

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGH ONGAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

High Ongar

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114938

Headteacher: Mrs E A Mulcahy

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: December 4th to 6th 2000

Inspection number: 224837

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Street High Ongar Essex
Postcode:	CM5 9NB
Telephone number:	01277 363761
Fax number:	01277 366762
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body, High Ongar Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Ogan
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Terry Elston 20704	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Physical education, Information and communication technology, Art, Pupils with special educational needs.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Helen Griffiths 9446	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Judith Howell 18083	Team inspector	English, Music, Religious education, Children aged under five.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development;
Arthur Evans 19897	Team inspector	Science, Design and technology, Geography, History, Equality of opportunity.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
"Thule"
60 Joy Lane
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 4LT
01227 273449

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

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

High Ongar Primary is a small school in the centre of the village, educating boys and girls aged between four and 11. There are 117 pupils on roll, ten of whom attend the Reception class mornings only. The surrounding area is a mixture of privately owned, rented and council accommodation. None of the pupils speaks English as an additional language, and there are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. At less than ten per cent, the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average. The school has around 20 per cent of pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is broadly the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, and this is about average. During the last school year, seven pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and five left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This degree of mobility amongst the pupils in this school is not unusual. Overall, pupils enter the school at broadly average standards of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good, and improving, school where pupils do well. There is a strong commitment to high achievement that permeates the school. The positive impact of strong leadership and good quality of teaching can be judged by pupils' high standards of work and behaviour. Despite the relatively high costs per pupil, the good progress they make shows that the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school's results in the latest national assessment tests in Year 6 were well above average in English and mathematics, and very high in science.
- The leadership is good, because the headteacher and governors have high expectations of pupils and staff, and clear ideas on how they will meet new challenges.
- The school promotes and monitors pupils' personal development very well, and, as a result, their attitudes to work and behaviour are of a high quality.
- The quality of teaching is good, because teachers teach new skills well, and then give pupils challenging tasks to consolidate their knowledge.
- The school has a very good range of extracurricular activities.
- Parents speak very highly of the school's work.

What could be improved

- Pupil' standards of work in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2 are too low.
- Much of the work planned for the very young children is too formal, and this restricts the development of their independence and imagination.
- Too much of pupils' work in Key Stage 2 is poorly presented.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's response to the main issues arising from the last report in 1997 has been good. The roles of governors and senior staff are now clearly established, and all make a strong contribution to the school's leadership. The school's planning for the future is now good, and provides a useful focus for the development of governors, staff and pupils. The plan's targets are clear, and the school's progress towards them is monitored closely by the governing body and senior staff. The school's office administration is much better, and systems for monitoring the budget, and pupils' attendance, are now

good. The leadership of the headteacher, appointed after the previous inspection, is good, and is an important reason why the standards of pupils' work and behaviour are so much higher now. Weaknesses in the teaching have been addressed successfully by the support given by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators, and, as a result, the quality of teaching is now good in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The issue of the appraisal of teachers has been resolved by the adoption of a well-structured performance management plan which provides a good structure for reviewing teachers' work, and setting targets for improvement. New staff benefit from good induction procedures, and speak highly of the way the deputy headteacher supports them. The prospectus and governors' Annual Report now meet statutory requirements. The school has spent considerable sums of money to set up a new computer suite, but weaknesses remain in the provision for information and communication technology, and some aspects of the subject are still not taught. Resources have been improved, and weaknesses in those for design and technology and music have been addressed. The health and safety issue has been resolved. The quality of information for parents is now good.

Pupils' standards by the time they leave are significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection in English, mathematics, science, art and geography, and have remained similar in all other subjects. In view of the strong leadership and good teaching, the school is very well placed to improve still further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	D	A	A
mathematics	C	C	A	A
science	C	B	A*	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Clearly, the school is doing well in the national assessment tests. The results in science are particularly high, and put them in the top five per cent of schools in the country. Standards are rising rapidly, and this inspection shows that, in nearly all cases, they are being maintained this year. Importantly, pupils also fare very well when compared with those from similar schools. Standards in literacy and numeracy have risen alongside the successful introduction of the respective national strategies. Pupils enter the school with average skills. They make sound progress in the Reception class, although their personal and social skills improve more slowly than other areas of their learning. This inspection finds that, in Year 2, pupils have made good progress to reach above average standards in English, art and mathematics. In all other subjects, standards are average. Pupils achieve very well in Key Stage 2, given their starting points, and exceeded their targets comfortably in this year's national assessment tests in both English and mathematics. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average in mathematics, above average in English (although their writing is only average), science, art and physical education. In information and communication technology, standards in Year 6 are below average, although the new computer suite is starting to have a positive effect. Standards are average in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In class, pupils behave impeccably, and work very well together. Around the school, they are courteous, and move around sensibly. In the playground, they play happily.
Personal development and relationships	These are good. Pupils are eager to help in the classroom, and take responsibility for younger ones. The relationships in the school are of high quality, and create a calm and supportive ethos.
Attendance	Good, and significantly better than the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and promotes the learning of all groups of pupils well. During the inspection, 36 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in 14 per cent of lessons and good or better in 72 per cent. None of the lessons was unsatisfactory. Parents believe that the quality of teaching is good, and the figures show a significant improvement from the previous OFSTED inspection when 19 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory, and teachers often asked too little of pupils in terms of their standards of work and behaviour. Teachers' expectations are now high, and this helps to explain why pupils do so well in the national assessment tests in Year 6. Teachers do not, however, always extend these expectations to the quality of pupils' handwriting and spelling in Key Stage 2, and these are not as well-developed as other aspects of English. The school has made good choices in its appointment of new teachers, and they all work well as a team. Teachers' planning is good, and lessons move at a brisk pace. The school has adapted well to the new arrangements for teaching literacy and numeracy, and, as a result, pupils learn the basic skills of reading and number well. The teaching of the youngest children is good in the areas of literacy and numeracy, but does not focus enough on developing children's independence. The teaching of creative skills is good, and pupils' art and design is often of a high quality. In Key Stage 2, not all teachers have good enough information and communication technology skills to teach all aspects of the required curriculum. The school has training planned to address this shortcoming.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well balanced, and supports pupils' learning of science, literacy and numeracy particularly well. Not all the required elements of information and communication technology are taught. There is a very good range of extracurricular activities. The curriculum for children in the Reception class is too formal, and does not focus

	sufficiently on pupils' personal and social development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. The co-ordinator organises the support well, and pupils make good progress. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution towards pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Good spiritual provision from assemblies, and good opportunities in lessons enable pupils to appreciate the place of God in their lives. Good moral provision teaches pupils clear messages about right and wrong. Very good social provision creates a warm atmosphere, where pupils are expected to support one another, and learn together. Good cultural provision gives pupils many opportunities to learn about art, music and the richness of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Their progress and personal development are assessed and tracked very carefully, and they are made to feel safe.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents appreciate the school's work, and are well-informed about the curriculum, and how well their children are progressing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads her team well, and is supported effectively by the deputy head. They have a commitment to the improvement of the school, and the standards pupils achieve in all areas of their lives. Co-ordinators support colleagues well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The strong governing body is very well led by the knowledgeable Chair of Governors. They have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and work closely with the staff to effect improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very well done. Pupils' results in the national tests are monitored carefully, and weaknesses addressed. The monitoring of teaching is very good, and explains why its quality is so good.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well. The governing body makes sure the school gets the best value from its funds, and the planning for the future is good.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	The staff are well qualified, and a good mixture of new and experienced teachers. Classroom assistants are knowledgeable, and provide good support to pupils. The accommodation is satisfactory, but classrooms are cramped for the largest classes. The resources are satisfactory overall, but good for English, mathematics and music. The new computer suite provides very good accommodation and resources for information and communication technology, but the school still lacks some programs and equipment to teach the required curriculum. Children in the Reception class have no separate, sheltered area in which to play.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children enjoy coming to school.• The teaching is consistently good.• The staff are very approachable.• The headteacher leads the school well.• Children's behaviour is very good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is sometimes too much homework.• There are insufficient extracurricular activities.

Parents' views were extremely favourable. The inspection team agrees with their positive views. Of the others, the provision of homework was found to be satisfactory. The school has a wide range of extracurricular activities, but more for older pupils than for younger ones.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Analysis of the school's national end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 shows that, compared with all schools, and schools in similar contexts, standards were well above average in English and mathematics, and very high in science. These results were much improved from the previous OFSTED inspection, when standards were average in all three subjects.
2. The percentage of pupils achieving higher than the expected standard was above the national average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science.
3. When these results are compared with those reached by the pupils in the last three years, they show an improving trend in standards which is significantly above the national trend in all three subjects. There is no significant difference in standards attained by boys and girls, although there was until this year, before the school introduced teaching methods which raised the attainment of boys.
4. The school set modest targets for this year's tests, based on previous levels of performance, and pupils easily exceeded them. More challenging targets have been set for the year 2001, which pupils are well on course to achieve.
5. The findings of the inspection are that the oldest pupils attain well above average standards in mathematics, including numeracy, and above average standards in science. In English, including literacy, standards are above average overall, but pupils' writing is only average. The current Year 6 is, therefore, performing in line with last year's group in mathematics, but lower in science and English, because of the effect that pupils' relative weakness in writing is having on their work.
6. This inspection finds that, in English, by the age of 11, the pupils ask good questions building upon the contributions of others, and speak clearly and confidently. They are interested in books and read with enjoyment, and predict what will happen next in stories. They write effectively for a wide range of purposes and readers, often showing very good imagination, but standards of spelling and handwriting are relatively weak, and their presentation is often untidy. In mathematics, by Year 6, pupils have very good strategies for problem solving, and have a thorough knowledge of multiplication tables up to ten. They work confidently with fractions and decimals, and have a good understanding of three-dimensional shapes. They handle data methodically, and use the information they have collected well in graphs. By the age of 11, in science, pupils conduct challenging experimental work very well, and make perceptive hypotheses of the likely outcome. They produce good descriptions of the functions of some important human organs, classify materials accurately as solids, liquids or gases and use symbols appropriately to draw an electrical circuit.
7. In the other subjects in Year 6, pupils' work is above average in art and physical education. In music, history, design and technology and geography, their work is average, and in religious education standards met the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In information and communication technology, it is below average. Since the previous OFSTED inspection, standards by the time they leave have improved in art and geography, and are similar in all other subjects.
8. In information technology, the pupils have basic word processing skills, but they are slow on the keyboard, and have had little experience of using spreadsheets, working with simulations, controlling or monitoring using computers. In art, pupils show a good capability to experiment with

different skills and techniques, and their drawing and painting, particularly in the style of Van Gogh, are of a high quality. In design and technology, they evaluate their work well as it develops, considering the purposes for which it is intended. When making models, they produce sound plans, and demonstrate reasonable accuracy, with attention to the quality of finish and function. In geography, their work on the local environment shows a sound geographical understanding, and they make good comparisons between school life in Pakistan and England. In history, pupils have a sound knowledge of the past, and write well about conditions in Roman Britain. In music, Year 6 pupils sing well, and a significant number play instruments to a high standard, benefiting from good specialist tuition. In physical education, nearly all can swim, and they play games particularly well.

9. At Key Stage 1, when the averages of the school's latest national assessment tests are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards were average in reading, above in writing and well above in mathematics. When the average of this data is compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics.

10. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for the school are compared with the previous three years, they show a good rise in standards, at a higher rate than the national trend, in writing and mathematics, and fairly static levels in reading.

11. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average all aspects of English, including literacy, above average in mathematics, including numeracy, and average in science. There are some discrepancies here with the latest national assessment tests, but with such small cohorts, none of these is significant.

12. Year 2 pupils listen well to stories, and respond appropriately. They read accurately and with confidence, and have good strategies for working out new words. Their writing is lively, and well presented, benefiting from an initiative by the school to raise standards in writing. In mathematics, pupils are fairly confident with all aspects of numeracy, and use standard units well in their measuring. They collect data well, and produce clearly labelled graphs of their results. By Year 2 in science, pupils have a sound understanding of how to sort materials according to their properties and recognise and name a number of sources of light and sound. Pupils conduct simple experiments with average skill, and produce good bar charts of their results. In art, pupils' attainment is above average. They paint imaginatively, and use string to print exciting pictures.

13. In all other subjects in Year 2, pupils' work is average. In design and technology, their designs are imaginative, and they use tools with good, safe skills. In information and communication technology, the pupils show average word processing skills, and use the mouse and keyboard confidently. In physical education, they have good gymnastic skills, and show interesting ideas as they produce sequences of movements. In geography, pupils have a good idea of how maps work, and produce their own of their route to school. They have a sound historical knowledge, and learn much from elderly members of their families about life in the past. Pupils sing well, and a few are starting to play instruments to a good standard. In religious education, pupils know a good range of Bible stories, and talk sensitively about spiritual issues.

14. Pupils do well at this school, and make good progress. From their starting point, which places them broadly in line with pupils nationally, they attain high standards by the time they leave in English, mathematics and science. A measure of their progress as they move through the school is their improvement from Year 2 to Year 6, as illustrated by an analysis of their results in the respective national assessment tests. This shows that, against pupils who attained similar standards in Year 2, their performance by Year 6 was well above average in English and mathematics and very high in science.

15. The strong focus on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is successful in giving pupils confidence to read challenging material in all subjects, produce interesting poems and stories in literacy lessons and work out complex mathematical problems. In science, teachers' demanding questions encourage pupils to think scientifically, and this helps them to tackle new experimental work with confidence. The presentation of pupils' work in Key Stage 2, however, often lets them down. Their experimental work in science is often spoilt by untidy writing and tables, for example, and their geography work has too many spelling and grammatical errors.

16. Children under five enter the school at average levels. They make suitable progress and reach appropriate standards by the time they enter Year 1. In the Reception, the children reach standards which are similar to those found in most schools in their mathematical development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. In their creative development and personal, social and emotional development, there are some shortcomings. In the school's previous inspection, the children were judged to reach standards in line with expectations in all areas of learning except for physical development, which was less satisfactory. Limitations in the curricular provision narrow children's range of experiences and there are too few opportunities for children to choose and explore activities for themselves and initiate their own ideas. This confines their social interaction and creativity.

17. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are assessed accurately, and all make significant gains, particularly in their reading, science and number work. Consequently, many attain, or come close to, national standards in the national assessment tests by Year 6.

18. Higher achieving pupils also do well. The ability sets generally provide them with challenging work, and the proportion of pupils exceeding national standards by Year 6 this year was above average in English and well above in mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are keen, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and usually settle quickly to the task given. Pupils enjoy contributing to the discussions in lessons, and are eager to put forward their thoughts and ideas. They concentrate well and work diligently both independently and with others. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons where they are actively involved, such as in music-making and those activities that they can relate to their own lives, such as the evaluation of an information leaflet for a nearby shopping centre. They are keen to instigate conversations, and show respect to all adults. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when it was noted that a significant minority of pupils were disruptive, rude and often showed limited study skills.

20. Overall, pupils' behaviour is very good, which again is much better than in the last report, when it varied between very good and poor. Pupils know the school rules, and are aware of the consequences of their actions. They are considerate of others, and aware of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are polite and friendly, know right from wrong and respect the views of others. They move sensibly about the school and, although they play energetically in the playground, they know what is unacceptable behaviour. Bullying is not a problem in the school. Pupils respect the environment keeping it free from litter and graffiti. There were no exclusions during the last academic year.

21. The personal development of pupils and relationships in the school are very good. They take responsibility readily, both within the classroom with different tasks that need to be done, and outside. For example, pupils in Year 6 sit with the younger children at lunchtimes in the library to share books with them. All pupils are involved in setting targets for themselves, and evaluating their own work. They respect the values and beliefs of others, and understand that there are many different kinds of faiths and cultures. The strong emphasis placed on pupils' personal development greatly enhances the opportunities for them to succeed and achieve of their best.

22. Children in the Foundation Stage feel secure in their surroundings and are happy to come to school. At the start of the day, they enter the classroom with enthusiasm and eagerly proceed to the classroom assistant who sits and works with them before the older children join the class. They are well behaved and work agreeably alongside one another. However, opportunities for sustained free choice activities, to develop children's initiative and personal responsibility, are insufficient, and progress in these areas is slower than in other aspects of the children's development.

23. Attendance is above national averages and there is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is now good. This is an improvement on the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is good overall, and promotes pupils' learning well. During the inspection, 36 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in 14 per cent of lessons and good or better in 72 per cent. None of the lessons was unsatisfactory. Parents believe that the quality of teaching is good, and the figures show a significant improvement compared with the previous OFSTED inspection when 19 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory, and teachers often asked too little of pupils in terms of their standards of work and behaviour. The school has made good choices in its appointment of new teachers, and they all work well as a team. The decision of the school to split pupils into ability sets is working well, and ensures that pupils of all levels of attainment work hard at work well-matched to their needs.

25. The quality of teaching and learning for children under five in the Reception class is satisfactory overall, and, in general, the children make suitable progress. For these children, the teaching of formal aspects of reading, writing and mathematics, including the teaching of literacy and numeracy, is generally good. For example, teaching methods are used well to direct children's learning with their number work, handwriting and practical skills, such as using scissors. The teaching is also good to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and improve their physical skills, and they make good progress in these areas.

26. However, in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and creative development, there are some shortcomings. There is insufficient provision of free play across the range of activities which help children interact with others, and there is too little in the planning to maximise children's independence, imagination and ingenuity. Everyday routines are well organised, and enable all children to become familiar with the pattern of the day and to respond quickly to the high expectations for behaviour, attentiveness and following instructions. The teacher and support staff listen with interest to what the children have to say, and, when working with them, demonstrate good skills in helping children to develop their language for communication. They explain new work clearly to the children, and then use questions skilfully to assess how well the children have grasped the concept. The Reception teacher knows the children well, and is skilled at developing warm relationships. Consequently, the children settle into school happily, and develop good attitudes to learning.

27. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good, with over three-quarters of lessons at least good. Teachers show a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and all make lessons interesting, so that pupils enjoy learning. Their direct teaching works well, and promotes pupils' learning of new skills effectively. Their management of pupils' behaviour is very good, because they have high expectations of how pupils should act, and this helps pupils get the most out of their time in school. They are quick to praise pupils who behave very well, and this encourages others to do the same. Planning of lessons is very good, and provides all pupils with an appropriate level of challenge. The teaching of mathematics is particularly good, especially in the basic skills of numeracy. The strengths of the teaching were exemplified in a numeracy lesson, where pupils were highly motivated by the teacher's quick fire mental mathematics session at the start. She built on their enthusiasm by requiring them to use their new knowledge of odd and even numbers in Venn diagrams, and, by the end, pupils had mastered two difficult concepts very well. These high expectations were lacking in the previous OFSTED inspection, and they are the key reason why teaching is much better now, and why pupils are learning more and at a faster rate. The quality of teaching and learning of English in general, and literacy in particular, is good. Teachers structure lessons well, so that pupils learn the basic skills of reading and writing, and are then set appropriate tasks to develop these further. Plenary sessions tie things together well at the end, and are used well to pick out pupils who are still unsure. No science lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, but teachers' planning and pupils' good progress show that lessons are challenging, and give pupils good opportunities to investigate in all areas of science. Elsewhere, the quality of teaching and learning is good in design and technology, art, religious education and music, and satisfactory in geography, history, and information and communication technology. No judgement can be made on the teaching of physical education, because none was observed in Key Stage 1.

28. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and often very good, and helps to explain why pupils do so well in the national assessment tests in Year 6. Lessons are very well planned to ensure that all pupils can learn at their own pace. The teaching in Year 6 is consistently good. A fundamental strength in the quality of teaching is the way the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught. These lessons have a brisk pace, and have a sharp focus on specific skills that pupils learn quickly, and then apply to follow-up tasks. The plenary sessions are very good, and teachers use them well to assess pupils' progress. In an excellent Year 6 numeracy lesson, for example, the teacher introduced the idea of squared numbers by first getting pupils to fire back answers to multiplication sums. Quickly moving on to multiplying a number by itself, the teacher then explained how to write the squared symbol. After five minutes hectic practice, the teacher introduced cubed numbers, and pupils saw the light immediately. They then rushed to their tables to put theory into practice. There was a buzz of activity as they worked, being constantly reminded of the time limits. Before long, they were back together in the plenary session. The teacher looked at the objectives of the lesson, and asked "Who now knows what squared and cubed numbers are, and who is still not sure?" Their responses showed how effective the lesson had been, and the teacher had assessed their progress in an instant. It was almost breathless, but taught pupils such a lot.

29. The teaching and learning of literacy is good overall, and a major improvement on the unsatisfactory standards reported in the previous OFSTED inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of the literacy hour, and their high expectations ensure that pupils make good progress in their reading in particular. A weakness in Key Stage 2 concerns the teaching and learning of writing. Although teachers do well to encourage pupils to use imaginative words, they do not always have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' handwriting and spelling, particularly in lessons other than English. As a result, these areas of pupils' learning lag behind others.

30. The teaching and learning of science are good, and lead to high standards by Year 6. Teachers have a good scientific knowledge, which ensures that pupils develop effective strategies for

conducting experiments, and build up a good store of knowledge. Elsewhere, the quality of teaching and learning is good in history, music and physical education. In information and communication technology, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, and the new computer suite is working well, but not all teachers have enough knowledge to teach all aspects of the curriculum.

31. Throughout the school, the quality of teachers' marking is generally good, and many books have helpful comments to help pupils to improve. Occasionally, however, teachers limit their marking to just ticks, or congratulatory comments, and this allows careless work to continue. A few parents feel that there is either too much, or too little, homework, but the inspectors found that teachers provide appropriate levels of homework to support work done in class.

32. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs works closely with teachers and support assistants in helping pupils who have special educational needs. The co-ordinator studies teachers' planning, and plans her own work that is appropriate for these pupils. Classroom assistants are skilled, well-briefed, and all make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Some pupils are withdrawn for well-directed specialist teaching. This system works well, and ensures that pupils with special educational needs are working at similar tasks to the rest of the class, but at their own level. This is why they make such good progress.

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

33. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. It meets statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship, and religious education conforms with the locally Agreed Syllabus. However, the school does not fully meet requirements for information and communication technology, thus limiting the range of learning opportunities available for the pupils. The use of control equipment, sensors and adventure simulations is unsatisfactory. Total weekly teaching time meets national recommendations. Key Stage 2 pupils have swimming lessons and visiting teachers provide instrumental music tuition for a few pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. The school is implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy well, with the result that standards in English and mathematics are rising and are above average and well above average respectively by the time the pupils leave the school.

