

INSPECTION REPORT

SHAW PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Ockendon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115058

Headteacher: Mrs. P. Shaw

Reporting inspector: R. Passant – OIN: 2728

Dates of inspection: 9th October to 12th October 2000

Inspection number: 224628

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Avon Green, South Ockendon, Essex
Postcode:	RM15 5QJ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Robert Springett
Date of previous inspection:	June 15th 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Roderick Passant	Registered inspector	Physical education; Foundation Stage; Information and communication technology; English as an additional language.	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities? How well is the school led and managed?
Paul Widdowson	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Sangster	Team inspector	English; Religious education; Geography.	
Dr. Gillian Plummer	Team inspector	Mathematics; Art and design; History; Equal Opportunities.	
Dennis Maxwell	Team inspector	Science; Design and technology; Music; Special educational needs.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is above average in size with 321 pupils on roll. It is situated on a large estate close to the centre of South Ockendon. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals at about 35 per cent is above the national average. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than most schools. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. There is considerable movement in and out of the immediate area and about 20 per cent of the school population join or leave the school at various points of the school year. Whilst the proportion varies year on year only about half of Year 6 join the school in the reception class. Many pupils have low levels of language and social skills when they join the school. Until the nursery opened in the school three years ago, many pupils did not have any pre-school experience.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Standards in the school in English, mathematics and science are very low when compared to national averages. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the high rates of pupil joining and leaving the school and the very low levels of literacy skills that the majority of pupils had when joining the school are factors in the low levels of attainment. Standards are rising steadily but slowly. The school development plan has raising attainment as a central focus and the school is led well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The work in the nursery and reception classes is good and young children make good progress;
- Overall, pupils have good attitudes to learning;
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- Throughout the school adults care for pupils and there are good relationships;
- The school is a calm community;
- There is a commitment by all staff and governors to raise achievement.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics;
- The balance of the curriculum and the organisation of the school day;
- Attendance, despite the school's efforts;
- More could be demanded of pupils when they are working on their own;
- Pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of what they need to do in order to improve.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1998 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses because of the low levels of attainment. Overall, there has been satisfactory progress. The trend for improvement as indicated by the school's average National Curriculum points score is above the national trend. There is in the school a shared commitment by members of staff and the governing body to tackle the issue of low attainment. The work of the Foundation Stage, the reception and nursery classes, is helping to raise standards. The nursery has only been opened for three years and it will be another year or two before the impact will show in National Curriculum tests at seven. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented

effectively and there is a slow but steady rise in standards. The impact of these initiatives is working through the school. Standards in science have shown a steady improvement and there has been good improvement in science in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels. Addressing standards in English, mathematics and science has been the priority in the school in the past two years. Standards in geography, identified in the previous report as being below average, have not been addressed. Apart for religious education and history, standards in the other subjects have been maintained. There have been improvements in the management of the school. The school development plan has raising standards as its focus. Assessment information is used well to inform improvements in English, mathematics and science. Schemes of work have been developed further. Additional behaviour management strategies have been developed and are effective. Teaching has been monitored and, as a consequence, the overall quality of teaching has shown improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E*	E*	E	E*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
mathematics	E*	B	E*	E	
science	E*	B	E	E	

Many children have low levels of language and other skills when they join the school. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, the Foundation Stage, and many children are likely to achieve the Early Learning goals by the end of their time in the reception class. The work in the Foundation Stage is helping to raise standards but the impact of the work has not yet developed beyond Year 1.

Standards are very low for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics tests compared to national averages but there is steady improvement. In the 1999 tests standards were above average in mathematics and science. In the 2000 tests pupils' performance in English and mathematics was very low, in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. In science they were well below average. However in all three subjects there has been slow but steady improvement. In all three subjects, pupils are doing better in 2000 than they did in 1996. The work of the current pupils in science is in line with expectations.

The trend for improvement in the four years to 1999 is above the national trend.

The school sets targets for attainment in the National Curriculum tests in association with the local education authority. These are realistic and based on knowledge of the particular pupils. The targets for eleven-year-olds are below the national average but reflect the ability range of the cohort of pupils. The school makes use of extensive testing procedures to monitor and track pupil progress.

Standards in art, design and technology, information technology, physical education and music are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards are below the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus in religious education. Standards in history and geography are below average.

The majority of pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. Higher attaining pupils are not always consistently challenged in mathematics and English. Girls show underachievement in mathematics and science and more could be expected of pupils when they work on their own.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. In the classroom most pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their work and respond well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is good. This is because members of staff are generally skilled at managing behaviour. There is a good school policy on behaviour which is implemented consistently. Behaviour support assistants are effective. There is a significant minority of pupils with behavioural problems who can disrupt some lessons. At playtime pupils are supervised well and any occasional incidents of aggressive behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the school's code of conduct. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. There is a calm atmosphere. The school has a high number of exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is satisfactory. There are opportunities to take responsibility on a rotational basis. Duties are taken seriously. Relationships between pupils and adults are good. Pupils value the support of staff in listening to problems and dealing with concerns.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. The absence rate is well above the national average. There is a small number of pupils who are regularly absent which has a significant impact on the rate of attendance.

Year 6 pupils attend a 'Crucial Crew' day run by the emergency services to raise their awareness of possible dangers. Part of the day is used to promote drug awareness. The majority of pupils come to school on time, although a small minority is persistently late.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

In the lessons seen, teaching was excellent in 3 per cent, very good in 13 per cent, good in 39 per cent, satisfactory in 40 per cent and unsatisfactory in 1 per cent. Four per cent of the lessons were not given a teaching grade because of the observation time being short. There has been improvement in the lessons seen since the last inspection when 20 per cent were judged unsatisfactory.

The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and children make good progress as a result. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infant and junior sections and pupils make steady progress.

Teachers are skilled at managing behaviour and have good relationships with the pupils. Overall, planning is satisfactory. Most lessons are planned with pupils with special educational needs in mind and the teaching approaches and questioning is usually adapted to their needs and they make satisfactory progress. There is good teamwork with learning support assistants. Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory with good lessons seen. Pupils' independent skills are not fostered consistently and they are often very dependent on the teacher. Higher attaining pupils are not always consistently challenged in mathematics and English. Pupils' confidence is not high and there are not enough opportunities for collaborative work.

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The range of experiences for very young children is good. In the infant and junior sections, teachers work hard to plan for interesting work and teach all subjects of the National Curriculum. However, the time available for subjects other than English and mathematics is limited. Overall, the breadth and balance of the school day is unsatisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of after-school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is a good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school identifies learning needs carefully. The pupils are given education plans that are usually clear and precise with good procedures in place to monitor and assess their progress. These plans are regularly updated. There are appropriate links with other specialists.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The 17 pupils who speak English as an additional language in the school who are integrated well into the school. Eight pupils are at the early stages of learning the language and receive specific appropriate support. Pupils make good progress in learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, the provision is sound. The school tries to foster pupils' sense of self-esteem. The provision for moral development is good. All pupils know and understand the school rules and the concepts of right and wrong are explored and consistently reinforced.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a safe and caring place. The quality of care for the pupils by all the staff working in the school is a strength of the school.

The school works very hard to encourage parents to become involved as partners in their children's education but with limited success. Parents who responded to the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and the work it does.

There are a number of traveller pupils in the school. They are supported well by a support teacher who comes into the school twice a week. The school has worked hard within the community to ensure that refugee pupils are fully included in the life of the school.

HOW IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall, the leadership and the management is good. The headteacher has led the school well. Parents and pupils have confidence in her. The deputy headteacher provides effective personal and professional support to the headteacher. Members of staff with team responsibilities are able and effective and are growing in their roles. Subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science are effective. The school development plan has a clear sharp focus on raising standards and the school has a clear sense of direction. The day to management of the school is good. It is a calm community.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and the need to focus on raising attainment. Members support the school and carry out their duties effectively. The budget is monitored carefully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching is formally monitored by the headteacher and the local education authority and individual targets are set. The school has made good use of local education authority consultants. Assessment data is used well to monitor pupils' progress and to analyse in the National Curriculum tests those aspects of teaching of the particular subject which require development.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively.

The infant section of the school is separated from the junior section but the school works hard to prevent a feeling of two schools. In the past there has been a significant number of staffing changes. There is currently a good match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum. Learning resources are adequate. The school ensures that principles of best value are applied to any expenditure. There is a proposal to invest in a small computer suite and the budget has been structured to create some funding to allow this to go ahead.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress; • The quality of teaching; • They would feel comfortable in approaching the school; • The school expects the children to work hard and do their best and is helping them to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More regular homework; • Pupils' behaviour; • The range of after-school activities.

There were 27 returns and the points indicated above are those where there was a significant number of responses. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. The school is welcoming to parents and wants to work in partnership. Homework is set regularly and the school works hard to keep parents informed. Overall, behaviour is good. If poor behaviour occurs it is managed well. There are effective systems in place to manage poor behaviour.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Although attainment is generally below average on entry to the school at age three, the children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and many are expected to attain in line with expectations by the end of the Reception Year. This good progress is due to the good teaching in that part of the school. Standards for seven year olds, as indicated by the 1999 National Curriculum tests in reading and writing are very low, in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. They are also very low when compared to schools which have a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. In the 2000 tests there was a small improvement in reading but overall, results remain very low. When the performance is considered over time using the average National Curriculum points score, which is a method of taking the full account of all pupils' performance and not simply considering the proportions of pupils reaching a particular level, then standards in reading show a steady improvement since 1996. Standards in writing also show improvement but at a slower rate.

2 In the English tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999, the number of pupils achieving the expected levels was very low. Results were also well below when compared with pupils in similar schools. Results in 2000 were also very low, in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. However, there has been slow but steady improvement in the average point score since 1996. The low levels of attainment reflects the low levels of language and the narrowness of the experience of pupils, which makes understanding of the written word and writing difficult for them.

3 In mathematics in the 1999 national test in mathematics for seven-year-olds, the school's standards were very low and very few pupils attained the higher levels. Compared with those of similar schools, these results were well below average. In the 2000 tests, the proportion of pupils attaining level 2 and above was below the national average. The school's results, however, were significantly higher than in previous years and show improvement.

4 National test results in mathematics for the eleven-year-olds in 1999 were well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels was close to average. However, over time the school's test results have been very low. In the 2000 national tests the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level, (level 4) and above was very low, in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The proportion was close to the target the school set. The school's target for 2001 is also below national expectations.

