine pupils who took the statutory tests at age eleven were in the school four years earlier for the seven-year-olds' tests. Comparing these pupils' results at ages seven and eleven shows them to have made good progress and to be the higher scoring pupils.
93. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has made a significant contribution to the improvements in attainment in English. Teachers follow the framework and the school has identified the literature pupils will read as they progress through the school. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and all lessons were at least satisfactory. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is usually good with the teacher clearly describing to pupils what they are going to learn at the beginning of the lesson and helping them recognise what they have learnt at the end of the lesson. Teaching in Years 3-6 is satisfactory and is good in some lessons.
94. Pupils enter the school with well below average language skills and little experience of books and reading. The introduction of an early reading programme has been particularly successful in developing pupils' early reading skills. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils enjoy books and are reading at a level appropriate to their age. Written work seen during the inspection shows that pupils are making steady progress in writing. The more able pupils can write simple sentences using adjectives and adverbs. A class of seven-year-olds enjoyed a model writing activity where they worked together to describe the setting for a story of 'Handa's Surprise,' comparing the life in a Kenyan village to theirs in Harwich. Pupils wrote their own account giving details of what they might see in a Kenyan village and ordering their thoughts in a logical sequence. Pupils of average ability write using simple sentences and correct punctuation. The less able pupils can write simple words and phrases to describe events and objects in the book. Their writing is clear and most letters are correctly formed.
95. By the age of eleven, pupils select their own reading materials and talk about books and authors they like. Although most pupils choose not to read in their leisure time, time is set aside in school and they read regularly. Teachers stress the importance of good reading habits encouraging pupils to complete a reading log, recording unfamiliar words to research their meaning and to learn to spell them. The majority of pupils become technically competent readers but few have yet to develop a sufficient sense of audience. The more able pupils are able to read with expression. They can read for inference and refer to the text when describing main characters and events. They discuss the author's writing style, making comparisons with other books they have read. Pupils of average ability read accurately and show a good understanding of the texts they have chosen. These tend to be short stories about events in the lives of young people like themselves. Less able pupils select books from structured reading schemes. They read hesitantly but usually accurately. They use a range of strategies such as sounding out unfamiliar words to establish meaning. In lessons, with the help of the teacher, pupils can think about the effect of the language used by the author. More able pupils identified the use of alliteration and onomatopoeia and explained the impact on the listener when the teacher read Rudyard Kipling's 'Smugglers Song.' They explained why they thought the poem was set in a time before the author's own life. Pupils of average ability could identify words that are no longer in common use. Less able pupils listened carefully and could recall the main events of the narrative.

96. Pupils' writing skills are not as well developed as their reading and the standard of writing in other subjects is not as high as in English lessons. Teachers stress the technical aspects of writing, paying careful attention to the use of sentence structure, correct use of punctuation and accurate spelling. The more able eleven-year-old pupils select an appropriate format according to the different purposes for writing. When describing events in the 'Sword in the Stone', they understood how conditional sentences build suspense and the three-word sentence is used for dramatic effect. However, opportunities provided by the teacher for pupils to use conditional sentences lacked clear purpose, making it difficult for them to apply the technique and produce the same effect as in the story. Pupils are able to write accurate factual accounts of events they have read or learnt about in lessons using appropriate vocabulary. They are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences to give more detailed information. The writing of average attaining pupils is accurate with correct use of punctuation and ideas are well organised. Less able pupils use simple punctuation correctly and sequence their sentences logically. Handwriting is joined and legible.
97. Opportunities provided by teachers for pupils to undertake extended writing activities are too limited and the use of reading, writing, speaking and listening in different subjects to provide systematic practice of skills learnt in literacy lessons have yet to be identified in subject schemes of work. This results in opportunities being missed for pupils to experience a sufficiently rich range of experiences for them to practise and apply skills they have been introduced to in the literacy hour at levels appropriate to their ability. The co-ordination of English is undertaken by two teachers, one for the younger pupils and one for the older pupils. This provides good support for teachers to ensure that lessons are thoroughly planned and prepared in order to systematically build upon pupils' skills and knowledge and appropriate learning resources are available to support pupils' learning. Lessons are monitored and the co-ordinators are now using assessment results to identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The English development plan sets out developments required to raise standards. This more focused approach to training is contributing to the improvements in the attainments of the lower ability groups. However, assessment information is not always sufficiently considered by teachers when planning lessons. Pupils are set individual targets for improvement in English. Where targets are based on assessment information and reviewed regularly as they are for the seven- and nine-year-olds, they make a positive contribution to pupils' progress but this practice is inconsistent across the school. The learning tasks set for the older more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenging. Methods used to teach older pupils with special educational needs, who are not withdrawn to work with the special educational needs co-ordinator, do not adequately support their individual learning needs. The progress of the more and less able pupils is thus less than it could be.

