

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGE'S INFANTS AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114705

Headteacher: Valerie Hollanders

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth - 2700

Dates of inspection: October 30th-November 3rd, 2000

Inspection number: 225072

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infants and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-7 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Barrington Rd.,
Colchester,
Essex

Postcode: CO2 9JJ

Telephone number: 01206 578080

Fax number: 01206 546515

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Rose Halls

Date of previous inspection: 8th July, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	Science; Music; Design and technology; Religious education; Foundation Stage; Equal opportunities.	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?
Susan Cash	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
Patricia Kitley	Team inspector	English; Art; History; English as an additional language.	
David Major	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; Information and communication technology; Physical education; Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Qualitas Education Consultants Ltd.,
Langshaw,
Pastens Rd.,
Limpsfield Chart,
Oxted,
Surrey, RH8 0RE

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The Registrar
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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St George's Infant School and Nursery is situated in a well-established part of Colchester, about a mile from the town centre. It serves an area of privately owned, lower cost terraced housing, housing association properties and a large local authority housing estate, which accounts for a great proportion of children attending the school. There is quite a high turnover of pupils. There are 250 pupils on roll including 52 part-time children who attend the Nursery either morning or afternoon. The school is about average in size for primary schools nationally and the numbers have remained fairly consistent in recent years. The children begin the Foundation Stage usually the term after their third birthday and transfer to the Reception class from the Nursery in the term before their fifth birthday. Approximately one-quarter of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Seven pupils have a language other than English as their first language but all have suitable fluency and understanding of English. Thirty-eight pupils are on the special needs register, of whom 20 are on the later stages, about the national average. Two of these pupils have statements of special educational need. Only a few pupils are from ethnic minority groups. Overall, the attainment on entry is below expectations, particularly in language skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in providing a sound education for its pupils. Standards are in line with expectations for the pupils' ages in most subjects by the end of Key Stage 1. In most subjects, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good and most pupils have good attitudes to their work. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is supportive of staff, pupils and parents. Value for money is sound.

What the school does well

- Attainment in mathematics and the use of literacy across the curriculum and standards in observational art work;
- The good level of care for children, effected by the strong leadership of the headteacher; each child is valued and grows in self-confidence;
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and their respect for one another;
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good;
- Links with parents and the community and communication with them;
- The work of the Governing Body;
- The provision for special needs pupils helps them make good progress;
- The lively and stimulating learning environment.

What could be improved

- Pupils' skills in writing and their knowledge of letter sounds and letter blends;
- The amount of time given to the teaching of religious education and the importance attached to the subject;
- The use of assessment information on pupils' understanding when planning future work;
- The balance and use of time for different Key Stage 1 subjects, including the teaching of literacy and numeracy;
- School development planning;
- Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality.

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

The school has some major strengths but some aspects of the school's work could be improved with significant benefits for the pupils.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1996. It has made satisfactory progress since that time. Teaching time now complies with minimum recommendations and schemes of work have been developed. Safety arrangements are now satisfactory. Some monitoring of teaching has taken place and there is regular monitoring of work. The work of the Governing Body has improved and is now good. Assessment practice and record keeping have not improved significantly, particularly in English. Standards in geography, music, and design and technology are in line with expectations and not above as reported previously. Standards in writing for children of average ability are not as good. Special needs pupils and those of higher ability often make good progress. The school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E	C	C	B
Writing	D	D	E	D
Mathematics	C	A	C	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
well below average	E

By the end of the Foundation Stage, the end of the Reception Year, about three-quarters of the children manage to attain national expectations, although standards are lower in language-related work than in other areas of learning. In Key Stage 1 pupils' performance in mathematics has been consistently stronger than that in reading and writing, and inspection evidence indicates that the trend is continuing. Writing and spelling standards are weaker elements of English work. The school has met its targets for pupils' attainments in the National Curriculum tests but these have not been set high enough for writing. Pupils of average ability do not achieve to their potential in writing but other pupils make sound progress. Standards of work observed in most subjects are in line with expectations for the pupils' ages in Key Stage 1 but they are below local expectations in religious education because there is not enough teaching of the subject. They are generally in line with expectations in ICT. Pupils attain at above expected standards in their observational work in art.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good overall. There have not been any exclusions. The behaviour policy is implemented effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have good opportunities to develop socially and arrangements for their personal development assist their growing maturity. They have good relationships with one another and with their teachers and this is a particular strength.
Attendance	Attendance is slightly below the national average. Several pupils do not attend on time. The school does not monitor attendance effectively enough.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching observed was almost always satisfactory with some which was good or better. Six per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. 94 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better of which eleven per cent was good and two per cent very good. Arrangements for teaching numeracy and literacy are sound overall but there is not an assurance that pupils carry out worthwhile literacy and numeracy activities daily. The teaching of phonics, letter blends and key words could be more rigorous. The school meets the needs of those pupils on the special educational needs register well and pupils of higher ability are adequately catered for. At times, the pace of work could be faster and more expected when pupils record work. A key positive feature of teaching is the way teachers constantly engage with pupils and work with small groups giving good focused support and usually matching the challenge of new work appropriately to the pupils' prior attainment

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory, but the school does not ensure that sufficient time is allocated to different subjects in Key Stage 1. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for the pupils who have special educational needs and they often make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils whose first language is not English are adequately catered for and their progress is monitored appropriately.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development. It is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. Good arrangements are made for pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and arrangements for their general welfare are good. Child protection procedures are in place and known to staff. Records of pupils' progress are not consistently of a high enough standard and important elements of work are not recorded systematically such as pupils' letter and word knowledge.

The school has good links with its parents and the parents think well of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the staff. The work of subject co-ordinators does not focus on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body fulfils nearly all its statutory responsibilities and is well organised but it should ensure that the school fulfils its obligation to provide a daily act of collective worship. The Governing Body is very supportive of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is improving the ways it evaluates pupils' performance and is setting individual pupil targets to improve the standard of their performance. Evaluation of teaching is at an early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	The school has good systems in place to set and monitor the budget but it does not effectively prioritise its spending on educational equipment and books. The school operates sound principles to obtain best value.

The school has adequate levels of staff, and accommodation is satisfactory. Sometimes classes sit closely together in neighbouring teaching bays and this can be distracting for the pupils when trying to listen to their own teacher. Levels of books and equipment are satisfactory. All members of staff are very committed to the children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress; • Teaching is good; • They are comfortable about approaching the school with any problems or concerns; • The school expects the children to work hard and achieve their best; • The school works closely with parents; • The school's approach is helping the children's levels of maturity and responsibility. 	<p>A very few parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not feel the pupils get the right amount of homework; • state they are not well informed about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team agrees with most of the parents' positive views about the school but differs in degree on two aspects. The team's view is that the average-attaining pupils could make better progress in writing and pupils could sometimes work harder when recording work. Inspectors feel that amounts of homework are appropriate given the ages of the pupils. The school has parents' evenings similar to most schools but the quality of written reports on pupils' progress could be more informative. The school has plans for improving the quality of reports. The school is always willing to talk to parents about their children's progress at other times.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The children's attainment on entry to the school is generally below average especially in their language development, although in mathematics it meets expectations. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the end of the Reception Year, about two-thirds of the children meet the expectations for their age in the areas of learning for young children which encapsulate physical, creative, social and emotional development as well as mathematical and language skills. By the end of the Reception Year, most pupils can work independently and sustain an activity for suitable lengths of time. Most can recognise numerals to ten and count accurately, some to twenty and beyond. Their listening skills are generally satisfactory but a few find listening and comprehending difficult. A small minority of children also has difficulty in speaking in sentences and communicating meaning. Some have made a start to reading simple books and all are beginning to acquire knowledge of letter sounds.

2. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are overall in line with national expectations but they are well below average in writing. Whilst the higher attaining pupils do quite well in writing, although not as well as in reading, the average pupils do not make enough progress, especially boys, despite the good opportunities to write for different purposes across the curriculum. This is because pupils do not have a sufficient grasp of phonics and letter blends to aid their writing and, as a result, pupils are often slow to finish their work. Spelling is frequently weak despite there being an accepted structure by which pupils learn spellings. In the most recent national tests, pupils' performance was above average in reading against similar schools, as judged by free school meal percentages, but below in writing. One-third of the pupils obtained the higher level in reading but fewer did so in writing. Nevertheless reading standards could be higher for the average and lower attaining pupils. Their lack of skills in tackling unknown words, partly a result of their unsatisfactory phonic knowledge, hinders their progress. When heard to read, some children could not blend letter sounds together. Few pupils who were engaged in discussion about books could use an index and content sufficiently well and their skills in finding information in the library are not yet well developed. Girls do significantly better than the boys in both reading and writing and in the past few years have on average been making the equivalent of two terms' better progress in reading and one term's better progress in writing, whereas in mathematics they have been performing equally well. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below expectations on entry to the school but by the end of Year 2 most pupils speak clearly, although few can express their ideas with sustained fluency. They make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. Good opportunities are taken to engage pupils in discussion as, for example, their detailed discussion about making prototype bird tables from card. Pupils' handwriting skills are well developed and handwriting standards are satisfactory.