5 The overall trend in mathematics shows a slow rise in standards. The girls' attainment in national tests is below that of the boys at the end of Key Stage 2, whereas at Key Stage 1 there is no significant difference. This school needs to address this issue.

6 In the teacher assessments for science for seven year olds in 1999 the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level, (level 2) or above, was well below the national average. At level 3 and above attainment was well above the national average, indicating that the teaching and experiences are enabling the higher attaining pupils to achieve appropriately. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, pupils' attainment at level 2 and above was well below average, whereas their attainment at level 3 and above was very high. The 2000 national test results indicate further good improvement in the numbers achieving the higher levels.

7 The school has made satisfactory improvements in attainment in science for seven-year-olds since the last inspection when attainment was below the national average. However, the school has made good improvements in the numbers of pupils attaining the higher level 3, since at the last inspection too few pupils did well.

8 In the science national tests of summer 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining level 4 and above was close to the national average, while the proportion gaining the higher level 5 was above average. Standards have improved since the previous inspection when they were below the national average. In the 2000 national tests standards were well below average, but there were several pupils with identified special educational needs in the year group. Standards have improved over the past four years in line with the national trend. This follows from the good focus on basic scientific skills and investigational methods. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, pupils' performance in the science tests was above average in 1999. When judged against pupils' prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, and allowing for a high level of mobility, pupils' progress was well above average. The results for summer 2000 are not as good, but against the pupils' own prior attainment when they were in Key Stage 1, their progress was satisfactory and attainment was broadly average.

9 Overall, pupils make steady progress and, given their prior attainment, achieve satisfactorily. There are four factors which need to be considered when considering the school's National Curriculum test results.

10 Many children have very limited language, social and other skills when they enter the school. This has been addressed by the opening of a nursery setting. The nursery has been opened for three years. Within the Foundation Stage, the nursery and reception classes, children are now making good progress. The majority of children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the reception year. The Foundation Stage is making a significant contribution to improved standards and this can be seen in the current Year 1 class. The impact of the work of the Foundation Stage has yet to work through the school.

11 The school has a large number of pupils joining and leaving the school at various points in the school year. Currently this figure is about 20 per cent of the school population. Over the past two years, for example, 111 pupils arrived at the school in classes other than the Foundation Stage. Of those, just under one half had special educational needs. The implications of this are that, for example, in any Year 6 class there will be a significant number who have not been at the school for their whole school life.

12 The percentage of pupils having special educational needs is above the national average. Pupils make steady progress against their targets. In addition some pupils speak English as an additional language. These pupils are integrated well, as are the traveller pupils, and they too make at least steady and often good progress in learning English.

13 Attendance is below the national average. The irregular attendance of a few children handicaps their progress.

14 The school is addressing the low attainment, although progress in English is slow. The trend for improvement over the four years up to 1999 is above the national trend at the age of eleven. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been implemented effectively and are helping to raise standards. There is a shared commitment by school staff and governors to raise standards and the school action plan has this as its focus. Overall, pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment.

15 Pupils' speaking skills throughout the school are well below those expected for pupils of their age. The responses of younger pupils are mostly limited to single short sentences; for instance, when expressing their wishes to a puppet in the reception class or speaking to the whole class in Year 2. Older pupils respond well to skilful questioning by the teacher but their range of expression is still well below that expected for their age.

16 Standards of reading are well below average. Pupils aged seven are able to remember a part of a story they have read previously, and higher attaining pupils are able to build unfamiliar words from their sounds. Pupils aged eleven are able to find information by using the contents and index pages of a non-fiction book, but they do not yet know how to locate books in a library. Higher attaining pupils read fiction quite fluently but without great expression and their reading is not wide. Less able pupils do not easily recognise the different sounds which make up a word, and their vocabulary is limited and they need support with simple texts.

17 The writing of pupils aged seven is well below the standard expected for their age. The handwriting of higher attaining pupils is mostly regular, but some pupils are not able to read back what they have written themselves. They use capital letters and full stops inconsistently, and lower attaining pupils are not able to write independently. By the end of the year, higher attaining pupils are beginning to write from their own experience and most pupils can write an account of, for example, a school visit. By the age of eleven pupils are writing in a variety of forms, for example, writing a sequence of instructions or a letter of thanks for a visit to the Millennium Dome. Their ability to write creatively is restricted by the narrowness of their reading and experience, both in and outside school. The handwriting of higher attaining pupils is good and of most others satisfactory. However, they still do not use punctuation consistently accurately. They have difficulty spelling more complex words, such as 'weird' or 'neighbours', but they are developing their vocabulary well.

18 In number work, most pupils recognise and understand place value to two digits by the end of Year 2. They use coins up to 50 pence confidently and have a basic understanding of the number patterns in the two and five-times tables. Simple addition, subtraction, and division by sharing are understood.

19 By the end of Year 6, pupils have a firm understanding of place value to three figures but struggle with four digit numbers. Terms such as 'even', 'square', and 'cube' numbers are understood and used appropriately. Decimal numbers to two places are ordered correctly and most pupils can do simple division sums using decimals. Their understanding of improper fractions is partial and they have difficulty in solving word problems when more than one operation is required. Their skills in reading and interpreting graphs are not well developed.

20 By the age of seven, pupils have suitable experiences and understanding of carrying out simple investigations in science. While the pupils have broadly average understanding, their ability to apply scientific knowledge remains uncertain at times and the higher scientific skills of observation and reasoning require consolidation.

21 Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the main parts of the human body and the basic structure of plants and the main functions of the roots, stem and leaves. Their oral responses indicate broadly average understanding during class discussions, although their writing is not always so clear. Older pupils take on investigational tasks well, with sufficient skill when challenged by the teacher to fit a switch into a simple circuit. Other pupils carried out an experiment requiring the control of testing conditions when finding out the amount of air in the gaps of a tub of gravel. Attainment is broadly average overall.

22 Standards in art, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education and music are broadly in line with expectations. Standards are below the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus in religious education. Standards are below average in geography and history.

23 There are three factors the school should address to raise pupil achievement. Higher attaining pupils are not always consistently challenged in English and mathematics. Not enough is expected of pupils when they are working independently, both in terms of the quality of that work and the quantity. The target setting and assessment systems do not always give pupils a clear enough picture of what it is they have to do in order to improve.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24 Pupils of all abilities have positive attitudes towards the school and this contributes to the progress they make in lessons. The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and find the work interesting and challenging. In the classroom, most pupils are enthusiastic and well focused on their tasks. They respond well during lessons where they participate in discussion and answer questions confidently. Most pupils respect the views of others and share resources and ideas when working collaboratively.

25 Behaviour at the school is good overall, although there is a significant minority of pupils with behavioural problems who on occasions cause some disruption in lessons. In the playground, pupils are very well supervised and there is no evidence of racial harassment or isolation. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds play well together. Occasionally there are incidents of aggressive behaviour but these are quickly and effectively dealt with by mid-day staff. At lunch behaviour is good and there is a friendly and social atmosphere. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner and are polite and open doors for visitors and each other. They line up sensibly and quietly when leaving and entering the hall and moving between lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and are aware of the school's code of conduct.

26 The school has a high number of exclusions and last year seven pupils were excluded for fixed periods and one boy was permanently excluded.

27 Pupils' personal development throughout the school is satisfactory and all are given individual classroom responsibilities. In Year 2 pupils additionally are responsible for delivering infant registers to the classrooms and bringing in equipment from the infant playground. Whole-school responsibility begins in Year 6 where a House Captain and Vice Captain are selected based on past behaviour and attitude. Monitors are appointed for a range of tasks within school which include ringing the bell, delivering registers and collecting names for lunchtime detention at the end of the morning session. All these tasks are done on a rotational basis. In addition there is also the opportunity for pupils in Year 6 to apply to be part of the 'friendship squad' to look after younger children who need support at playtime. Duties are taken seriously and are performed conscientiously.

28 Personal development is further enhanced in Year 6 where pupils attend a 'Crucial Crew' day run by the emergency services where they experience a range of activities aimed at making them aware of potentially dangerous situations. Part of the day is also used to promote drug awareness.

29 Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. Teachers are always available to listen to problems and deal with issues that are raised by the pupils. The pupils see this as a strength of the school and value the support of the staff.

30 Attendance at the school is unsatisfactory. The authorised absence rate is well above the national average although the school has a low rate of unauthorised absence. There is a small minority of pupils who are absent from school on a regular basis which has a significant impact on the rate of attendance at the school. The majority of pupils come to school on time, although there is a small minority of pupils who persistently arrive late. Unsatisfactory attendance does not encourage positive attitudes to learning and contributes to the unsatisfactory attainment and progress of some pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

31 Overall, the quality of teaching is good in the nursery and reception class, the Foundation Stage. In the reception class it is very good. As a result children in these classes make good progress. In the infant and junior school the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and overall, pupils make steady progress. In the lessons observed during the inspection the teaching 99 per cent were satisfactory or better and over half were good or better. Very good and excellent teaching was seen. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when just under a fifth of lessons were unsatisfactory.

32 In the Foundation Stage, teachers and adults teaching have a good understanding of young children and teach basic skills of numeracy and literacy well. They plan effectively in detail and this ensures that not only are children under-five receiving the broad range of curriculum experiences identified as essential parts of the young child's curriculum but that there is seamless teamwork with all adults understanding what their roles and priorities are. As a result, children work productively and at a good pace. Independence is fostered consistently and children make good progress along the 'steps' towards reaching the Early Learning Goals in this regard. Children with special educational needs are supported effectively and make steady progress against their individual education plans.

33 In the infant and junior sections of the school, teachers have, in the main, a sound knowledge of the subjects. In English and mathematics teachers are generally confident and have good subject knowledge, although there are individual teachers who are less confident in mathematics. In science, in the junior part of the school subject knowledge is good in science and this is put to good effect in the quality of experiments that pupils are asked to carry out. In the main, pupils and classes are managed well. Teachers are mainly skilled at managing the difficult behaviour of a few pupils in a positive fashion. The 'red card' system of alerting behaviour-support assistants works well and these support assistants are particularly effective at easing the situation whilst the teacher works with the rest of the class. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen was as a result of the teacher's lack of confidence in the subject matter and ineffective behaviour management strategies.

34 Expectations of what the pupils can achieve are satisfactory overall but at times are not sufficiently challenging. This is particularly true in mathematics with higher attaining pupils where work is not always matched well and provides insufficient challenge to individual or group needs. This leads to a significant number of pupils underachieving. Too many teachers in mathematics are aiming at a level of work which is safe rather than challenging these higher attaining pupils. In addition, more can be expected of some pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils in terms of the amount of work they complete and undertake and the quality of that work when they are working independently.