MATHEMATICS

98. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests, pupils' results at the ages of seven and eleven were well below the national averages but in line with the averages for similar schools. Although test results dipped a little in 2000 more recent evidence shows an improving trend since the previous inspection. The work of pupils seen during the inspection gives a more positive picture than past test results, although the standards remain below the national standards for pupils' ages. The National Numeracy Strategy, which is now more fully and confidently implemented than at the last inspection, is beginning to have a positive impact on the standard of teaching and learning and is contributing to an improvement in attainment throughout the school. Both at ages seven and eleven pupils' standards reflect their very low earlier attainment and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Taking account of these factors pupils are now achieving satisfactorily in mathematics.
99. At the age of seven the majority of pupils are beginning to understand place value (tens and units) up to a hundred, are able to carry out simple computation involving addition and subtraction and can count in twos, fives and tens. Pupils identify simple properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and can record information using informal jottings to gain answers. Mental and oral work, which encourages the development of pupils' listening skills, forms an important part of the daily mathematics lesson and this is leading to a quicker recall of number facts and increased confidence in the subject. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils responded to simple money problems with interest and enthusiasm and enjoyed singing a mathematics game. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils responded quickly and accurately to questions about shapes using the correct mathematical vocabulary, working well independently and in small groups.
100. By the age of eleven pupils' numeracy skills are extended with the majority of pupils able to complete addition, subtraction, division and multiplication computation up to 1000 and able to round numbers up or down when required to do so. Pupils correctly identify the properties of quadrilaterals, can work out perimeter and area problems and can represent their work using a variety of graphs. Year 5 pupils are able to interrogate data and represent information using graphs; they are also able to explain their results and strategies whilst trying out their own ideas. Year 6 pupils make games for younger children to help them to practice and develop basic numeracy skills and are able to complete decimal and percentage problems. Mental strategies are given a high priority within the mathematics curriculum and Year 6 pupils are able to recall table facts quickly and accurately when questioned by the teacher and fellow pupils. The teaching of mental and oral strategies, considered a weakness at the time of the last inspection, is now satisfactory, though not enough attention is paid to work on time, fractions, decimals and the application of division and multiplication processes in problem-solving situations. Pupils with special educational needs attain well towards the targets as identified in their individual educational plans. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
101. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall. Planning throughout the school is thorough and is firmly grounded in the National Numeracy Strategy. In lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6, where teaching is good and sometimes very good, mental and oral strategies and appropriate questioning are used to challenge and extend pupils' learning. Good teaching throughout the school is characterised by detailed planning, clear learning objectives, an emphasis on whole class teaching, regular opportunities to develop mental strategies and good subject knowledge by the teacher. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed during the inspection. This lesson, despite being well planned, lacked pace, the work was

inappropriately matched to the needs of the pupils and the teacher lacked the required subject knowledge to successfully deliver the lesson's learning objectives. Teaching has benefited from monitoring and guidance by visiting advisers which has led to improved application of the national strategy for the subject, though teaching does not fully exploit strategies for using the introduction and conclusion to numeracy lessons to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