34. There are clear written policies for all subjects, although some, such as geography and design and technology, are still in draft form and need governors' approval. Curricular planning is good. The teachers plan carefully for the work which the pupils will do each term and each week. Planning in English and mathematics is soundly based on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, whilst that for other subjects is based largely on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. A key issue of the previous inspection was to establish roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and the school has done much to address this. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor planning, samples of work and teaching, with a view to sharing best practice. Topics are planned on a two-year cycle, in order to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes.

35. A weakness in the curriculum lies in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Whilst there are good opportunities to develop the children's reading, handwriting and number skills, there is insufficient planned provision for children to develop their independence, and, for example, to choose for themselves what they will do. Although there is an appropriate range of resources available, the children do not have adequate time, on a regular basis, to plan and choose freely from a wide range of

different activities. This, in turn, restricts their personal and creative development and limits their independence to choose, experiment, explore creatively and initiate ideas of their own.

36. The school has a clear equal opportunities policy, which reflects its aim to ensure equality of access for all the pupils to the full curriculum. The needs of more able pupils in Key Stage 2 are met by ability setting in the mornings for English and mathematics and by additional support on a short-term basis. The school was aware of boys' underachievement. Action was taken to improve this and, as a result, boys performed well in the most recent national tests. The school is aware of the need to plan carefully for the withdrawal of some pupils from lessons for support, so that they catch up on work missed and do not regularly miss the same lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life. Their targets for improvement are clear, and are reviewed regularly. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

37. Provision for extracurricular activities is very good, and most parents believe that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside normal lessons. Pupils participating in a weekly gymnastics club are working for national awards. During the inspection, 11 pupils, accompanied by two teachers, set out for their regular cross-country run. The school choir has sung at Brentwood Cathedral and at Ongar Garden Centre. There are clubs for chess, recorders, dance, football and netball. Matches are played against local schools, with some success. The school came fourth in the most recent local swimming gala. The pupils have also participated in local country dancing events. A fortnightly after school Bible Club strengthens the already close links which exist between the school and St Mary's Church. The school successfully enhances the pupils' learning through many worthwhile visits in the locality and further afield and by utilising the expertise and experience of visitors whenever possible.

38. The deputy headteacher is responsible for co-ordinating the pupils' personal, social and health education and provision is good, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. A good policy reinforces the ethos of the school as a caring institution. Relevant issues, such as attention to the dangers of drugs misuse, tolerance and respect for others, are dealt with in subjects, such as science, religious education and physical education, and through assemblies and in 'circle time' for Years 5 and 6. During the inspection, the youngest children had a visit from a police officer, who dealt with issues of personal safety. There is formal sex education for the oldest pupils and parents are informed of the nature of these lessons. The school nurse helps with the teaching of sex education. Issues of human growth raised by younger pupils are dealt with appropriately according to age and maturity. The school successfully links personal, social and health education with the many ways in which the pupils are involved in the local community.

39. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

40. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. The school's clear mission statement emphasises the need to cultivate social and emotional growth in an environment of mutual respect. There are good links with St. Mary's Church and the vicar is a regular visitor. He recently led a special assembly for the school's late caretaker. A bench inside the school reminds the pupils of this much-loved person. Outside, there is a millennium garden, where pebbles, decorated and named by all the pupils, make an attractive feature. The teachers give the pupils opportunities to reflect on issues. For example, in religious education, younger pupils have thought about times which have been special to them. In geography, these pupils displayed wonder at the clothes and equipment of the visiting police officer, particularly her radio communication with Chelmsford police station. Acts of collective worship, on themes such as the nativity story and on giving and receiving, make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.

41. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good. The previous inspection found this to be unsatisfactory, as the existing behaviour policy was not clear and was not implemented consistently. This policy is much improved and staff are now consistent in their teaching of the differences between right and wrong and in the way in which the pupils are encouraged to put their hands up to ask questions, to line up sensibly and to share resources responsibly. School rules are clearly displayed in corridors, in classrooms and in the playground. Positive behaviour and effort are encouraged through a house system, with gold awards being celebrated in a weekly rewards assembly. There is a House Cup for effort, supplemented by cups for individuals. Some of the pupils' targets for improvement include behaviour.

42. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The previous inspection judged this to be 'just satisfactory'. Most parents believe that the school helps their children to mature and to become responsible. Indeed, there are many opportunities for all the pupils, particularly the older ones, to display responsibility every day. The pupils vote for house captains and their deputies and these pupils have additional responsibilities to carry out. Pupils help in classrooms, in the library, and in assemblies. Older pupils were observed helping to read stories to the youngest children in the library at lunchtime. An annual school grounds day gives the pupils the opportunity to work outside with others of all ages in their house. Social skills are developed through participation in clubs and on school visits. During a residential visit to Wat Tyler Country Park, pupils in Years 5 and 6 participate in team building and problem solving activities.

43. The pupils are encouraged to care for the environment and for living things and there is a good collection of books on this in the school library. All the pupils have helped to plant trees in the school grounds. Older pupils have made a number of bird boxes and they have helped in the regeneration of the old village pond. They participated recently in a photographic competition about High Ongar, sponsored by the governors. The teachers encourage the pupils to think of others. The pupils have sung carols and donated harvest produce for local senior citizens, and they have supported many charities, including the British Heart Foundation and the Royal British Legion. Social skills are cultivated through participation in carol concerts and school productions. One pupil won the Ongar Town Partnership Christmas card design competition, and switched on the town's Christmas lights with Frank Bruno. The teachers encourage the pupils to work collaboratively in lessons, whenever necessary. In geography lessons in Years 1/2, the pupils were taught about safety on the roads.

44. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. They have visited museums and theatres and have been visited by a poet. They participated in a recent Book Character Day. Many pupils take part in the choir and in country dancing. In history, older pupils are made aware of the legacy of the Romans and the Victorians. The teachers make the pupils aware of the multicultural nature of modern society in Britain and world wide, both in lessons and in assemblies. A recent focus has been on India and on Divali. In one assembly, the pupils listened to Indian music and heard the story of Ramayana. Younger pupils have been making some Divali lamps in design and technology. There is a small selection of musical instruments from different cultures. In religious education, the pupils are encouraged to develop respect for peoples of diverse faiths and cultures. Islamic and Jewish visitors have enhanced learning. In geography, Year 5/6 pupils learn about aspects of the culture of Pakistan, whilst in literacy, Reception and Year 1 pupils read the African story of Handa's Surprise. In art lessons, pupils become familiar with the work of some famous artists, including Van Gogh and Pollock.

45. The school is deeply embedded in the local community. There are very good links with the local church, where school services are held. The vicar regularly takes assemblies and an after-school club is run for the pupils. The school invites local residents, including the elderly, to Christmas dinner

and to Harvest Festivals. Local shop and business owners sponsor school cups and judge competitions. The school choir performs at local festivals and at fund-raising concerts for charities. A retreat house in the village has made generous donations to the school's information and communication technology suite. Various local groups use the school's facilities.

46. Links with the many local secondary schools are good. The school keeps parents well informed about secondary school open days from Year 5 onwards. Teachers from the school to which most pupils transfer visit the primary school and hold lengthy discussions with Year 6 teachers to ensure continuity of curricular provision and pastoral care.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school cares for pupils well, and monitors their progress very effectively. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and very good systems for monitoring and supporting their personal development. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. As pupils move through the school, their attitudes to work, behaviour and particular talents are recorded systematically, and the information is passed on to the next teacher. This builds up a clear picture of the pupils, and helps teachers when planning for a new class.

48. The school has a good assessment policy, the effectiveness of which is co-ordinated and monitored by the headteacher. Arrangements for end of key stage national tests meet statutory requirements. The teachers incorporate opportunities for assessment well into their planning. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked, and the school makes a good analysis of pupils' progress from their results in the national assessment tests in Key Stage 1 to those they achieve in Year 6. Information gained from analysing the results of national tests and other assessments is used well to plan subsequent work, arrange ability sets and match work to the differing needs of the pupils. It is used well to set targets in English and mathematics and the teachers make constant reference to these in lessons. There are examples of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels of attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, in order to help the teachers in the accuracy and consistency of their assessments. Some of these samples are, however, out of date. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, offering praise when appropriate. Too much untidy work, however, is often left unchecked. The quality of marking is variable. There are examples of comments which are helpful to the pupils in suggesting ways in which they might improve, but this is far from consistent practice. The teachers use plenary sessions well to assess what the pupils have learnt during lessons, often referring the pupils back to the original learning intentions of the lessons, and asking "Have you learnt what we set out to achieve today?"

49. The school now has effective procedures for ensuring the health, welfare and safety of its pupils. This represents a considerable improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when this aspect was judged to have serious weaknesses.

50. Child protection procedures are effective. The school has adopted the county's guidelines, and the headteacher and all staff have received appropriate training. Child welfare issues are discussed at termly key stage planning meetings. All class teachers have notebooks for recording changes in behaviour or attitudes which cause concern. Links with social services, the educational psychologist and the educational welfare officer are good.

51. The monitoring of attendance, a cause of concern at the last inspection, is now good. Registers are completed correctly, and the school uses a computer system to monitor them for patterns

of lateness and absence. Parents are contacted on the first day of a child's absence. Certificates for full attendance are awarded each term.

52. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour and now has very effective procedures to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying. Positive approaches include the 'House' system: all pupils have special badges and 'house points' are earned by pupils for effort and good work, building towards the House Trophy. House activities encourage co-operation between older and younger pupils, and individual effort is rewarded by stickers leading to certificates. Target books mark the attainment of pupils' individual targets. Playground rules were formulated with the help of pupils, and this helps them work well. There is a good system of monitors and House Captains to promote responsibility. School rules are clear and well understood by pupils.

53. Health and safety practices are good. The school has addressed the issue from the previous inspection and security is now very good. Risk assessments are carried out regularly. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions are good. The number of fully qualified first-aiders is very good, and all staff have received basic training. Appropriate records are kept of accidents, fire drills and of the checking of safety equipment. The level of supervision at lunchtime is good and supervisors are to receive further training. There is good play equipment and a shaded area.

54. The youngest children in the Reception class are well cared for, and it is evident that they feel at ease in their surroundings. The induction procedures are very comprehensive, and ensure that all children and their parents are prepared well for starting school. The children play happily in the main playground, and staff are always on hand to deal with any mishaps. Assessment and record keeping procedures for children aged under five are satisfactory. Children are assessed on entry to the school and the information provided is used appropriately to set targets for the children and plan work that will meet their needs in literacy and numeracy.

55. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are met well by the co-ordinator who liaises closely with teachers and classroom assistants to ensure that pupils receive a balanced curriculum, whilst benefiting from specialist help when necessary. The pupil with a statement of special educational need is served well by the school, and the arrangements for including this pupil into all school activities are very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The school has established a very good relationship with parents. At the pre-inspection meeting and in response to the questionnaire, parents were very positive about what the school did for their children. They appreciate the good pastoral care and value the way that the school builds up their children's confidence. Teaching staff and the headteacher are felt to be very approachable, and parents are quickly informed of any concerns.

57. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning in school. A good number of parents help in school on a regular basis, and others provide help for trips, swimming and events. A good programme of meetings was held to introduce the literacy and numeracy hours, which included the opportunity for groups of parents to observe sessions. Consultation evenings are held each term, and parents feel that they can always consult teachers on an informal basis. Attendance at school events is very good. Regular assemblies are held to which parents are invited. Very good numbers were present at the annual governors' meeting and at the home/school agreement meeting.

58. The information provided for parents was criticised at the previous OFSTED inspection, but is now good. The prospectus and governors' Annual Report to Parents are attractively presented, and

provide good, clear information. They now conform to legal requirements, which was not the case before. Advance information on the curriculum is provided each term and includes details of homework. There are regular newsletters from the school, governors and the Friends' Association. Nearly all parents have signed home/school agreements. Reports, criticised in the last report, have now improved. They provide good information about children's progress, and identify targets for improvement. There is an opportunity for parents to comment. Communication with the parents of children with special educational needs is good.

59. The induction programme for the youngest children in school is good. Parents are invited to meet with the Reception teacher, headteacher and classroom assistant, where they have the opportunity to hear about the general procedures and receive the school documentation. The children are then invited into the class for three or four visits during the term before they start school to get to know their teacher and become familiar with their new surroundings. There is constant daily communication between the Reception teacher and parents

60. The Friends work closely with the school. They provide a good range of social and fund-raising events, which have raised good sums to enable the school to purchase playground, physical education and information and communication technology equipment and to build a millennium garden. Events are well supported by teachers and governors as well as parents.

61. These findings represent a major improvement on those of the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The quality of the school's leadership and management is good, and is of a far higher standard than that reported in the previous inspection. At that time, the ethos was 'not wholly devoted to high achievement' but now there is an expectation that staff and pupils should strive to attain the highest standards.

63. The headteacher, appointed after the last inspection, creates this ethos, and provides strong direction for the school's future development. One of her main priorities has been to create a very strong team spirit within the school, and she has done this very well so that all staff work closely together towards a common purpose. The headteacher is good at looking critically at different aspects of the school to see how things could be done better, and this is one reason why the school keeps improving. One example of this happened last year when the headteacher led a 'school review' to see what the school did well, and what could be improved. They uncovered an important issue concerning classroom assistants, who did not feel sufficiently part of the team of staff. As a result of these findings, classroom assistants are now invited to all staff meetings and staff training days, and have similar performance review meetings to those experienced by teachers.

64. A key aim of the leadership has been to raise standards of work and behaviour, and the headteacher has led from the front on both accounts. Pupils' results in the national assessment tests have been scrutinised carefully, and, where weaknesses have been found, they have been addressed successfully. When, for example, boys were found to be performing worse than girls, the headteacher brought in an expert in boys' attainment and behaviour, and staff learned much about how to improve both. The school then introduced different ways of teaching boys how to write stories, and more practical methods to help them enjoy mathematics. As a result of this sharply focused action, boys' attainment improved so much that their results in the national assessment tests are now above the national average in English and mathematics. The behaviour of pupils, criticised at the previous OFSTED inspection, has improved dramatically since the school adopted a more positive way of

responding to pupils who misbehave. Now, teachers praise those who behave very well, and this encourages others to follow suit.

65. The leadership's response to the main issues arising from the last report has been good overall, and is the result of a determination to work systematically through all the elements of the well-structured action plan. The roles of governors and senior staff are now clearly established, and all make a strong contribution to the school's leadership. The school's planning for the future is now good, and provides a useful focus for the development of governors, staff and pupils. The headteacher teaches for two days a week, but has sufficient time away from the classroom to lead the school well. Weaknesses in the teaching have been addressed successfully by the support given by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators, and, as a result, the quality of teaching is now good in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The issue of the appraisal of teachers has been resolved by the adoption of a well-structured performance management plan which provides a good structure for reviewing teachers' work, and setting targets for improvement. The prospectus and governors' Annual Report now meet statutory requirements. Although the school has spent considerable sums of money in setting up a new computer suite, weaknesses remain in the provision for information and communication technology, and some aspects of the subject are still not taught.

66. The deputy headteacher makes a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school, working closely with the headteacher, and sharing a common purpose. His work with new teachers, a weakness in the last inspection, is especially valuable, and a significant reason why they settle quickly into their new job.

67. Subject co-ordinators give good support to teachers. They monitor standards effectively by scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' work. Co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have monitored the introduction of their respective national strategies, and this has helped the school make a good start with these initiatives. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs supports teachers and pupils very well, both in the planning of work and in the teaching of basic skills.

68. The governors, very well led by the knowledgeable Chair of Governors, are enthusiastic, and provide good support to the headteacher and staff. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and visit the school often to monitor their areas of responsibility. They are keen to raise pupils' standards, and work closely with the staff to analyse the national assessment tests and see which subjects are priorities for further development. They take an active role in the formation of the school improvement plan, and in the monitoring of the progress towards its targets.

69. The finance committee works hard to keep the school's funds in good order. Its members analyse spending carefully, and are keen to achieve the best possible value for the school's money by constantly comparing different sources for their purchases. This policy, for example, saved the school a great deal of money when the new computer suite was equipped. They are well supported by the school's secretary, who keeps good records of expenditure, and keeps the headteacher and co-ordinators well informed of the progress of the budget. These records are in much better order than at the time of the previous OFSTED inspection, since when the headteacher and secretary have worked effectively to improve the systems. The school's high proportion of its funds left as a surplus last year has been allocated appropriately, and the proposed figure this year is reasonable at less than six per cent.

70. The school uses its funds well to support pupils with special educational needs. A large number of well-qualified classroom assistants provide cost-effective support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, and the school's provision is good in these areas as a result.

71. The school's teaching staff is a good mixture of youth and experience who work well together as a team, supporting one another well. The employment of an 'extra' teacher is working well, by making smaller groups for literacy and numeracy, providing specialist music tuition and releasing co-ordinators to monitor their subjects. Teachers are well deployed as classroom teachers, and co-ordinators have a keen interest, and appropriate expertise in the subject they manage. All staff have detailed job descriptions which clarify roles and responsibilities.

72. The school's accommodation is adequate to support the teaching of the curriculum, which is the same judgement as that made by the school's previous inspection. The classrooms are bright, and large enough for all but the biggest classes, where space is very limited. The library is small, and provides limited accommodation for pupils to browse, and enjoy reading books. Outside, the playground is large and attractive, and the field provides a good surface for games.

73. The school's provision of resources is satisfactory overall. At the time of the school's last OFSTED inspection, there were shortages in information and communication technology, design and technology and music. Resources in design and technology are now satisfactory. In music, they are good, particularly in the supply of instruments, including a small selection that support pupils' learning about music from different cultures. The school has built up a good supply of computers, and the new information and communication technology suite is starting to have an impact on pupils' confidence in the subject. There are, however, still gaps in the school's equipment to monitor changes in materials, control devices and programs to teach pupils how to negotiate adventure simulations. In English and mathematics, resources are good, and support pupils' learning of basic skills well.

74. The school's accommodation for the youngest children in school has some shortcomings, in terms of the outdoor play being too small, and having no sheltered area. Although this is unsatisfactory, the teacher does make use of the main playground for playtime activities and, at this time, the children have access to the climbing equipment. However, these times are not sufficiently well planned to ensure that the children have regular and frequent stimulating outdoor physical activity. Overall, learning resources are adequate to support the children's learning indoors and for outdoor activities.

75. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to maintain the school's improvement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) raise standards in Information and communication technology at Key Stage 2 by:

- ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum are planned for, taught and have appropriate resources,
- providing relevant training so that all teachers have the skills to teach the required curriculum, and
- making greater use of information and communication technology in other subjects; (paragraphs 7,8,30,65,73,109,133-38)

(2) improve curricular provision for very young children in the Reception by:

- providing regular opportunities for them to develop their initiative and independence,
- allowing the children to choose more activities themselves,
- planning more opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity through role play, and
- investigate how the school could give these children a separate, sheltered play area; (paragraphs 16,22,35,74,77,78,80,81,88,89)

(3) raise the standard of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work in Key Stage 2. (paragraphs 6,29,90,98,99,111,115,126,131)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- improve the library facilities, (paragraphs 72 and 101) and
- improve the marking of pupils' work(paragraphs 31,48,115).

76. **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	11	58	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	112
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	4.7
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	0.0
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8*	9*	17*

* In schools with very small numbers, the scores attained by boys and girls are not reported separately.

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	15	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (90)	82 (81)	100 (81)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	14	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (86)	82 (86)	100 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (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	*8	*6	*14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (67)	86 (60)	93 (87)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	8	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (67)	79 (60)	86 (87)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	117
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Average class size	29.25

Pupil/teacher ratio 18.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£

Total income	256312
Total expenditure	256926
Expenditure per pupil	2254
Balance brought forward from previous year	45339
Balance carried forward to next year	44725

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	64

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	45	0	0	13
My child is making good progress in school.	39	47	2	0	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	44	2	0	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	41	6	0	14
The teaching is good.	41	44	0	0	16
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	40	5	2	12
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	42	0	0	13
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	41	0	0	13
The school works closely with parents.	42	39	5	0	14
The school is well led and managed.	39	45	2	0	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	47	2	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	47	2	0	14

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

77. There were no key issues for action dealing with provision for the under fives in the previous report. However, the report did state that the opportunities for the children to choose activities for themselves was limited. This is still the case and although, overall, the children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year, there are some important areas with weaknesses. Direct teaching skills are good and attention is paid to finding suitable activities for the more formal lessons. However, provision for all the recommended areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, especially for the youngest children in school, is incomplete. In particular there is insufficient free play and free choice to facilitate the development of social relationships and creativity. Despite these shortcomings the quality of teaching and learning for these children is satisfactory overall. The school provides a safe environment which, together with the calm and purposeful atmosphere, enables children to feel secure.

78. Most children enter the Reception class with average skills in writing, mathematics and personal and social development. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these children. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of children achieve appropriately and attain the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. In their personal, social and emotional development and in their creative development, there are some shortcomings.

79. Children start school part-time in the September of the year in which they become five. They move to full-time over the year according to when their birthday occurs. Of the 24 children in the Reception and Year 1 mixed-age group class, 13 are in the Foundation Stage; ten children attend part-time and three full-time. The judgements of this inspection relate to how these young children fare in a class with 11 children from Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

80. Although there are areas of weakness in this area of learning most children are happy and secure in their surroundings and have settled in well since starting school. For example, at the beginning of the day, they enter the classroom with enthusiasm and eagerly proceed to the classroom assistant who sits and works with them before the older children join the class. They respond appropriately and remember to answer the register with a greeting to their class teacher that may even be in French or German and are sufficiently confident to take the register back to the office with a partner. They are usually eager to explore new learning and make effective relationships with adults and the older children in the class. Children are able to attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and most can put on their coats independently when dressing for outdoors. Most children are able to express their feelings and behave in appropriate ways and are developing an understanding of right and wrong. During a religious education class lesson, where the theme was giving and receiving, children reflected on this and put forward their own ideas of what special gift they would give to a friend at Christmas. They respond appropriately and, in general, show consideration towards each other and are helped to know how to apologise effectively if they upset one another by their actions.