35 Teachers plan their lessons well in the infant section and planning in the junior part of the school is satisfactory. Teaching assistants are well briefed and provide effective support. Most lessons are planned with pupils of special educational needs in mind. The coordinator provides teachers with a copy of the pupils' individual education plans and the teaching approach and questioning are usually adapted well to their needs. The management and group arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and support staff work well together as a team which benefits the pupils. They use well-structured activities. The special needs support teacher uses good teaching strategies that focus well on

the specific learning needs of pupils with special educational needs, for example helping a pupil interpret a picture and discussing what is happening in it. The learning support assistants provide thoughtful, caring and effective support that is used to good effect in promoting the pupils' development. A considerable amount of time is given to their personal and social needs to enable them to take part in the lessons.

36 English lessons are planned well and mathematics is planned appropriately using the relevant strategies. All teachers share with pupils what the point of the lesson is and how it fits into what has gone before. This ensures that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and reinforces their responsibility in the learning process. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively.

37 Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory with good and very good teaching seen in both subjects in the infant and junior sections of the school. Throughout the school, relationships of teachers and pupils are good which helps to create pupils' generally positive attitudes to learning and a good working atmosphere. Pupils' independent skills are not fostered consistently; they are often heavily reliant on the teacher. In some measure, it explains why in science, for example, standards of science are higher in the classroom than the standards they achieve in the tests. Pupils' confidence is not high and more opportunities need to be provided for independent and collaborative work.

38 In all other subjects across the school standards of teaching are least satisfactory and often good. Teachers set appropriate homework. Marking is satisfactory but pupils do not always have a clear picture of what they have to do in order to improve.

39 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Carefully considered and realistic targets are set for the pupils that they are able to achieve through the well-focused and effective support. The targets include attention to early reading, writing and speaking skills since language delay is a major problem for many pupils. The register of special educational needs shows that a few pupils are ready to move off the register as they overcome their difficulties. One pupil is receiving additional support for teaching English as an additional language and is making good progress.

40 There are two further reasons which prevent pupils making good progress which relate to the way the school day is organised. The curriculum time has been extended in response to the previous inspection but the organisation of the school day results in some short time slots with consequent time pressures on the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics. Whilst substantive time is given to these two subjects, other subjects are sometimes, for example, somewhat crammed in at the end of the morning. The second reason relates to the overall curriculum balance. Understandably the school has established the teaching of English and mathematics as a priority and gives over a very significant part of the week to the teaching in these two subjects in order to address low attainment. The result is that the role of other subjects in providing areas of success and enrichment to pupils is lessened. Pupils are not achieving the higher levels in English, not simply because they lack the technical skills, but because of the quality of what they have to say. A rich and stimulating and a more balanced curriculum is more likely to bring the pupils into contact with ideas and broaden their experience which currently remains narrow. At the moment the role of subjects such as religious education and geography in developing literacy skills is under-developed. The school rightly places emphasis on developing pupils' confidence. Pupils are more likely to develop this self-confidence when they have a broad range of experiences and opportunities for success.

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

41 The range of experiences for the Foundation Stage is good and covers fully the areas of the curriculum for children under-five. The planned programme is always stimulating and provides children with rich opportunities to develop their personal, social and emotional development, development of their communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills, their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their physical and creative development.

42 In the infant and junior sections of the school teachers work hard to plan for interesting work and the school meets the statutory requirements to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum and the requirements for the new curriculum. However, although the school has increased the amount of teaching time per week in response to the last inspection report, pupil progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is restricted by the way the school day is organised. In addition, for very understandable reasons, the school has given a very large proportion of the week to literacy and mathematics in an attempt to raise standards. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well.

43 However, the time available for other subjects is limited. Overall, the breadth and balance of the curriculum are unsatisfactory and they and the organisation of the school day require review. The provision for personal, social and health education is sound. Pupils are introduced to sex education and drug awareness at an appropriate time and manner as part of the personal, social and health education and the science curriculum. The school makes sound use of the community resources with visits to Kentwell, a setting which offers historical experiences to schools, and, for example, to the Millennium Dome to enhance the learning opportunities. There are sound links with the secondary schools. Although parents raised some concerns, there is a satisfactory extra-curricular programme, which enhances the formal curriculum.

44 The school seeks to foster equality of opportunity. The school monitors pupils' results carefully by gender and is aware, for example, of girls' underachievement in mathematics by the age of eleven. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged, particularly in mathematics. The choice of tasks and activities usually provide worthwhile and interesting experiences for the pupils with special educational needs, matched to their stages of development. They take part in the full range of curriculum activities, although there is a general over-emphasis on English and mathematics. In a few instances, pupils are taken out of lessons to consolidate language work. Usually this is timed sensitively so that pupils do not miss the crucial part of the lesson which would prevent them from participating in the activity. In one physical education lesson the house captains left their physical education lesson to undertake their responsibilities missing out on their only games time.

45 Overall, the provision for social, moral, cultural and social development is sound. The school tries to foster pupils' sense of self-esteem and assemblies are thoughtful occasions which offer some quiet reflective opportunities, often with teachers being open and sharing aspects of their own lives in order to build pupils' trust. The provision for spiritual development is sound. The provision for moral development is good. All pupils know the school rules and concepts such as telling the truth, the true nature of friendship, and concepts of right and wrong are explored and consistently reinforced. The provision for social and cultural development is sound. The limited time given to subjects such as history, geography, art and design and music restricts the opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46 The school provides a safe and caring environment for all its pupils and the quality of pastoral care is a strength of the school. There is a child protection policy with a named co-ordinator and clear guidelines to staff on how to identify children who may be at risk. The majority of administrative and support staff has received first-aid training and there are clear and well known procedures in place for recording and dealing with accidents.

47 The school deals with sex education and drug awareness at an appropriate level for the age of its pupils.

48 The procedures the school has in place for recording and monitoring attendance are good, although attendance remains unsatisfactory. The Education Welfare Officer visits the school on a regular basis. The school follows up unexplained absence quickly and efficiently and parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

49 The school has a behaviour management policy which is effective in improving behaviour and establishing a good learning environment. Rewards and sanctions are well known by pupils and are used consistently throughout the school by all staff. The school has two qualified behavioural support assistants who are effectively used for pupils who have behavioural problems. School and class rules are well publicised and are negotiated with staff and pupils.

50 Very good procedures have been established for monitoring the academic progress of pupils. They enable the school to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in key curriculum areas. On the basis of this information, appropriate teaching groups are formed within and across classes. Assessment on admission gives teachers useful information upon which to plan the learning of the youngest children. Standardised tests in English, mathematics and science allow older pupils' progress to be measured year-on-year. This information is used appropriately to help raise pupils' attainment by the allocation of additional literacy and teaching support for pupils with specific learning needs. It also forms the basis for individual pupil targets, which aim to increase pupils' knowledge and skills in literacy. Arrangements for assessing pupils with special educational needs are very good.

51 At the time of the last inspection, the use of assessment to assist curriculum planning was unsatisfactory. Satisfactory action has been taken in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Planned assessment opportunities and lesson evaluations are beginning to impact on teachers' lesson planning. In the other subjects there are no systems for measuring pupils' progress. Good assessment systems exist for science and English and an appropriate mathematics record has been introduced. However, this is not detailed enough to prevent a mismatch of work within classes and mathematics sets; higher attaining pupils often work at too low a level. This is also true within the foundation subjects and religious education.

52 The school has established good practice in using information from baseline assessments as pupils enter school to identify those likely to need additional support. The school identifies their learning needs carefully and selects materials and the teaching approach well to target those needs. The pupils are given targets to focus teaching and learning that are usually clear and precise, with good procedures in place to monitor and assess their progress. Targets are updated regularly. There are appropriate links with outside agencies for specialist help and support, such as with the speech therapist and educational psychologist. Pupils with statements receive the support to which they are entitled.

53 Members of staff know the pupils well and the procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are informal but effective. The pupils' annual reports contain detailed information on personal and social development and pupils' progress.

54 A wide range of outside agencies works closely with the school to support different pupils' needs. The school has recently been funded for a learning development group which will begin in January next year to support pupils in lower Key Stage 1 who are identified as having learning or behavioural difficulties.

55 The numbers of travellers' children in school has dropped from 30 last year to 15. They are well supported by a support teacher who comes into school twice each week. The school is currently working with the Traveller Education Support Service on producing a booklet giving advice to other schools on admitting and integrating traveller children.

56 All the refugee children in the school are now fully integrated and eight pupils now receive support for English. A support assistant works for five hours per week to support pupils with English as an additional language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57 The school works very hard to encourage parent to become involved as partners in their children's education but with limited success. Parents who responded to the questionnaire are very supportive of the school and the work it does

58 The contribution of parents to pupils' learning at school is limited, although parents do help with school visits and swimming and a small number of parents help in the classroom at both key stages. Effective parental support with homework is limited, although where it is given it has a noticeable impact on attainment.

59 The school provides good quality information to parents through the school brochure, the Governors' Annual Report and regular newsletters. Pupils' annual reports provide satisfactory information on pupils' knowledge and understanding, although there is limited information on comparative attainment and progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed of their child's progress and are involved in the review process.

60 There are termly consultation meetings for parents and sufficient opportunities are given for parents to discuss their children's progress with the teachers. The school has held opportunities for parents to understand how the school approaches numeracy, literacy and drug awareness and it keeps them suitably informed on what is being taught in school at the beginning of each term. Attendance at these type of meeting is, however, disappointing. The school is currently working on an initiative with the Local Education Authority to develop parental involvement. The aim is to improve communication, share ideas and encourage parents into school. The school also organises a family learning group course once a year to help parents support their children's education. The course is aimed at developing self-confidence in order to encourage parents to be partners in their children's education.

61 The co-ordinator for special needs makes sure that she establishes good relationships with parents at an early stage of the children's time at school. This helps when any learning difficulty is identified, and a relationship of trust is in place. Parents know they are welcome in school to discuss matters and they are fully involved in the review procedures for their child. The school ensures that parents agree the targets related to special educational needs.

62 Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they have any problems or concerns and teachers are always available to talk to parents at the beginning or at the end of the school day. An appropriate home school agreement has been produced although at present only about 50 per cent of parents have signed up.

63 There is an active parent teacher association which raises between £500 and £1,000 annually to support the school for the purchase of equipment and improving facilities. Whilst meetings in school are poorly attended, parental support is readily given to fund-raising and social activities. Despite its limited success with involving parents as partners in their children's education, the school remains committed to encouraging more parent participation and to help parents overcome their concerns about helping in school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64 Overall the leadership and the management of the school are good.