102. Though generally satisfactory, the targeting of work to the full range of pupil abilities is not always successful in allowing pupils with learning difficulties to work independently and more able pupils to achieve a higher standard of work through undertaking more challenging activities. However, pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by learning support assistants. Most teachers use mathematical vocabulary very well and this enhances the pupils' literacy skills as well as their numeracy skills. Speaking and listening skills are often developed when teachers have high expectations of pupils' abilities to explain the strategies used to solve a problem. This was clearly seen in a Year 6 lesson, when the teacher used a mental arithmetic game to conclude a lesson and the pupils, as well as getting the correct answer, had to explain to the class the strategies used to arrive at the solution. Attitudes to the subject throughout the school are satisfactory overall, the majority of pupils enjoying the structure and variety of numeracy lessons and working and behaving satisfactorily as a result. An annual 'mathematics week' assists in raising the profile of the subject in school as well as celebrating pupils' achievements. Meetings with parents help to keep them involved regarding the teaching of mathematics.
103. Effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is not yet accompanied by a related and sufficiently systematic and consistent process for assessing pupils' progress and using the data in planning the teaching. The introduction of individual targets for all pupils since the last inspection is a good initiative, but present targets do not have a sufficiently precise focus on what pupils need to achieve to move on to their next stage of learning. The marking of work continues to be inconsistent throughout the school and pupils' involvement in the process through self-assessment tasks for example, is underdeveloped.
104. The use of a mathematics computer program helps to develop basic numeracy skills in all year groups but the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. Where computers are used, such as in the work on shape in Years 1 and 2 and in data handling in Years 3-6, information and communication technology has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
105. There are some opportunities for pupils to apply basic numeracy skills in real life situations such as when they use a mathematics trail at the local water treatment plant created by a member of school staff. Generally, though, too few opportunities are given for pupils to apply their skills to mathematical investigations or develop numeracy across the curriculum.
106. The subject is led satisfactorily by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. An action plan is already in place to build on the progress that has been made. This plan, which identifies weak areas of the curriculum following a detailed analysis of National Curriculum results, correctly identifies the need for the co-ordinator to develop monitoring and evaluation procedures, through the systematic analysis of pupil work, lesson observation and a planned programme of staff training.

SCIENCE

107. The oldest pupils' results in the standard National Curriculum tests in 2001 were just below the national average but were good when compared with results in similar schools. Work seen during the inspection confirms this picture of standards. Most pupils achieve the level of attainment expected at age eleven but the proportion exceeding this level is much smaller than in the average school. When pupils' earlier low attainment is taken into account their work at age eleven represents a good achievement. Test results over recent years show that standards are rising and better than at the previous inspection. This is consistent with a corresponding improvement in the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs also progress well.
108. The oldest pupils show some sound knowledge and understanding in a variety of areas of the curriculum. They know, for example, the proper names of important organs of the body and can explain their functions in keeping us alive. They understand the conditions in which plant life occurs through processes of seed dispersal and germination and know the necessary conditions of plant growth, a few more able pupils managing to recall difficult technical terms like 'photosynthesis'. Pupils distinguish, and give examples of, conductors and insulators in electricity and explain how to separate solids and liquids through filtration or evaporation. However, pupils' appreciation and use of skills of investigation are unsatisfactory. They are not sure about the ways to ensure scientific tests are fair and when presented with an imaginary test find difficulty in evaluating the methods used or identifying the key variables that the test needs to control or change. Nor are they clear about interpreting data from investigations and drawing significant conclusions. These weaknesses in investigation skills are the main reason that fewer pupils exceed the expected level of attainment than in the typical school.
109. Teachers' own assessments of pupils' attainment at age seven in 2001 were that attainment was well below average and this view, too, is supported by inspectors' observations of work during the inspection. Again, though, when pupils' work is compared with their particularly low attainment at earlier ages they are seen to have achieved well. Pupils begin to develop some understanding that science involves recognising important similarities and differences as a basis for classifying natural phenomena. Starting with distinguishing those that are 'living' from the 'non-living', pupils progress to classifying creatures that are, or are not, insects. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils carried out an effective investigation that developed their practical skills as well as their understanding of magnets, classifying those materials that are attracted to magnets and those that are not. A few more able pupils realised that only metals are attracted but that some metals are not. Overall standards are well below average because the proportion of pupils who show the levels of knowledge, understanding and skill expected at their age is lower than average and because fewer pupils than usual rise above the expected level.
110. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory, representing an improvement since the previous inspection. Only one science lesson could be observed in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection and this was of very good quality. It provided a very well designed and well organised opportunity for Year 2 pupils to extend their investigation skills and their understanding of magnetism through testing. It provided a range of challenges to match the range of ability within the class and good collaboration with an additional teacher and a learning support assistant meant that pupils experiencing difficulty and those with special educational needs were well supported. Other evidence of teaching from examination of pupils' past written work shows that pupils have too little practice in systematic recording or presentation of observations or measurements through tables

or graphs. Relatively little writing is done in Years 1 and 2 reducing opportunities for pupils to both practise their writing and reinforce their scientific knowledge or understanding through expressing themselves.