3. Standards in mathematics are stronger than those in reading and writing, partly a result of the good opportunities which are provided for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects but also because of the range of opportunities pupils have to work practically. Pupils enjoy the practical assignments and sometimes work together on specific tasks, learning from one another and negotiating answers with good levels of collaboration, as they did in their money work when pupils worked with real money to calculate different amounts and to obtain change. Their achievements are appropriate in the subject and the pupils make satisfactory, and some, good progress. They make

good use of mathematical estimations in science, as they guessed how many plastic cubes their plasticene boats would hold before sinking. They also use the computers to help in their analyses, for example, of the month's weather. As a result, they gain some good understanding. The trend of results in mathematics has been more consistently in line with national average standards over recent years than in aspects of English and sometimes they have been above the national average. Overall they have been slightly better than the national average. In the most recent national test results the percentage of pupils obtaining the higher level was above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of place value to 100 and can sequence numbers accurately. They can add and subtract money up to one pound. They have good knowledge of the properties of the more common two- and three- dimensional shapes and can interpret charts and graphs.

4. Almost all pupils are attaining expected standards in science and a significant percentage of pupils are obtaining above expected standards. They make better progress, however, in acquiring knowledge than they do in their appreciation of the process of experimentation and fair testing, although good use is made of prediction. Overall, their achievements are sound and progress satisfactory. They use their own form of words to write up their experiments and sometimes make good use of mathematics, for example, as they record the falling temperatures on line graphs as the liquid cools during their insulation tests. 93 per cent of the pupils obtained the expected level as judged by teachers' assessments in 2000 and one quarter of the pupils obtained the higher level, similar to the previous year.

5. Standards in mathematics, reading, writing and science are broadly similar to the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in mathematics, English and ICT because of the good support that they receive individually or in small groups from the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the learning support assistants. The few pupils who have a language other than English as their first language speak English with suitable levels of fluency, have satisfactory understanding and do not require special teaching arrangements.

6. In ICT too, similar standards were observed as in the previous inspection and overall pupils are making satisfactory progress. Younger pupils gain a basic understanding of the keyboard and sound skill in mouse control. Older pupils can program a toy robot, and can save and retrieve their work. However, whilst pupils have some opportunities to use computers in other subjects, this is not yet a strong feature of the pupils' work. Insufficient progress has been made in developing ICT work in the school since the last inspection but standards are improving.

7. Insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of religious education and the subject is not given proper attention. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding are generally below expectations for pupils aged seven and the school does not meet the requirements in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

8. At the time of the last inspection music, geography design and technology were strengths in the school. Standards are not as high as previously because of the loss of key staff with musical expertise and the reduced amount of time given to geography and design and technology. They are now in line with expectations, achievements are appropriate and pupils make satisfactory progress. The quality of singing is satisfactory but little compositional work was observed. Pupils' have good opportunities to hear music, for example during assemblies. Insufficient work was available to judge standards in history but the little that was available indicated that pupils have an emerging, rather

than well developed, awareness of the past and change over time. Pupils' achievements in physical education, art and in design and technology are appropriate and in line with expectations for seven-year-olds, and pupils make sound progress. However, their observational artwork of natural objects and their painting and drawing in the style of old masters are often good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils have positive attitudes to school. Most of the pupils, and their parents agree, say that they enjoy coming to school. In lessons, they are attentive and generally sit still and quietly on the carpet. They are keen to respond when the teacher asks questions. They share well together and listen to each other with respect, although some of the Nursery children are still developing the convention of listening to others and not calling out. Pupils also co-operate well, supporting each other, for example in a Year 2 geography lesson when drawing a plan of the school grounds. They are able to stay focused and concentrate well when lessons are interesting but when explanations go on for too long or when the task is not challenging enough, they lose interest, do not work hard and become noisy. An example of very good attitudes and behaviour was seen in a Year 2 mathematics lesson. The pupils came into class quietly, all settled silently on the carpet, were very keen to take part in the lesson, co-operated well and stayed on task.

10. Inspection confirms parents' perceptions that pupils behave well, both in lessons and around school. There have been no exclusions for some time. Pupils and parents say it is a friendly school and that rare incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are helped to realise that their actions have an affect on others because adults take the time to explain why certain behaviour is unacceptable. Adults set a good example and are very positive in their dealings with the children. These factors contribute to the good relationships throughout the school. Pupils relate well to one another, playing and working together happily.

11. Pupils' personal development is good. In addition to their good behaviour and relationships with one another, they respond well to the responsibility of being leader, 'back marker' bringing up the rear of the line and special helper for the day. They hold doors open, are always polite and take good care of the school environment. They show considerable independence in collecting the equipment they need, organising their work and mounting it when finished.

12. Levels of attendance are slightly below the national average as many families take their holidays in term-time. Too many pupils arrive late in the mornings.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and it is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Eighty-one per cent of all lessons observed were sound, 11 per cent good and 2 per cent very good. A small proportion of lessons, 6 per cent, was unsatisfactory. Teaching is consistently sound across all subjects. Strengths in teaching are the application of numeracy and literacy across the curriculum but it is not yet as strong in ICT, although some good examples were observed, for example analysing the weather data for the month but equally there were many missed opportunities.

14. In the good and very good lessons, teachers are very aware of the pupils' needs and keep them engaged and on task. Relationships and the pace of work are good. Questioning re-inforces previous learning, for example as in a literacy focus when technical terms to do with books such as author and illustrator were introduced along with checking pupils' understanding of story. Attention was drawn to the book's illustrations to support reading and help prediction. The events in the story were related to children's own experience and appropriate time was created for personal response as the teacher asked, for example, 'Do you have a teddy bear?' 'How would you feel if....?' The pupils' replies were expected to be clear, audible and focused.

15. A particular feature of the work in literacy is the use of word hats which groups of pupils wear when they focus on key vocabulary which they have learned. These help pupils to write. However, pupils' writing skills are often weak because teachers do not keep adequate records of individual pupils' phonic knowledge, letter blends and key word knowledge. As a result pupils do not have a secure enough knowledge of letter and blend sounds to help them to write and to sound out when reading.

16. On occasions teachers' draw effectively on pupils' own thinking. For example, in a good Year 2 science lesson, pupils were asked to think of their own ways of sorting a collection of leaves, freshly gathered by the teacher for the lesson. They devised their own methods; some did so on the basis of size, others by evergreen or deciduous and some by shape. Discussion enabled the pupils to articulate their reasons for their groupings and thus further their speaking and listening skills.

17. Teachers use learning resources effectively in lessons and prepare their work well. Art materials are laid out ready in anticipation of the pupils' needs. Other additional materials that they might need are ready for pupils to obtain for themselves and so develop their independence.

18. Overall, teachers have satisfactory knowledge about the subjects they teach, including the Literacy Strategy, and they have good knowledge of the pupils. The school's approach to literacy teaching differs from the conventional literacy hour, because teachers give more frequent and shorter teaching inputs throughout the week. These arrangements have their advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that the teachers work in concentrated ways with groups at regular intervals and there is much ongoing discussion with pupils. The major disadvantage is that the groups, who do not continue with literacy or mathematics after the immediate stimulus, go on to do something entirely different and there is not an assurance that pupils carry out effective and worthwhile literacy and numeracy activities daily.

19. Teachers make written evaluations of their classroom work but they do not always use these to focus on specific groups who are finding the work too easy to push them on or to give extra input where some pupils are meeting difficulties.

20. When teachers are knowledgeable about the subject matter it is used effectively and enhances the quality of learning. In a very good art lesson in Year 2, the teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled her to share her enthusiasm with the pupils for the artist Van Gogh and his style. She was able to advise them how to blend pastels with their fingers and helped them to use the correct technique to achieve lots of fine detail. The pupils were encouraged to look carefully at prints of Van Gogh's work and to copy accurately. Good resource materials illustrated the artist's life and work. The pupils were interested and motivated. The task generated discussion about techniques as the pupils worked. The teacher's high expectations of pupils' learning during the well-managed session resulted in pupils attaining good standards of work.

21. The school has no dividing walls between class areas and, in some situations, the pupils sit very closely together in neighbouring bays. These arrangements can be disturbing when pupils are trying to listen to their teacher and a noisier activity is taking place in a neighbouring bay. It can affect the flow of a lesson and pupils' concentration. Examples were observed in which pupils were listening to the teacher in the neighbouring bay rather than to their own teacher.

22. In many lessons, including mathematics and written work, teachers do not expect enough recorded work from the pupils, the pace is often leisurely and quite frequently work was unfinished by the end of the lesson. Expectations of amounts of work to be done within particular time slots are not often made clear.

23. A key positive feature of teaching is the way teachers constantly engage with pupils and work with small groups giving good focused support and usually matching the challenge of new work appropriately to the pupils' prior attainment. Pupils have good levels of independence, select resources for tasks and can be left to work without constant supervision.

24. Teachers have modified their approach to the Numeracy Strategy, about which they have a satisfactory understanding. Numeracy is soundly taught and the mental aspect is generally well taught, although those pupils who are attaining at an average level do not make enough progress in their learning in mathematics. Pupils reason their answers and are encouraged to think of their own mental ways of calculating, but teachers also give the pupils strategies, for example putting the biggest number in their heads first. They also communicate with the pupils in mathematical language so that they learn mathematical vocabulary which pupils then apply themselves.

