

INSPECTION REPORT

THORPE GREENWAYS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Southend-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend

Unique reference number: 114777

Headteacher: Mr P Fairbrass

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Gough
22361

Dates of inspection: 18th - 21st September 2000

Inspection number: 224563

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greenways Southend-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS1 3BS
Telephone number:	01702 468057
Fax number:	01702 602122
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Greenway
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M Gough 22361	Registered inspector	Art Music Special educational needs	What sort of school is it The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught What should the school do to improve further
Mr B Harrington 31729	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Mr D Carpenter 31807	Team Inspector	Religious education English as an additional language Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils How well does the school care for its pupils
Mr D Hughes 3227	Team Inspector	English Geography	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils
Mrs L Lavender 1359	Team inspector	Mathematics History	How well is the school led and managed
Mrs A Wilkinson-Tilbrook 10068	Team Inspector	Design and technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed

The inspection contractor was:

Lynrose Marketing Limited
Bungalow Farmhouse
Six Mile Bottom
Newmarket
Suffolk
CB8 0TU

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

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House

33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thorpe Greenways Junior School caters for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven, and there are currently four hundred and nine pupils on roll. The school is popular, and although the majority of pupils come from the local area, one third of pupils travel from further afield. Most pupils are of white ethnicity, and the school currently has nine refugee pupils from Poland, and six pupils who are from traveller families. Twenty pupils have English as an additional language, and their main languages are Polish, Czechoslovakian, Albanian and Cantonese. Currently 19% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is about average. Pupils' attainment on entry has been generally below average over the past few years, but the attainment of the most recent intake of pupils is average on the basis of their end of Key Stage 1 test results. Ninety pupils have special educational needs, which represents 22% of the school population and is average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective and has improved since the last inspection four years ago. Standards are rising in English, mathematics and science, and are in line with the national average by the time the pupils leave school. Teaching is good overall, and enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress. The leadership and management of the school are good, and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in religious education and music are good.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities are encouraged to do their best, and they make good progress.
- Teaching is good, and teaching assistants provide very good support in class.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to work and enjoy coming to school.
- The curriculum is broad and is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' social, moral and cultural development.
- The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
- There are good lines of communication between home and school, and parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's education.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and key staff.
- The Governing Body is well informed, and is supportive of all aspects of the life and work of the school.
- The school's finances are very well managed.

What could be improved

- Standards in design and technology, and the control element of information technology.
- The way in which teachers manage pupils who misbehave in class.
- Pupils' attendance.
- Some aspects of curriculum planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection took place four years ago and since that time, the school has improved at an appropriate rate. All of the key issues identified in the previous report have been addressed, although aspects of some of the more complex issues, relating to curriculum and behaviour management have not yet been fully resolved. Standards are continuing to rise year by year, and the school is appropriately targeting resources to raise the attainment of the lower attaining pupils. The school has made particularly good progress in handling the increase in the number of pupils on roll over the last few years, and has worked hard to improve the quality of the accommodation, aspects of which were described as unsatisfactory in the last report. The school has improved its provision for information technology, and in addition to classroom computers, now has a networked computer suite which is a valuable resource for the pupils. Although the school is well placed for continued development and improvement in terms of the targets it has set, and the commitment of the staff and governors, in the short term, the recent high turnover of staff is likely to slow down the school's progress.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	E	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	C	C	B	
Science	D	D	E	D	

The above table shows that on the basis of the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 test results, standards in English are below the national average, standards in mathematics are in line with the national average, and standards in science are well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' performance is average in English, above average in mathematics, and below average in science.

The school's most recent end of Key Stage 2 test results show that although standards in mathematics are similar to those of 1999, in English and science, standards have improved significantly, especially in terms of the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. National data for 2000 are not yet available, and it is not therefore possible to draw comparisons between the school's results and the national picture.

The inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage, and that pupils make good progress. The school uses assessment data well to set appropriate targets and is committed to ensuring that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils of all ages and abilities have positive attitudes to school and to their work. They are keen, enthusiastic and hard-working. In most classes, there are a small number of pupils who lack concentration and perseverance.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils are well behaved in class, although a small number of pupils persistently misbehave and disrupt the learning of others. Behaviour is particularly good at playtimes and when pupils are moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils get on well with one another and are co-operative and sociable. They willingly take responsibility for school and class tasks. However, pupils throughout the school have only limited opportunities to set their own targets for development.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Pupils' attendance falls below the national average. The rate of authorised absence is too high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
67 lessons seen overall	not applicable	not applicable	good

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

During the inspection, teaching was very good in 10% of the lessons seen, good in 44% of lessons, satisfactory in 40% of lessons, and unsatisfactory in 6% of lessons. The school was inspected during the third week of the Autumn term, and eight of the staff, including three newly qualified teachers and a graduate entrant, were new to the school. The few incidents of unsatisfactory teaching occurred in these classes, and because of the circumstances are not significant.

Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science, and this is reflected in the improved end of key stage test results. Teachers effectively promote the use of literacy and numeracy skills in English and mathematics, but could do even more to promote these skills across the rest of the curriculum. There are particular strengths in the teaching of religious education and music, and standards in these subjects are good. There are weaknesses in the teaching of design and technology, largely because it is subsumed within other subjects, and does not receive enough time. Teachers are currently undergoing training for teaching information technology, and are acquiring the skills necessary to ensure that pupils benefit from working in the computer suite.

There are strengths in the way in which teachers plan, prepare and organise activities, although the practice whereby one person in the year group team plans activities for their colleagues constrains the individuality of the more creative teachers. Teachers use questions well to support the lower attainers and to challenge the higher attainers, and give good support to those pupils who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are very well used to support small groups of pupils, and their input enhances pupils' learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, and as a result, the majority of pupils

want to do their best, and try hard with their work. A small number of pupils in the school persistently misbehave, and some teachers have difficulty managing these pupils.

The school currently has twenty pupils for whom English is an additional language. Although there is no additional funding for these pupils, the school is trying hard to support them and to meet their needs, but some teachers find it difficult to overcome the language barriers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad curriculum which is effectively enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Although the planning for English, mathematics and science is good, the planning for some of the other subjects has weaknesses, and does not specifically identify the skills and knowledge that pupils are to acquire.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good and enables them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory, and is an ongoing area of development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' social development is very good, and provision for their personal, moral and cultural development is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, and opportunities for promoting spirituality across the curriculum are very limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very much for its pupils, and their health, safety and well-being are the shared concern of staff and governors. However even more could be done to promote good attendance and to develop strategies to help teachers effectively manage pupils who misbehave in class.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life and work of the school, and good lines of communication have been established. There are high levels of parental satisfaction.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and key staff provide effective leadership and management for the school and there is a clear sense of purpose to their work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body is very supportive, and well informed about its role in the management of the school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, and take an active role in the life and work of the school.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a range of strategies in place with which to measure the school's performance in terms of the standards the pupils achieve. However, some of the success criteria in the School Development Plan are not precise enough, and do not provide an effective measure of the school's achievements in other areas of its work.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes the best possible use of the resources at its disposal. The budget is very well managed, and is used very effectively to support ongoing educational priorities.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There is an appropriate number of teachers for the number of pupils on roll, and a generous number of well qualified support staff. The accommodation is adequate, and specialist areas for music, art and information technology enhance teaching and learning. Resources are at least satisfactory in terms of both range and quantity, and are well used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased with the values and attitudes the school promotes and believe that pupils' behaviour is generally good. • Parents are happy with the leadership and management of the school and with the quality of teaching. • The majority of parents are pleased with the amount and frequency of homework. • Most parents believe that the school helps pupils to achieve their best and to develop as mature and responsible individuals. • Parents are pleased with the range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school. • Parents are happy to approach the school with any concerns or suggestions and appreciate the fact that they are made to feel welcome when they visit. • Parents agree that they receive good levels of information about the school's life and work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's life and work and have no significant concerns.