111. In Years 3-6, strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment exactly reflect variations in the teaching. In Years 5 and 6 teachers adopt a very systematic approach to teaching pupils basic knowledge. A good Year 5 lesson seen was also successful through its lively and enthusiastic presentation, in stimulating pupils' interest and encouraging good effort and industry on pupils' part. These qualities are successful in helping almost all pupils reach the expected level of attainment. A weakness, though, is the lack of sufficiently challenging work in investigation to help pupils develop skills of understanding how investigations should be conducted and how observations and measurements can be recorded, presented (for example as graphs) and then analysed to allow important conclusions to be drawn. Because of these shortcomings the teaching also does too little to give pupils practice in using their skills in numeracy or information and communication technology. Challenging investigative work for older pupils is hindered by a lack of suitable equipment.
112. Although pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 undertake a good deal of writing, this consists largely of copied notes thus reducing the scope for pupils to consolidate their skills of writing their own sentences or for reinforcing their scientific understanding through such writing. Copied notes also give teachers little useful feedback when marking work on the quality of pupils' knowledge or understanding. Teaching in Year 4 is in marked contrast to that in Years 5 and 6. Here well designed and very challenging investigations are constantly used to support pupils' growth in knowledge and understanding and good opportunities for making measurements and handling data supports pupils' development of both investigation and numeracy skills. Writing, too, gives pupils in this year group practice in expressing themselves.
113. Inconsistencies in the teaching of science reflect a past history of insufficiently rigorous management of work in the subject. The school's improving processes for keeping a check on its own performance have only recently begun to have an impact in science. A simple form of assessment of pupils' progress is used but this provides too little precise data to show exactly how teaching and learning might be improved. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role but has made a satisfactory start by carrying out a valuable analysis of pupils' performances in national tests and identifying the weakness in investigation skills described above. A good action plan for improving the work in science and the assessment of progress has recently been created. Its implementation has yet to take effect, except in the co-ordinator's own class where improving investigation skills are being tackled energetically and more precise means for assessing progress are being trialled.

ART AND DESIGN

114. Art is timetabled in conjunction with design and technology. This reduces the amount of time allocated to art and limits opportunities for pupils' creative development. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and judgements on standards are based on scrutiny of documentation, teachers' plans and samples of work. No overall judgement of teaching is made. Seven-year-olds achieve standards below that expected for their age. The standard remains unsatisfactory in Year 3 with insufficient opportunities for pupils to use a range of materials and processes, including information and communication technology, to develop appropriate skills and understanding of line, tone, shape and form. However the quality of the curriculum improves as pupils progress through Years 4-6 and by the age of eleven, pupils achieve appropriately for

their age. The situation in art is little different from that reported at the previous inspection.

115. Year 1 pupils draw from memory and observation and use this skills to record work in other subjects such as history and geography. They learn about the work of famous artists and traditional artwork from different cultures, but the range of materials they experience is narrow and they do not explore three-dimensional work. Opportunities for creative development remain limited in Year 3 but improve from Year 4 onwards. Progress in Years 5 and 6 is good and pupils explore ideas and collect visual information and objects to help them develop their work. They work in a range of media and use their knowledge and understanding of materials and processes to create designs, images and objects. A Year 6 class explored the impact of light on different textures and patterns from natural objects, experimenting with producing visual images using chalk and charcoal on tinted paper. Samples of pupils' work demonstrate sound mastery and control of paint and wash, print and pastels. Resources were well organised and learning was greatly enhanced through the effective intervention of a parent helper with art training who demonstrated techniques and asked questions that made pupils reflect on their work and develop their ideas. Pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, was good.
116. The art policy is in the process of being revised and the co-ordinator has identified the need to develop resources and facilities for art. The role of the co-ordinator makes too little impact on the quality of provision or its improvement. The co-ordinator has yet to undertake an audit and develop an action plan in order to identify priorities for art. Teachers undertake assessment in art when pupils are aged seven and eleven but no analysis is made of teachers' plans or assessment results to evaluate the standards of work or the quality of provision.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. During the inspection two lessons in this subject, in Year 4 and in a Year 5/6 class, were taught. Judgements are based on these lessons, on examples of items older pupils have made and on their written designs and evaluations. The work of the older pupils is of a satisfactory standard, as it was also at the previous inspection. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 and no judgement of the quality of teaching here is made. Photographic records show past work in these classes but this evidence is insufficient as a basis for a reliable judgement of the standards achieved by pupils in these year groups.
118. The oldest pupils have recently been undertaking work on various forms of shelter. Their designs, which include plans carefully drawn to scale, show a sound understanding of the functions of the shelters they chose to construct and of the need to make appropriate selections of materials, construction techniques and tools. They also show an understanding that designs and constructions should be evaluated as a basis for refining and improving designs and products. When making their constructions they strive for, and achieve, a satisfactory standard of accuracy.
119. Taking account of two lessons seen and of examples of pupils' past work seen, teaching in Years 3-6 is satisfactory. In a very good lesson seen with Year 5-6 pupils, the teacher's own enthusiasm and good knowledge in the subject resulted in pupils working on their constructions with interest, enthusiasm, concentration and care. Pupils co-operated well in pairs. Effective support by a learning support assistant helped special educational needs pupils join in the activity with as much success as others and show pride in their achievement. A satisfactory lesson in Year 4 was the culmination of