25. The teaching of special needs pupils is good. Classroom learning support assistants give good support and their interventions are timely with those who find learning difficult. Pupils are effectively supported individually or in groups by the SENCO whose own teaching is of a good standard. Equally, in most lessons, teachers meet the needs of these pupils and provide appropriate activities and good support. The individual education plans for those on the later stages of assessment, because of their more severe difficulties, are particularly thorough and help teachers in their planning of work for the class. Tasks are well matched to pupils' specific targets and individual needs and, as a result, pupils make good progress. More able pupils receive focused extension work in the latter part of Year 2 in literacy and numeracy. This arrangement has helped to challenge more able pupils during the last two years, and helps to account for the high proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in mathematics. Pupil who have a language other than English as their first language (EAL pupils) are also monitored periodically, despite their familiarity with English, to check on their continuing levels of understanding. This is usually achieved through well-chosen group games.

26. Teachers' planning of work is suitably thorough and they are clear about the work they intend to teach during the week and within their integrated themes. The assessment focus for learning activities is not always as well considered to link in with the often clearly expressed learning intentions.

27. An unusual part of each teaching day is the fifteen-minute mid-morning slot referred to as 'community time'. At such times, pupils gather on the carpet and eat crisps and have their drinks. This does not always work satisfactorily. On most occasions, it is a time for a story but in some classes it was taken as the time for religious education. The lessons took place against a backdrop of rustling crisp bags and children munching crisps, and did not create an appropriate atmosphere against which to read stories or to teach religious education. By contrast, the well-known story of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' was read to Nursery children at the end of a day. Two children were chosen to accompany the sound of the Billy Goat Gruffs crossing the bridge and the troll coming from under it with musical instruments. This imaginative approach gave the story much added appeal and strengthened the children's listening skills and their interest.

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

28. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught, and the school continues to provide a broad and relevant curriculum, with many good links between different subjects. However, the balance between the core subjects and the foundation subjects is insecure, which was the case at the time of the last inspection. The time given to teaching literacy and numeracy is low compared to other schools. Lessons in these subjects are split up into short whole-class sessions followed by three group tasks at some time during the week. The fragmented nature of these lessons does not help pupils to consolidate points taught in whole class sessions. The time allocations for ICT and religious education also require review, as pupils spend insufficient time studying these subjects. The school has implemented appropriate schemes of work in all subjects and lengthened its teaching day, to address issues arising from the last inspection. However, the start of the day is leisurely and community time takes up further time which is not always well used and pupils do not always work to full capacity during sessions.

29. The school has chosen not to adopt the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, but it has implemented elements from both of these into its curriculum. The lack of rigorous records of pupils' knowledge of phonics, letter blends and key word knowledge has resulted in writing standards falling below the national average and pupils not having enough strategies to read unknown words when they meet them in text. Nevertheless good use is made of literacy across the curriculum and pupils try to write in their own words. Although the teaching of mathematics is fragmented, standards in numeracy are satisfactory. Mathematics is also well linked to other subjects in the curriculum, and pupils have good opportunities develop numeracy skills in science, ICT and other lessons.

30. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. There is a comprehensive special needs policy that meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The school identifies these pupils carefully, and provides good support for them in class. They are well involved in whole class activities, and receive appropriate additional support during group activities from the class teacher or classroom assistants. The special needs co-ordinator also conducts regular detailed assessments of individual pupils and gives them focused support, either as individuals or working in small groups within the classroom. Pupils with statements of special educational need receive good help in lessons from their attached support assistants. Individual education plans have specific targets, which are well matched to the needs of individual pupils.

31. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. A gymnastics club and a dance club are both held weekly after school. A recorder group meets in the summer term, and a school choir periodically practises for events such as school productions and local music festivals. Day visits support learning in some studies undertaken. For example, visits to Bourne Pond, or further afield to Clacton, the River Deben, and the Aklowa African village have enhanced studies in science, geography and history. The provision for homework is satisfactory. Pupils take reading books home and older children are occasionally set other appropriate tasks to do at home.

32. The school provides an education designed to enable pupils to develop their potential physically and mentally, and there is a satisfactory programme for personal, health and social education. Some aspects of integrated work are covered in assemblies or circle time, whilst others are woven into other curriculum themes. Health education is well taught through the 'Myself' theme

in each class, with good emphasis placed on personal hygiene, growing up and looking after themselves. Circle times, when pupils usually gather together in a circle for discussion, cover an appropriate range of themes but their quality is inconsistent as opportunities to discuss feelings are too often missed. For example, in the theme about 'Me,' some more able pupils later wrote about their likes and dislikes but did not go on to write, for instance, about what made them happy or sad. Circle times encourage pupils to take turns and make choices, but do not always go into sufficient depth on issues such as feelings and friendship.

33. Appropriate provision is made for sex education and for teaching pupils about the proper use of drugs. The school ensures equality of access and social inclusion for all its pupils. The content of the personal, social and health and education programme (PHSE) focuses mainly and appropriately on social skills.

34. Appropriate links are made with the community and the locality to further pupils' learning. They study their own district in history and geography, and talks from visitors enhance these projects. Regular visits from the school library service introduce children to new books. Visits from the local fire brigade, local police and crossing patrol also support their thematic studies.

35. The school provides good training opportunities for students from partner institutions. It hosts nursery nurse students from a local further education establishment, and trainee teachers from a local training institution. In addition, it also provides work experience placements for the Sixth Form College and local comprehensive schools. Links with the partner junior school are not well developed beyond a few induction visits for Year 2 pupils in the summer term and courtesy exchanges of pupils to attend concert performances. Curriculum co-ordinators do not meet to discuss continuity in pupils' learning as they transfer to the junior school.

36. Overall, the school makes good provision in support of pupils' personal development with strengths in moral and social development, both of which are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very similar to that found at the last inspection. Pupils clearly understand right from wrong and relationships with others, including adults, are good. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development. For example, during the inspection week, they were encouraged to smile, be happy and act like a light so that their families and friends would benefit. Pupils support a wide range of charitable work and have much concern for others who are less fortunate than themselves and, in so doing, have a lot of fun, for example by having a Mad Hair Day in which the whole school community participated. The dog warden visits regularly to encourage respect for animals and pets. Through the discussion of classroom and playground rules, pupils learn the need for rules in an ordered community and begin to understand right and wrong. They are trusted with real money in mathematics lessons. The school invites senior citizens to harvest tea and to sing carols at Christmas. There are also good links with a local special school, which supports pupils' social development well. Whilst not explicitly formulated in a mission statement, the headteacher expresses the ethos of the school as 'caring, sharing and having respect for one another' and this is evidently expressed in the way pupils and adults are shown mutual respect.

37. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is broadly satisfactory, although acts of collective worship do not always meet statutory requirements. Most now contain some meaningful time for reflection, an improvement since the last inspection, but there is rarely any mention of a deity and they do not often have any Christian content. Religious education lessons, when they occur, are brief and frequently held during community time, when pupils are eating their mid-morning snacks. This

is not conducive to a sense of respect for the values and traditions of the faiths pupils are learning about. Timetables include a few moments at the end of the day for reflection, but this was rarely observed and then was of a perfunctory nature. There are, however, good opportunities through the study of nature, for pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world, for example in the autumn theme and to marvel at works of art.

38. Pupils have sound opportunities to develop their cultural awareness. Music is played in assemblies and pupils learn about the composer or relevant detail about the particular piece. They study the work of artists such as Van Gogh. They listen to traditional stories and learn rhymes. Recently they had the opportunity to learn how to wear a sari and some of the traditions of life in India. The major festivals of the world faiths are explained. A good multi-cultural, anti-racist policy includes some useful guidance for teachers on including this aspect of pupils' personal development within thematic work. It was not in evidence in the work seen.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school provides a caring and supportive environment in which pupils grow in self-confidence. All the adults in the school know the children well, helped by the frequent practice of teachers exchanging classes on occasions for story-time at the end of the afternoon. Discussions with pupils indicate they are confident that they can easily find someone to turn to for help and support whenever necessary. There is a good level of adult support in the classroom and this is used effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs. Teachers record comments about pupils' behaviour and personal development in their reviews of lessons. This alerts them to developing problems and also enables them to compile perceptive reports at the end of the year.

40. Pupils are always well supervised. They go straight to their classroom when they arrive in the mornings and they are handed over to a parent/carer at the end of the day. Arrangements to ensure their health, welfare and safety are good. Safety arrangements have improved since the previous inspection. First-aid provision is good. Child protection procedures are in place and known to staff. The school works well with outside agencies to provide advice and support when necessary.

41. The school has good behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Teachers discuss class and school rules with the pupils so that they have a clear understanding of the high standards of behaviour expected and why such behaviour is appropriate. Pupils respond well to the positive reinforcement of good behaviour, which is generally consistently applied both in the classroom and in the playground. They enjoy being given stickers. School conventions such as putting a hand up and not calling out are consistently reinforced from the Nursery onwards, although these youngest children are still learning the proper conventions. The wide range of play equipment for use in the playground ensures that pupils have plenty to do and supports good behaviour. There are effective systems for monitoring the rare incidents of poor behaviour and pupils are then supported, with their parents being fully involved.

42. Most parents telephone or write to explain their child's absence, resulting in low levels of unauthorised absence. Sometimes unexplained absences are followed up. The school works effectively with the education welfare officer. Whilst parents who arrive with latecomers are required to fill in forms about the reasons, the school is not sufficiently pro-active in encouraging good attendance and punctuality. Consequently, too many families take their holidays in term-time and many pupils frequently arrive late at school in the mornings.