81. Already, the children settle quickly to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy and show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. The satisfactory teaching

and learning, well-established routines and the caring nature of the provision allow all children to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role-models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. However, although the teaching of relationships and interactions is of good quality, the curricular provision is limited. It restricts aspects of their social development and also impinges on the breadth of other areas of learning to a lesser degree but, in particular, on the children's creative development. Although there is a good range of resources available, the children are not provided with sufficient time to choose activities for themselves, initiate their own ideas and develop their independence in pursuing an activity. This reduces progress in effective co-operation with others and in their abilities to work and play collaboratively.

Communication, language and literacy

82. On entry to the Reception class, the attainment of children in communication, language and literacy is generally average. They make sound progress and most are on course to achieve the recommended Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned well, but all children, even the youngest children who attend part-time, are expected to work within the structure of the literacy hour. Although the group work in general is planned to meet their needs, the opportunity to take part in role-play and free play is limited. However, their language and communication develop appropriately when children work with adults. All adults use talk to good effect and are good active listeners. Throughout all the areas of learning, both the Reception teacher and helpers talk to the children, individually and in groups, to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating.

83. Most children sustain attentive listening and participate appropriately in discussions. The children enjoy listening to stories and experiment with words and text when, for example, listening to the story of 'Handa's Surprise', they attempt to predict the word hidden by the teacher. By the time they enter Year 1, they begin to hear and say initial and final sounds in simple words such as 'pin, tin and bin' and 'have a go' at writing phonetically plausible sentences. For example, when writing a sentence to contain the three letter words they had put forward, one child wrote, 'The bin was fow (full)'. Most children learn to write their own name independently and are taught to join their letters from an early age. The children are fascinated by the illustrations in books and most know that the print tells them what the story is about. They show appropriate book handling skills and, by the end of Reception, understand the concept of a word. The shared partnership with parents for reading has a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Paired reading with pupils from Year 6 at lunchtimes provides a very good opportunity for promoting interest in reading. The Year 6 pupils are attentive, talk to the younger children and discuss the pictures in the books.

84. Support staff are used effectively in small group situations when direct teaching is involved. This helps to develop the children's knowledge of letter names and sounds and to form their letters correctly when writing. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the youngest children to interact with adults when they have the opportunity to take part in role-play. This is made difficult by having to provide for the needs of all children in this class as time for suitable interaction with the youngest children has to be shared with the needs of the older children.

Mathematical development

85. Attainment and progress in mathematics for children in the Reception class are satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good, and the teacher's methods, by and large, are appropriate to develop learning. Most children can copy write their numbers and a few are able to

record their numbers unaided. They can mostly count up to five accurately, with some older children counting up to 15. They use simple mathematical language and gain experience of basic activities underlying the development of mathematical concepts such as volume and capacity through the opportunity to play with the sand and water. The more formal activities for mathematics are introduced to the children through the framework for teaching numeracy, but, occasionally, opportunities to provide suitable practical activities for the youngest children to explore are missed. Children learn to use everyday words to describe time, such as 'yesterday', 'to-day' and 'to-morrow'. Older children order the days of the week and, together the class teacher, complete a block graph on the computer to show how many children were born on each day. The task of finding which day they were born on was given as a homework activity. Many children name the simple shapes of triangle, circle and square and recreate a repeating pattern with beads and when printing with different objects. Whilst direct teaching of mathematics is carefully done, the work planned for the younger children is not always appropriate in terms of providing a range of daily experiences for them to develop their own mathematical ideas and devise methods to solve practical problems.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Children enter the Reception class with a basic general knowledge, which the teacher builds on well to help them know more about the world around them. Teaching and learning in this area of development are, in general, good and most children are well on course to achieve the appropriate standard by the time they enter Year 1. Good use is made of the local environment to provide children with a variety of experiences. Children learn more about their own locality and the people who live and work there. For instance, they visit the local post office to take their letters for Father Christmas and find out how the letters are sorted. Elderly residents from the village and relatives of the children are invited into the classroom to talk about their lives when they were young. During the week of the inspection, a grandmother of one of the children was invited in to talk and answer questions about the work of 'lamplighters' in the past. In their scientific work, they carry out an investigation and find out from a variety of materials, such as paper, card, plastic and cereal boxes, which are the strongest.

87. Good teaching in the information and communication technology suite enables all children to achieve well. They use the computer with confidence and already the youngest children control the mouse well to click and drag images on the screen in order to dress teddy. Discussion forms an important part of the work and children are encouraged to be observant and to describe what they see. Tasks are supervised by staff, which enables them to instruct children and develop specific skills, such as how to handle scissors correctly and how to cut out. An appropriate range of construction toys and materials is provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. The children are introduced to a suitable range of cultures and religions. For example, they gain an awareness of their own and the beliefs of others by celebrating festivals such as Christmas, Divali and the Chinese New Year.

Physical development.

88. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to achieve appropriate standards in their physical development. When outdoors in the large playground, the children enjoy the freedom of large-scale movement, such as running energetically, and improve their co-ordination and control when riding on tricycles, balancing on bucket stilts and, when the weather is fine, using the clambering equipment. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was noted that there were insufficient opportunities for children to develop physically through the use of large wheeled toys and appropriate play equipment. However, these opportunities are more an activity that takes place only at playtime rather than an activity that is planned for and on offer during a free choice time. The children's own designated play area does not lend itself well to this, as it is small, has no covered or

sheltered area and is dull and unattractive. Indoors, in their physical education lessons the youngest children are fully integrated and perform well. They listen carefully and follow instructions well. The teaching and learning are generally good in this area. Good involvement by the teacher gives them useful models to follow, and they all participate with enjoyment. The children skip round the hall confidently on their own and with a partner and can hold various items on different parts of the body while they walk and lie down. Fine movements involving hand control are developing well. Children try hard to control their pencil when writing and most are achieving a joined handwriting style by the time they enter Year 1. They make good attempts at cutting out and use pastels and paintbrushes carefully during art sessions.

Creative development

89. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in creative development and children achieve appropriately in most aspects of this area of learning. However, there are weaknesses in the curricular provision with too few opportunities for children to choose from a range of activities. This limits their independence to choose and initiate ideas of their own and to explore imaginatively, for example, through role-play, and holds back their creative development. However, when children are given the opportunity they engage with delight in dressing up and acting out the role of such characters as air stewards in the 'aeroplane' play area. In their art activities, the children use colours well in their paintings and pastel pictures of such subjects as the fruit in Handa's basket, print with different objects and explore what happens when they mix colours. Particularly impressive, is their work in the style of Jackson Pollock, based on the theme of his painting 'Yellow Islands'. This was also used effectively to stimulate the children's work in information and communication technology, when they used a paint program to produce pictures in the same style. Although no music was observed during the inspection, the children know a variety of nursery rhymes and action songs, which they sing tunefully from memory. They enjoy singing and, once they attend school full-time, have the opportunity to join in with the music lessons taken by the music co-ordinator. The classroom is attractively displayed with work completed by the children that shows that their work is valued.

ENGLISH

90. Overall, standards in English are above average for seven and 11 year olds, but those in writing are average in Year 6. This represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection when all aspects of English were judged to be in line with national averages. The findings of this inspection generally reflect the results of the 2000 national tests which showed that, although overall standards were high in reading, in writing no pupil achieved the higher Level 5. Over the past four years, standards have risen steadily in Year 2, whilst in Year 6 there has been a considerable rise in standards. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results in the national tests in 2000 were average in reading and above average in writing at Year 2, and at Year 6, pupils' results were well above average. The school easily exceeded its target for the percentage of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and above in the national tests, although no pupil reached the higher Level 5 in writing. The school had identified pupils' writing as an area for development, and, in Key Stage 1, this is already having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' written work.

91. All pupils achieve well in English as they move through the school, although standards in handwriting and spelling in Key Stage 2 are relatively weak. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment, especially when they receive well-targeted support, both in class and when working in groups withdrawn from the class. The Additional Literacy programme in Years 3 and 4 supports their needs well. This inspection finds no significance difference in the performance of boys and girls.

92. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are above average. Most pupils enter the school with average communication, language and literacy skills. Effective teaching enables them to make good progress. Pupils enjoy listening to and talking about stories and information books, as was evident when Year 2 pupils discussed the book 'From Egg to Chicken'. All pupils listened very attentively and were aware of the importance of taking turns and valuing the contributions of others. Most pupils spoke confidently, included relevant detail when replying to questions asked by the class teacher and made suitable comments about the labelled diagrams produced by other pupils in the class.

93. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to be active and responsive listeners. In class, they listen thoughtfully and show good respect for the views of others. Many pupils, both boys and girls, express their ideas confidently and fluently, respond precisely to the point being made and use a well-developed vocabulary and complex sentences. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when a significant minority of boys showed poor listening skills, and lacked the confidence to speak clearly to adults. In Years 5 and 6 for instance, pupils were giving their opinions and evaluating the layout, usefulness and clarity of a leaflet for the nearby Lakeside Shopping Centre. The discussion was very well led by the teacher, who encouraged all pupils to participate and extend their ideas thoughtfully. Most of the pupils conveyed their opinions clearly, and contributed reasoned, evaluative comments to the discussion.

94. Standards in reading are above average throughout the school, with a significant percentage of pupils in Year 6 achieving well above average standards. Pupils' obvious enjoyment of books is a strength of their learning. At all ages, they read willingly with adults, and older pupils take great pleasure in reading stories to the younger ones during the lunchtime break. In Key Stage 1, pupils handle books confidently and take them home regularly to practise their skills. They read simple texts accurately with understanding, and employ a number of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. The ability of both average and below average pupils to hear, identify and blend phonemes in words is good. The more able pupils read confidently and with good expression, and have strong views about their likes and dislikes in the books they read, and of the authors who write them.

95. Pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for, books develop well through Key Stage 2. By Year 6, they read with fluency and accuracy, and evaluate the texts with growing competence. Many give a concise summary of events and discuss characters in detail. They read challenging text well, such as that drawn from 'Jane Eyre', and in their responses to questions, they identify key features and select the relevant phrases and information to support their views. Pupils' research and referencing skills are appropriately developed as they get older, and most are familiar with the Dewey system of classification.

96. Standards in writing are above average in Key Stage 1, but average in Key Stage 2. These differences are, in the main, due to the strong focus the school has placed on developing the writing skills of the younger pupils, which contrasts with the relatively weak hand writing and spelling skills of the older pupils. Nearly all pupils in Year 2 have a sound awareness of the structure of a story, and most can write a description of a length appropriate for their age as seen in their 'books' entitled 'The pig in the pond'. A few more able pupils use a broad vocabulary, write for a wide range of purposes and develop their imaginative ideas particularly well through writing poetry. This was well illustrated in their poems on the theme of a recipe for Gran, when a child wrote,

'To make a lovely Gran you mix,
A shower of kisses
A bath of hugs
A bucketful of presents
A cup of smiles

A jug of wrinkles
A smell of perfume
A cupful of surprises
A bowl of lipstick
Mix them up for a lovely Gran.'

97. Handwriting Key Stage 1 is joined and legible, and pupils' accuracy in spelling and punctuation is generally average.