a well designed series of lessons on torches. Pupils, having disassembled commercially made torches to understand how they work, made their own designs for using everyday materials like cardboard tubes for the torch body and paper clips for switches. Most could explain satisfactorily how they had designed and made their torches and understood the principles involved, making a link with their work on electrical circuits in science. In this lesson, pupils were asked to evaluate and write about the success of their designs, a less attractive and harder task for some, whose interest and concentration therefore lapsed at times. However, the teacher's skilful management of pupils' behaviour ensured most persevered soundly at the task. This lesson made good use of the opportunity to give pupils some practice in writing skills while evaluating their designs and constructions. In other classes, though, the teaching does not sufficiently exploit opportunities to incorporate writing, work with numbers or use of information and communication technology within teaching and learning in the subject.

120. The subject co-ordinator leads the subject with personal enthusiasm but development in management processes for monitoring and evaluating teaching have not been applied in this subject. The simple assessments of pupils' progress are not sufficiently precise. These weaknesses limit the capacity to plan and implement improvement in teaching, learning or the standards that result.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Only one lesson in geography was scheduled to be taught during the inspection. Judgements are based on examination of planning for the teaching and of pupils' past written work, on the one lesson seen and on discussion with pupils. No judgements are made about the quality of teaching.
122. Discussion with a group of seven-year-olds showed them to have a satisfactory awareness of where they live. They name the town and county they live in and know London is the nearest big city. They know which country they live in and can name several others as well. Pupils are aware of the range of different buildings in their locality and recognise the different forms of residence like flats, bungalows and terraced or semi-detached houses. They know what maps are and can describe routes around the school with reasonable accuracy.
123. Discussion with a group of the oldest pupils showed that they have some sound geographical knowledge and understanding. Their recall of earlier work on rivers was good. They can name and define a range of river features such as 'source', 'tributary', 'meander' and 'delta' and they understand the part rivers play in the water cycle. They understand that the process of erosion causes rivers to alter the landscape. Pupils sometimes use maps in their work but are not very sure about how to make the best use of them. The one lesson seen, in Year 5, showed pupils to have a sound understanding of the part water plays in agriculture and industry, thereby affecting people's lives. Pupils appreciated the effects of water shortages on the economies of different parts of the world. Teaching of this lesson was good with ideas presented in a stimulating way supported by telling examples so that pupils responded with interest.
124. Examination of pupils' work shows an appropriate range of work being undertaken. This includes some detailed study of the local area, employing photographs and maps. There is some work on more distant locations but this is sometimes superficial. Generally, though, a broader curriculum is in place than at the previous inspection following adoption of recent national guidelines for the subject.

125. The subject has not been a priority in the school's attempts to improve and this is reflected in a continuing weakness in the management of the subject. There is a lack of systematic checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Simple assessments of pupils' progress and attainment are made but these do not yield a clear enough picture of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. These shortcomings mean that the school has insufficient evidence of exactly how improvements can be made.

HISTORY

126. Only two history lessons and a small amount of pupils' work were available to be seen during the inspection. Consequently, no overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be made in this subject. The lessons seen, examples of pupils' past work and discussions with pupils, show the work to be in line with the quality expected for pupils' ages.

127. The focus for Years 1 and 2 is on how people used to live. Early historical skills, such as using evidence and deduction together with accurate recording of information, are systematically developed. Pupils are taught to distinguish between past and present and asked to place events in order. Seven-year-olds compare household objects, such as a sewing machine and a mangle used in Victorian times, with what is used today identifying the similarities and differences. They use clues such as the materials objects are made from, to identify the relative age of an object. Last term they used pictures and contemporary accounts when studying the Great Fire of London. Excellent use is made of artefacts and original sources of information to bring history alive and make it relevant to the lives of the younger pupils and the standard of work is in line with national expectations.