43. The school's arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance are satisfactory overall. However, since the last inspection, the use made of assessments and record keeping to inform planning has remained inconsistent and of varying quality. The assessment of the youngest children when they enter school is satisfactory and developing in line with the Foundation Year. On-going assessments are planned for each child and record what they can do and what they know. A detailed record file is prepared for each child at the end of the year and includes dated work samples, assessments on entry and parents' assessments. At the end of their time in the Nursery, teacher and child complete together the Nursery record which is in the form of a flower with the parts of the flower embracing statements of achievement. In the Reception class and Nursery, some good ongoing assessment takes place based on the six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage with dated comments recorded for individual pupils.

44. In Key Stage 1 check sheets assist in the tracking of pupils' skills in art. Reading records list titles and the dates of books when they are read but comments are often quite general and do not often pick out specific difficulties, which the pupils need to overcome. Reading records do not track individual pupils' knowledge against key words that will support children's progress in reading and writing. A useful idea is the completion of 'My Book of Challenges'. Whilst the challenges are similar for all pupils at the start of the year to give the pupils confidence, they quickly progress to individual challenges which the pupils and teachers set together. For example, one pupil had written 'I must remember to put a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence and a full stop at the end'.

45. The format of individual pupil records continues throughout Key Stage 1 with several additions. Records of pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science are updated twice yearly with colour coded highlights to indicate the term in which National Curriculum targets are met. Teachers assess this information at the end of each year. A most effective system based on pupils' achievements is 'Star Marking'. This system uses the results of a standardised reading test to identify pupils who need extra support by predicting future success. The number of stars against a child's name indicates a better prediction. Members of staff have used recent analysis of Key Stage 1 results effectively to identify the need to monitor the progress of boys and younger pupils.

46. Teachers know their pupils very well and teachers' daily plans contain satisfactory evaluations of individuals' or a group's behaviour and understanding. However, the school's informal approach to marking means that this wealth of data is based on broad target levels and not on the basis of what pupils know, understand and can do. Work is often undated and without a constructive, written response to boost pupils' self-esteem. Pupils in consultation with the teacher correct recurring mistakes, but discussions with pupils show that they do not always know how well they are doing. Analysis can be made of pupils' work when it is logically sequenced in workbooks. When pupils' completed work is put in folders or mounted by pupils in large workbooks they have made themselves, and not always sequentially, reference has to be made to the termly themes to analyse progress.

47. The assessment co-ordinator keeps informal records of courses attended that promote new initiatives and identify national trends. Members of staff feel that the systems of planning and assessment that have evolved since the last inspection are satisfactory. However, these systems have not yet been evaluated against rigorous criteria, and over a given period of time, to enable the staff to evaluate whether they are resulting in improved pupils' attainment and academic progress.

48. The school monitors carefully the progress of pupils whose first language is not English and this is often done practically through well-chosen group games. The school has good systems for the identification of pupils with special educational needs, and for determining strategies to support them. The special needs co-ordinator provides very good support to teachers when assessing pupils' specific needs. Targets on individual education plans are satisfactory for pupils on the initial stage of referral. Individual education plans for pupils beyond the initial stage of support are good, with specific targets well matched to pupils' needs in literacy, numeracy or their social development. Progress towards these targets is well monitored by the co-ordinator, and parents and all staff involved play a full part in the termly reviews. Pupils with statements of special needs receive very good support, with detailed individual education plans outlining many specific targets, and strategies to achieve these. Assessment and record keeping for pupils with statements are very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents express positive views about the school, which has maintained the good relationships it had with parents at the time of the last inspection. Parents feel that they are given good information and this was borne out by the inspection. Frequent newsletters, an attractive and informative prospectus, a very good governors' annual report, as well as other communications, keep them well informed about school life. They receive useful guidance about helping their children to read and the school arranges evening meetings to explain curriculum developments, although these have not been well attended. End-of-year reports have improved since the last inspection but require further improvement. The information on English, mathematics and science is now very good, with a 'statement bank' to indicate what the child can do each term and also a comment about progress and attitudes. They also include useful 'carry forward' targets. However, the foundation subjects, religious education and ICT are inadequately reported. The school is to alter the format for the next reports to give more information in these subjects.

50. Parents indicate that their children like school, make good progress, work hard and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. A very small number of parents feel that the pupils do not get the right amount of work to do at home and are not well enough informed about their children's progress. The inspection team does not agree with the very few parents who expressed these views. The school gives appropriate amounts of homework, given the ages of the children, and the school provides the parents with good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The inspection evidence is that higher expectations could be made of the amount of recorded work children accomplish in lessons.

51. The school is well supported by parents. Many hear their children read regularly and this makes a good contribution to reading standards. Some are able to help in the classroom and on visits. Almost all attend the evening meetings to talk to teachers and view the pupils' work, because these are thoughtfully arranged to offer a range of convenient times. There are a number of informal events to which parents are welcome, including Monday assemblies when birthdays are celebrated. While there is no formal parent-teacher association, a small group of parents, through the parent representative attached to each class, organises fund-raising events and these, with the sponsored events which the school arranges, are well supported. Parents and the wider community provided very good support during the recent successful campaign to oppose the amalgamation of the school. Parents are confident that they can approach the school with concerns and they appreciate the 'open door' policy which the school operates. A small minority of parents could support the school more by making sure they bring their children to school on time and by not taking holidays in term time.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The overall quality of leadership and management is sound. The headteacher provides strong and supportive leadership and she has the full confidence of the Governing Body and staff. Parents are appreciative of the efforts of the headteacher and her staff for their children and feel that the school is well led and managed.

53. The headteacher espouses a clear philosophy about children's learning and this is apparent throughout the school. She exerts a strong influence in maintaining a pleasant learning environment. The pupils enjoy the learning approach and gain much in their conceptual understanding but at times teaching methods are unduly complicated and more could be demanded of pupils' efforts, particularly of those of average attainment. Presentation is considered to be important and this is reflected in the way work is presented and valued.

54. The headteacher has the good support of the deputy headteacher and they share a common philosophy and form an effective management partnership. They meet formally at appropriately regular intervals.

55. Curriculum co-ordinators do not yet track progress and standards consistently and rigorously across the school, monitor standards of teaching and learning and support colleagues in classrooms but some improvements have been made since the last inspection report. The headteacher has monitored some lessons and given both written and verbal feedback to individual teachers and, in this respect, there has been some improvement since the last inspection. However, comments have largely been supportive rather than developmental. Schemes of work are now in place in all subjects, though some are quite recent and their quality ranges from satisfactory to good in the amount of guidance they give. Not all co-ordinators devise an action plan for their subject responsibility and those that are in place do not always form an integral part of the school development plan, although they do in numeracy, literacy, ICT and for special educational needs.

56. The school development plan outlines developments for the year ahead but, whilst some indications are given of longer-term developments, these are only referred to vaguely. The plan is of satisfactory quality but it lacks precise success criteria and the methods to be used to track whether priorities have been successfully undertaken. It is costed but the completion dates for action are imprecise and there is little reference to the tasks to be undertaken by individual staff apart from the SENCO.

57. The Governing Body is supportive of the school and the quality of its work has improved since the last inspection. Its annual report is of very good quality and extremely well presented. It fulfils almost all its statutory responsibilities but it does not ensure that there is a daily act of collective worship. Its own policy is of good quality and gives clarity to its work. Governing Body members are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development, and priorities for improvement are appropriate and on schedule. The headteacher takes the major role in determining the school development plan. Some members have individual responsibilities to monitor aspects of the school's work, including what happens in classrooms, for example in the Foundation Stage. These specific responsibilities keep the Governing Body well informed. All governors are involved in the committee, which meets between statutory termly meetings and this system works effectively. All are kept fully informed and involved in the school's life.

58. Governors have good oversight of the arrangements for special needs pupils. All legal requirements for pupils with special educational needs are met. The monitoring of special needs provision is good. The SENCO does not teach a class, and is able to provide good support to class teachers throughout the school. This support includes making thorough assessments of individual pupils, and providing focused support to individuals or small groups in lessons. The progress pupils make towards their targets is monitored by the co-ordinator, and pupils' individual education plans are reviewed and updated towards the end of each term. Good systems are in place to ensure pupils with special needs receive appropriate support from outside agencies, that all necessary information is shared within the school, and that parents are kept fully informed of children's progress.

59. Targets for the school's national test results are generally appropriate, although they could be higher in writing, and these were met in the last year. Careful analysis is made of pupils' attainment levels before targets are set. Good use is made of national test analysis but the school has not yet analysed individual question responses to track aspects of work which pupils found difficult. Good analysis is made of the respective performance of boys and girls and, as a result, the type of literature has been modified to interest boys more.

60. The school has one specific all-embracing aim, although this is not written in to the school's prospectus. In many respects, it is being met but there is further scope for pupils to achieve their potential, particularly in writing. The school's philosophy and ethos permeate the whole school. Pupils are valued and the atmosphere created is supportive of the staff's and pupils' efforts. The school works as a cohesive unit. It has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

61. The school has a good scheme of financial delegation, although it has not recently had a Local Education Authority (LEA) audit. The budget setting process is appropriate and day-to-day management of the budget is undertaken efficiently by the headteacher's personal assistant and school financial manager. She works very closely with the headteacher and is most supportive in administrative matters and in keeping the Governing Body well informed about financial matters. Additionally, the school makes good use of the LEA financial services advisory section when needed. More routine matters are undertaken conscientiously by the long serving school assistant. Sound procedures are in place to plan spending on equipment and resources and other funding. Specific grants are used for their intended purposes but better systems could be used to identify priorities in resources and equipment so that money is targeted appropriately. Sound principles are used to obtain best value in the use of resources.

62. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. There are sound procedures in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers. The school provides good opportunities for initial teacher training, and hosts students from a regional teacher training establishment, in addition to providing work experience placements for local colleges. The arrangements for appraisal are satisfactory. Teachers attend various courses, write reviews of them and share the experience and information from the course with other teaching staff.

63. The school has sufficient resources to support pupils' learning. The budget for books, equipment and materials is centrally managed. Recent allocation of special funding has expanded the non-fiction library. Other fiction and non-fiction books are displayed in attractive reading areas around the school. The range of books available to pupils supports the equal opportunity policy. The staff resource area has some material to help implement numeracy across the National Curriculum, but little material to support literacy.

64. Resources in classrooms are well managed, accessible and clearly labelled. Centrally stored resources are well arranged. The Nursery children have a chalet and a satisfactory range of ride-on toys. There are good resources for science, and physical education equipment includes a good range of small apparatus, mats and games equipment. A good selection of art materials is located in every classroom with extra materials stored according to health and safety requirements. A newly opened ICT suite has added to the adequate range of computers and software in classrooms, and children have easy access to listening stations. The school makes good use of its own grounds for teaching resources and pupils visit other areas of educational interest in the region.

65. The school provides a pleasant learning environment, enhanced by the lively displays of children's work. The open plan arrangement can sometimes lead to distraction of one class by another and teachers have to work hard to overcome this. Nursery accommodation is good, with good play space both indoors and out, as well as a kitchen and shower. The chalet outside is a particularly good resource. Pupils were consulted over the markings they wanted in the Year 1 playground. The building and grounds are maintained to a good standard and the site manager and his staff maintain the school to a very good level of cleanliness. These high standards encourage pupils to take care of the environment and they respect the work on display.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. In building upon the improvements which have been made since the last inspection and to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and Governing Body should:

- improve standards in English, particularly in reading and writing for pupils of average ability, especially boys by:
 - a) creating better record systems of pupils' knowledge of key words, letter sounds (phonics) and letter blends and focusing on those which children do not know;
 - b) increasing the range and challenge of texts used by pupils on a daily basis during literacy work;
 - c) making better use of the school's library.
(Paras. 2, 15, 29, 60, 74, 77, 78, 79, 80)

- take steps to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding in religious education by:
 - a) giving more teaching time to the subject;
 - b) teaching the subject at an appropriate time;
 - c) paying more attention to the requirements in the Local Agreed Syllabus for the subject.
(Paras. 7, 27, 28, 37, 121, 123)

- make better use of record keeping and assessment data by:
 - a) using records of pupils' knowledge and understanding to better effect in lesson planning and target particular groups of pupils for specific and relevant instruction;
 - b) make better use of the information provided by test data to determine in which aspects of learning pupils should improve.
(Paras. 26,43,44)

- improve the quality of school development planning by:
 - a) including the methods by which success criteria are to be measured and evaluated;
 - b) being more precise about time scales;
 - c) planning in more detail for the longer term;
 - d) including co-ordinators' plans for the development their subjects.
(Para. 56)

- review the rigour and use of time within sessions and the time allocations given to different subjects by
 - a) ensuring that sufficient time is given to English, mathematics religious education and ICT;
 - b) creating a climate where higher demands are made of pupils' work output and pace of learning, particularly when they are recording work, and combine this with a more efficient and rigorous use of time;
 - c) making better use of the time at the start of the day;
 - d) making clearer to pupils what teachers expect the pupils to complete in particular time slots;
 - e) commencing lessons more promptly after breaks;
 - f) re-evaluating the place of community time.
(Paras. 22, 28, 53)

- take steps to monitor and improve the level of attendance and improve levels of punctuality by working in conjunction with the education welfare officer.
(Para. 42)

In addition the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- placing greater accountability on teachers to monitor the standards of work across the school and provide them with more opportunities to support one another by observing one another teach.
(Para. 55)
- ensuring an act of collective worship takes place daily;
(Para. 37, 57)
- reviewing where pupils sit in neighbouring bays during whole class instruction.
(Para. 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	11	81	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	224
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	38

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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
	00 (99)	32 (35)	37 (45)	69 (80)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20 (26)	18 (25)	27 (29)
	Girls	33 (39)	30 (35)	37 (40)
	Total	53 (65)	48 (60)	64 (69)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (83)	70 (76)	93 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20 (26)	25 (28)	27 (30)
	Girls	37 (39)	37 (40)	27 (30)
	Total	57 (65)	62 (70)	54 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (82)	90 (86)	93 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black - other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	244
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

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	99/00
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	£
Total income	498597
Total expenditure	507971
Expenditure per pupil	2031
Balance brought forward from previous year	30374
Balance carried forward to next year	21000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	37	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	33	5	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	49	7	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	30	12	5	7
The teaching is good.	53	44	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	51	9	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	23	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	35	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	47	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	51	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	51	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	42	7	2	28

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

67. Pupils begin the Foundation Stage in the Nursery on a part-time basis, commencing in the term after their third birthday, dependent on places being available and then continue in to the Reception classes in the term before their fifth birthday. On entry to the Nursery, the pupils' attainments are below average overall, particularly in language.

68. The curriculum is based on the national guidance for the Foundation Year, the Early Learning Goals. At the time of inspection, the school was still getting to grips with the new guidance and trying to ensure that the learning between the Nursery and the Reception class becomes a progression of learning experiences. Record keeping and planning systems were still developing but satisfactory progress has been made so far. Some good notes were being made of individual children's ongoing gains in learning. The Nursery and Reception classes are well staffed and each contains a nursery nurse (NNEB). The NNEBs are based mainly in one class or the other but with some weekly exchanges so that the children are familiar with adult personnel when they change classes. The NNEBs offer good support for the teachers and the children, and carry out their work calmly and efficiently. The overall quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Standards are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. The children's personal, social and emotional development is in line with expectations by the end of the Foundation Stage. Most children quickly settle to school and establish good relationships with one another. The children are adept at playing, working independently and making choices. They show confidence in their engagement with tasks. Generally, they play co-operatively. They sustain play for a reasonable length of time and become engrossed in their activities. They tidy up at the end of sessions but are not always quick at finishing their activities when asked. The children's behaviour is good overall but some children can be a little immature, especially when they are insufficiently challenged on occasions and a few are prone to call out at the wrong time. The children make satisfactory progress in this aspect of their development and the quality of teaching is sound.

Communication, language and literacy

70. About three-quarters of the children attain the expected standard by the end of the Foundation Stage in this aspect of their learning and they make satisfactory progress. Whilst some occasional examples of good teaching were observed, the overall quality of teaching is sound. In one session the teacher worked with a small group and told the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' with the use of model people and animals and a representation of the river to provoke pupils' interest in the story. The children later made use of these in recalling the story and developing their understanding and also their speaking and listening skills. Most children listen well to story but a few find concentrating in this way difficult and they can be a disturbance to others. In another session, good

use was made of musical instruments in the telling of the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. The children's listening skills are often below expectations and a significant number of children have poorly developed speech and a narrow range of vocabulary, although some children are very chatty and confident. The children develop knowledge of some technical terms to do with books such as author, illustrator and speech bubbles. They learn the sounds of some letters but, at the time of inspection, few pupils could write decipherable words on their own.

Mathematics

71. The children's attainment in mathematics is in line with expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Most children can recognise and write numerals to ten and some can recognise numerals beyond ten. Most can count accurately. They can make repeating patterns, sometimes in pictorial form but also practically with coloured beads and cubes, and can explain the sequence. They can recognise some common two- and three-dimensional shapes. They can recognise their colours. They learn about shape as they make biscuits. Most children can add numbers to ten and also take away a given number from ten. They estimate how many objects can fit on other objects and how many containers can fill another one in the water tray, and so develop concepts of capacity. Children learn about balance as they try and balance model teddy bears on balancing scales and they learn about comparative language such as heavier and lighter, although the children find some difficulty in interpreting the results on the balancing scales. The children make sound progress in mathematics. The teaching is satisfactory but in the Reception class the children do not always have regular enough experiences in mathematics and more activities of a mathematical nature could be provided for children as choice activities in the Nursery.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. The children develop a sound understanding of various aspects of their environment and learn to compare past and present, for example present day toys with those in olden days. Their attainments are in line with expectations by the end of the Reception class and they make satisfactory progress. The teaching is sound. The children plant bulbs and observe and record their growth. They go for walks in the neighbourhood of the school and look at the natural and man made world. They learn about vegetables and make soup. Nursery children observe the activity of worms in the wormery, and the nature tables have interesting natural objects, helping the children to appreciate what happens in the world of nature at autumn. Children learn to familiarise themselves with part of the keyboard in computer work and can use the mouse to manipulate icons as they dress teddy from a choice of clothes on the screen. They occasionally hear stories from other faiths and learn that people have different beliefs.