98. In Year 6, pupils write in a wide range of forms including diaries, newspaper reports, poetry, play scripts and letters, and have the ability to construct an effective argument against capital punishment. Their best writing shows a good command of style and expression. Most pupils organise their writing well, paying attention to the sequence of paragraphs and use appropriate connectives to link one paragraph to the next. Strengths of older pupils' learning in English are the imaginative descriptions in their writing, and their adventurous choice of words used for effect. For example, when writing a letter to the Information Service asking for their help to identify an amazing creature, their descriptions were vivid and original. One Year 6 pupil wrote, '*if you look very carefully at it you will see that the fair wings which are placed on its back change from silver to turquoise extremely slowly in a mystifying manner*'. Pupils in Key Stage 2 plan, draft and develop their ideas on paper and a few more able pupils present a neat and correct final copy. For many, however, their weak handwriting and spelling mean that, overall, the presentation of their work is untidy. Throughout the school, standards in literacy are good. However, as in English, the presentation of pupils' written work across the curriculum in Years 3 to 6, is generally weaker.

99. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good throughout the school. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when a quarter of the lessons seen were less than satisfactory and often poor. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils, that create a positive climate for learning and enable pupils to enjoy their work within clear guidelines. Language has a high profile in the school, and teachers reinforce this well in class by emphasising precise terms so that pupils become familiar with, and understand, words such as antonyms, syllables, alliteration and phonemes from an early age. Teachers' good subject knowledge is also evident in their clear and lively presentations, and confident management of the literacy hour. These qualities ensure a brisk pace, and almost never fail to grab pupils' interest and attention. However, in Key Stage 2, teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' written work are not of the same high standard, and pupils do not learn well enough that the quality of their writing is important. Strengths in the teaching and learning of English across the school were well illustrated in a Year 5/6 lesson, in which the teacher introduced pupils to the style of instructional text by using leaflets from the Lakeside Shopping Centre for them to evaluate. Pupils were very involved, and, by effective questioning, the teacher enabled them to explore the leaflet and focused their attention on the detail and success, or otherwise, of the information provided. The teacher brought her own experiences to the lesson, and this, together with her enthusiasm for the subject, made the lesson stimulating, meaningful and enjoyable. Pupils made very good gains in their understanding of how to comment critically on the language, style and success of the leaflet. This was the result of detailed planning, well-structured teaching and the high level of challenge set. In Years 1/2, there is a good focus on linking all three elements of English in literacy lessons to improve pupils' skills. For instance, when sharing the book, 'From Egg to Chicken' the teacher made very good use of pupils to share in the reading of the text. She involved them fully in a lively discussion, and explained how to improve their writing by making better use of language such as 'later on' and 'after that' to describe the passage of time. Overall, teachers' expectations are sufficiently high to promote good progress for pupils of all abilities.

100. Teachers use the plenary session well to assess pupils' progress. This is made more effective by referring back to the aims of the lesson which teachers share with pupils at the start. By asking questions such as "What did we set out to learn? Who thinks they know that now, and who isn't sure yet?" teachers are able to judge the effectiveness of lessons, and revisit work that pupils find hard.

101. The curriculum in English fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented effectively, and the well-documented policies, including those for speaking and listening and reading, support teaching and learning well. Assessment procedures are good, and pupils have appropriate targets in literacy to motivate them and give them responsibility for their own learning. Information and communication technology is generally under-used to support teaching and learning in English. Otherwise, teachers make sound use of literacy in other subjects, particularly when developing the pupils' research skills in history and geography. The responsibility for the co-ordination of the subject is effectively shared between the headteacher and a class teacher. This works very well, and ensures all issues facing the subject are addressed promptly. Samples of pupils' work have been monitored and all teachers have been observed teaching literacy. Classroom assistants are very well deployed, and provide effective support to both teachers and pupils during the literacy hour. Resources in English are generally good. However, the library is difficult for pupils to use during lesson times, and does not allow for 'browsing' by the older pupils as it is situated in the classroom of the youngest pupils.

MATHEMATICS

102. The findings of this inspection show that pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in numeracy and all other areas of the mathematics curriculum. This finding shows a good improvement compared with the average standards noted in the previous inspection report. The results of the national end of key stage tests in 2000 show that, compared with all schools and similar schools, standards were well above average, and all pupils attained at least the nationally expected level. These results were a good improvement on earlier years when the school's results were well below average compared with all schools and similar schools. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 1 from their average standards on entry in order to attain these good standards. This particular group of pupils, however, is not achieving as highly as last year's pupils because there are more Year 2 pupils on the special educational needs register this year.

103. In Year 6, standards are well above average. The results of the national end of key stage tests in 2000 confirm this judgement, and show that, compared with all schools and similar schools, standards in Year 6 were well above average. Analysis of the school's results for the Year 6 national tests have shown continued improvement since 1997, and at a greater rate than that found nationally. However, the school has continued to set challenging targets, and the good improvement made is shown by the way pupils exceeded their numeracy targets at both key stages last year. The standards achieved in Year 6 are a very good improvement compared to the last inspection when attainment was judged to be broadly average. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls this year, although, in the past, girls fared better. The school has done a good job in raising boys' attainment by introducing more practical work in lessons to motivate them. Progress, including that for pupils with special educational needs, is very good in Key Stage 2, as is shown by the analysis of pupils' results in the Year 6 tests compared with those they achieved in Year 2.

104. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good, as it was in the previous OFSTED inspection, and accounts for pupils' good progress. In lessons, consistently good quality teaching was observed. Consequently, nearly all Year 2 pupils are at least working at suitable levels, and a significant number are exceeding these standards. They use their mathematical skills well,

selecting which operation to use, and explaining simple processes using words such as ‘halving’ and ‘doubling’ appropriately. Pupils are quick in their mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten, and order numbers correctly up to 100 and beyond. Teachers are well organised, with resources ready for use, and support staff aware of what they are required to do. Teachers maintain very good control of the pupils, with a friendly but firm atmosphere within the classroom. They praise pupils who, for example, get ready for work quickly, and this makes others rush to do the same. Teachers are particularly good at directing questions at specific ability groups of pupils, and this ensures that all are constantly involved in the lesson. Pupils respond well to this method; it encourages them to be attentive and gives them confidence to attempt to explain their mental strategies. Pupils solve simple money problems easily, are beginning to use centimetres to measure length and tell the time, when on the hour or half-hour. Teachers make good use of open-ended questioning, and this enables pupils to reflect and think for themselves. In one lesson, for example, the teacher asked “What could we do to tell whether a number is odd or even?” and pupils responded quickly with two different ways. Work is well planned to match the needs of pupils with varying abilities, and this explains why those with special educational needs develop sound basic numeracy skills, whilst higher achieving pupils move on to develop a deeper understanding of mathematics.

105. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is very good, and promotes rapid progress. There has been a very good improvement in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. Previously it was judged to be inconsistent, and ‘just satisfactory’, with some weak control of pupils in Years 3 and 4. It is never less than satisfactory now, and, on occasions, it is very good or excellent. Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the subject are very good, and this is evident by the very good methods employed and the skilful way basic skills are taught. Consequently, pupils in Year 6 are quick to grasp new work, and enjoy their mathematics. They use efficient written methods for computation, and nearly all pupils do long multiplication and division sums easily and accurately. In the best lessons, the teacher uses quick-fire questioning about multiplication tables, or number bonds to one hundred, to start lessons, and this explains why pupils are so adept at mental mathematics. Occasionally, however, the start of lessons is pedestrian, and pupils lose their way. Otherwise, teachers’ planning is very good, and includes comprehensive information about the use of teaching assistants, resources and homework. The ability sets work very well, and ensure that the work provides the right level of challenge to meet all pupils’ needs. Within the class, there is further grouping, and this enables the teacher to extend high achieving pupils by requiring them to investigate complex number patterns, for example, whilst the teacher helps lower achieving pupils understand more basic ones. Pupils with special educational needs are sometimes withdrawn by the co-ordinator for special educational needs for work to support that started in class, and pupils make good progress in these sessions. This teacher is particularly skilled at reinforcing concepts by regular practice, and making mathematics seem ‘real’ to pupils. When explaining how to check whether an answer seemed right, for example, the teacher asked “..but if I had 42 sweets, and you gave me 16 of yours, would I really have 26 left?”, and this helped the pupil understand the sum much better.

106. The teaching of shape and measure is equally good, and is enhanced by extensive use of practical work. In this way, pupils develop a very good understanding of solid shapes, by making their own, and learning how important it is to measure sides and angles accurately. This also helps pupils gain a good grasp of area, by cutting out centimetre squares, and of quadrilaterals in four quadrants, by rotating card shapes through positive and negative fields. The pace of lessons is nearly always brisk, and teachers constantly remind pupils of time limits. This creates a feeling of urgency, and ensures that pupils make the best use of their time.

107. Teachers assess pupils’ progress well, and use this data to plug gaps in their knowledge. When, for example, these assessments found that pupils struggled with probability, and collecting information in frequency charts to construct line graphs, teachers planned extra work in these areas.

As a direct result of this, pupils are confident collecting and using data, produce good graphs of their findings and work out complex problems involving probability, using percentages to describe an even chance.

108. Teachers in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 fully understand the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. Years 1 and 2 pupils play number games with the teacher, counting up in even numbers until the teacher bangs an 'auctioneer's hammer' to stop them. This helps to build up their basic knowledge, and they learn valuable skills, almost without realising that they are working. In Years 3 and 4, pupils take this further by 'bidding' for a chocolate bar in multiples of £100, and soon develop greater confidence with large numbers. By the time pupils are in Years 5 and 6, they benefit from numeracy teaching of a high quality, and use a wide range of skills and knowledge in situations requiring mental agility. They count briskly in multiples of six, seven and eight, for example, and fire back the answer to 6×7 immediately.

109. The improvements, which the school has made since the last inspection, are having a positive effect on attainment throughout the school and particularly in Key Stage 2. A very able co-ordinator, who clearly understands what is required to maintain high standards, manages and monitors the subject very well. Strengths include the setting arrangements, the range and use of the assessment procedures, the individual targets set for pupils, the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching numeracy skills and the clear education plans for pupils with special educational needs. In addition, mathematics is used well across the curriculum. For example, graphs and measurement are used in science, when Year 5 pupils plot their changing pulse rates, and in geography to chart rainfall in different countries. There is a good range of resources overall, but too little use is made of computers to support pupils' learning in mathematics, because the school lacks sufficient programs. The teaching of the subject meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

110. Standards in Year 2 are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Standards were above average in the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 teachers' assessments, but there is little evidence of pupils currently in this class achieving the higher National Curriculum Level 3. Boys and girls attain equally well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, and they are making good progress in their grasp of scientific concepts.

111. Standards in Year 6 are above average, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. In the latest national tests, standards in Year 6 were very high compared with schools nationally, and with similar schools. Standards have risen consistently since 1997. Boys and girls attain equally well. Standards in the current Year 6, though above average, do not reflect these very high standards, as the weak writing skills of many pupils hinder their recording of investigations. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support, and make good progress.

112. It was not possible to observe any science lessons in Key Stage 1, but an analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and discussions with some pupils, indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is promoting good progress from Reception to Year 2. The last inspection judged teaching to be satisfactory. The pupils know that some materials occur naturally, whilst others are man made. They investigate clearly the characteristics and uses of different materials, such as wool, wood, clay and paper. They have a good understanding of why they should eat a balanced diet of healthy foods, and they have made good use of their mathematical skills in producing simple bar charts of their favourite foods. The teachers place an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry, which is illustrated by Year 1 pupils, who have investigated the strength of different materials, and, in work related to design and technology, they

have built bridges out of paper and card and tested them. The pupils understand that light comes from a variety of natural and man made sources, including the sun, moon, torches and candles.

113. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is good, and is promoting good progress. The previous inspection judged teaching to be satisfactory and often good. A Year 5/6 lesson illustrated many of the characteristics of good science teaching. There was a good balance between direct teaching and practical activity, in the form of an investigation, inside and outside the classroom, into pulse rates after exercise. The teacher made good use of large cards designed by the local science advisory team to develop the pupils' ability to plan and record the investigation systematically. She encouraged the pupils to make the tests fair, and to predict outcomes. She taught the difference between a prediction and a hypothesis clearly, and expected more able pupils to develop more detailed hypotheses. The classroom assistant offered good support, which helped pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.

114. The handwriting and spelling of many pupils are weak, however, and hinder accurate recording. There is usually a good focus on the skills of scientific enquiry, as was illustrated in a Year 3/4 lesson, when the pupils investigated what happens when extra light bulbs are used in an electrical circuit. Pupils were given sufficient information, but were encouraged to explore for themselves what happens when you alter variables in an experiment. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that they have a good understanding of the water cycle. They have investigated evaporation rates in and out of the classroom. Most of the pupils have a good knowledge of the location and functions of the major organs of the human body, and have conducted good investigations of how muscles work. They understand clearly the differing characteristics of solids, liquids and gases.

115. There is a good subject policy, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is soundly based on national guidelines, on a two-year cycle. Management of the subject has improved since the last inspection. In addition to monitoring planning and samples of pupils' work, the co-ordinator has now observed science teaching, with a view to sharing good practice. He has led some staff training on the development of enquiry skills. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and information from assessment is used effectively to plan future work. The quality of marking, however, is variable. There are examples of good marking which seeks to help the pupils to improve, and includes comments such as "Why are the pins made of metal?" and "How will you turn the switch on and off?". Too often, however, pupils' weak recording, and untidy work are left unchallenged. There are adequate resources to support learning, and these are easily accessible in a central storeroom. Learning is enhanced by a small wild area in the school grounds and by visits to local country parks. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to collaborate responsibly during practical investigations. They have planted trees in the school grounds and are made aware of the need for environmental conservation and recycling.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Standards of art are above average in Year 2, and higher than the average standards reported in the previous OFSTED inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 1, learning how to mix colours, and how best to achieve different effects using brushes. They move on to more adventurous activities as their skills improve, and produce effective prints by creating string outlines of fruit, painting the surface, and pressing them on to paper. They extend this three-dimensional side to their work well by designing 'springy mouths' of card, which stand proud from the frame. Pupils use computer-design programs well to make interesting patterns on the screen, and change the colours to alter the effect.

117. Standards in Year 6 are above average, and show a very good improvement from the below average work seen in the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in the Key Stage 2, and their observational drawing is a particular strength, with many of them, including those with special educational needs, producing work of high quality when drawing shoes. Their painting skills are very well developed, and their work in the style of Van Gough is excellent in the way it captures the mood, colour and texture of his paintings.

118. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but it is clear from pupils' work that the quality of teaching and learning is good, and significantly better than before. Pupils' folders of work, their sketch-books and the displays on the walls show that teachers provide a broad and stimulating curriculum, and have high expectations of pupils. There is a clear emphasis on the need to work carefully, without compromising pupils' creativity. Consequently, we see vivid colours, great varieties of textures and meticulous attention to detail. Pupils are just as happy using inks, paints, colour wash, clay or computers to express their feelings and demonstrate their skills.

119. The new co-ordinator is well qualified, and is keen to raise standards further. She has observed some lessons already, and has brought examples of work from her previous school to give teachers ideas. Her inventory of resources has shown that the school is well-stocked with textured paper, paint, clay and printing equipment. The scheme of work is basic, but the school is dipping into that produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and this is providing a broad curriculum, and lots of ideas.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. In both key stages, boys and girls attain equally well, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress, with well-targeted support.

121. The quality of teaching and learning in the one lesson in Key Stage 1 observed was good and this promoted a good rate of progress. The teacher made effective links with art and design and religious education, and clearly demonstrated brush techniques for securing the desired effect in the patterns which the pupils were painting on their clay thumb pots to celebrate Divali. He encouraged Year 1 pupils to work independently, whilst focusing on a small group of Reception children. With these, the teacher clearly demonstrated the technique of rolling wax paper and this helped the children produce some sound candles, complete with string wick, in work linked to a scientific topic on light. An analysis of display work and of photographs indicates that the pupils have learnt something of how levers work and how scissors and staplers use the principle. They have made some effective moving whales and 'springy' mouths, using paper and glue. They have also participated in some food technology, mixing flour, butter and eggs to make 'special' biscuits.

122. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, and this promotes a sound rate of progress. The previous inspection found some teaching here to be unsatisfactory, as a result of lack of adequate class control and over-direction by the teacher. All teaching this time was at least satisfactory, and teachers are far better now at managing pupils' behaviour. In a Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher made sure that the pupils could recollect their design briefs and the stages which they had gone through in making some effective shelters out of wood and other materials. She emphasised the need to think about the purpose of the shelters; in this case, for children to use at playtime, or for parents to use while waiting to collect their children. The teacher encouraged the pupils to evaluate their finished product, and to suggest ways in which it might be improved: "Are you pleased with it? Why are you going to change the roof?" She stressed that products need to look 'aesthetically' pleasing, and this had a good impact on the way in which some pupils moved on to decorating wooden

picture frames which they were constructing. Due attention was paid to safety, with only the teacher and classroom assistant using the glue guns. The pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson, although most found sawing a difficult technique. In a Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher also encouraged the pupils to think of ways of improving their work, and this helped them in their sewing of different fabrics to make satisfactory money containers. The hardest technique here for the pupils was threading the needles.

123. The management of the subject has improved since the previous inspection, when there was no subject co-ordinator, no scheme of work and unsatisfactory planning. The headteacher is currently responsible for managing the subject. She has drawn up an appropriate action plan to secure further improvement, and has monitored planning and teaching. A draft policy, which awaits the governors' approval, meets National Curriculum requirements. There is now a good scheme of work and planning on a two-year cycle is soundly based on national guidelines. There are adequate resources to support learning. Through encouraging collaborative work whenever appropriate, and in creating products to be given as presents to parents or others, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

GEOGRAPHY

124. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average. This judgement is based on lesson observations in Years 1 and 2, an analysis of pupils' work throughout the school and discussions with some pupils. The previous inspection found that attainment was below average, as insufficient geography was taught. This issue has been addressed, and time spent on the subject now meets national averages. Pupils achieve reasonable standards, given their average starting points, and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

125. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The previous inspection found that teaching across the school was variable, with inadequate class control in some lessons. In a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher combined geography effectively with road safety, taking the pupils outside and focusing on the Green Cross Code. She used questioning well, in order to make the pupils think carefully about the potential danger of traffic near the school: "Why is it important that no one parks outside our school?" An analysis of pupils' work indicates that they are making satisfactory progress in the development of their early mapping skills. They have drawn simple pictorial maps of their routes to school. Pupils know the four cardinal points of the compass. They have used their mathematical skills well to record a traffic survey on a tally sheet and to construct a simple class bar chart of passing vehicles. A strength of the teaching, as with history, is the use the teachers make of visitors to enhance the pupils' learning. Following the visit of an air stewardess, the Reception and Year 1 pupils had the opportunity, during the inspection, of listening to a visiting police officer. They were fascinated by the specialist clothing and equipment, and were particularly taken with the radio communication with Chelmsford police station. The teacher encouraged the pupils to ask questions, and they responded well to this. He made good use of role-play to help the pupils understand the helping role of the police.

126. It was not possible to observe any geography lessons in Key Stage 2, but an analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The pupils know about aspects of the geography of Pakistan, as an example of an economically developing country. They use their literacy skills to describe differences between schools there and here, although some of this work is untidily presented and often spoilt by weak spelling and handwriting. The pupils understand how water supply in the arid regions of Pakistan is often difficult. The teachers place an appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' research skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have done individual research into countries of their choice, including Australia, Canada and

Egypt. However, there is too little evidence of information and communication technology being used to enhance this research or to record findings.

127. The management of the subject has improved. The previous inspection found that there was no co-ordinator for geography. As there was only a very basic scheme of work, planning did not ensure full coverage of the programmes of study. The headteacher is currently co-ordinator for the subject, and she has monitored planning and teaching. A draft policy, which awaits the governors' approval, meets National Curriculum requirements. Planning is now soundly based on guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and a two-year cycle meets the needs of the mixed-age classes. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, and the results of these assessments are used soundly to plan future work. The headteacher is keen to raise standards in geography further. To this end, she has developed an appropriate action plan.

128. Resources to support learning are adequate, and the teachers make sound use of local fieldwork and visits further afield, to places such as Basildon, to enhance learning. In raising awareness of different cultures and environmental issues and in encouraging collaborative work where necessary, the subject contributes positively to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HISTORY

129. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. This judgement is based on the observation of one lesson in each key stage, on an analysis of pupils' work and on discussions with some of them. Boys and girls attain equally, and pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Pupils enter Year 1 with average levels of understanding, and all groups of pupils achieve standards in line with their abilities.

130. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. A strength of the teaching is the use of visitors to stimulate interest and make learning more real for the pupils. In the lesson observed, one pupil's grandmother helped the others to understand how aspects of life, such as street lighting, have changed over time. The teacher encouraged the pupils to ask questions, and they learned much about the past as a result. The pupils have observed household items from the past, and have learned much about how objects have changed since Victorian times.

131. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is good, which is an improvement on satisfactory teaching of the previous inspection. The lesson observed was planned carefully, and the teacher made good use of Victorian toys to enhance the pupils' learning about a Victorian childhood. The teacher made useful references to a recent visit which the pupils had made to the Colne Valley Railway. She encouraged careful observation of items by asking questions such as "Why were lots of toys made of wood?" This helped the pupils to appreciate that materials such as plastic are a relatively new invention. The pupils have a sound understanding of everyday Victorian life and of the role of children then. The teacher used drama and role-play very effectively to bring out differences in the way in which children were treated then compared with modern times. The pupils enjoyed participating in this activity. The teacher used questioning well to make the pupils think carefully about their roles: "If I say you are going to be a Victorian family, what will I be looking for?" An analysis of pupils' work shows that they have used their literacy skills to some effect in writing in the roles of a Victorian pickpocket, a maid and a rich child. They have used their research skills well to find out more about the contrasts in life in the nineteenth century for rich and poor people. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are familiar with a Roman timeline. They know why the Romans invaded Britain and about

events such as Boudicca's rebellion. Presentation of work, however, is often unsatisfactory, and pupils often take too little care with their spelling.

132. The co-ordinator has made a sound start to managing the subject, and has recently conducted a useful audit of resources for learning. These are generally adequate, and are supplemented by worthwhile visits and by visitors. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor history teaching, with a view to sharing good practice. Planning is soundly based on national guidelines in Key Stage 2, and on a commercial scheme in Key Stage 1. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment, and information from assessment is used soundly to plan future work. In making the pupils aware of past cultures and in encouraging collaborative research skills, the subject is making a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

133. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology in Year 2 are average, and better than the below average standards reported in the previous OFSTED inspection. The opening of the new computer suite is having a good effect on pupils' skills and confidence, and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make sound progress with regular practice. Pupils in Year 2 have an average understanding of how to turn on the computer, locate their program and input their text. They use the space bar confidently, and change the case of their letters with average skill.