128. In Years 3-6, lesson plans show that teachers place appropriate emphasis on understanding of chronology and the events, peoples and changes in the past and they also develop pupils' enquiry, interpretation and organisational skills through the study of history. In Year 6, where pupils study ancient Egypt, more able pupils select relevant evidence to support their description of life in ancient Egypt. They produce a simple fact sheet about food, and buildings in ancient Egypt. All the pupils show a good understanding of how the geography of the area has influenced the civilisation and they appreciate the importance of the River Nile on the development of the Egyptians' way of life. Discussion with pupils shows that they have a greater understanding than their written work suggests and their historical knowledge and understanding is in line with national expectations. The limited amount of time allocated to history limits the attention paid to the presentation of history. Pupils produce a limited amount of written work and there are examples of unfinished work in pupils' books. Homework often relates to tasks that involve finding out information. There are only occasional examples of pupils writing at length, as when more able Year 5 pupils produced an extended piece of good quality work based on their studies of the Tudors.

129. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator for the subject has successfully overseen introduction of a long-term curriculum plan that follows national guidelines in providing for the required work to be covered as pupils move through the school, with history lessons alternating with geography on a half-termly basis. Examination of teachers' plans and samples of work indicate that the new national programme for history is being successfully implemented and makes a positive contribution to the breadth of the curriculum. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Use of assessments of pupils' progress and direct checks on teaching and learning to evaluate the work and plan improvement is unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. This represents an improvement in standards for pupils aged seven since the last inspection where they were below national expectations. Standards for eleven-year -old pupils have been maintained.
131. At the age of seven pupils are beginning to show good control of the computer mouse and they use drawing programs to good effect to create pictures and designs. Pupils recognise the important parts of a computer and are beginning to use it for different purposes. Year 1 children, for example enter information on a database to produce a pictogram in science representing different materials, whilst Year 2 pupils use a computerised floor robot to produce two-dimensional shapes linked to their work in mathematics.
132. By the age of 11 pupils have developed a range of computer skills. Pupils know how to enter text and manipulate it by changing font size, style, and colour. They are able to use wordprocessing and graphics to produce posters, enter and interrogate data on spreadsheets, to produce pie charts and graphs and use the Internet to research information for topics in history and geography. Year 6 pupils successfully research work related to ancient Greece and use the information, which includes pictures and text, to create an attractive classroom display. Pupils combine pictures with text, and confidently compose and edit their work on screen. They check it for accuracy, and consider layout and presentation to maximise the impact on the audience. Listening centres, calculators and a digital camera are used across the curriculum and pupils show a very good understanding of the use of technology in everyday life. Whilst the skills of wordprocessing, data handling, graphics and spreadsheets are well developed throughout the school; some other areas of the curriculum such as control, modelling and monitoring, identified as weaknesses at the time of the last inspection, are still not fully covered.
133. There is good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, achieving standards that are close to those expected of pupils of similar ages. More able pupils however, would benefit from more challenging tasks and the opportunity to apply acquired skills in more open-ended situations.
134. During the last inspection teaching was judged to be satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3-6. During this inspection teaching was more consistent throughout the school and was judged to be good. All teaching observed was characterised by detailed planning, clear learning objectives and good subject knowledge. Sometimes though, teaching, particularly for older pupils, does not provide sufficiently challenging tasks allowing pupils to apply acquired skills themselves. An interactive whiteboard is used to very good effect by staff to demonstrate the skills being taught and to clarify any problems the children might encounter. As during the previous inspection, the majority of pupils show good attitudes towards the subject, listening carefully to instructions, sustaining concentration and working well both independently or with a partner. Older pupils are allowed to use the computer suite unsupervised during break and lunchtimes and do so in a sensible and responsible manner. Before school a learning support assistant also provides a voluntary daily mathematics session, employing ICT to help reinforce basic numeracy skills for pupils with learning difficulties.

135. Whilst the teaching of basic skills in the computer suite is good, information and communication technology is still not sufficiently practised in other lessons, or developed across the curriculum and this hinders pupil progress. A mathematical computer program is used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs to develop basic numeracy skills, but information and communication technology is rarely incorporated within the daily numeracy and literacy lessons. Resources are adequate but the computers in the classrooms are underused. A commercial scheme of work based on national guidelines has recently been introduced to assist teachers in planning comprehensive work in the subject and ensuring pupils progress properly through the necessary steps in learning. The introduction of consistent whole school assessment procedures in information and communication technology, a weakness identified at the last inspection, has still to be tackled.
136. Resources for the teaching of the subject are adequate. The school's well-equipped computer suite, which is well used by all classes, contains computers, a scanner and an interactive whiteboard and in addition all classes have two computers to allow for work in other curriculum areas. Calculators, listening centres and tape recorders are effectively used across the curriculum.
137. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the curriculum but still has too little involvement in the monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school. An action plan is in place, which identifies the need to develop monitoring and evaluation, a whole school assessment framework and a programme of staff training to increase teacher confidence in the areas of control, modelling and monitoring.