65 There have been improvements in the leadership and management of the school since the previous inspection. The school development plan has a clear, sharp and sustained focus on raising pupil achievement. The success criteria, by which the success of a development is measured, relate not to the provision of a particular initiative but to its impact on raising standards. The school has a clear sense of direction.

66 The headteacher has successfully created a committed team of staff. There has been a high turnover of staff and the mobility of staff has had an impact on pupil progress. Ensuring that new members of staff are introduced effectively into the way the school is run and developing teams has been a drain on the head teacher's time and energy. At the time of the inspection there was within the school a sense of stability, teamwork and importantly a growing sense of teachers being accountable to each other, which genuine teamwork demands, for the achievement of pupils in their care. This sense of accountability has been developed through clear job descriptions and effective formal and informal monitoring of the quality of teaching by the headteacher and the Local Education Authority, with targets being set. The overall quality of teaching has shown significant improvement since the previous inspection.

67 The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is now an open debate about raising pupils' achievements and the governors are clear that this is a central focus of their activity. They support the school effectively and are involved in shaping the direction of the school. They have developed in their role as acting as critical friend and carry out their statutory duties effectively.

68 The budget is monitored effectively and principles of obtaining the best value for money are applied. The school is hoping to develop a small computer suite and the budget has been carefully structured to allow for future investment.

69 Perhaps the most significant factor since the last inspection is that there is, amongst all the staff and the governing body, a corporate commitment to raise standards.

70 The school's provision for special educational needs is managed and organised very well and efficiently by the co-ordinator. She oversees the assessments of the pupils and analyses the results carefully to help target support. Her record keeping is very thorough and provides many details of pupils that are available to share with colleagues as required. She liaises closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the best help possible. The learning support assistants work closely with the class teachers and consequently are well briefed on the tasks for the week. Several of the assistants have attended appropriate training that is enhancing their work.

71 Members of staff with team management responsibilities are able and effective. The work of the subject co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science is good and is raising standards, albeit slowly in English and mathematics. The management of the Foundation Stage is effective and the good work with very young children is providing a good basis of standards for Key Stage 1 to build on.

72 Good use is being made of assessment data to analyse successful and less successful aspects of the teaching of subjects. Use of voluntary tests and other assessment data such as reading ages are being used effectively to set targets for pupils. Members of the senior management team are able people who are beginning to grow in their roles and

responsibilities. The deputy headteacher provides effective personal and professional support to the headteacher and in helping to create the teamwork evident in the school. Perhaps for the first time, the school is now in a position, not only to have the corporate commitment to raise achievement, but has the skills and capacity to succeed.

73 Throughout the period since the last inspection the headteacher has led the school well. She has a deep commitment to the school and the pupils which is fully recognised by the parents and governing body. She is a focal point and pivot in the school. Parents have confidence in her and so do the pupils. She has a quiet, calm authority and has maintained her commitment to raising pupils' achievements and the commitment of other staff. She absorbs other people's anxieties and, in a turbulent staffing situation, often has not had the luxury of being in a position to delegate. She has managed successive changes in education, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and their impact on members of staff well. Her own expectations are high and she is very able to make judgements about the quality of the work. Through careful support she has developed individual teachers' strengths and created the current strong team.

74 The day-to-day operation of the school is very effective. It is a calm community. The headteacher models respect in the way she talks to adults and pupils. She has managed the change of teachers moving from personal professional autonomy to teamwork and accountability well and staff have confidence in her. She in turn is generous towards their success. She is fiercely loyal about the school and the people who work in it but sensitive to the pressures that many parents have in their own lives and she shows a similar loyalty to them and the community the school is in. The consequence is that parents feel able to approach her with a problem 'and it is sorted.'

75 There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. There is effective teamwork with support staff. The range of learning resources is satisfactory. The school is housed in two separate buildings but the school works hard to ensure that there is the feeling of one school. Accommodation is satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76 In order to continue the process of raising standards in the school the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) address standards in English through the National Literacy Strategy and ensure that work in English and other subjects:
 - provides a broad range of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills;
 - extends the range of their reading experience;
 - broadens their experience so that the quality of their ideas is enriched;
 - ensures that higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged.
(paragraphs: 88 to 97)

- (2) address standards in mathematics through the National Numeracy Strategy and:
 - ensure that higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged;
 - address the under-achievement of girls in Key Stage 2.
 - develop pupils'
 - ◆ knowledge of mathematical language;
 - ◆ confidence with mental arithmetic;
 - ◆ problem solving skills;
 - ◆ and the ability to interpret data.
(paragraphs: 40, 98 to 110)

- (3) review the organisation of the school day and the balance of the curriculum.
(paragraphs: 40, 42 and 43)

- (4) continue to support and encourage parents to become involved in their child's education, in particular enlisting their help in ensuring that their child attends school regularly.
(paragraph:30)

- (5) raise staff expectations with regard to the quality and quantity of work pupils achieve when working independently.
(paragraph: 34)

- (6) ensure that pupils are clear what they have to do in order to improve by developing the system of setting targets and assessment systems in the foundation subjects and religious education.
(paragraphs: 51)

77 In addition as minor issues the school should address standards in religious education, geography and history.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

76

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	13	39	39	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	274
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		107

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	145

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	58
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	57

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000 (1999)	30 (21)	17 (14)	47 (35)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7 (7)	14 (8)	22 (9)
	Girls	11 (8)	12 (11)	15 (10)
	Total	18 (15)	26 (19)	37 (19)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	55 (43)	55 (54)	77 (54)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14 (8)	22 (9)	28 (12)
	Girls	15 (11)	15 (11)	16 (13)
	Total	29 (19)	37 (20)	44 (25)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62 (54)	79 (57)	93 (71)
	National	N/A (82)	N/A (86)	N/A (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000 (1999)	19 (21)	13 (14)	32 (35)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3 (8)	9 (18)	10 (16)
	Girls	4 (8)	3 (12)	9 (13)
	Total	7 (16)	12 (30)	19 (29)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	21 (46)	35 (86)	56 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	19	17
	Girls	8	11	13
	Total	18	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (16)	86 (25)	86 (22)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	10
White	258
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.8
Average class size	24.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	298

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	711,315
Total expenditure	688,569
Expenditure per pupil	2,081
Balance brought forward from previous year	96,642
Balance carried forward to next year	119,388

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	297
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	56	4	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	52	18	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	48	28	0	4
The teaching is good.	52	44	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	56	15	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	30	0	0	11
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	44	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	22	52	15	0	11
The school is well led and managed.	33	56	0	4	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	56	4	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	33	15	15	15

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

There were seven parents at the parents' meeting who were supportive of the school. A very significant number of the parents' returns to the questionnaire survey were from parents with a child under the age of six which possibly accounts for the relatively large number of 'don't know' responses to some of the questions. One return equals approximately four per cent. The inspection team support the positive views held by parents. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. The school is welcoming to parents and wants to work in partnership. Homework is set regularly and the school works hard to keep parents informed. Overall, behaviour is good. If poor behaviour occurs it is managed well. There are effective systems in place to manage poor behaviour. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

78 Many children joining the nursery have very limited language, social and other skills. They make good progress in the nursery and reception class, the Foundation Stage, and the majority of children achieve the learning goals for young children by the time they enter Year 1. Although the nursery has been established only a relatively short time, the Foundation Stage is making a significant contribution to raising standards in the school and the impact of the work is evidenced in the work of those pupils who have been through the Foundation Stage and those who have not.

79 Overall, the quality of planning is very good, particularly for the five-year-olds. It is detailed and ensures that all adults know and understand their roles in the particular learning experience and covers the full range of experiences specified for the Foundation Stage. There is very good teamwork as a result.

80 Overall, the quality of teaching is good across all curriculum aspects. It is sometimes very good, particularly for five-year-olds, and occasionally excellent. Teachers and other adults are skilled and experienced and very well organised. They exploit and guide the learning experiences well and use praise effectively to encourage children's sense of self-esteem. Assessment is used well throughout the setting to record what children know and what the teacher needs to plan for.

81 Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well. Through a range of well-planned activities children are engaged and interested and motivated to learn. They are encouraged, for example, to take turns over using the musical instruments or to ride their tricycles sensibly. There is very good encouragement to be kind towards each other. Five-year-olds are sensitively encouraged to make a child's wish to play with more children 'come true'. Younger children play together sensibly building their house out of plastic construction bricks working alongside each other. Independence is consistently encouraged and five-year-olds tidy up very quickly after an activity. They are given opportunities to make choices and children show the ability to concentrate on an activity for a length of time with the result that there is a calm atmosphere and the teacher is able to concentrate effectively on the small group she is working with.

82 Many children have low levels of language skills when they join the nursery. Their communication, language and literacy skills are encouraged well. Adults are skilled at exploiting the language opportunities within any learning situation encouraging the children to express their ideas as they tell their 'story'. For example in the nursery the teacher uses a puppet effectively to interact with the children's puppets and the teacher is skilled in the way talk and dialogue between the puppets are encouraged. Children, playing in role in the shop, are told in the bad tempered tones of a tired cashier, 'I done the bananas, Gabrielle.' Puppets are used very effectively with older children who tell their wish to the puppet. Specific mathematical language is developed well as the children cook their cakes. 'Is the butter heavier than the egg?' Words such as 'nearly', 'heavier' 'balance', 'lighter', 'the same' are used and the underlying concepts reinforced. Five year olds explore initial sounds of 'e' 'b' 'c' linking the initial sound to an object such as a plastic 'elephant' or 'envelope'. In this class the teacher has very good enunciation of words, encouraging children to listen hard to, for example, the plosive nature of 'b'. Children share a wide range of stories and rhymes and non-fiction books. A very young child 'play-read' her story of 'Spot' to a visitor, 'reading'

each page for an appropriate amount of time before turning over. Older children read the story of 'Floppy'. They recognise the words and are asked, through skilled questioning to think and imagine 'What do you think he is saying?' The children in this group reading session made very good progress. Through skilful questioning, children recall the Pinocchio story. Writing is encouraged well throughout the setting. Very young children 'play-write' their story which they tell to the teacher, or play write the story of 'Goldilocks' whilst older children cut up words to create a sentence, or write their wishes down in the form of pictures. Throughout the Foundation Stage language is made fun. Five-year-olds explore with enjoyment, for example, the alliteration of 'Tiny Teddy' and 'Lucy likes her lolly'.