Creative development

73. The children have good opportunities to work with different picture-making media and this is often linked with their other work. For example, they make leaf rubbings during their work on autumn. They make pictures with chalk and pastels, and sometimes blend paint with washing up liquid to make bubble designs. They have good experience in printing, for example with leaves, with their hands and with kitchen utensils. They learn to appreciate tones of colour and are taught to mix their own colours to make good representational paintings. They are taught to mount their work independently, and through this, the children develop a sense of pride in their work and acquire cutting and pasting skills. Their singing skills are not well developed and a few children are reluctant to join in. They have good opportunities for role-play, which take on different situations from life such as the baker's shop. They make simple models from junk materials. Overall, their attainment in this aspect is in line with expectations and the quality of teaching sound.

Physical development

74. The children reach the expectations for the end of the Foundation Stage. They make sound progress in developing their fine motor skills, for instance in putting on and zipping up coats, aprons and role-play costumes, and sound progress in other aspects of their physical development. They are able to turn sleeves the correct way round, match shoes to feet, use scissors, and use glue and glue spreaders, brushes and paints in creative work. They hold pencils and other markers correctly in their written work and in mathematics when they draw shapes. Their fine motor skills are developed along with eye-hand co-ordination using jigsaw puzzles and other small equipment such as sorting animals and small construction equipment. They develop their individual physical skills using the outdoor area for riding their bikes and tricycles and the main hall for gymnastics, dance and other physical activity. The teaching of this aspect of work is satisfactory.

ENGLISH

75. Standards in English have not changed significantly since the last inspection. In 1999 the national test results for reading and writing rose, but this improvement was not maintained in 2000 and standards at Key Stage 1 are now in line with national averages in reading but well below national averages in writing. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading are above average, however standards in writing remain below average. Girls achieve higher standards than boys, and almost a third of pupils reached the higher level in reading in the most recent national tests. A much smaller percentage, 10 per cent, reached this standard in writing. Observations made during the inspection confirm the test results and the trend over the past four years of better standards in reading than in writing. Standards in spelling are weak. Taking into account pupils' knowledge when they enter the school, the below average and higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress but it is unsatisfactory for the average pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported in class.

76. When pupils enter the school they lack confidence in speaking and their listening skills are weak. By the end of Year 2, most have begun to speak clearly in a range of situations, although there is a wide variation in their ability to express their ideas fluently. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Satisfactory progress in speaking and listening is maintained throughout the school and this leads to satisfactory attainment at Key Stage 1. Pupils are eager to contribute orally in assembly and the school provides satisfactory opportunities for them to develop their speaking and listening skills in many lessons. For example, in a Year 2 design and technology lesson, one group presented their plans for a bird table to the class. Their presentation was audible and the questions posed by the other pupils generated a detailed exchange of ideas. The class teacher reinforced technical vocabulary such as cement, decoration and the need for deep or shallow postholes. Where teachers' questioning skills are used effectively, pupils' responses are clear, audible and focused. However, opportunities are lost in assembly, community time and some lessons for pupils to develop more detailed responses to express their feelings.

77. Pupils enjoy reading and test standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national averages. Higher attaining pupils achieve good standards and this is confirmed in the readers heard during the inspection. In Year 1, they read confidently, fluently and with some expression of direct speech. They talk confidently about the story and give opinions about its meaning. In Year 2, this group of pupils reads with improving fluency and accuracy, recognising more complex punctuation, for example question marks and ellipses, affects expression. They talk enthusiastically about plot

and character, and can predict what might happen next. The standard of reading skills of the average and lower attaining pupils in the school could be higher if pupils developed better phonic and letter-blend knowledge, and learned to read key words that they do not know. They enjoy sharing books and can interpret a story sequence from the pictures, but few pupils have developed either a sight vocabulary or sufficient phonic or letter blend knowledge to sound words out.

78. Many parents hear reading in school and from comments in pupils' reading record books it is clear that most parents enjoy books with their children at home. All pupils use the well organised reading area with confidence and each teaching area has a comfortable, well stocked reading corner. The texts used in the school's literacy focus sessions and stories read by teachers through the school are introducing pupils to a range of literature. However, texts are not from a sufficiently wide range of genres to challenge higher attaining pupils and engage the interest of boys. Pupils at the end of the Key Stage do not know how to select books from the non-fiction library and are not sufficiently familiar with the contents and index pages. This recently enlarged resource does not form part of general curriculum planning

79. Standards in writing at Key Stage 1 are well below the national average due to the low number of pupils attaining the higher level. Emergent writing is arranged with appropriate spacing of sentence lengths. Not enough support is given to these writers in the form of writing frames or model writing. Most pupils write with simple sentences, correctly punctuated, in a range of narrative and non-narrative forms. Year 1's 'Pirates' project appeals to boys and includes wanted posters and story writing. Messages are written in bottles and pupils list the items they would need if they were stranded on an island. The shared reading text used during the inspection, 'This is the Bear on a Scary Night' is part of the 'Light and Dark' project and was used to model sentence writing about what happened to the bear and was successful as a result. Some pupils work independently writing a range of sentences, including one joining two ideas with 'who,' and correctly spelling simple words. Phonic attempts at writing words are weak and many pupils were unable to complete the written task in the allocated time.

80. Year 2 pupils use different forms of writing appropriately. They re-tell stories such as 'Old King Cole' in zig-zag books, write captions for their own illustrated stories and label diagrams. Their narrative writing uses strategies for sequencing. Poems written about autumn leaves include imaginative vocabulary, such as 'the wind whispers between the leaves,' and words arranged on the page descend like leaves, 'down, down, down, ... make a popping sound when they flutter to the ground.' By the end of Year 2, a minority of higher attaining pupils writes with a sound knowledge of punctuation, such as exclamation marks and speech marks, used selectively for effect. Their sense of audience is demonstrated by a good choice of vocabulary to create atmosphere, such as 'I could feel the sweet breeze brush on my forehead.' However, standards vary considerably and a significant number of pupils have little experience in planning and drafting their ideas to write sustained stories, correctly spelt, with good attention to characterisation and plot.

81. Handwriting skills of the majority of pupils are well developed and handwriting standards are satisfactory. Pupils write with attention to letter size, spacing and letter formation. Following a policy decision taken in February 2000, with the support of the Governing Body, the literacy hour is no longer followed in the school, although aspects of it have been incorporated into the teaching of English across the curriculum. English skills are used in mathematics, geography and science to label diagrams and write out experiments. Some work displayed on the walls has been word-processed and pupils create illustrations for their written work in Year 1 using a software package. Spelling is weak throughout the school. Some brief phonic sessions are taught formally but much is taught incidentally and in small groups through reading and written work. Pupils' knowledge of letter sounds is not secure. The lack of a clear strategy for teaching phonics, letter blends and key words and recording pupils' knowledge of them is having a significant impact on the low standards achieved by the average pupil.

82. Teaching is satisfactory across the school, although there are variations in teachers' skills and subject knowledge. It ranged from unsatisfactory to good with the vast majority of lessons judged to be satisfactory. In the classes where teaching was good, constant use was made of learning objectives to focus the pupils' attention on what they had to learn. Well prepared resource material supported pupils' writing and helped them achieve good learning outcomes; teachers demonstrated good questioning skills to draw out pupils' knowledge and understanding, and work was matched to the differing needs of the pupils. In an unsatisfactory lesson, work began before all pupils were attentive and the slow pace allowed pupils' attention to wander. A weakness throughout most lessons observed was the lack of continuity of learning caused by fragmented classroom practices and less than rigorous time keeping. Classroom assistants very effectively support groups and individuals with special needs and with a first language other than English. The SENCO provides class teachers with carefully planned and structured targets for each pupil, and she frequently works with them in class. These pupils make good progress as a result of this focused work.

83. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and continuously interact with them. They plan together in year groups and set targets for all pupils. Regular assessments record pupils' progress in reading and pupil record sheets record progress in the National Curriculum. Since the previous report, insufficient progress has been made to extend these assessments to inform planning. Marking is through verbal communication: teachers do not make a written response to give value to pupils' work. Daily evaluations in teachers' weekly planning record comments about individuals and groups, but they are still not analysed to target groups for specific and relevant instruction.

84. The subject co-ordinator is aware of current developments in the National Literacy Strategy. The school has correctly identified the need to improve standards in reading and writing. Objective monitoring of teaching strategies and their impact on learning needs to be undertaken if the school is to achieve this target.

MATHEMATICS

85. The results of the 2000 national test results showed the attainment of 7-year-olds to be broadly in line with the national average, and above average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level was well above the national average, and well above average compared with similar schools. This reflects the additional support given to a target group of more able pupils during the latter part of Year 2. Results have been slightly above the national average over the last four years. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the overall attainment of pupils in the current Year 2 is broadly in line with national expectations. There was a marked difference in the performance of girls and boys in the 2000 results, with girls performing better. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained appropriate standards in the subject.

86. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, and can sequence numbers accurately. They have quick and accurate recall of number bonds up to 10, and develop sound mental strategies. They perform addition and subtraction calculations using money up to one pound. Pupils can name and describe the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They all recognise and use simple fractions, and more able pupils can calculate sums such as one half of 92 or one quarter of 48. All pupils collect information and are able to represent this in bar charts and pictograms, sometimes using the computer, and extract information from their charts. Overall, standards of numeracy are average by the age of seven.

87. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Younger pupils consolidate their knowledge of number in a good range of practical activities, games and puzzles, and achieve average standards by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, appropriate emphasis is placed on mental calculations, with pupils encouraged to share their strategies with the rest of the class. Pupils become more confident in their use of number, shape and space. They make good progress in handling data, and are taught different ways to display information and interpret a good range of charts. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Higher-attaining pupils also receive good support in the latter part of Year 2, when they are taught together in target groups, and given more challenging extension work. This arrangement has been successfully adopted during the last two years, and helps to account for the high proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in the national assessments.

88. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They enjoy mental mathematics and opportunities to engage in practical activities. Most pupils are keen to participate in discussions, answer questions, and share their methods with the class or group. They behave well in lessons, share practical equipment, and look after resources well. When working independently, most pupils concentrate well and are able to complete a satisfactory amount of work. When required to work together, they are able to co-operate with each other and share ideas and methods. Some pupils do not take sufficient care or pride in recording work, and their standard of presentation is weak.

89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary, and pupils are able to use appropriate terms in their explanations. Mental mathematics is generally well taught, with pupils being asked to share their methods with the class. However in one session, only a small number of Year 2 pupils were involved, and the pace of learning for the whole group was slow and unchallenging. Teachers set tasks for different abilities during lessons, and when they work with a group they often provide good focused support. They incorporate a good range of practical activities in lessons, and make good use of a range of different displays when teaching data handling. Teachers' expectations of pupils' recorded work are not always sufficiently demanding. Older pupils often take a considerable time filling in number squares before they make any calculations relating to their main task, and are not set time targets to help achieve good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants, and make good progress during lessons. An additional programme is provided for more able pupils towards the end of Year 2, which enables them to achieve high standards.

90. The school's scheme of work covers all National Curriculum requirements, and good use is made of mathematics to help learning in other subjects. For example, pupils are taught to measure accurately in science work, and good use is made of graphical displays in ICT. The school has chosen not to adopt the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers split their time spent teaching mathematics into different sessions. Short mental mathematics sessions are taught to the class at the start of the morning or afternoon. Additional class sessions, focusing on the theme for the week and explaining methods are taught three times weekly. Pupils also undertake mathematics tasks in small groups for three lessons during the week, sometimes with focused teacher support for a whole lesson. These unduly complicated teaching arrangements mean that often, pupils do not have the opportunity to follow up methods learned during a whole-class session until the following day, which does not help pupils' ability to consolidate new concepts, extend their learning and make good progress. The co-ordinator has had few opportunities to observe teaching and learning in classrooms, and provide feedback to colleagues. Appropriate use is made of assessment data to set targets for pupils. A satisfactory range of resources is available, with good use made of practical equipment.

SCIENCE

91. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work in science and observation of lessons indicates that the school covers the National Curriculum and that pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 1 with a significant number of pupils attaining above expectations. This judgement confirms that standards are being maintained since the most recent teachers' assessments when 93 per cent of pupils attained the expected level and one quarter of the pupils obtained the higher level. Results in 1999 had been similar, although compared with other schools, the overall standard of performance in the different aspects of science at the expected level was below the national average.

92. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can name the main parts of a flower and the body. They use prediction in their experiments as, for example, when they predict how many cubes their plasticine boats will hold before sinking. They know that some things such as chocolate change their state when they are heated. They are familiar with simple electric circuitry and can indicate whether the bulbs will light up when they refer to various diagrams of simple circuits. They know that musical sound is made in different ways. Pupils appreciate the difference between pulls and pushes as types of forces. They carry out simple chromatography experiments with coloured sweets to identify the colours that are mixed to obtain other colours. They have tested materials for their insulation properties and recorded temperatures at different intervals of time having tied different materials around containers. Their understanding of the concept of fair testing is beginning to develop, for example, as they record at similar frequencies of time and use the same amounts of material. However, in general the pupils do not have enough opportunities to engage in activities which require such thinking, although the frequency with which they predict what they think will happen is good. Pupils' achievements are mostly satisfactory but sometimes good, and pupils make sound progress in science.

93. Pupils show good levels of interest in their science work and enjoy the subject. They like to experiment and think for themselves, as when they decide how they will group different kinds of leaves. Good opportunities are provided for them to use their own thoughts when they write up their work and particularly good use is made of numeracy. For example, they can make graphs for weather data and to record temperatures of the water as it cools in different pots that are covered by different insulating materials.

94. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was sound but it ranged from occasionally good to mostly satisfactory. In the good lesson, the pupils were given plenty of scope to think for themselves as they sorted leaves and determined how they could be set into groups of like features. They were prompted to articulate their reasons and so their speaking and logic skills were developed. Some did this on the basis of size, others as evergreen or deciduous whilst others took into account the shape of the leaves. The pupils remained on task and the pupils' self-esteem was confirmed as they were praised for their individual thinking. This increased their interest, concentration and effort, and they went on to record their own thinking. The pupils were well behaved throughout, and had good relationships with one another in the group and shared resources amicably. Where teaching did not reach the same good standard, the pace of work was too leisurely and not enough was expected of the pupils in the time available. There was no challenge to work faster and finish their tasks, and no extra challenge for those who finished quickly.

95. The science co-ordinator has made good progress in developing the subject since she took over the role of co-ordinator a year ago. Resources have been purchased and are now good. A good scheme of work has been prepared based upon national guidance and a record of pupils' attainment has been developed, although this is a recent innovation. She has undertaken some monitoring of the implementation of the scheme of work. Standards are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.

ART

96. Pupils' overall standards of attainment in art remain satisfactory since the last report, although they have improved in observational art work which is now of good quality. The school ethos values every pupil as an artist. High expectations encourage pupils to explore a range of two-dimensional techniques and ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory, and sometimes good progress, as when they paint and draw from reality.

97. At the start of the school year, each class creates a range of printed paper and fabric to cover the walls of the school. Their roller and block printed patterns are clear, crisply edged, well spaced and use a range of bright, strong colours. This bright backdrop acts as a foil for the volume of work displayed around the school.

98. Self-portraits use different materials ranging from detailed computer generated, head only, pictures to collages made up with paper curls, wool hair and button eyes. Year 1 practise skilful brush control to explore the range of tonality found in primary colours. This skill is used to good effect in a hue of autumn colours found in collage and direct observational drawings for the 'Harvest' project.

99. Pupils are encouraged to look closely at objects, draw from their direct observations and copy the styles of different artists. In these particular aspects of work, standards are good. Pupils are interested in and concentrate on their work. Year 2 pupils discuss the technique used by Van Gogh to work with small lines, and share their observations about shadow, light and dark as they work on an oil pastel copy of his painting 'Willows at Sunset.'

100. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge, use correct terminology, teach techniques and encourage pupils to evaluate their work. Programs are available for pupils to experiment with computer generated art images. Classrooms are well organised for artwork and pupils are provided with protective clothing. The well-stocked art resource room provides safe storage for a wide range of paints, inks, printing and collage materials. 'Woodyform' and clay are available for modelling but no three-dimensional work was seen at this stage of the school year.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards of attainment in design and technology meet expectations for the end of Key Stage 1 but below those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' achievements and rates of progress are satisfactory. The planned activities are in accord with National Curriculum expectations and include a suitable range of work involving paper, card, fabric and occasionally food technology. Little evidence was observed of work with wood and the use of tools, but these are planned for in the scheme of work when pupils make wheeled vehicles in Year 2. The work also addresses the issue of food packaging, and pupils discuss the appropriateness of label designs and the waste of materials which often accompany packaging.

102. Little evidence was available from the previous year as pupils had taken home most of the models and artefacts that they had made but evidence was seen of designed musical shakers, fireworks and finished felt toys of Elmer the elephant. During the course of the inspection, Year 2 pupils were engaged in making a card prototype of a birdhouse. Pupils had prepared their designs in draft first with indicative measurements. They discussed the safety aspects of the bird table including safety from cats, the sturdiness of the pillars and the kind of roof shape. They worked with interest and with much involvement, and their finished prototype lent much resemblance to their designs on paper, for example the pitch of the roof, the size of the hole to allow birds in and out and the overall design to prevent food blowing away. They showed appropriate cutting and pasting skills and use of sticky paper to join parts together. They understand the term design and use this in their discussions. A little teaching was observed in Year 2 and this was of satisfactory quality. Suitable discussion took place with the pupils about the shape of the bird house roof and its function. The pupils worked attentively on their designs and they could discuss bird tables in general. The subject was not being taught in Year 1 during the week of inspection.

103. The brief policy does not give enough information and guidance to staff about the way the work is tackled in the school or of reminders to staff about specific aims, such as the correct handling and use of tools, and processes in the subject. The precise scheme of work gives a progression of skills to be taught in the subject but there is little reference to sources of ideas and the different ways, for example in which moving parts on models might be constructed. Resources for the subject are adequate.

GEOGRAPHY

104. The last time the school was inspected standards in geography were above average and this made a significant contribution to the success of thematic work. Since then, there has been less emphasis placed on the teaching of geography in cross-curricular studies, and standards are now in line with expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. Younger pupils learn about the school's locality and have some opportunities to look at maps. They develop the notion of a plan view and draw basic objects to make a plan. They also have the chance to learn about features and compare places through educational visits. On visits to places such as Bourne Woods, and further afield to Clacton, pupils learn about physical features they would not normally see and compare them to their own town locality. In Year 2 pupils construct three-dimensional models of the local neighbourhood, including features such as nearby shops and the two schools. They learn to recognise and use geographical terms and ask a range of questions about places.