The inspection findings support the parents' views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. On the basis of the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, pupils' attainment in English is below the national average, and this has been the picture for the last few years. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance in English is average. The school's test results for 2000 show a significant improvement and suggest that standards are now close to the national average. There has been a big jump in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5, and very few pupils attained the lower Level 3. Pupils have a satisfactory range of literacy skills which they use effectively to support their work in English, but still more could be done to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across other subjects. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' overall attainment is in line with the national expectation at the end of the key stage. There are strengths in their speaking, listening and reading skills, and although their writing is satisfactory, this is an area where there is room for further improvement.
2. Pupils' attainment in mathematics, on the basis of the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, has been close to the national average for the last three years, and the most recent test results suggest that this trend is continuing. In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' performance is above average. Pupils have good numeracy skills which they use well to support their work in mathematics, but there are only limited opportunities for pupils to use these skills to support their work in other areas. The inspection findings indicate that pupils have a secure grasp of all elements of the mathematics curriculum, and that the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' mental agility.
3. On the basis of the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results, standards in science have been below average for the past three years, and in 1999 they were well below average. In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' performance in 1999 was below average. The most recent test results show a significant improvement, and are likely to be close to the national average. There has been a big jump in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5, and very few pupils attained the lower Level 3. The inspection findings indicate that standards are in line with national expectations, and that pupils have a secure grasp of the subject.
4. In information technology, pupils attain good standards in most aspects of their work, but do not have enough experience of the control aspect of the subject. They are making good use of the newly installed networked computer suite to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding and are making rapid progress. Although there are some opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their work across the curriculum, this is an area that should be developed further, as at present, information technology is not seen as an integral working tool by most pupils.
5. Standards in religious education are above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject is taught in a sensitive way, enabling pupils to gain a good knowledge which they appropriately interpret in the light of their own experiences.
6. Pupils' attainment in art, geography, history, and physical education is in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage, and their attainment in music is well above national expectations. In design and technology, pupils' attainment is

unsatisfactory. It is rarely taught as a separate subject, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge they need.

7. As the result of good teaching, and their own positive attitudes to learning, pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress in most subjects as they move through the school. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants which enables them to overcome some of their difficulties and to achieve the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, but this is limited because of the current lack of appropriately qualified staff and limited funding.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They respond well to their teachers, and are willing to take an active part in all activities. Pupils show high levels of concentration, perseverance and enthusiasm, except when discussions are too long, or when the lesson is undemanding, and they become restless. Relationships amongst pupils are good, and in the inspection, many instances were observed of pupils helping one another without prompting from their teachers. Pupils co-operate well in lessons, and willingly share ideas and resources.
9. Pupils move around the school in a very disciplined and orderly fashion, and when negotiating the stairs, they show a good awareness of the need for ensuring their own safety and that of their classmates. At break and lunchtimes, behaviour is particularly good. At these times there is a high level of trained adult supervision and pupils respond well to the interesting playground environment, which has been developed by the school over the last few years. Occasional incidents of poor behaviour in the playground are formally recorded and dealt with appropriately.
10. Behaviour in class is variable. The vast majority of pupils behave well at all times, but a small number of pupils in most classes persistently misbehave, and this has an adverse impact on the learning of others. There have been no recent exclusions.
11. Pupils' personal development is effectively promoted through the school's personal and social education programme and positive values and attitudes are encouraged. In class, pupils learn to respect equipment, to clear away after lessons and to follow the class rules. In discussions most pupils listen well to each other, share their ideas and become confident in expressing their own opinions. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for aspects of the school's life and work, and a wide variety of monitoring duties are sensibly and effectively undertaken. Although Year 3 pupils have recently set personal targets for the term, this practice is not consistent throughout the school, and most pupils do not have enough opportunities to set targets for their own personal and academic development. Many pupils conscientiously carry out homework tasks and this helps them to develop their capacity for personal study. However, there are only limited opportunities in school for pupils to carry out research or to pursue their own lines of enquiry.
12. The attendance rate is 93%. This is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. Registration routines are carefully observed in all classes, and records are kept of pupils who arrive late. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and most arrive on time, enabling a prompt start to the school day. There has been a drop in the level of whole-school attendance since the last inspection, largely due to the fact that more parents are withdrawing their children for holidays during term time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. During the inspection, teaching was very good in 10% of the lessons seen, good in 44% of lessons, satisfactory in 40% of lessons, and unsatisfactory in 6% of lessons. The school was inspected during the third week of the Autumn term, and eight of the staff, including three newly qualified teachers and a graduate entrant, were new to the school. The few incidents of unsatisfactory teaching occurred in these classes, and because of the circumstances are not significant. Examples of good teaching were observed in most classes, and all of the music teaching seen during the inspection was of a particularly high standard.
14. The teachers who have been at the school for some time have a good grasp of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, and teaching in English and mathematics is good. Literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately promoted in English and mathematics, but opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are limited. Some of the newly appointed teachers are from abroad and do not have experience of teaching the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. Firm plans are in place to ensure that these teachers receive the necessary training, and in the meantime, colleagues are giving good support and advice.
15. The teaching of science, religious education, physical education and information technology is good, and the teaching of music is very good. Teaching in art, geography and history is satisfactory overall. Teaching in design and technology is unsatisfactory as the subject is not taught in sufficient depth, and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Some good and very good examples of teaching were seen during the inspection across all areas of the curriculum, especially when co-ordinators were teaching their own subjects.
16. Good use is made of a variety of teaching methods, involving whole-class, group and individual work, although in a few classes, where teachers are overly concerned about maintaining an almost silent working environment, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to discuss aspects of their learning with their classmates. Some teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively together and to develop independent learning skills, such as selecting their own resources, and this is an aspect of good practice which could usefully be extended across the school. Although many teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively, in some classes teachers do not have enough strategies for dealing with pupils whose behaviour is inappropriate.
17. Pupils in all classes are encouraged to work hard and to the best of their ability, and most teachers have appropriately high but realistic expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers work very closely with teaching assistants, who are very well deployed to help small groups of pupils in their learning. The input of the learning assistants is crucial in raising standards, and in supporting those pupils who find aspects of their learning difficult. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good, and ensures that these pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Class teachers are now involved in writing individual education plans, and this is a positive development in the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.
18. At present, although they are doing their best, teachers are a little unsure as to how to support those pupils who have English as an additional language. The number of pupils in the school whose main language is not English has increased recently, and no-one in the school has any real experience or expertise in terms of teaching English as an

additional language. The school has plans to appoint a co-ordinator for this aspect of its work, who will support classteachers.

19. Teachers make good use of nationally produced schemes of work to guide their planning, which is generally thorough. However, the practice of one teacher in each year group preparing and planning lessons for their colleagues to deliver constrains the creativity of individual teachers, and in some cases impairs the quality of their teaching.
20. Teachers present activities in an enthusiastic way, and make good use of resources to enhance the pupils' learning. The vast majority of teachers are skilled in the way in which they use open-ended questions to check pupils' understanding and to extend the thinking of the higher attaining pupils. Many of the teachers show a warm sense of humour which puts the pupils at ease, and motivates them in their learning.
21. Homework is set in all classes, but there is some variation within and between year groups in the amount and nature of the work that is set. Homework tasks are mostly linked to English and mathematics, and opportunities for pupils to carry out homework in other subjects are limited.
22. Teachers mark work regularly, but because of the volume of work they mark, comments are brief, and do not always give the pupils enough guidance as to how they might improve their work further. Further thought needs to be given to the marking policy to ensure that marking is more valuable for the pupils and more manageable for the teachers.
23. The school has successfully maintained the good standard of teaching described in the last inspection, despite the very recent changes in staff.

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

24. The school provides a broad curriculum for all pupils, which is supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Religious education, and most subjects of the National Curriculum, are taught regularly, and for an appropriate amount of time. However, insufficient time is given to design and technology, and this prevents the teaching of the full range of activities and adversely affects pupils' learning. The school places great value on the teaching of physical education, but the timetabling of half hour sessions is not efficient, as too much time is spent by pupils changing clothes, and waiting outside the hall for the previous class to finish their lesson.
25. English, mathematics, some aspects of information technology and religious education are taught discretely, and the remaining subjects are taught through termly topics. Whilst this gives pupils a meaningful context for their learning, there are occasions when teachers, in their efforts to forge a link between the topic content and a subject, do not pay enough attention to ensuring that the skills and knowledge within individual subjects are taught in a way that takes account of pupils' previous knowledge and understanding.
26. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy across all the year groups, and these initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Religious education is taught in accordance with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school makes good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education and attention to drug

abuse. A healthy life-style is promoted through the curriculum and provides the pupils with the knowledge and skills to make informed and healthy choices, now and in later life. The school has compiled a good personal, social and health education policy which is now being used by teachers as guidance throughout the school.