83 Children's mathematical development is planned and encouraged well. In the nursery children join in with number rhymes and encouraged to count objects as they carry out their cooking or to count how many are having a snack. Children sing 'One Two Three four Five' and 'Five Green Bottles' and five-year-olds are able to order numbers to 20 and answer questions about more or less. Questioning is very skilled to assess a child's knowledge. 'What would come next?' 'If you have a number which is less than five stand up.' Mathematical vocabulary is developed well and in their art-work and construction they develop an awareness of pattern.

84 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well. Very young children go on a trip to the woods and record the changing seasons on a display. They use a computer programme to 'Dress Teddy' as well as a simple drawing programme. They are engaged in making a puppet, cutting out materials carefully and sticking the shape to a stick. Through exploring Divali they find out about other people's beliefs and cultures.

85 Creative development is encouraged well. Children have access to a range of activities to encourage their senses. They use play-dough, pasta and paint. They listen to stories and music and play musical instruments. They are encouraged to use their imagination and take part in enjoyable imaginative activities. They use puppets and the role-play corner of the café and shop well.

86 Physical development is promoted well. They are encouraged to wash their hands before eating snack and they handle a range of equipment using a range of tools and materials. They move around the setting with control and play outside using pedal bikes. The outside play area has been developed but lacks permanent play equipment. In the hall children move in a variety of ways, sliding, crawling and responding to the music. They demonstrate their knowledge of colours by playing the 'Colour Stations' game. There is good safety awareness on the part of adults particularly with regard to earrings and footwear.

87 Throughout the Foundation Stage assessment is used well and there is close tracking of individual children's development by the team. Samples of work are kept to monitor progress. The teachers try to involve parents who are welcomed after special assemblies and at the end of term. The nursery lacks a covered area for parents to wait for their children. Simple work to be carried out at home is set each week and it is monitored by the use of a 'smiley face'. Parents are informed about the term's activities, such as a paddling pool event or a particular trip.

ENGLISH

88 The standards achieved by pupils at seven and eleven are well below those expected for their age. The majority of pupils in the school, who have not had experience of nursery education, have poor language skills when they enter the school. The irregular attendance of a significant minority of pupils, as well as the number of pupils moving in and out of the school, also contributes to the poor attainment. The good provision in the recently opened nursery is improving the social and language skills of younger pupils, but the impact has yet to work through the school.

89 In the 1999 national tests of seven-year-olds, the number of pupils achieving the expected level was very low compared with the national average, and their average score was very low compared with pupils in similar schools. In the results for 2000, there was a small improvement in reading but results for writing were similar to the previous year, and, overall, still very low. However, the average point score in reading and writing shows slow but steady improvement since 1996.

90 In the tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999, the number of pupils achieving the expected levels was very low. Results were also well below when compared with pupils in similar schools, whereas those for mathematics and science were well above. This reflects the low levels of language and the narrowness of experience of pupils in the school, which makes understanding of the written word and writing difficult for them. Results in 2000 were also very low, in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally but there has, however, been a slow but steady improvement in the average point score in English since 1996.

91 Pupils' speaking skills throughout the school are well below those expected for pupils of their age. The responses of younger pupils are mostly limited to single short sentences; for instance, when expressing their wishes to a puppet in the reception class or speaking to the whole class in Year 2. They mostly listen well in class, both to their teacher and each other, and are particularly attentive when being 'addressed' by a puppet. Pupils in Year 3 respond politely to their teacher but show a limited vocabulary, for instance when describing what the old lady in a play script wears. When pupils in Year 4 suggest characters for a piece of writing, their range is limited to popular characters, such as James Bond or Tom and Jerry, by the narrow range of their own experience. Older pupils respond well to skilful questioning by the teacher but their range of expression is still well below that expected for their age.

92 Standards of reading are well below average. Pupils aged seven are able to remember a part of a story they have read previously, and higher attaining pupils are able to build unfamiliar words from their sounds. The majority of pupils are not able to do this without prompting. Although they enjoy reading, their experience of books is limited, and lower attaining pupils need support with simple texts. Pupils aged eleven are able to find information by using the contents and index pages of a non-fiction book, but they do not yet know how to locate books in a library. Higher attaining pupils read fiction quite fluently but without great expression. They can express their likes and dislikes but their reading is not wide. Less able pupils do not easily recognise the different sounds which make up a word, and their vocabulary is limited.

93 The writing of pupils aged seven is well below the standard expected for their age. The handwriting of higher attaining pupils is mostly regular, but some pupils are not able to read back what they have written themselves. They use capital letters and full stops inconsistently, and lower attaining pupils are not able to write independently. By the end of the year, higher attaining pupils are beginning to write from their own experience and most pupils can write an account, for instance of a visit to the Sea Life Centre, but their use of punctuation is still inconsistent. By the age of eleven pupils are writing in a variety of forms

for example, writing a sequence of instructions or a letter of thanks for a visit to the Millennium Dome. They write empathetically, for example when describing what life would have been like as a child in Victorian times. They can plan a story, such as 'The Mysterious Cellar', and sometimes write extensively; but their ability to write creatively is restricted by the narrowness of their reading and experience both in and outside school. The majority are reaching standards in writing that are below expectations for their age. The handwriting of higher attaining pupils is good and of most others satisfactory. However, they still do not use punctuation consistently accurately. They have difficulty spelling more complex words, such as 'weird' or 'neighbours', but they are developing their vocabulary well by learning lists of words connected to other subjects, for instance science and mathematics.

94 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Younger pupils find it difficult to work independently, but they respond well to adults in the classroom. They maintain their attention during the shared work of the literacy hour and behave well. The majority of junior pupils behave well but there is a small number who do not become involved in lessons. These sometimes have to be withdrawn because of their unsatisfactory behaviour, when the teacher makes use of the 'red card' system. In a Year 5 lesson observed during the inspection all pupils were fully involved throughout the lesson because of the very good questioning and other strategies used by the teacher.

95 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and examples of good and sometimes very good teaching were seen in both infants and juniors. Teachers of younger pupils use resources such as puppets well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. For instance, in a Year 2 class pupils were asked to correct a bear when he mispronounced the final sound of simple words, which caused them to listen well and distinguish between the sounds they heard. Teachers manage and control their classes well. Teaching assistants are briefed well, and they provide good support for pupils in group work. This helps pupils of all levels of attainment to make satisfactory progress in this part of the lesson, although sometimes the tasks are not closely matched to the needs of all, particularly higher attaining pupils. This is also the case in the juniors, and as a consequence a minority of pupils do not become fully involved in the task they are given.

96 Teachers plan their lessons in detail, using the framework of the National Literacy strategy, which the school is implementing well. Teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn, and this is usually consolidated well when the whole class is brought together at the end of a lesson. Occasionally the pace of a lesson is too slow in the whole-class introduction, but in a Year 5 lesson the literacy co-ordinator maintained a lively pace in the shared reading session of 'The Scourge of the Dinner Ladies', directing questions well, for instance to develop pupils' understanding of the use of the word 'swarm'. Occasionally, teachers use commercially produced worksheets which are not entirely suited to the aim of the lesson and even contain spelling errors.

97 The school has a wide range of texts for classroom use, but the library is not used well to develop reference skills which would equip pupils to work independently. Some use is made of computers for word-processing but not to help pupils draft and revise their work. With the emphasis on literacy and numeracy lessons, there have not been sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy in other areas of the curriculum. These were all issues which were raised at the last inspection and which have not been satisfactorily addressed. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the role, and she provides a very good model of teaching. The school now has good systems of assessment, which are enabling teachers to set targets for individual pupils as well as establish standards against which pupils

' work should be measured. It has also used additional literacy support and booster classes to target pupils who will benefit most. The subject contributes satisfactorily to pupils' cultural development by using texts which reflect a range of cultures and the school should continue to widen pupils' range of reading experience to provide the material on which their imagination can work in their writing. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. In view of the satisfactory, and often good, quality of the teaching, the good assessment procedures which are in place and the effective implementation of the national literacy strategy, the school is well placed to improve further.

MATHEMATICS

98 At the time of the last inspection, attainment in mathematics was judged to be below national expectations. While it is slowly but steadily rising, attainment continues to be well below that expected for the pupils' ages.

99 Overtime, national test results show the school's standards to be very low in comparison with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. In the 1999 national test in mathematics for seven-year-olds, the school's standards were very low and very few pupils attained the higher levels. Compared with those of similar schools, these results were well below average. In the 2000 tests the proportion of pupils attaining level 2 and above was below last year's national average. The school's results, however, were significantly higher than in previous years. In number work, most pupils recognise and understand place value to two digits by the end of Year 2. They use coins up to 50 pence confidently and have a basic understanding of the number patterns in the two and five-times tables. Simple addition, subtraction, and division by sharing are understood. Most pupils know that if you halve a shape and halve it again, you get a quarter. Regular and irregular shapes are grouped appropriately in work on shape and space and pupils can repeat a simple pattern. Reflecting a shape is difficult for many pupils. Pupils can measure in centimetres and represent time in half and quarter hours.

100 National test results in mathematics for the eleven-year-olds in 1999 were well above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels was close to average. However, over time the school's test results have been very low. In the 2000 national tests the proportion of pupils attaining level 4 and above was very low, in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. It was, however, close to the target the school set. The school's target for 2001 is also below national expectations.

101 The overall trend shows a slow rise in standards. The girls' attainment in national tests is below that of the boys at the end of Key Stage 2, whereas at Key Stage 1 there is no significant difference. This school needs to address this issue.

102 By the end of Year 6, pupils have a firm understanding of place value to three figures but struggle with four-digit numbers. Terms such as 'even', 'square', and 'cube' numbers are understood and used appropriately. Decimal numbers to two places are ordered correctly and most pupils can do simple division sums using decimals. Their understanding of improper fractions is partial and they have difficulty in solving word problems when more than one operation is required. Their work on shape shows they can measure angles and know the number of degrees in a triangle but they have difficulty in calculating an angle. Regular shapes are named and parallel lines and perpendicular sides are correctly identified on diagrams. While most pupils know how to calculate the perimeter, area and volume of a shape, a significant proportion is unsure about the correct units of measure and using formulae. In data handling pupils can construct frequency charts, Venn diagrams and bar graphs but their skills in reading and interpreting graphs are not well developed.