134. By Year 6, whilst pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is below average, it is better than the poor standards at the time of the previous inspection, and shows a good improvement in the few weeks the computer suite has been in use. Their keyboard skills, however, are slow, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 still have to search for the shift and caps lock keys. They have basic word-processing skills, and change the size and appearance of text with reasonable confidence, but are only just learning how to 'cut and paste' text. They have had little experience with operating a floor robot, or using spreadsheets or databases. The school has no facilities to monitor changes in materials, and few programs to develop pupils' decision-making skills using simulations or adventure programs. Pupils are starting to use the Internet for research, but have done this too rarely to be confident.

135. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Teachers make good use of the computer suite to introduce new concepts, and give pupils a speedy chance to put their new learning into practice. Sometimes, teachers make the most of the time in the suite by starting lessons in the classroom, reminding pupils of what they have learned so far, and preparing them for the lesson ahead. This works well, and means that, as soon as they enter the suite, they can begin working on computers. In this way, one teacher prepared Years 1 and 2 pupils in the classroom by explaining about how to select icons on the screen. Once they were sitting by a computer, all were then confident to locate the symbol representing a rectangle, choose where on the screen they wanted the shape and 'flood' it with colour.

136. In Years 3 to 6, pupils fall behind others of their ages, not just because of the shortage of resources, but also because of the variations in teachers' knowledge. This was the case at the time of the previous OFSTED inspection, and the school has been unfortunate to have provided training for teachers who have then left. This means that topics within the National Curriculum for information and communication technology have to be picked out to match the confidence of the teachers. Within these limitations, the lessons work well enough, and pupils are beginning to catch up with their peers, but these improvements have come too late for those in Year 6. These pupils have been disadvantaged in the past by having a variety of temporary teachers, whose own competence in information and communication technology has been mixed. Consequently, in the lesson seen with this

group, they were still learning how to select images from the screen, cut sections of them and paste elsewhere on their picture. The skills were taught well by the teacher, and pupils made good progress, but these were processes appropriate to younger pupils.

137. Teachers make some use of computers to support the learning in other subjects, and this certainly helps pupils' art work as they make their own versions of Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers'. In Key Stage 1, pupils follow up their counting and sorting activities by sorting shapes on computers, but, overall, the school has too few programs for the new computers to make full use of them.

138. The school is aware of the problems with information and communication technology, and has the development of the subject as a priority in the school improvement plan. In an effort to improve teachers' knowledge, the school has arranged further training starting in January. The co-ordinator has monitored some teaching in the computer suite, and has introduced the elements of the scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority that the school's human and physical resources can manage. There is no whole-school assessment system, and this further restricts the systematic building of skills. In view of the restrictions placed by the lack of monitoring equipment, the gaps in teachers' knowledge and the shortage of appropriate software to develop pupils' modelling skills, the subject does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

139. Overall, pupils attain average standards in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. They sing, perform, compose and listen to and appraise music satisfactorily. These judgements are similar to those made in the previous inspection report. In assemblies, they sing with enthusiasm, a good sense of pitch and melody and of rhythm. Pupils use tuned and untuned instruments to make beat and rhythm to accompany the singing. A music specialist, recently employed by the school, teaches music to all pupils in the school and further enhances the provision for pupils by providing the tuition for recorders and leading the choir. Fifteen pupils who receive specialist tuition are familiar with conventional notation, although there is little evidence of any achievement in graphic notation. All pupils enjoy their music making activities and participate with enthusiasm. They make good progress in lessons and achieve well, because much of the work is carried out by the music specialist. Consequently, the pupils receive well-targeted specialist support that has a positive effect on their learning.

140. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The music specialist has very good subject knowledge, which she uses well to challenge and extend pupils' creative learning through imaginative teaching. She stimulates pupils' ideas through good open-ended questioning and encourages them to explore and experiment with different musical instruments before deciding which they will use for their group compositions. There is a wide range of attainment in the mixed-age group classes, but, in Year 6, most pupils listen attentively and show good progress in their ability to discern and play beats in differing times when playing a range of percussion and tuned instruments. Pupils learn to improvise rhythmic phrases as part of a group and compose by developing ideas within musical structures. They show good understanding of the sounds made by different musical instruments and how they can be used effectively for their own compositions, as observed when pupils in the Year 3/4 class chose Indian bells and glockenspiels to represent a tropical rainbow.

141. Most pupils learn how to explain their ideas and are provided with appropriate opportunities to appraise each other's performance and are encouraged to do so. The good teaching ensures that pupils are taught a wide range of musical activities and helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress. However, in all classes there are mixed-age groups and

there is no indication in planning of any increase in challenge for the older year groups in each class. This does not support a steady progression in the pupils' learning within their class lessons, as the two year groups work at the same level. The teacher does, however, plan lessons well to build progressively on the pupils' skills as they move through the school. The quality of learning is often increased because the pupils enjoy music and their interest enables them to make the best use of the good opportunities provided by the music teacher. Her high expectations encourage all pupils to work hard and achieve their best. The opportunity for pupils to participate in school productions, entertain elderly people, sing at local venues and take part in music festivals, enhances their learning and provides them with the experience of performing to an audience.

142. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, as demonstrated by improved behaviour of pupils in music lessons and in the quality of teaching, which was judged to be satisfactory. The music co-ordinator manages the subject effectively, and sets a good example through her enthusiasm and specialist knowledge that she brings to the school. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory, and in general are the responsibility of the music co-ordinator. Although class teachers remain with half of their class when the music co-ordinator teaches pupils, she ensures that all teachers are provided with the appropriate knowledge of pupils' learning in the lessons. Extracurricular recorder clubs, and a choir run by the co-ordinator, enrich the provision for those pupils who choose to attend. A parent helper provides valuable support for the recorder groups. There is a wide range of good quality resources that includes compact disks, tapes, percussion instruments and multi-cultural instruments. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. In Year 2, pupils' work in physical education is average, as it was in the previous OFSTED inspection. Pupils combine running, jumping and walking movements into suitable sequences with appropriate levels of co-ordination. They link movements well on the large apparatus, creating a sequence with a beginning, middle and end. They get out the equipment quickly and safely, respond well to instructions, and are aware of the effects of exercise on their heart and lungs.

144. In Year 6, pupils' work in physical education is above average, and the school has maintained these good standards since the inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have good games skills. They control balls well, and have good hand-eye co-ordination. They run very well, and compete with great success in local cross-country events. Many have good football and netball skills, and older pupils do well in competitive games against other schools. Their dance skills, although average, are the subject of a plan for improvement by the co-ordinator. Nearly all pupils swim well by Year 6, and even the 'non-swimmers' from Years 3 and 4 this year managed to swim 15 metres. In their gymnastics, pupils observe each other's work carefully, and improve their own performance as a result. They have a good understanding of why they need to warm up before exercise, and name the correct muscle groups that are being stretched.

145. It was only possible to observe one physical education lesson during the inspection, but on the basis of this, and pupils' good skills, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good. In the lesson observed in Key Stage 2, the planning was good, and provided a clear structure of warm-up, skills training and their practical application in a competitive game of volley-ball. Pupils were monitored carefully so that the teacher could correct faulty techniques, and illustrate particularly good practice. In this way, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress, particularly in their choice of shots to play and in their control of the ball, and their attainment was well above average by the end.

146. The subject is overseen capably by the headteacher, who has a keen interest in physical education. The school has a good scheme of work, and the curriculum includes appropriate

opportunities for swimming and outdoor adventurous activities. The school has a suitably sized hall, a good hard surfaced playground and a large, flat playing field. A good range of extracurricular sports sessions help to boost standards, especially by the most able pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement is similar to the findings of the school's previous inspection. The teaching is better lower down the school, and as a result, pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress, and in Key Stage 2, they make steady progress. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in all class activities and discussions and, with support and encouragement, make sound progress.

148. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is good, which broadly reflects the judgement of the previous inspection. The analysis of work shows that pupils have a sound understanding of the traditions and festivals important to Christians, and a reasonable grasp of simple aspects of world faiths such as Hinduism, and Judaism. Teachers create a warm and supportive environment for pupils to share their ideas and thoughts openly in an atmosphere of trust, without fear of ridicule. This was shown when Year 1 pupils discussed the presents they would like to give and receive at Christmas. The teacher listened carefully to their replies, and, by asking them questions such as "Why is the gift you are giving special to you?" encouraged the pupils to think about not only receiving gifts at Christmas but also how the 'giving' can be just as important. After talking this over with a friend, one boy said "I would give a gold pound coin, because it is my own to give". In Year 2, a strength of the teaching is the opportunity for meaningful discussion at a level appropriate to the age of the pupils. For instance, after reading the first part of the Christmas story to the class, the teacher asked for a volunteer to sit in the 'hot seat', take on the role of Mary and think about how she would have felt when the Angel Gabriel came to tell her she was going to have a baby. Pupils then asked 'Mary' questions such as, "Were you scared?" and "What did the angel look like?" This worked well, as it brought the Christmas story alive, and encouraged the pupils to think about the significance of Mary. The pupils' knowledge was reinforced and made enjoyable with the activity of producing the story in 'cartoon' form after looking through comics to help them appreciate the style of writing.

149. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The analysis of work shows that, by Year 6, pupils have an appropriate insight into the beliefs, festivals, symbols, traditions and literature of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. They have a satisfactory knowledge of stories in the Old and New Testaments in the Bible and can retell the story of Adam and Eve and the Creation. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the importance of the Christian marriage ceremony, and of the symbols associated with the commitment of marriage. Pupils know that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that Hindus worship the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In Years 3 and 4, pupils know about the Hindu festival of Divali, when it is celebrated and talk knowledgeably about what the Festival of Light means. They understand that light represents good, and identify a number of special occasions where light is used to celebrate events and festivals. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class write sensitively about things that are special to them.

150. The strength of the teaching and learning of religious education in the school is the way in which teachers encourage the active participation of pupils in lessons and create an atmosphere of mutual trust. They listen to the pupils and value their comments. A good range of methods is used to promote the pupils' interest and very often links effectively with other subjects of the curriculum. This was seen in the Year 3/4 class when the pupils made Diva lamps, and designed Rangoli patterns. In Years 1 and 2, teachers make good use of drama to help younger pupils re-live and develop an understanding of the significance of stories from the Bible.

151. The curriculum is well planned in accordance with the 'Open Worlds' agreed syllabus. Themes in collective worship reinforce topics covered in religious education effectively, and make an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. They also provide an opportunity to celebrate the pupils' achievements. The school has good links with the local church, and the vicar leads assemblies on a regular basis. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, whose monitoring of classroom teaching and pupils' work supports teaching and learning well. Assessment is linked closely to the agreed syllabus, and is fully integrated into teachers' planning. The school's resources for religious education are adequate, and good use is made of a loan service to supplement the range of artefacts and books. An after school club, 'Harmony', is run by the rector and a member of staff in the local church, to which all pupils are invited. The contribution of religious education to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and provides opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on a range of issues, study some major religions and learn to respect and celebrate cultural diversity.