27. Curriculum planning is satisfactory overall, but in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, insufficient attention is paid to outlining the skills within the subjects that need to be covered if pupils' learning is to be systematically advanced as they move through the school. The school has recently started to implement some of the nationally produced schemes of work, and these are ensuring good breadth of coverage in pupils' learning. Teachers in each year group meet regularly to plan the delivery of the curriculum for their classes, and to produce standardised lesson plans. Whilst this has the advantage of providing a common experience for all pupils in the year group, it is sometimes too prescriptive and constrains the more creative teachers.
28. The school has good links with the community and these contribute to the quality and variety of pupils' learning. Pupils regularly take part in local music and dance festivals, often in collaboration with other schools, and compete in local competitions for a variety of sports including swimming, rugby and athletics. These opportunities enhance pupils' social skills, and present the school positively within the local community. Places of worship, museums, zoos and parks are used as study resources, and classes periodically make studies of the town as part of their history or geography work. Each summer the school makes its resources available to the 'Elizabeth Venture', which enables disadvantaged children to benefit from a holiday within a safe and secure environment.
29. The school works very closely with its partner infant school and with the high schools to which pupils transfer. There are established arrangements for pupils to visit the high school of their choice, often including sample lessons. Each year, some pupils from the high schools are welcomed into school as part of their work experience programmes. The school has previously enjoyed a very good association with the teacher training department of a local college, but this link has been temporarily suspended by the college.
30. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and cultural development, very good provision for their social development, and unsatisfactory provision for their spiritual development.
31. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is ongoing, and teachers rarely miss incidental moments that arise during the day for reinforcing pupils' learning in these areas. The personal, social and health education policy provides teachers with a good framework for much of the social and moral development within the school, and ensures there are regular opportunities for pupils to present and discuss their personal beliefs and views. Social and moral development is further encouraged through pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities, including the residential 'School Journey', and through classwork, when pupils are given opportunities to work collaboratively. There is a very good team spirit amongst staff, and this presents pupils with a very good example of positive relationships. All adults in the school treat pupils with respect, and this encourages pupils to do the same. Good use is made of stories in assemblies and in some classes to illustrate moral dilemmas and discussion enables pupils to draw their own conclusions.
32. Pupils' awareness of other cultures is enhanced by visits to a range of places of worship, visits by an Indian lady, the presence of bilingual books in the school library, and through the teaching of subjects such as geography, music and art. The school is

fortunate to have on its staff a number of teachers from different backgrounds who willingly share their experiences with the pupils, giving them insight into other customs and traditions. Visits to living museums such as Kentwell Hall, and participation in music and drama festivals reinforce pupils' views of British culture, whilst regular exchange visits with a French school provide pupils with an appreciation of a different European culture.

33. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is unsatisfactory, and relies too much on the sensitivity and intuition of individual teachers. Opportunities for fostering spirituality across the curriculum are not identified in planning, and as a result, are sometimes missed. The school has created a beautiful environmental area which has the potential to be used by pupils as an area for reflecting on the wonder of nature, but there are few other places within the school and its grounds where pupils can sit quietly to consider their own thoughts. Assemblies are sometimes effective in promoting spirituality, but more could be done in these gatherings to encourage pupils to contemplate aspects of their lives and their beliefs.
34. Pupils are offered a good range of extra curricular activities, some of which are time-tabled as part of the school day. These activities are varied in nature, and are well supported by the pupils, adding considerably to their personal and social development. The school remains a lively place after lessons have finished and the pupils enjoy taking part in the football, hockey, netball, tennis, drama and steel pan clubs, and the rock band and choirs. The school intends to revive the art club and introduce a computer club. A small number of these activities take place during the school day, which means that some pupils are withdrawn from their planned lessons. This is not an ideal situation as it disrupts the learning of others, but the arrangement does ensure that pupils who could otherwise not stay after school have the opportunity to take part in an additional activity.
35. Pupils with English as an additional language, of whom there are a number in the school, are making satisfactory progress. They are well integrated into their classes and have the opportunity to experience the whole curriculum. Teachers make good efforts to promote their learning in general and the acquisition of English in particular and also, where opportunities arise, use the different experiences of these pupils to enhance the cultural understandings of the rest of the class. Support assistants are deployed effectively in the education of pupils with English as an additional language. Many barriers are broken down by the positive attitudes of the majority of pupils towards their peers from other backgrounds.
36. The curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs is appropriate and ensures that they make good progress. All pupils at Stage 2 and above on the school's special educational needs register have individual education plans which clearly state the pupils' individual targets. Pupils receive good support in class from their teachers and from the classroom assistants who often work closely with small groups of pupils helping them to overcome their difficulties.
37. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop the curriculum and has maintained a good breadth of experience for pupils of all ages and abilities. The school is well placed for further development in the light of the recently introduced Curriculum 2000, and staff are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are fully met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides very good levels of support and guidance for pupils of all ages and abilities, and the welfare, health and safety of pupils are the shared concern of the headteacher, staff and the Governing Body.
39. Procedures for child protection are good and ensure the safety of pupils. The headteacher has been nominated to deal with issues of child protection. He is supported in this role by the deputy headteachers. They and four other members of staff have received appropriate training. The school's child protection policy and procedures are included in the staff handbook, and this ensures that staff, including new and temporary teachers, are aware of the escalation routines. There is a confidential post-box for pupils who find it difficult to approach an adult with a problem. The contents of this post-box are regularly monitored by a nominated teacher's assistant.
40. The school makes every effort to secure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. All adults in the school receive training in first-aid each year. Currently forty members of staff hold first-aid certificates, with one member of the administration staff holding the advanced, three year certificate. The administration staff provide the first point of contact for pupils who are unwell and they are very effective in comforting emotional as well as physical hurts. The first-aid boxes are well stocked and pupils' medicines and applicators are securely stored. Records of all accidents are carefully maintained, and staff accept responsibility for the administration of prescribed medicines. Should it be necessary, letters detailing accidents are sent home to parents.
41. The school pursues the local code of practice for health and safety in primary schools, maintaining formal records for practice evacuations of the building, and carrying out regular inspections of safety equipment. Although informal risk assessments are carried out by a governor who is a member of one of the emergency services, identified hazards are not formally recorded and monitored. The site management staff are vigilant, and during the inspection were seen to take appropriate and sensible precautionary measures upon finding a wasp's nest near large play equipment.
42. Teachers, classroom assistants, administration and site staff are all involved in providing support and guidance for pupils which helps to ensure that most pastoral concerns are identified and addressed. Break and lunchtime supervisors are effective in encouraging pupils' positive social skills and, on those occasions when their authority is challenged, they pursue the formal, agreed procedures. The school is proud of the variety of backgrounds from which children are drawn and is sensitive to the harm that racial discord could confer upon the school community. Hence incidents of misbehaviour are monitored in case they have been racially motivated.
43. The school has appropriate whole school policies in place for monitoring and managing the behaviour of pupils, including incidents of bullying. However, the day to day management of behaviour within the classroom is the responsibility of the classteacher, and at present, some staff lack the necessary strategies for handling the misbehaviour of a small number of pupils, for example, lunchtime detentions are sometimes used inappropriately for very minor offences. The school has provided training for all staff in behaviour management, but recent changes in staff mean that some teachers did not benefit from this training. Class rules are displayed in classrooms, and pupils know what is expected of them.
44. All staff monitor pupils' personal development both informally and through more formal procedures of assessment and recording, and liaison with parents and external services. The annual report of pupils' progress comments on their personal

development and progress, and gives parents a good idea of their children's strengths and weaknesses. At present, there are few opportunities for pupils to monitor their own personal development through setting targets, other than in Year 3 where some opportunities are provided.

45. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Although a very good system is in place for recording attendance and non-attendance, and the records are sufficiently detailed to provide good knowledge of authorised and non-authorised absence, the school needs to be even more rigorous in following up absence.
46. The school has responded very positively to the issue raised in the previous inspection report relating to the development of assessment procedures and the monitoring of assessment in the school. The school now has a comprehensive plan for assessing pupils' progress and attainment in English, mathematics and science. Very good use is made of standardised tests in all year groups and these are administered at appropriate intervals throughout the year. Each pupil has a detailed record of assessments that have been carried out, and teachers are well informed as to the progress being made by individuals in their classes. Examples of pupils' work are selected for inclusion in their personal record files but this work is not always clearly annotated and dated, making it difficult to measure progress. Assessment in the other subjects is less detailed, although pupils' annual progress reports contain brief but useful information about the skills and knowledge that pupils have learned.
47. Pupils' academic performance is regularly and effectively monitored during lessons by the classroom assistants who make note of the extent to which pupils contribute to discussions. In those classes where personal, social and health education is formally presented, opportunities are taken to monitor pupils' personal development through the way in which pupils respond to social and moral issues. Progress files which contain completed academic test papers and progress reports to parents are maintained for all pupils.
48. Pupils are given many opportunities to contribute to the daily life of the school. Older pupils excel at organising the healthy-eating tuck shop, balancing the books as well as selling their wares. From the profits of the tuck shop Year 6 pupils, each year, present the school with a useful gift such as the ball game feature in the playground. Prior to transfer to secondary school, all pupils are given the opportunity to attend a residential week during which they reflect upon their progress to date and plan for their academic futures. Adults who accompany the pupils on this 'School Journey' use this occasion to further promote self-esteem and confidence in the pupils for whom they are responsible.
49. The school does much to promote a caring learning environment where pupils feel valued and respected. The very good levels of support and guidance provided by the school are important in ensuring a happy school community, and for raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents are very pleased with most aspects of the school's work, and have no suggestions for how the school might be improved. They are particularly pleased that their children enjoy coming to school. They believe that the school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best, and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems. All classteachers make

themselves available to parents at the beginning of the day, and this enables small concerns to be resolved quickly. Parents appreciate the open-door nature of the school, and agree that the headteacher is readily accessible to discuss suggestions and concerns with them.

51. The school provides good quality information for parents through the governors' annual report and pupils' progress reports. The pupils' progress reports are of good quality and inform parents of what their children know and can do. Parents may discuss their children's progress with teachers at the parents' meetings that are held twice a year, and at other mutually convenient times. Information for parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and enables them to be aware of the help their children are receiving and the progress they are making.
52. Induction routines are firmly established, and the headteacher gives generously of his time to ensure that parents of prospective Year 3 pupils are familiar with the layout and routines of the school. Regular newsletters and termly topic outlines help support a strong dialogue between parents and the school, and parents are pleased with the level of information they receive. Coffee mornings and other social events are well attended, and parents are invited to celebration assemblies at the end of the school year.
53. The school enjoys the very good support of parents who make significant contributions to the life and work of the school. The 'Friends of Thorpe Schools' are extremely active and raise substantial funds to help provide additional resources. Their recent contributions have helped in the development of an art room, which is a useful resource for the pupils. A small number of parents and friends regularly work in school and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning by carrying out such duties as the organisation of the library and listening to children read. Parents support extra-curricular activities, and the coaches for the basketball and tennis clubs are parents. One parent, a former pupil, runs a well-supported evening course in computers for other parents. This activity not only provides parents with new skills, but helps to demonstrate to pupils that their parents value learning. The school has further supported this scheme by making surplus computers available to disadvantaged families. Most parents provide good support for the work that pupils carry out at home and all have made a commitment to the new home-school agreement. However, there is no home/school reading record in place to guide parents in helping their children to read at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher, key staff and Governing Body provide good leadership for the school. The head teacher's supportive style of management has enabled the school to develop as a welcoming and caring family community in which all children and adults in the school feel included and valued. He has the full support of the staff and there is a very good team spirit amongst the teachers and support staff which helps to create a positive learning environment for the pupils.
55. The school has an effective senior management team which consists of the headteacher, three senior teachers, and the office manager. All members of the senior management team have clear roles and responsibilities and work well together to ensure a clear educational direction for the work and development of the school. The senior teachers take turns to fulfil the role of deputy headteacher on a termly basis, and this arrangement is very successful, ensuring that the staff concerned gain experience, and enabling the headteacher to use their individual strengths to full capacity. Effective teaching and learning is promoted by senior managers through a suitable evaluation

programme. This includes the regular monitoring of the performance of all teaching assistants and lesson observations.

56. Subject co-ordinators are in place for most subjects with the exception of design and technology. There have been considerable improvements since the previous inspection in the way in which subject co-ordinators carry out their role. All co-ordinators efficiently manage resources for their subjects, and receive delegated funds to enable them to make new purchases. Subject co-ordinators are released to observe lessons, as and when funding allows, and they regularly monitor the planning of lessons. They offer good advice and support to colleagues, and those staff who have recently joined the school have been particularly grateful for the help they have received. Co-ordinators do not yet monitor standards in their subjects through the scrutiny of pupils' work, and the lack of whole-school portfolios of pupils' work reduces the opportunities for monitoring pupils' progress within and between year groups.
57. Under recent legislation a new Governing Body has been formed, although many of the members are the same. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the level of involvement of the governors in the work and life of the school. Governors now consider themselves to be 'critical friends' and have a more significant input into decision making. They are highly supportive of the life and work of the school, and are well informed about school matters. They give generously of their time and are regular and welcome visitors to the school. There are plans in place for governors to be linked to each area of the curriculum.
58. The previous inspection report states that the school development plan was very weak. The Governing Body and senior management team have taken steps to address this issue, and the quality of the current school development plan is satisfactory. The plan now contains appropriate targets and provides a suitable working document for the school. However, there are still some weaknesses in the way in which the plan is constructed. It only spans one year, making it difficult to see the long-term development of the school, and the success criteria, against which progress towards the targets is measured, are sometimes too vague.
59. The school meets statutory requirements, with the exception of providing a suitably broad and balanced curriculum for design and technology. The equal opportunities policy is fully reflected in practice, and all pupils are treated with respect and care. The provision for special educational needs is good, and the school fully meets the needs of pupils who have statements of special educational needs. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory and is an ongoing area of development. The school has recently made welcome a small group of refugee pupils from Poland, who are very well integrated into school life.
60. The quality of the school's financial management is very good. Priorities for spending are clearly identified by the staff and Governing Body, and spending decisions are closely linked to ongoing educational priorities. The school makes very good use of the resources at its disposal, and is constantly striving to upgrade equipment and accommodation. The school uses the specific grants and additional funds it receives very effectively, frequently supplementing them from its own funds.
61. Financial control and school administration are very good. The office manager is highly skilled in the use of technology and she makes very good use of a wide range of software, enabling routine procedures, such as recording attendance, to be carried out quickly and accurately. The school makes very good use of an assessment package to collect, collate and interpret a range of data about the pupils' progress and attainment,

and employs a member of staff to operate this software. The administration staff make a significant contribution to the efficiency and ethos of the school.