103 The attainment of the majority of pupils, who have not had nursery experience on entry to the school, is very low. Over time, most pupils are making satisfactory progress across the key stages. Across the school, pupils' mental arithmetic, problem-solving skills, understanding of measurement and use of mathematical language are areas of relative weakness. In Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge of fractions and decimals and the ability to interpret data are also areas of relative weakness. Progress currently in these areas is insufficient to raise standards. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress with additional help from learning support assistants. The progress of the highest attaining pupils is often unsatisfactory. Although extension work is provided, it does not always challenge higher attaining pupils. This is particularly noticeable where these pupils are asked to do the simpler work first instead of moving on to the harder extension work directly.

104 In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils showed a positive attitude to mathematics. In most lessons they made at least satisfactory and occasionally good progress. They worked well on tasks and shared resources and ideas willingly. Pupils in Year 5, in particular, were confidently responding to mathematical questions. They enjoy demonstrating their understanding of patterns in number and their grasp of mathematical vocabulary relating to probability. The majority of pupils are well behaved, though a small minority of pupils in most classes does not respond well. They find it difficult to concentrate. This lack of concentration was most noticeable in Year 5/6 where many pupils were slow to settle, inattentive, and took little responsibility for their learning. Not listening to questions and explanations limited their knowledge and understanding of the new mathematical terms being introduced. Pupils' independence and self-control are not well-established in the school. Responses to teachers' questions were satisfactory. Many pupils lack confidence in their mental arithmetic abilities and have difficulty in remembering previously learnt knowledge. This was seen in Year 3, when pupils were asked to recall the names of two-dimensional shapes.

105 In just over half of the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good or better; a quarter was very good. The remaining lessons were satisfactory with the exception of one lesson in Key Stage 2, which was unsatisfactory. In the last inspection teaching was judged to be mostly satisfactory. There has been a noticeable improvement in the standard of teaching.

106 Teachers plan from the nationally recommended numeracy materials appropriately. Their lesson plans are detailed and state clearly what the pupils are to learn. This information is usefully shared with the pupils. Pupils in Year 3 were 'to use the vocabulary of three-dimensional shapes'; and in Year 6, 'to find the median and range of a set of data'. In the upper school, pupils record this information in their workbooks and have a valuable measure for monitoring their learning. Most teachers' subject knowledge is good but there are individuals in both key stages whose knowledge is less secure. For instance, to develop pupils' understanding of mathematical language teachers use mathematical terms appropriately, but only the more confident teachers encourage their pupils to use the terms. Year 3 pupils are able to name shapes such as 'pentagon' and 'octagons' while Year 6 can speak of the 'range' and 'median'. Asked to define terms in Year 5, pupils do so successfully, for example describing probability 'as a measure of the likelihood of something happening'. In the best lessons, questions are used to challenge pupils to think; they are required to explain their methods. Year 6 pupils gave their strategies for mentally adding two-digit numbers. This clarified their understanding and enabled pupils to learn from one another. Most teachers listen carefully to pupils' answers and make informal assessments. In Year 2, pupils' ability to count in twos starting with an odd number was observed.

107 In most classes there are firmly established rules of behaviour and teachers manage behaviour well to create positive learning environments. Learning is better where teachers adopt positive behaviour strategies. Praise is used effectively to raise pupils' self-esteem by giving them a sense of achievement. All teachers have good relationships with pupils and treat them respectfully. Most pupils respond well to this approach despite the short concentration of many.

108 A few teachers use time well by setting a good pace in whole-class mental arithmetic sessions to encourage their pupils to develop quick mental calculation skills. This is essential as most pupils struggle to respond to simple, mental arithmetic questions. In the activity session, the time pupils have to work at a task or the amount of work to be achieved is rarely stated. Too many pupils decide their own pace and make limited progress. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen the weaknesses were in the teacher's subject knowledge and strategies for the management of pupil behaviour.

109 On-going assessment to inform teachers' planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy's key objectives. These are too general to support teachers in matching work closely to individual or group needs. This is most noticeable with higher attaining pupils, whether in class or mathematics sets. A significant number underachieve due to insufficiently challenging work. Too many teachers are aiming at a level of work with which they believe the pupils will feel safe. This is reflected in the absence of pupils attaining higher levels in national tests. Pupils' work is marked but marking rarely informs pupils of what they can do to improve their work. Good practice is seen in Year 2 where, the teacher records what pupils can do independently and with help. The school is using formal assessments well to monitor pupils' achievements year on year and identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This information is used to set pupils for mathematics in Years 2 and 3 and needs to be used for re-grouping pupils in Key Stage 2 to raise standards.

110 The co-ordinator for mathematics is new to the school but has previously held the post in another school and is clear about what can be done to raise standards. She has already monitored teaching and is giving support to teachers whose subject knowledge is insecure. Monitoring to offer advice and support to teachers has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school's development plan and the school's mathematics audit offer a firm basis from which to strength mathematics in the school in future. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and there is a satisfactory range of resources to support teaching. The contribution made by other subjects to pupils' competence in numeracy is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

111 Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 of the current pupils are broadly in line with expectations, taking into account an analysis of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and observations in lessons. In the national tests of summer 1999 using teachers' assessment for science at Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils gaining level 2 or above was well below the national average. At level 3 and above, attainment was well above the national average, indicating that the teaching and experiences are enabling the higher attaining pupils to achieve appropriately. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, pupils' attainment at level 2 and above was well below average, whereas their attainment at level 3 and above was very high. The results for the teacher assessments for 2000 indicate further improvement and results for the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 or above and level 3 or above are in line with the national average. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last

inspection when attainment was below the national average. However the school has made good improvements in the numbers of pupils attaining the higher level 3 since at the last inspection too few pupils did well. Currently, the pupils' attainment is average in all the elements of science, including experimental and investigative work which the teachers emphasise.

112 By the age of seven, pupils have suitable experiences and understanding of carrying out simple investigations. In Year 2, for example, pupils shared their ideas and experiences of materials that are transparent. They recognise everyday uses for the property of being able to see through glass, such as seeing the face of a watch. They have an early understanding of the idea of controlling conditions in an experiment to make a test fair. Previous work and the subject planning shows that by the end of the key stage pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the human body and know about the five senses. They are familiar with simple habitats for animals, and know some of the characteristics of different animals. They recognise the main parts of a plant. They have met some properties of materials such as metals, wood and plastic, and what they are used for. While the pupils have broadly average understanding, their ability to apply scientific knowledge remains uncertain at times and the higher scientific skills of observation and reasoning require consolidation.

113 Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with expectations for their age, overall, taking into account an analysis of pupils' work and observations in lessons. In the national tests of summer 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining level 4 and above was close to the national average, while the proportion gaining the higher level 5 was above average. Standards have improved since the previous inspection when they were below the national average. In the summer 2000 national tests standards were well below average but there were several pupils with identified special educational needs in the year group. Standards have improved over the past four years in line with the national trend, and result from the good focus on basic scientific skills and investigational methods. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, pupils' performance in the science tests was above average in 1999, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. When judged against pupils' prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, and allowing for a high level of mobility, pupils' attainment was well above average. The results for summer 2000 are not as good, but against the pupils' own prior attainment when they were in Key Stage 1, their progress was satisfactory and attainment was broadly average. Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in science are average when pupils are working in class, and are better than pupils demonstrate in the formal tests. The performance of girls has been significantly below that of boys over the past four years. The trend in pupils' performance over the past four years has been above the national trend.

114 In the lower years of Key Stage 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the main parts of the human body. They know about muscles, bones and joints and are beginning to understand how muscles work so that a joint may move and lift something. They know about the basic structure of plants, and the main functions of the roots, stem and leaves. Their oral responses indicate broadly average understanding during class discussions, although their writing is not always so clear. Within Years 5 and 6 the pupils take on investigational tasks well, with sufficient skill when challenged by the teacher to fit a switch into a simple circuit. They understand the need to complete the circuit, and also the effects of putting two batteries or bulbs into it. Other pupils carried out an experiment requiring the control of testing conditions when finding out the amount of air in the gaps of a tub of gravel. The pupils applied early test skills carefully, although the over-direction by the teacher reduced their opportunities to experiment freely. The pupils' reasoning and understanding were developed carefully by the teacher, showing that most pupils understand that air is present in things like gravel or sand. Previous work and subject planning show that the pupils have studied all aspects of the programme of study, and that attainment of the current eleven-year-olds is broadly average overall.

115 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages overall, though with a few examples of good teaching in the lessons observed. The teachers in both key stages provide pupils with good learning experiences and practical tasks, so that pupils respond with good attitudes and interest. Several good investigations challenge pupils to think about what is happening and to interpret their observations, for example with the effects of putting a second bulb or battery in a circuit. There is an appropriate focus on experimental skills to help pupils predict and reason, although the pupils' ability to use these higher skills remains limited. Usually, the teachers' careful questioning helps pupils to notice significant properties, such as glass being transparent. The teachers' good subject knowledge at Key Stage 2 is applied effectively in having the pupils set up purposeful experiments. This understanding is shown through clear explanations and good questioning, with an emphasis on pupils making first-hand observations. The teachers and pupils have good relationships and this helps to maintain a good working atmosphere. The teachers make on-going assessments as the pupils work and make a suitable record of their observations. In all classes teachers make their expectations clear for behaviour, attitudes and work, which keep pupils attentive and on task.

116 The teachers give careful attention to scientific language. There are several opportunities for pupils to apply their numerical skills when setting up their experiments making tables of results and to use the technical language of the subject. The school has adopted the national science guidance which is broad and balanced and meets national requirements. The school's focus on investigative and experimental science is good. It is well focused and underpins all the areas of the subject. The school is beginning to use information and communication technology for science. The co-ordinator manages the subject appropriately and she has a good understanding of the role. Good use is made of the data from National Curriculum tests to identify strengths and weaknesses in what has been taught and to inform future planning. The quality and range of resources are both satisfactory and equipment and materials are readily accessible. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development through helping them to work together and improving their understanding of the world.

ART AND DESIGN

117 Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in art and design, at both key stages. By the time they leave the school, the quality of their work is at the level expected for pupils of this age.

118 Younger pupils learn to use and combine different materials and to experience different techniques. They mix contrasting colours of paint, make colour washes, experiment with wax crayons and pastels, and use mix media to create textured pictures. Much of this work is linked to the stories of 'Noah's Ark' and 'The Three Little Pigs'. In observational work they sketch twigs showing details, such as the veins, successfully and use pastels carefully to create self-portraits. They position their facial features satisfactorily in their drawings but have limited knowledge of the diverse effects that can be achieved using pastels.