MUSIC

138. Throughout the school, standards in music are broadly in line with national expectations. No judgement about standards had been made at the previous inspection.
139. At the age of seven, the majority of pupils sing in tune and show an understanding of both tempo and dynamics. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils responded enthusiastically to a chant led by the class teacher and were able to vary their volume and tempo as directed. Pupils understand the musical terms 'pulse' and 'beat' and are able to sustain simple rhythmic patterns to accompany songs. In a Year 2 lesson all pupils were able to clap the beat of a song and were able to sustain the pulse and rhythm on percussion instruments showing good vocal and instrumental control. Pupils listen to extracts of music and are beginning to be able to express preferences and opinions satisfactorily. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 lesson where children listened to the same song performed first in English and then in an African language and were able to recognise similarities and differences and imitate the rhythm of the drum accompaniment.
140. By the age of eleven, children have built on the musical skills in earlier years and are beginning to perform and refine their musical compositions satisfactorily. A Year 6 'rap' performed during book week, for example, required pupils to set words skilfully to rhythmic patterns and these skills were further developed to perform a simple composition on the theme of 'Bones'. Pupils are introduced to musical notation and in Year 5 there are opportunities to discuss different styles of music from different periods and different countries. Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, successfully compare and contrast Tudor music with twentieth century compositions.

141. Pupils with special educational needs work well in music without additional support and achieve standards broadly in line with national expectations.
142. During the last inspection there were insufficient music lessons seen to judge the quality of teaching. During this inspection teaching in Years 1 and 2 is judged to be good. Teaching here shows detailed planning, clear learning objectives and good subject knowledge. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the planned singing, instrumental and listening activities where a good knowledge of the pupils' abilities, together with good subject knowledge, resulted in the majority of pupils gaining well in knowledge and understanding of the work being covered. Although only one lesson was observed in Year 3, examination of pupils' past work and discussion with them point to satisfactory teaching in Years 3-6. However, teaching here provides too few opportunities for older pupils to refine and perform musical compositions and use their understanding of notation to create their own compositions. The use of information and communication technology is currently underdeveloped throughout the school as is musical appreciation as a means of stimulating pupils' imagination which they might express in their own musical or written compositions. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and participate with enthusiasm. Good management of pupils creates an atmosphere in which all are encouraged to participate and this contributes significantly to pupils' positive attitudes towards the subject.
143. Pupils listen to a variety of music from different cultures both within the music curriculum and during assembly. Singing and listening to songs in assembly enhances the music curriculum, enriches pupils' experiences and extends their enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils' opportunities to discuss the music they have heard have been improved since the last inspection. There are, though, no visits by musicians to broaden the pupils' musical experiences.
144. The subject is satisfactorily led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who accompanies the pupils' singing in assembly on either the guitar or piano. A positive recent development has been the adoption of a commercial scheme of work to help teachers plan the work systematically and with confidence. There is currently no monitoring of teaching and learning in music and this hinders progress in the subject. There are no precise means for assessing pupils' progress as a basis for ensuring they are always presented with work that builds on previous learning in a challenging way. Nor are present assessments able to show whether an individual pupil has a particular musical talent or is in need of extra help. These are weaknesses in co-ordination of the subject. A strength, however, is in the provision of opportunities to play the recorder, sing in the weekly choir or perform in local music festivals. Resources for the subject are just adequate. There is a shortage, though, of tuned percussion instruments to extend musical composition, non-European instruments to enhance both the teaching of the subject and pupils' cultural development, and recorded music to widen pupils' musical appreciation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. Games, dance and swimming lessons were observed during the inspection and the standards pupils achieved in these lessons were in line with national expectations. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Sufficient time is allocated to the subject and the long-term curriculum plans provide for full coverage of the new national curriculum for the subject. At the last inspection there was no evidence that outdoor and adventurous activities formed part of the physical education programme in Years 3-6. Under the new curriculum arrangements there is no longer a

requirement for outdoor and adventurous activities to form part of the programme for these year groups and the school has opted to focus on athletics and swimming.