62. There is an adequate number of teaching staff for the number of pupils on roll, with a generous allocation of support staff. Most teachers are qualified to teach the primary age range but a small number of newly appointed teachers lack experience of teaching primary aged pupils. A substantial amount of the school's resources is used to keep class sizes at thirty or below, and to provide teaching assistants for every class. This is cost-effective in that it ensures that pupils receive good levels of attention which help them to make good progress. The school encourages teachers to realise their full potential, and as a result of promotion, staff turnover during the last two years has been high. There have been difficulties in recruitment, and despite the best efforts of the headteacher and Governing Body, there are still two teaching posts to be filled. At present, five teachers are from other countries and some are on temporary contracts. One class is being taught by two teachers on a 'job-share' basis.
63. There are good induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers and those new to the school. All are linked to experienced mentors and are given effective support within their year groups. The programme for staff development is comprehensive and includes training in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Teachers attend in-service training courses regularly, both within the school and outside, and this is having a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching. Appraisal procedures are in line with new national requirements. Support and ancillary staff are given positive encouragement to develop their own expertise and to attend courses to acquire appropriate qualifications. Teaching and non-teaching staff work extremely well together as a team and they all make a valued contribution to the life and work of the school.
64. The accommodation enables the teaching of the National Curriculum, although despite recent improvements, it is still difficult for teachers to arrange whole-class practical activities in many classrooms. Since the previous inspection, a determined effort has been made to improve the premises. There is now a separate junior entrance and an extra classroom has been provided. There are plans for further building development in the very near future to accommodate the expected increase in the number of pupils on roll. Specialist accommodation for art, craft and music enhances teaching and learning in these subjects, and the new networked computer suite is a well used and very successful resource for all pupils. Toilets have been much improved, both for staff and pupils. The use of the school hall for dining restricts the time available for physical education and other activities, but the school makes the best use possible of this space.
65. The school has appointed a maintenance manager who has worked hard to improve the school's decorative condition. He has helped to provide other facilities outside such as quiet areas in the playground and a boules court. Pupils make effective use of the new basketball courts and other apparatus. Parents welcome the new environmental area which has been set up recently and which is beginning to contribute to the curriculum. Volunteer staff and friends of the school have built an amphitheatre to be used for outside drama and music activities and this has the potential to be a valuable resource.
66. Resources are good in most subjects. They are particularly good in music, and are satisfactory in mathematics, science, and design technology. Emphasis has been placed on providing sufficient books, materials and apparatus to support literacy and numeracy, and in these areas the school is well resourced. Although a great deal of

money has been spent on updating and increasing the number of computers, there is still a lack of control equipment, such as floor robots, and the school is aware of the need to improve resources in this area. Learning resources to support the work of pupils with special educational needs are good. Most resources are stored on purpose built shelving around the school, and are clearly labelled and easily accessible. To make room for the computer suite the library has been moved to a corridor. Although pupils make good use of the library, space for quiet study is now restricted. The school uses the resources of the local environment well to broaden the curriculum.

67. Good attention has been paid to the key issues raised in the last report, and although some of the more complex issues are not fully resolved, progress overall since the last inspection has been good. In the light of the rising standards in English, mathematics and science, the good progress made by pupils of all abilities, the good quality of teaching and leadership, the school is giving good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1) The headteacher, Governing Body and staff should improve standards in design and technology by ensuring that:-
 - the scheme of work for design and technology is fully implemented in all classes;
 - enough time is given to the subject and that it is taught regularly throughout the school;
 - teachers have the necessary confidence and expertise through a programme of in-service training.

(paragraphs 6, 15, 92 - 95)
- 2) The headteacher, Governing Body and staff should improve standards in the control element of the information and communication technology curriculum by:-
 - ensuring that teachers have the necessary confidence and expertise through a programme of in-service training;
 - providing the necessary software and hardware;
 - monitoring the provision for this element of the information and communication technology curriculum across the school.

(paragraphs 4, 66, 103 -110)
- 3) The headteacher and Governing Body should help teachers to manage incidents of misbehaviour in their classrooms by:-
 - providing further training in behaviour management for all staff;
 - making regular classroom observations to identify teachers who are experiencing difficulties enabling further individual support to be given;
 - identifying and sharing good practice across the school.

(paragraphs 16, 43, 77, 83, 102)
- 4) The headteacher and Governing Body should improve attendance by:-
 - introducing more rigorous follow-up procedures for families where there are high levels of authorised or unauthorised absence;
 - making parents even more aware of the need for their children to attend school on a regular basis;

(paragraphs 12, 45)

5) The headteacher and staff should improve curriculum planning in some foundation subjects by ensuring that:-

- the skills that pupils are to learn as they move through the school are clearly identified in the long-term planning for individual subjects in a progressive and systematic way;
- where subjects are taught within topics, that the skills associated with those subjects are not neglected;
- teachers within year groups plan lessons individually within an agreed framework;
- there are clear opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual development.

(paragraphs 20, 25, 27, 33, 91, 92, 98,)

• **Other issues which should be considered by the school:-**

- the quality of marking of pupils' work;
- the presentation of the work of some pupils;
- opportunities for pupils to set their own targets for development;
- the accumulation of portfolios of levelled samples of pupils' work.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	10	44	40	6	-	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	409
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	77

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	89

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	51	45	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	36	43
	Girls	33	33	37
	Total	70	69	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (69)	72 (69)	83 (77)
	National	N/A (70)	N/A (69)	N/A (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	32	36
	Girls	32	33	35
	Total	63	65	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (68)	68 (66)	74 (64)
	National	N/A (67)	N/A (69)	N/A (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	389
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	27

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	230

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

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

	£
Total income	724350
Total expenditure	751891
Expenditure per pupil	1974
Balance brought forward from previous year	64080
Balance carried forward to next year	36539

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	409
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	40	7	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	42	7	4	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	49	12	4	2
The teaching is good.	52	38	4	4	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	37	9	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	25	5	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	27	5	5	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	38	7	9	4
The school is well led and managed.	44	35	5	9	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	37	10	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	33	7	2	2

PART D:

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

ENGLISH

68. The inspection findings indicate that standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. Reading standards at the end of the key stage are average. Writing is satisfactory overall, and there are examples of good work in poetry, and examples of high quality pieces of extended writing at the upper end of the school. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection in terms of the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in the end of key stage National Curriculum assessments, and have kept pace with the rate of improvement nationally.
69. Pupils of all ages and abilities communicate clearly with one another, and put forward their views and opinions confidently during class discussions. They express their thoughts, evaluate stories and written work, and most listen attentively to the opinions of their teachers and classmates. Skilful questioning by many of the teachers elicits thoughtful answers and extends pupils' speaking skills. At present there are few opportunities for pupils to take part in whole class speaking activities such as choral speaking, drama, role play and debates, which would further develop pupils' speaking skills.
70. By the age of eleven, most pupils attain the expected standards in reading, and make good use of their skills to access information in their work across the curriculum. They benefit from taking part in the shared and guided reading sessions within the literacy hour, and these activities have given them a good understanding of the wide range of reading material that is available. Some pupils in all year groups read fluently, accurately and with good levels of understanding. The school places an appropriate emphasis on reading, especially in the lower part of the key stage, and these pupils make good progress. The most enthusiastic readers in each class are eager to discuss the plot and characterisations in their chosen books, and because of the encouragement of their teachers, even the weakest readers enjoy reading and are proud of their achievements. Pupils are clear about the difference between fiction and non-fiction and make good use of the central library, which is situated in the main corridor. They successfully use the index and contents pages in books and are fully conversant with the purpose of glossaries. In choosing fiction pupils use a variety of techniques from looking at the "blurb" to reading a few pages, scanning and skimming to decide whether or not they are likely to enjoy their choice. In some classes, pupils work in pairs, helping and supporting one another. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the reading targets set in their individual educational plans.
71. By the end of the key stage standards in writing are in line with national expectations. In English lessons, pupils write for a range of purposes including letters, reports, plays, curriculum vitae and stories, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects across the curriculum. In Year 6, pupils' writing is often well structured, lively and thoughtful, and pupils make effective use of expressive vocabulary, as seen in the work linked to 'The Valley of Dinosaurs'. Higher attaining older pupils are beginning to use complex sentences in their work, but some of the lower attaining pupils use only a limited vocabulary to express their ideas. There are

examples of good writing in all year groups, including samples of poetry and pieces of extended writing.

72. The quality of English teaching is good, and in two of the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was very good. With the exception of the new teachers who have recently joined the staff from abroad, teachers are confident about teaching and planning literacy hour sessions, although some sessions extend beyond the recommended hour and this cause pupils to lose interest. The most effective teachers set clear and precise learning objectives for each lesson, and make effective use of questions to extend the highest attainers and to support those who have learning difficulties. Pupils support pupils who have English as an additional language well. All teachers offer good support to pupils, and encourage them to do their best. Effective use is made in most classrooms of the classroom assistants, especially during group activities in the literacy hour. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the marking is not consistent throughout the school and does not always show pupils how they can improve their work further. Although teachers encourage pupils to present their work neatly, this is an aspect that could be further improved, as in some cases pupils do not make enough effort with the presentation of their written work.