119 In Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3 look closely and line sketch pupil models. Most pupils can draw one model but many struggle to position the second model so as to capture the relationship between the two. A third of the pupils do this well. A small number of Year 4 pupils make close observational drawings of aspects of a skeleton – skull, ribs, hand. They emphasise the bone structure very well but most drawings are oversimplified. Older pupils use shading effectively to increase the impact of their sketches, as work on plant roots

shows. They also become more aware of other artists' styles and techniques. Year 5 exploring and communicating their ideas about paintings, express feelings, in response to colours and compositions. Famous painters such as Monet and Van Gogh are known but the pupils are unsure about the styles of their work. Studying Van Gogh paintings, Year 5/6 draw out basic similarities; 'the backgrounds are done in a similar way'. In the development of techniques there are sometimes significant gaps in pupils' knowledge, for example some pupils not being confident to mix a particular colour.

120 Pupils' attitudes to art and design are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. They are inquisitive about new media when they are introduced to it and are interested in learning new methods and techniques. Pupils work effectively in pairs or groups, when given the opportunity, and offer help to each other when needed. Resources are willingly shared and pupils take responsibility for using them appropriately. A significant number of pupils lack confidence. In Year 3 pupils show concern about making mistakes and Year 5/6 pupils are anxious that their still-life sketches are not good enough. In both groups, pupils do not listen carefully and this adds to their uncertainty. Year 5 pupils are full of ideas when they compare paintings and their excitement brings an element of calling out, but here pupils are developing good levels of confidence.

121 In the few lessons seen, teaching and learning range from satisfactory to very good. In the previous inspection it ranged from poor to very good. The best teaching occurs where pupils are clear about the specific skills they are to learn. Year 3 pupils know they are learning 'to show relationships using shapes and lines' while Year 5 know they are learning 'to comment on their own and others' work'. In these classes teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Good questioning enables pupils to display their knowledge and observations. Year 5 pupils observing a painting of a bottle are asked to describe it. The teacher's focus on their language development leads them to descriptions such as 'transparent' and 'translucent'. When one pupil makes reference to Renoir's imagination the teacher carefully introduces them to the term 'visualisation'. The pupils enjoy using these terms, which they can apply to science observations. Techniques such as how to hold a paint brush and how to shade from light to dark are taught directly through whole-class demonstrations and discussions with individuals. This raises the standard of work pupils achieve.

122 All teachers have good organisation skills, which enable them to give an input at the beginning of lessons, and to help pupils throughout the session. Pupils are engaged in the tasks throughout the lesson, due to the good management skills of most teachers. Teachers make explicit the behaviour that is expected. The standards attained were lower where there was insufficient emphasis on teaching specific skills and techniques, as Year 5/6 still-life drawings of flowers and fruit demonstrate. Not all teachers are confident in teaching this element.

123 Art and design has been a low priority. The current co-ordinator is new to the role and is enthusiastic. She has already monitored and improved school displays. The monitoring of teachers' planning and lessons, to ensure a balanced coverage of the scheme of work, which enables pupils to build on their skills, is planned but has not yet happened. There is little evidence of three-dimensional art and sketchbooks for developing ideas and practising techniques are inconsistently used. The absence of an agreed approach to recording and assessing the development of pupils' artistic skills hampers teachers' ability to base plans for future lessons on what pupils have already achieved. The individual portfolios of pupil work, updated annually, do not provide teachers with this information. Resources for art and design are adequate. Effective use is made of the work of artists, famous and unknown, to make comparison in texture, tone, shape and composition.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124 Pupils are making appropriate gains in design and technology skills and understanding to reach standards broadly in line with expectations in Key Stage 2. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement at Key Stage 1. Design and technology alternates with art and design, which was planned for the period of the inspection, but displays of collage and other work indicate pupils have early experience and skills. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection, when standards were below national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The school gives careful attention to the design processes, so that pupils are prepared for making simple products and experience a reasonable selection of materials and skills.

125 Pupils in Key Stage 2 have appropriate skills to design and make simple products with their choice of materials. Pupils in Year 4 took a keen interest in preparing a design for various styles of torch, then used papers and card to produce a model. Most pupils made a satisfactory attempt, supported by the teacher, although not enough attention is given to the teaching of specific skills and methods. Pupils explained their ideas clearly, and showed how they were trying to overcome some of the problems encountered. Within Year 6, pupils' cutting, shaping and joining skills are satisfactory, for example, in preparing a pair of slippers, although the range of resistant materials is not extensive. They enjoyed their tasks, and worked purposefully, sharing their ideas and methods. The pupils have occasional opportunities for food technology, such as making sandwiches. Pupils produce simple clay articles at times, although there was little evidence of such work at the time of the inspection. By the end of the key stage, pupils have had opportunities to design a variety of articles and used their skills to construct them, taking pride in what they do. They are beginning to understand the idea of problem solving, and improving their products after an evaluation.

126 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning is generally clear, based upon the adopted scheme of work. The teachers give careful attention to the intended technological outcome and the skills required. They help the pupils to think about the design, and discuss the problems of the actual making of the products. Teachers mostly use their time well, moving round the class to check progress, although further attention to demonstrating skill development is required. Teachers encourage pupils to develop their skills of design and construction. The pupils are generally given independence to use their initiative and own ideas.

127 The subject co-ordinator has an unsatisfactory understanding of the role. He provides support to colleagues when asked, and keeps a basic supply of resources available, but is insufficiently active in promoting the subject for the benefit of the pupils. The school has adopted the national guidance for the scheme of work, which is used appropriately as a basis for planning, and the subject meets national requirements. Resources for design and technology are just satisfactory for the range of skills involved, but require extending.

GEOGRAPHY

128 There were limited opportunities to observe geography being taught to infants during the inspection, as it was not a focus in the curriculum at the time. Current Year 1 pupils have little concept of place, and are unable to locate Thurrock on a map. Examination of pupils' work from last year showed that little recording is done. Seven-year-olds show an awareness

of the need 'to keep the world clean' and are able to distinguish between different geographical features, such as desert, mountains, sea and forest. They have only a limited awareness of places beyond their own locality. They have, for instance, written an account of their visit to the 'Sealife Centre' or drawn a poster 'Come to Scotland', but with no reference to the contrasting features of these locations or with any use of geographical vocabulary. Standards are well below those expected for pupils of this age.

129 The examination of last year's work of Year 3 pupils showed a good range, including work on the water cycle, coastal climates and the contrasting area of St Lucia. Pupils' writing skills were limited but their work showed a satisfactory understanding of these topics. However, this was not built on in subsequent year groups, - where pupils studied the water cycle again without any further development in their understanding, - and there was little recorded work on other topics. In the lessons observed, pupils in Year 4 discussed ways of improving their immediate environment; but there was no opportunity for higher attaining pupils to extend their understanding. They were set the undemanding task of filling in the gaps in a worksheet. This topic was discussed again in Year 5 in relation to plans for the local shops. Pupils in Year 6 showed some understanding of the features of the mountain environment, but they have not had sufficient opportunity to develop the geographical skills of collecting, recording and analysing evidence or the techniques required for fieldwork. The standards of the oldest pupils in the school are well below those expected for their age. This was confirmed by discussion with Year 6 pupils, who could recall little, for instance, of their study of an overseas area.

130 Overall pupils' attitudes are satisfactory, but in the lessons observed with older pupils the poor behaviour of a minority disrupted the learning of others. However, pupils in Year 4 behaved well and settled well to the task they were set, taking pride in their work.

131 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, but the subject is often allocated a short time at the end of a morning or afternoon when it is not possible to consolidate learning properly and when pupils' concentration is at its lowest level. Alternatively a whole afternoon is devoted to an activity which is not sufficiently challenging for all pupils. Also, where work has been recorded in the past it has been in a general humanities book or on pieces of paper so that it is difficult for pupils to see geographical links. In the lessons seen in the juniors teachers managed their classes well and used questions well to prompt pupils' thinking, for instance about possible uses of the land which would become available if the shops were demolished, but because of these other factors, learning, particularly by older pupils, is unsatisfactory.

132 The co-ordinator has been in post for a year but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the subject. The school has now chosen to adopt the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for the subject, and if they are implemented fully they should provide for the development of skills. It currently has satisfactory resources but will need to review these in the light of the scheme it is introducing. In particular it needs to ensure that maps are up to date. The subject has not been a priority since the last inspection and the school has made insufficient progress in meeting the criticisms of the last report about the lack of development of skills and the lack of progress by junior pupils.]

HISTORY

133 In the few history lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' learning was satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, pupils made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Progress in Key Stage 2 continues to be unsatisfactory. This is due to the time devoted to it, and the imbalance in the delivery of the curriculum. Work in pupils' books is often incomplete and there is scant coverage of some topics. By the time pupils leave the school, the quality of their work is at a level below that expected for pupils of this age, especially the higher attaining pupils. History has been a low priority subject in the recent past but the school has now adopted a scheme of work and drawn up a long-term plan to enable teachers to provide a more balanced curriculum.

134 Young pupils learn about famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and have a satisfactory understanding of the things she did that made her an important person. After watching a video pupils discussed and recorded information about her work: 'she gave sick people food to make them strong', 'she became known as lady of the lamp'. When drawing her they find it difficult to present her as a historical character. Studying events such as the Great Fire of London 1666, pupils understand the 'houses caught alight because they were wood and set together'. Using prints they can draw a Tudor house and satisfactorily emphasising the thatch roof and wooden beams.

135 Older pupils build on their knowledge of historical events over a much longer time scale when learning about periods of history and the Romans, Vikings and Victorians. They acquire a satisfactory level of knowledge of factual information about the past. This is partly done through visits such as those to Colchester, the Greenwich Maritime Museum and Kentwell Hall and through class assemblies on a historical theme. Year 3 pupils struggle to place themselves in a period of history and use appropriate historical terms, dates and references to events. By Year 4 pupils are more successful in this, though their accounts are usually brief, as work on the Romans conquering Britain illustrates. Year 5 pupils make simple comparisons between Victorian children and children nowadays and satisfactorily draw information about rich and poor children from Victorian photographs. Pupils often record their knowledge and understanding of historical evidence in limited ways. While most pupils can give brief descriptive or factual accounts, there are few examples of older pupils formulating historical questions and little evidence of pupils drawing on conflicting evidence. Higher attaining pupils are not taught higher level skills.

136 Pupils' attitudes to history range from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. Where attitudes are unsatisfactory pupils lacked concentration during the whole-class session. Many Year 2 pupils were restless and did not listen to the teacher, or each other. Working in pairs to discuss famous people they behaved better.