105. Teachers integrate work in geography into the main themes. They follow an outline scheme of work, which does not include detailed information on skills or concepts to be taught in different studies. For example, map skills are not taught sequentially throughout the school. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were asked to draw a plan of the school grounds for their work on designing and making bird tables. They found this task very difficult as it did not build on previous work on small-scale maps and plans, and did not involve a walk around the school grounds to help consider the relative size and positions of the playground, field and car park. Pupils made satisfactory progress on the task as they worked in small groups with much teacher input. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

106. Resources are adequate, and include some appropriate software programs. There was no co-ordinator in charge of the subject at the time of the inspection. Very little use is made of assessment procedures to inform planning or record pupils' achievements.

HISTORY

107. Insufficient evidence was seen during the inspection to judge overall standards of attainment of pupils at Key Stage 1. In the lessons seen, standards of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. As part of the 'Light and Dark' project, Year 1 pupils are using terms relating to the passing of time. Lessons focused on comparing and contrasting Vincent Van Gogh's painting of his bedroom with their own. All pupils could discuss the differences based on observation of the picture. Effective teaching incorporated language that helped pupils' understanding of such terminology as past, present, then, before and a long time ago. Their drawings distinguished between the ways of life at differing times in history. Although the learning objectives had been made clear, pupils' labelling did not differentiate between objects in use 'then' and 'now.' Their overall attainment showed an emerging awareness, rather than a clear understanding, of change over time.

108. A scrutiny of pupils' work in folders and on wall displays, discussions and the examination of teachers' records and resources indicate that the learning of historical skills, knowledge and understanding are not part of routine curriculum planning. The history focus in Year 2's current project on 'Trees' lists four items: the age of trees, changes trees may have seen, family trees and discussion about Van Gogh, but no detailed planning that links them to the National Curriculum or national guidance. This deterioration since the last inspection is largely due to the lack of a subject co-ordinator. However, recommendations concerning documentation in the previous report have been implemented and the scheme of work provides a planning structure that non-specialist teachers will find very helpful in understanding the objectives of teaching history. Written reports to parents for this foundation subject still omit an evaluation of skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. At the last inspection, standards were in line with those expected for the pupils' age, and since then, they have stayed the same. Few pupils were observed using ICT during the inspection, and this report is based on those few observations, discussions with pupils and teachers, and a scrutiny of pupils' work across the curriculum to look for the use of ICT.

110. Younger pupils use a range of appropriate programs to help them gain basic keyboard skills, and to practise and develop their control skills using a mouse. In Year 1, pupils use art programs to paint self-portraits and to produce night pictures. They make satisfactory progress when producing their images, which they label with simple text. They are taught to use a basic multimedia phonics program, and begin to use word-processing programs to produce labels and complete short pieces of writing. In Year 2 pupils make good use of ICT when learning about data handling in mathematics. They process weather data, information from dinner numbers and class surveys into different types of displays. Pupils learn to save and retrieve their work, and make satisfactory progress in developing basic word processing skills. They build on their use of painting programs from Year 1, for example, to try and create simple landscape pictures in a similar style to Van Gogh. They are able to programme a robot to follow a series of instructions.

111. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Teachers do not ensure that ICT tasks are included in their planning across the curriculum. Many opportunities are missed for pupils to use computers and practise and develop their ICT skills. For example, there are times when computers are switched on during lessons but not being used, when pupils could engage in literacy and numeracy tasks using simple word-processing and computational programs. All aspects of the National Curriculum are covered, but pupils only achieve satisfactory progress due to the limited time they spend on computers. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support when they use computers, and make good progress.

112. When working at computers, either individually or in pairs, pupils apply themselves very well and work enthusiastically. They help each other and share knowledge and skills co-operatively. The school has most recently updated its resources, and is developing a small suite of six new computers with Internet access. A new scheme of work, based on national guidelines identifying which skills should be taught by the end of each year, is in draft form. Assessment procedures are weak, and do not inform teachers' planning in ICT. The co-ordinator has not monitored standards in the subject, or led in-service training with the staff in the last year. Monitoring and assessment were both identified as areas to develop at the time of the last inspection, and insufficient progress has been made since then. Improvements have been delayed by the setting up of the National Grid for learning project (NGFL) and changes in the co-ordination of the subject.

MUSIC

113. The standard of attainment in music is in line with expectations for the end of Key Stage 1 representing a fall in standards reported at the last inspection when attainment was judged to be good. The reason for the fall in standards is the loss of specific musical expertise from the staff. The staff now relies more heavily on published materials and tapes. Overall, pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory National Curriculum expectations are fulfilled. However, there is a greater emphasis on singing than of composition because classes from the same year group are sometimes taught together making the groups too large for more individual and group work.

114. Pupils can name some of the instruments they hear in recorded music and know how some of the instruments such as flute are played. They can maintain a steady clapped pulse to recorded music and identify loud and quiet parts. They are able to talk about musical patterns within a piece of music such as a part which is later repeated. Their quality of singing is satisfactory.

115. Pupils take part in music lessons with suitable levels of enthusiasm, although their singing can lack enthusiasm and sparkle, much being dependent on the quality of accompaniment. They can sing with vigour when the accompaniment is good. Their behaviour is usually satisfactory but occasionally their enthusiasm is occasionally misdirected and they can sometimes move spontaneously in to song at the wrong time.

116. Good use is made of music before assemblies and the choice of music is often calming and reflective such as 'The Lark Ascending'. Reference is made to the composer and sometimes pupils are asked for their opinion about the music and to describe the feelings the music creates for them.

117. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was satisfactory. A suitable pace is maintained in most lessons but sometimes the pace of singing is sluggish. Some teachers have more confidence than others do in teaching music. Where it is better, explanations are clearer, for example one teacher was able to liken the musical pattern diagrammatically to a sandwich. She was also able to teach the technique of holding the rhythm sticks correctly and loosely so that they would resonate better.

118. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and the school has good resources of recorded music. The scheme of work gives good ideas for teaching music and a structure of work for each year group including composition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Standards are in line with expectations in physical education, similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Boys and girls perform equally well. There is a good balance between dance, gymnastics and games. In Year 1, pupils learn to move imaginatively during dance lessons, whilst changing the speed, level and direction of their movements. They show sound agility and co-ordination as they copy their partner's movements. They devise different ways of expressing feelings, such as happiness, when they move to instructions and to musical rhythms. In gymnastics lessons, Year 2 pupils improve their balance when making and holding shapes on small apparatus. They learn to control and develop their landings onto mats. The quality of teaching is no better than satisfactory because pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Demonstrations do not focus clearly on why pupils' work is of a high quality or how it could improve. Pupils' achievements are generally appropriate.

120. Teachers structure lessons well, providing warm up activities, paying appropriate attention to skills and techniques, and finishing with cool down sessions. They use praise to reward and encourage quality work, but more focused use could be made of demonstrations to teach specific skills and raise the standard of work. Pupils enjoy physical education, and they work hard, both individually and in pairs. They generally follow instructions promptly, and use equipment and apparatus sensibly.

121. The school makes good use of its hall and outside play areas during lessons. Resources are good, including a good range of small apparatus and gymnastics mats, and some good quality equipment for games activities. The Top Play scheme has been used to provide in-service training for teachers in games. A gymnastics club and a dance club are held after school each week, and an annual sports afternoon takes place on the school field. An appropriate scheme of work is in place. The co-ordinator has produced useful guidance for teachers, but has not had opportunities to observe lessons and give feedback to teachers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is below locally agreed expectations because insufficient time is given to the subject and, when it is taught, time devoted to it is minimal. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attainment ranged from poor to good but for most it was sound. Standards have declined since the last inspection. Their understanding of religious concepts and symbolism is still low when matched against the expectations for their age. It is not given the same status as other subjects and the main emphasis on the subject is implied through other subjects. For example, pupils are exposed to the natural world through their studies such as that on autumn. The school does not fulfil the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus.

123. Pupils learn about the main religious festivals and hear the Christmas story and act a nativity. They learn briefly and occasionally about some of the stories of Buddha and stories from the Hindu faith such as Rama and Sita. Occasionally, they hear stories from the Bible such as that of Zaccheus but these do not form a structure so that pupils can build up their knowledge and relate lessons to one another. Pupils do not have a sufficiently in-depth knowledge of the elements of the programme of study as set out in the school's religious education scheme which is based on the Agreed Syllabus.

124. Most of the teaching of religious education observed was undertaken by reading stories to pupils from different faiths and in the best of these, stick puppets were used to try and help pupils understand the story, for example of Rama and Sita. Pupils' listening skills are satisfactory but there are few opportunities for questioning and discussion to interest the pupils because of the brevity of the lessons. In two lessons observed the teaching took place whilst pupils were eating crisps at snack time and the subject was not afforded sufficient respect.

125. The brief, undated policy for the subject does not contain sufficient guidance for the staff, for example about the time for the subject and how it should be taught. The objectives in the policy are not fulfilled. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a new scheme of work, which is appropriate and carefully laid out but there is little evidence that it is being adhered to. Whilst she periodically takes in planning, she does not monitor the work in the subject sufficiently well. She has obtained a suitable range of learning resources and these are well stored and accessible for use.