MATHEMATICS

73. The inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment are average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are improving year by year and in terms of the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in the end of key stage National Curriculum assessments, pupils' attainment is better than it was at the time of the last inspection.
74. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved pupils' mental and oral skills and the speed at which they can recall number facts and multiplication tables, although this is an area where some pupils are still too slow. Teachers make effective use of incidental moments that occur during the day, such as registration, for reinforcing mental skills in a light-hearted and effective way.
75. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils have a good grasp of place value. Most understand and accurately use the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and apply this knowledge in their number work and when carrying out computational exercises involving money, fractions, decimals and percentages. They plot positive and negative numbers on a grid and construct two-dimensional shapes using these co-ordinates. Pupils recognise and draw acute and obtuse angles with the aid of a compass and measure them accurately in degrees. Information about pulse rates is collected and represented in line graphs using computer technology. Pupils apply their skills in problem solving exercises such as converting foreign currency, and when working out ratio and proportion. Many use a calculator correctly, although opportunities for them to do so are limited. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects across the curriculum.
76. Pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are well supported by their teachers and classroom assistants, and make good progress. The individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs include personal targets in mathematics which are appropriate to the level at which they are working.
77. Teaching is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have a good understanding of mathematics and use a range of strategies to motivate pupils. They are often enthusiastic in the way in which they present activities, and make good use of

resources to enhance pupils' learning. Lesson objectives are made clear at the start of each lesson and are often displayed on the board in advance so that pupils know what is to be covered before they start. Pupils are given a thorough grounding in numeracy and basic skills, and they enjoy taking part in the quick-fire mental and oral sessions which help them to develop confidence in handling large numbers. Not all staff yet have the skills to deal satisfactorily with persistently disruptive pupils who, in a few cases, disturb the learning of others. Teachers plan in year groups using a commercial scheme of work which divides lessons into four sessions, not three, as advised in the National Numeracy Framework. The result is that whole class mental and oral work is often too long and pupils have insufficient time to complete written tasks. This is particularly so for those with special educational needs. Not all work is systematically marked, and guidance for pupils on how to improve or correct mistakes varies from teacher to teacher. Homework, including tables, is done by most pupils and supports work carried out in class.

SCIENCE

78. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average, with a significant proportion of pupils reaching standards that are above the national average. There has been a significant improvement in standards in science since the last inspection and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher standard of Level 5 has also improved.
79. By the end of the key stage, pupils use scientific vocabulary with confidence when giving explanations, and record their results using standard units of measurement. In Year 6 good use is made of charts and diagrams and pupils are encouraged to record their work in tabular form. Most pupils in the school have a good understanding of fair-testing procedures which they demonstrate when carrying out experiments. Pupils' ability to carry out their own scientific investigations is largely dependent on the emphasis placed on this element of the curriculum by individual teachers. In some classes, teachers are too prescriptive and this prevents pupils from developing their own enquiry skills.
80. Pupils of all ages name and locate major and minor organs on a skeleton with considerable accuracy. Older pupils describe the function of the heart and lungs and are acutely aware of the effects of exercise and rest on pulse rates. This was effectively demonstrated when pupils used information technology to collect, store and present the information in graphical form. Pupils understand what is required to sustain life and the importance of healthy living. They display good knowledge of the senses and of the harmful effects that drugs and alcohol can have on the body. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of food chains.
81. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties are secure. When asked to separate out different materials pupils suggest a range of strategies including sieving, and the higher attainers are confident about ways in which the constituent parts of solutions might be recovered. They investigate the different properties of materials and understand how shape can influence floating and sinking. Pupils are aware of the different states of solids, liquids and gases, and explain the processes by which water can achieve each of these states. As part of their studies into electricity, pupils have learned which materials make the most effective conductors and insulators

82. Pupils are aware of the dangers of electricity and are confident about constructing simple circuits. By the end of the key stage the highest attainers understand the notion of series and parallel circuits and their possible uses in real life situations. Pupils have been successfully taught that adding additional batteries to a circuit creates brighter bulbs and that adding a switch controls the flow of electricity. Pupils have a firm grasp of forces, including gravity and air resistance and explain the effect of force on materials. For example, they know that when the air is sucked out of a drink carton that the walls of the carton will collapse. A weaker area in terms of physical processes is pupils' knowledge of the earth and beyond. Although pupils are aware of the passage of night and day, their grasp of the relationship between the earth, moon and the sun is tenuous.
83. The quality of teaching in science is good and enables pupils to make advances in their learning. In the best lessons seen during the inspection lesson objectives were clear, teachers' subject knowledge enthused pupils, and activities and tasks were well matched to pupils' abilities. However, there are occasions in some classes when teachers' explanations are too long, and this reduces the time that pupils have to carry out written work, and results in some pupils losing interest and becoming distracted. Questioning is effectively used by most teachers to ascertain pupils' knowledge and to offer opportunities for them to make suggestions and to clarify their thinking. Good quality daily plans, with clearly identified lesson objectives which are shared with pupils, present good learning opportunities and ensure that lessons are well focused. Most teachers organise lessons well and have good classroom management skills, but some do not have the necessary strategies to deal effectively with the few pupils in each class who persistently misbehave.
84. The recently appointed co-ordinator has undertaken a subject audit and has produced a comprehensive action plan for science. The analysis of previous end of key stage National Curriculum test results and the scrutiny of pupils' answers to test questions are currently taking place, and are enabling the co-ordinator to focus attention on areas where coverage is insufficient or where pupils remain insecure in their knowledge and skills. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to consider the organisation of science teaching in the school as at present, breaks in coverage for significant periods of time make it difficult for pupils to retain their previous learning. Although year group planning is carefully scrutinised, the monitoring of science teaching, identified in the development plan, remains a priority for the school. Resources are more than adequate, and there is sufficient equipment for practical tasks. Good use is made of the extensive and attractive environmental area to promote pupils' awareness of different habitats and variations in growing conditions.

ART

85. Pupils' attainment in art by the end of the key stage is in line with national expectations, and there are samples of good quality work displayed around the school and in classrooms. Pupils of all ages experience a broad range of art activities, although more emphasis is placed on two dimensional work than three dimensional work.
86. Pupils' drawing skills are of a satisfactory standard throughout the school. Pupils make effective use of pencils, chalks, pastels and charcoal to make careful observational drawings, and in the best examples of work seen, show an understanding of perspective, and make effective use of shading to add depth. In a particularly good lesson seen during the inspection, Year 3 pupils studied human and animal bones which they then drew using magnifying glasses to ensure that they could accurately

reproduce the detail of the surface texture. Pupils coped well with the translation of a three dimensional model into a two dimensional drawing, and understood that they could only represent the part of the bone that they could see.