137 It is not possible to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching because few history lessons were being taught. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the lessons observed. Teachers make explicit in their planning what pupils are to learn. They plan activities to help pupils look at evidence draw on pupils' skills in speaking and listening music, drama and art. Good use is made of resources such as videos, storybooks and old newspapers and visits to increase pupils' knowledge. Closed questions often limit pupils' opportunities to respond and the responses wanted were often factual rather than a view or opinion. Work in pupils' books is not always marked and pupils are rarely informed of how they could improve. In Key Stage 1 history is mixed with other subjects in pupils' humanities books; this does not offer pupils continuity in their learning.

138 The management of history is satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to raise pupils' attainment and targets have been identified in the school's development plan. At present, there is insufficient assessment and evaluation of the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making within and across year groups.

139 Pupils' literacy and oracy skills are satisfactorily developed through history and resources for delivering Curriculum 2000 are adequate. The school draws well on visits from the local history library to supplement its own artefacts and has twice won the Friends of Historic Essex competition for local history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140 Standards in information and communication technology across the key stages are broadly in line with expectations. Overall, pupils make steady progress. This is an improvement on the previous inspection where standards were below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. In each class there are pupils who are confident users of computers, who are often used as the class 'expert' to support other pupils who are less confident. The adoption by the school of the national guidance for information and communication technology is ensuring a progressive development in skills and that all pupils have a basic level of skills. It also ensures that pupils are introduced to a broad range of information and communication technology experiences and applications at an appropriate time. The Local Education Authority recently carried out a detailed survey of pupils' information and communication technology knowledge to provide the school with the information of where the gaps were in pupils' knowledge and this has helped the school.

141 Younger pupils are able to create monster pictures using an art package and are confident in using the keyboard and mouse and are able to carry out simple tasks on the word processor. In one lesson the teacher worked intensively with two Year 2 pupils developing their skills using a 'Storymaker' programme. Under the guidance of the teacher they were able to enter the topic list, select a theme, choose objects and drag and drop them into the story background and then create a speech bubble. Older pupils have had experience in controlling a programmable robot, and finding information. They were generally confident in the use of a word processor and could insert images into their text. Year 6 pupils are able to enter data into a spreadsheet and create appropriate charts. In one lesson, following an exploration of Encarta, a software encyclopaedia, the teacher demonstrated how to include text graphics and sound on to a page with a view that pupils would design their own page of information.

142 Pupils' attitudes are very good when working at the computer, either independently or with a teacher and are keen to discuss the work when taught as a whole class. The difficulties of demonstrating on one computer to a whole class meant that in one lesson pupils were somewhat cramped and a little fidgety as a result.

143 It was only possible to see a small sample of taught sessions. These were taught by the subject co-ordinator who does some support teaching across the school. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teacher has a calm, patient manner with the result that pupils gain readily in confidence. He is very knowledgeable so that he can concentrate on the learning taking place rather than having to think about what is happening with the computer. So that, for example, as the pupils produced a pie-chart and bar-graph he could question them effectively about the difference between the two and which was the most appropriate to show the particular data they were using from their science experiment. The teacher has very good awareness of equal opportunities, particularly in the neutral language used and in ensuring that pupils have equal time and access when he is working with them. There are difficulties when teaching and demonstrating to the whole class but these sessions are managed satisfactorily.

144 The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and the expertise and the subject shows steady development. Currently there is no assessment system to record what pupils know, understand and can do. The school has plans to build a small information technology suite to further enhance developments in the subject.

MUSIC

145 Only a few music lessons were observed in either key stage, but the evidence suggests that pupils are attaining appropriate skills in line with expectations. This maintains the standards observed during the previous inspection. Infant pupils sing with adequate knowledge of the words and melody, using skills of rhythm and pitch satisfactorily. The opportunity to act as conductor was taken enthusiastically by two pupils who controlled the loudness or softness of singing well, including a complete stop that surprised the teacher. The lesson was managed satisfactorily with so many pupils, but their gains in singing skills were not extended since it was mostly singing practice.

146 Within Key Stage 2, pupils have an early appreciation of the differing sounds of instruments, such as wood blocks, tambourine and maracas, and they are very keen to play them. Pupils follow simple rhythms and beats well, and are encouraged by the teacher's methods, but pupils are not secure with compound rhythms. Most pupils take part well, although a few indulge in immature behaviour that is corrected firmly by the teacher. The teachers ensure that all pupils have a chance to take part and play instruments to the others. Pupils have the skills to play a variety of untuned percussion instruments with reasonable control and style. By Year 6 pupils have a developing knowledge of early musical elements such as pitch, timbre and duration, and apply these successfully to simple musical patterns.

147 Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided by the teachers, and gain skills as a result. For example, they are introduced to informal musical notation, and terms such as fortissimo, to direct their singing. Overall, pupils make sound progress through the school, supported by the programme of study and the work of the subject co-ordinator. Pupils usually co-operate sensibly when playing instruments and are beginning to listen carefully to them.

148 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages. Teachers manage pupils well, and encourage the pupils to take an active part which helps their learning. The subject planning allows for opportunities to compose, perform, listen to and appraise music, although little of this was evident in the lessons observed. The co-ordinator provides helpful support, and prepares groups of pupils for outside performances such as music festivals, giving the pupils good opportunities to perform. The range of instruments includes some from differing cultures. A small number of pupils receive instrumental tuition, for example with the violin, and they are making appropriate progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149 Standards in physical education are in line with expectations across the school. It was only possible to see a very small sample of full lessons but this was supplemented by some partial observations. The school takes water safety seriously and pupils swim in the local swimming pool on a rotational basis. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils are able to swim the expected 25 metres.

150 Young children show the ability to develop ideas in movement into a sequence for an animal dance. From pupils' demonstrations other members of the class are able to see the differences in performances and suggest improvements. For example, when the class was exploring low movements, individual pupils demonstrated how they moved, 'as a wriggly worm', snail or another type of creature. They initially found the idea of copying their partner's movement a little difficult but this improved as the lesson progressed. A Year 2 class explored basic skills associated with jumping and holding a balance. Older pupils explored attack and invasion games well; developing a good understanding of the tactics of the particular game they were playing for example, the need to find space so that your team-mate can pass to you. They also clearly understood the purpose of warming up before an activity. Year 5 pupils demonstrated in their group dance the ability to rehearse shape and refine their movements over time to produce a finished piece of dance work that they were very evidently proud of. Year 6 pupils, although tending to lose their tactical awareness in the excitement and enthusiasm of a limited rule netball match, nevertheless demonstrated some control and precision in developing their passing skills.

151 Pupils' attitudes are at least satisfactory overall. In the Year 6 lessons, one or two pupils became over-enthusiastic and behaviour slipped as a result. Pupils engaged in their dance performance showed considerable concentration. Younger junior pupils were very keen and enthusiastic and wanted to do well in their game of 'bench-ball.' The poor behaviour of one individual pupil was not allowed to escalate and managed very well by the teacher in accordance with the school policy. Very young pupils showed a little silliness in their work but there was no problem with behaviour and they listened well to the teacher.

152 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and pupils make steady progress. Teachers seem to be confident teaching the subject and the scheme of work the school has adopted provides effective support for the teacher's planning. Where teachers feel particularly confident, and have particular skills, as in the dance work with older juniors, then the quality of pupils' work is good. Teachers use praise and manage behaviour well, in a positive fashion. The quality of relationships across the school is good and there is a sense of genuine warmth towards the pupils by the members of staff which builds trust and encourages and motivates the pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

153 Standards in religious education achieved by seven year olds are below those expected for their age. Pupils in Year 2 learn stories from the Old and New Testaments and also learn isolated facts about, for instance, Islam and Sikhism, but they do not acquire more than a superficial knowledge and do not explore the meaning, for instance, of what it means to be a follower of a faith. They find the concept of a symbol difficult to understand.

154 The school has adopted a commercial course for the infants and is now introducing national guidelines for the juniors. This is linked to the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus and ensures that pupils develop their understanding and knowledge progressively as they move through the school. However, there are instances of duplication. For example, in the work examined from last year, pupils in both Year 2 and Year 5 had studied the Old Testament story of Joseph's coat and the New Testament story of Jesus stilling the storm in a similar way without any advance in their understanding of the significance of these stories to a believer. Similarly, during the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were introduced to the concept of Muslim prayer and the place of the mosque in this tradition; while a similar topic was being taught in Year 6, where pupils had absorbed more information about the architecture of

the mosque but had not developed significantly their understanding of the religious practice of prayer. In contrast in a Year 5 lesson very good questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to come to a sound understanding of the place of prayer in religion by linking it to their own experience of love and compassion. Overall, the achievement of eleven-year-olds is below what is expected.

155 Pupils' attitudes are good. They have positive attitudes to the faiths they learn about and are generally attentive in lessons, although younger pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration when they spend a long time sitting on the carpet or when the lesson follows a literacy or numeracy lesson just before lunch. In the best lessons, pupils have good opportunities for personal development, when they are able to relate what they learn to their own experience.

156 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good and very good teaching. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher used role-play well to show pupils the differences between Christian and Sikh weddings. Generally teachers use resources well, particularly when they are not as confident in their knowledge of the subject, as for instance when they are teaching about Islam. Teachers are more secure in their knowledge of Christianity and use this well to extend pupils' understanding. A good example was seen when the teacher emphasised that Jesus was brought up in the Jewish faith, when asking Year 3 pupils about his significance to Christians. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good, and individual lessons are planned satisfactorily.

157 The school has no system of assessment in place to enable it to measure pupils' progress against the targets of the Agreed Syllabus. Some attempts are made to develop literacy through religious education, for instance in a Year 3 class when the use of correct vocabulary was emphasised, but this is not consistent, particularly with younger pupils where recording is often through drawing. No examples were seen of computers being used to extend pupils' learning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by making them aware of the range of religious beliefs and, in the best lessons, prompting them to examine their own experience. The co-ordinator has monitored the subject through looking at displays and talking to pupils about their work, but the school should review the way time is allocated to religious education to ensure that pupils have good learning opportunities at times when they are receptive. It should also ensure that teachers plan for pupils' knowledge and understanding to increase as they move through the school, and check that they have understood what they have learned. Currently progress across the school is unsatisfactory. The school has addressed the issue raised in the last inspection, when religious education was often part of topics; but it has only recently introduced separate exercise books for religious education. This means that older pupils are still confused about some of their previous learning, for instance not being able to distinguish between what they have learned in history about the Romans or Anglo-Saxons and religious education.