146. Standards in games are satisfactory throughout the school despite unsatisfactory accommodation. The school takes advantage of being part of an education action zone by augmenting its limited facilities with facilities offered by neighbouring schools. Standards in swimming in Years 3-6 are satisfactory but the lack of apparatus, equipment and storage space has a negative impact upon the range of gymnastics activities that the school is able to offer. The school feels that this impairs pupils' progress and the standards they achieve in gymnastics.
147. In the few lessons observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Many pupils enter the school with poor co-ordination, balance and control. Pupils make good progress in developing appropriate co-ordination and control by the time they progress to secondary school. This is successfully taught through dance, games, athletics and swimming activities. The lack of indoor facilities makes this task considerably more difficult. In dance lessons in Years 1 and 2, pupils explore the use of space, speed and direction to vary their movements, linking them together in a sequence of movements to create a sea dance. In games, pupils run and dodge using space appropriately, and show reasonable control when bouncing and throwing balls for their partner to catch. They follow rules and take turns and enjoy taking part in simple games. Teachers plan and structure lessons carefully so that pupils understand how to exercise safely and build upon their existing skills and physical control.
148. In a swimming lesson for Years 5 and 6 pupils, teaching was satisfactory. Standards in swimming are in line with national expectations with over two-thirds of pupils being sufficiently strong swimmers to progress to lifesaving skills. Last year all pupils were able to swim at least 25 yards by the age of eleven. The teachers and qualified instructors have established clear routines that enable pupils to know what to do and how to behave safely. This is particularly important as many of the pupils are excitable and require support to maintain appropriate levels of concentration.
149. Since the time of the last inspection the school has appointed a co-ordinator for physical education. The appointment is very recent but she has already had a positive impact upon the management of the subject. She has introduced an effective scheme of work with lesson plans to support the teaching. Through her monitoring role she has completed an audit and developed an action-plan. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and has a clear view of what to do next. The school competes in local sporting events. During the week of the inspection the older pupils took part in the local schools' swimming gala and came seventh. A range of sporting activities within class time and after school, provide skills training and good opportunities for pupils to meet and compete against other schools. These include football, netball, cross-country running, rounders, cricket and touch rugby.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Throughout the school pupils' work meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
151. In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to think about the importance of valuing self and others and to see themselves in the context of family, community and society. By learning about Jesus' friends, for example, they are encouraged to think about their own relationships with friends. They learn about the biblical account of creation and in an

effective link with their work in science they begin to wonder at the miracle that causes the tiniest seed to become a large plant. They begin to understand that celebrations are an important aspect of religious behaviour.

152. In Years 3-6, pupils learn some of the important Bible stories and parables and develop some understanding of the role of symbolism as, for example when they consider the symbols of the Christingle' service. Older pupils also develop some knowledge of several world faiths such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, though some of this work lacks detail and sufficient support from educational visits or visitors to make discussion of unfamiliar faiths come alive for pupils. There are, though, no synagogues, mosques or temples in the vicinity. The school has a few artefacts, however, to give visual support to learning. Pupils explore similarities and differences between faiths as when they compare Christian and Hindu accounts of creation. A strength of the work in the subject is the way pupils make links between religious ideas and their own feelings and lives. The oldest pupils appreciate the idea of a journey through life and that faith can help give meaning to important milestones in life from birth to death.
153. Only two lessons in this subject could be seen during the inspection, one for Year 1 pupils and one for Years 5 and 6 pupils. They, and the past work of pupils seen, show teaching to be at least satisfactory. The lesson for younger pupils showed satisfactory teaching in its use of a story, a practical demonstration and a popular song ('Wonderful World') to encourage pupils to think about the wonders of creation. Planting seeds captured pupils' interest and sense of wonder at creation. The atmosphere of wonder was enhanced when pupils floated paper flowers they had made on water and watched them open, apparently of their own accord. The lesson for Years 5 and 6 pupils was very effective in tackling the challenge of encouraging pupils to reflect personally on their feelings about major life events, in particular death. The teacher tackled this difficult subject with great sensitivity and her willingness to share her own personal feelings with pupils was very successful in encouraging them to do likewise. This illustrates a strength in the teaching generally in the way it shows pupils that religious ideas can be related to everyday lives and concerns. This is aided by links that are made with personal and social education. When thinking, for example, about the wonders of creation, pupils are encouraged to think about reasons for looking after the environment, looking after each other and looking after themselves.
154. In recent months, co-ordination of the subject has been subject to temporary arrangements during the maternity leave of the co-ordinator. The subject has also had low priority in the school's development. As a result, procedures for monitoring teaching and learning and for assessing pupils' progress remain insufficient.