87. Pupils use paint in a variety of different ways for producing pictures and for printing. They have experience of printing using a range of materials including sponges and cardboard, but do not have opportunities to print using screens, enabling the overlap of colours. Pupils know how to marble, and this activity has reinforced their scientific understanding as they considered why the oil and water do not mix. During the inspection pupils' developed their knowledge of Celtic designs, and used paint well to depict body painting patterns.
88. By the end of the key stage pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the works and style of well-known artists such as Picasso, Matisse and Van Gogh. However, because their recall is poor, and they do not make a written record of this work, much of their learning is forgotten from year to year, and their knowledge is not progressively built upon. Pupils' paintings in the style of well-known artists show that they have picked out the distinctive features of the chosen artist's work noting texture, colour, line and tone.
89. Pupils have experience of using clay to make Roman tiles, wall plaques, and animal models which they paint, and glaze using the school's own kiln. They understand different techniques for making pots and have made coiled and thumb pots as part of their history work. Although some opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their artistic skills using fabric as a medium, such as the appliqué wall hangings on display in the corridor and the tee-shirts which pupils decorated with their favourite book cover designs, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use fabric in their art work.
90. Pupils in all year groups have sketch books, which are used effectively for recording their drawings and sketches, but not sufficiently extensively as records of pupils' preparatory work, or for the development and practice of skills such as colour-mixing and mark-making.
91. The teaching of art is satisfactory overall, and some examples of good and very good teaching were seen during the inspection. However, teachers do not always pay enough attention to ensuring that activities build upon pupils' previous learning, and are sometimes too concerned with linking art activities to the ongoing termly curriculum topic. This means that pupils' skills and knowledge are not always systematically advanced year by year. Most teachers have a good subject knowledge, and their enthusiasm motivates the pupils to want to learn. Skills of drawing and painting are well taught, and enable pupils to make advances in their learning. Resources are well prepared and effectively used to support teaching and learning. Teachers give clear explanations of the activities, and in the best lessons seen during the inspection there were plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas creatively. There are occasions when teachers are too prescriptive, and this constrains the pupils' creativity and results in similar work from all pupils. Teachers value pupils' work and create attractive displays around the school, which encourage the pupils to take a pride in their achievements. Very few homework tasks are linked to art, and opportunities for pupils to develop personal study skills, by preparing for some art tasks at home, are therefore missed. Good use is made of computers to support pupils' art work, and there are many examples of computer generated art work displayed around the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Standards in design and technology are below national expectations at the end of the key stage. Insufficient time is allocated to the subject, and this prevents full coverage of the programmes of study, and some teachers lack confidence and subject expertise. Currently, design and technology activities derive from the termly topic, and opportunities for pupils to make, design and evaluate are very limited.
93. Pupils throughout the school have opportunities to work with paper, card and other materials to make models. For example, Year 6 pupils made angels as part of their work related to the Millennium using fabric, wire and card, and following a visit to Lyme Regis made a small wooden model of the pier. As part of their work relating to the Tudors, pupils have made clothing, and have used fabric to make insects which they filled with beans. Pupils have little opportunity to make models with moving joints, and in discussion are unsure about how to strengthen wooden joints or to use struts to make joints firm. Pupils have some experience of food technology and understand the need to ensure high standards of hygiene when working with food.
94. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work, and pupils are not sufficiently familiar with the notion of comparing a finished article against an initial plan to see where and why changes have been made. In their evaluation of their work, pupils are too easily satisfied with their first attempt, and not skilled in pinpointing which parts of their work have been most or least successful and why. Pupils are not confident in their use of wheels, gears or pulleys, and do not have enough opportunities to learn about how things are put together by taking them apart and reassembling them. Because pupils' experiences are so limited, they have not gained the experience of working with a range of tools and rarely use resistant materials such as plastic and wood.
95. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, as pupils do not have regular design and technology lessons, and there are far too many gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching and planning the subject, and the new national scheme of work is yet to be implemented across the school. Although teachers provide some opportunities for pupils to make items, they do not place enough emphasis on the designing and evaluating elements of the subject, and pupils have no written record of their learning to help them with future work. The school has not moved forward sufficiently in design and technology since the last inspection, largely because other initiatives have taken priority.

GEOGRAPHY

96. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in geography is line with national expectations, and standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
97. By the time the pupils leave school, they have studied various localities, and make sensible comparisons of the similarities and differences they have observed. Pupils make distinctions between human and physical geographical features, as seen in their work linked to Lyme Regis, and understand the impact of the geography of an area on the lives of the people who live there. They have conducted a detailed study of Southend-on-Sea, and have drawn comparisons with the city of Leeds. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge of mapping skills and show a secure understanding of scale. They interpret map symbols and identify features on a variety of maps, and older pupils use maps well as sources of information and evidence about an area. Pupils have

made studies of rivers, and describe how rivers start and how they grow, eroding the land as they flow. Pupils use appropriate geographical vocabulary to explain features of places beyond their own locality such as the customs and traditions of India, and this work gives pupils a good understanding of cultures other than their own.

98. Teaching in geography is satisfactory overall, although the lack of clearly defined progressive skills in the subject means that there are occasions when teachers do not take enough account of pupils' previous learning. Geography is often subsumed within termly topics, and although this gives pupils a meaningful context for their learning, it sometimes results in gaps of up to one term before the subject is the topic focus once again. This pattern of learning is difficult for the lower attaining pupils whose recall of what they have learned is often poor. Coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study is satisfactory, and during their time in school pupils receive a broad curriculum. Good use is made of a variety of visits to support and enhance pupils' learning.

HISTORY

99. By the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations.
100. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of historical occasions, timelines, kings and queens and other events based on their studies through the school, and have good recall of their past work. They are particularly enthusiastic about the visits made to support work in history. One such visit was to Kentwell Hall, when pupils dressed up in period costume and re-enacted Tudor customs and domestic life. This experience gave pupils a good insight into life at the time of the Tudors, and because of their first-hand involvement, they have good recall of the event. By the end of the key stage pupils make a clear distinction between primary and secondary historical evidence, and are aware of the importance of artefacts in recording historical events.
101. To support the teaching of history visits are made to places of interest wherever possible. These include visits abroad for instance, to Paris, and in England to Lyme Regis, where pupils gain first hand experience of the past. When classes return from a visit they record their observations and continue to search for further evidence. Pupils have a natural curiosity about other cultures and are eager to know more about the traditions of countries such as Egypt during the time of the Pharaohs and the building of the pyramids. Opportunities are provided for them to undertake research both at school and at home, which helps them to evaluate and interpret evidence from the past.
102. Teaching is good overall as tasks are well matched to pupils' interests and ability. Good use is made of video footage to provide background material for work on the Romans, and in a lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were encouraged to make notes during the video in preparation for class debate and later written work. Good use of questioning by classteachers, who are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject, helps to keep pupils well motivated and focussed on their work. Pupils are encouraged to make effective use of computers, using programs such as 'Encarta' and where possible the Internet, to find out information about ongoing topics. Teachers have good classroom management and organisation skills, although some struggle at times to control the behaviour of a few disruptive pupils. Although history is taught regularly throughout the school, there are sometimes long periods of time between the topics, and this adversely affect pupils' learning, especially the lower attainers who have difficulty retaining information.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

103. The standard of attainment in information technology by the end of the key stage is above national expectations in terms of pupils' ability to communicate information, but below expectations in terms of their ability to control and monitor events and situations. Control technology is limited to 'Logo' and pupils are provided with insufficient opportunities to work with programmable equipment in order to develop their control skills. Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of skills, and the use of a dedicated computer suite is promoting very good levels of learning in a supportive, well-equipped environment.
104. Computers are used effectively in some areas of the curriculum such as art and history to support pupils' learning, but in other subjects, such as English, science and mathematics, more use could be made of computers and other information technology equipment. The school has identified the use of computers across the curriculum as an area for future development.
105. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils successfully load and save files, log on and off the network and print out their work. For example, after inputting data on heart, pulse rates and exercise that were collected as part of their science topic, Year 6 pupils successfully manipulated the information to produce useful graphs of their results. They successfully retrieve information from CD ROMs in support of topic work and word-process prose and poems using a spell checker to improve accuracy.
106. Younger pupils are being successfully taught to use a range of painting and drawing tools based on appropriate software programs. They skilfully add shapes, colour in identified areas and are able to complete a part-developed picture adding lines of varying thickness, fill predetermined areas with colour and construct additional features. They recognise the functions of particular icons and demonstrate accurate mouse control. Pupils demonstrate their skills in manipulating text, and effectively change the style, size and font of text to enhance their work.
107. A considerable number of pupils have access to computers at home and come to school with good levels of knowledge and expertise. They bring in word-processed homework, find information using the Internet and are familiar with e-mail applications. The majority of pupils incorporate graphics into their word processing and but are less secure with cut and paste techniques. Opportunities for drafting and editing work are limited with some word-processed work being a 'best copy' rather than allowing for the development of editing and drafting skills.
108. One of the teaching assistants currently plays a leading role in the delivery of information technology activities, whilst teachers are in the process of receiving training and updating to enable them to make best use of the new computer suite. She provides a good level of challenge to pupils of all abilities, and is fully supported by the classteachers. Learning is rapid and pupils experiment confidently with a range of drawing and colouring tools. Pupils' knowledge is being extended through the planned, systematic exposure to a published scheme, which meets the requirements of the revised national curriculum. The teaching of information technology skills in half classes ensures that pupils are given very good support and any help required is readily available through this enhanced staffing provision. Sensitive support by the teaching assistant and classteacher ensure pupils' problems are resolved quickly allowing for rapid progress to be made. The recording of pupils' skills is an area which

could be effectively developed by the school to ensure that teachers can build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding.

109. The school now has a very good ratio of computers to pupils but a number of machines remain underused. Some recent difficulties relating to technical problems with the server prevent the saving and printing of pupils' work in some instances, making it difficult for the teachers to monitor progress and to maintain an up-to-date portfolio of work. Information technology is timetabled on a regular basis for the systematic teaching of skills whilst machines in classrooms are available to support other curriculum areas.
110. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject but has successfully overseen the introduction of enhanced facilities and provision of equipment. Delays in the full implementation of the National Grid for Learning and external connection difficulties are beyond the school's control. The co-ordinator has attended a range of courses and these are impacting positively on the school's development of information technology. The school is assisting parents through making redundant computers available to them and courses are organised to enable parents to support their child's learning through developing their own information technology skills.

MUSIC

111. By the end of the key stage, the vast majority of pupils attain standards that exceed the national expectation. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress, and have very positive attitudes which enhance their learning.
112. The quality of pupils' singing is good, and they successfully maintain parts when singing rounds and descants. Their singing is tuneful, both when accompanied and unaccompanied, and they demonstrate a good sense of rhythm. Pupils try hard to reflect the mood of the lyrics by varying the tone, speed and volume of their singing, and their enjoyment is evident. Pupils sing regularly in class, but opportunities for pupils from different classes to sing together are limited, and insufficient use is made of singing to enhance acts of collective worship and assemblies. Older pupils enjoy listening to songs performed by a wide variety of well-known artists, and have a growing appreciation of distinct styles such as Motown and reggae.
113. Pupils throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of composition. During the inspection, younger pupils worked industriously together to produce compositions based on the pentatonic scale. On discovering the need to notate their work, so that they could play it again at a later date, they made effective use of graphical notation to illustrate which notes were long and which were short. Pupils have an extremely good musical vocabulary which they use to good effect. They understand that an ostinato is a repeated rhythmic pattern, and have recently learned how to choose a drone by listening carefully, and selecting notes that are concordant with the melody.
114. Pupils' knowledge of musical instruments is good, and when performing their compositions they try hard to choose instruments that will closely match the sound they wish to convey. The school has a good range of instruments, including orchestral instruments, keyboards, guitars and steel drums, and pupils have experience of using many of them in their work. When listening to and appraising extracts of music, pupils show an appreciation of why the composer selected a particular instrument. For

example, when listening to excerpts from “Carnival of the Animals’ by Saint Saëns, pupils recognised the flute as a good choice for the representation of a bird.

115. Pupils of all ages and abilities are encouraged to develop special talents through taking part in choir and orchestra, but the current arrangement of pupils being withdrawn from lessons for rehearsals is not ideal. The two school choirs are well rehearsed, and produce polished performances of songs in a range of styles and from a variety of cultures. Pupils who choose not to belong to the choirs thoroughly enjoy listening when the choirs perform their repertoire, and in a short concert seen during the inspection, were a most appreciative and attentive audience. The school orchestra is large, and contains a wide variety of instruments. Pupils rehearse regularly, and produce a pleasant, well co-ordinated sound. The orchestra enjoys performing to the rest of the school and within the local community, and pupils who belong to the orchestra have an understanding of the team work that is involved, and the commitment that is necessary to ensure its success. Watching the school orchestra perform gives other pupils the chance to listen to a combination of different sounds, and a real understanding of how an orchestra works.
116. The teaching of music by the specialist teacher is very good, and is a crucial factor in the high standards pupils attain, the enthusiasm they have for the subject, and the good progress they make. However, classteachers are too reliant on the input of the specialist teacher, and are progressively becoming less skilled in the teaching of music themselves. Good opportunities are provided for all pupils to take part in practical music-making activities which encourage creativity and successfully link theory and practice. Music is taught regularly to all classes, but currently, some of the lessons are too short for pupils to develop their ideas fully. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and to evaluate and refine their work, thereby improving the standard of what they produce. Their learning is enhanced by the good range of resources at their disposal, and the expertise of the music teacher who has tremendously high expectations of what they can achieve. The high standards described in the previous report have been successfully maintained.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. By the end of the key stage, pupils’ attainment is in line with the national expectation. During the course of the year, pupils take part in a wide range of activities which successfully promote their physical development. They make good progress as they move through the key stage in all aspects of the physical education curriculum.
118. In gymnastics, pupils make good use of the available space when travelling and demonstrate an effective range of balances when using both the floor and apparatus. They practice and improve their own performance showing increasing co-ordination and control, although the work of some pupils lacks fluency and poise. In most classes, pupils plan, perform and refine sequences of movements, which they appropriately link with jumps, twists and rolls. Pupils work well independently, and in pairs and groups, and where the most effective learning occurs, they are keen to take on board the suggestions of teachers about ways in which their work might be improved. Older pupils explain the importance of warming-up and cooling down prior to physical education activities, and understand the effect of exercise on the body.
119. Games lessons are well organised and very good use is made specialist support which enables pupils to develop knowledge and skills across a range of different ball games. Pupils of all ages and abilities benefit considerably from specialist teaching in tennis,

hockey, basketball and netball, and most demonstrate good skills of fielding, throwing, passing and catching. In team games, pupils show a good awareness of the need for rules, and respect the final decision of the referee. Opportunities for them to take part in inter-school tournaments and competitions raise the pupils' awareness of the need for fair-play, and help them to develop a healthy spirit of competitiveness.

120. The school has its own swimming pool and swimming is taught to all pupils throughout the summer term. This ensures that all pupils are able to swim at least the recommended twenty five metres by the end of the Year 6.
121. The quality of teaching in physical education is good. Strengths of teaching are the way in which teachers clearly identify the skills that are to be taught, the teachers' high expectations and their effective management of pupils' behaviour. The best lessons are well planned and organised with a good range of suitably challenging activities. In these lessons, good opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others. Teachers present activities with enthusiasm and this helps pupils to develop positive attitudes towards physical education and to be well motivated.
122. The subject is well managed and there is an appropriate policy and detailed scheme of work in place. However, the use of time for physical education is sometimes inefficient. Half hour lessons are timetabled throughout the day, often with little or no time between classes. Difficulties arise when pupils have to wait for classes to finish, and during the inspection, classes sometimes waited for as long as ten minutes. The half hour sessions are too short for pupils to work in any depth, especially in gymnastics when valuable time is used in setting up and putting away the apparatus. Resources are sufficient to cover all aspects of physical education and the co-ordinator works hard to ensure that all pupils experience a very wide range of sporting activities. There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection with the range of out of school clubs that is now in place. These contribute considerably to the pupils' personal, social and sporting development. School teams have been particularly successful representing the borough at the Essex Youth Games and becoming the county champions in football.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and by the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
124. Most pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and a secure understanding and knowledge of aspects of the major world faiths of Judaism and Hinduism. In discussion pupils talk confidently about the life of Jesus and have a good recall of events from the Bible. They make the important distinction between ceremonies and festivals in all the faiths that they have studied, and understand the significant use of prayer in all religions. By Year 6, pupils have the ability to address profound concepts and ideas, and to discuss belief, agnosticism and atheism with confidence and tolerance for the views of others.
125. Pupils' understanding of faith and belief is supported and enhanced by visits to local places of worship, and they have an appreciation of the importance of sacred buildings and the long history of their use. Pupils in a variety of classes demonstrate that they know the power of symbols such as the cross, and also that bread, water and wine have a symbolic importance in a number of religions. There is a strong sense among the majority of pupils that sacred texts and other artefacts are to be treated with

reverence and respect. In discussion older pupils show very positive and mature attitudes towards their learning in religious education.

126. The quality of teaching is good, with teachers being well prepared and secure in their knowledge of the subject. Teachers work together to plan the delivery of the syllabus and prepare lesson plans for the classes in their year groups. Whilst this ensures that all pupils in a given year are pursuing the same topics there is an over-prescriptive element to the planning that occasionally prevents some pupils from developing ideas and arguments fully, especially the older more articulate pupils. The teaching of the subject contributes to the spiritual, moral social and cultural education of the pupils and to the caring ethos of the school. Teachers make good use of the artefacts and books available for use as learning resources. During the lessons observed during the inspection, the interaction between teachers and pupils was challenging and helpful in developing pupils' understanding. Pupils in most classes make regular entries in their religious education books which help them to recall their previous learning. However, some written tasks are very routine and do not enable the pupils to draw their own conclusions or present their own opinions.