

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Kelvedon, St. Mary's Church of England  
(Controlled) Primary School**

Kelvedon, near Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115109

Headteacher: Mr. John Brace

Reporting inspector: Kath Beck  
10090

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 225091

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Docwra Road  
Kelvedon  
Essex

Postcode: CO5 9DS

Telephone number: 01376 570411

Fax number: 01376 572408

e-mail

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. J. Becker

Date of previous inspection: 23/09/1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Kath Beck 10090	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology  Special educational needs	What sort of school is it?  How high are the standards?  How well are the pupils taught?  How well is the school led and managed?  What should the school do to improve further?
Doug Binfield 13481	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.  How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Martyn Richards 7694	Team inspector	Science  Religious education  Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?  (Spiritual, moral, social and cultural)  How well is the school led and managed?  (Finance)
Evelyne Lavender 1359	Team inspector	Mathematics  Geography  History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?  (Curriculum)
David Lee 21003	Team inspector	English  Design and Technology  Physical Education	How well does the school care for its pupils?  (Assessment)
Jacqueline Grieve 2343	Team inspector	Art  Music  Under fives	

The inspection contractor was:

Quinset  
Draycott  
Chappel Road  
Great Tey  
Colchester  
CO6 1JP

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>32</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Kelvedon, St. Mary's Church of England (Controlled) Primary is a large school with 328 children aged four to eleven on roll. There are very few children from the ethnic minorities or with English as an additional language. 56 children are on the school's register of children with special educational needs, mostly for additional help in literacy and numeracy. Achievement on entry is broad, ranging from children with special educational needs to very bright children. Children speak well, but few can read. Mostly achievement is similar to that which is expected for children aged four.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good and effective school. Children make a good start to their education. This is built on by very good teaching so that the standards achieved at the age of eleven are above those in other schools in almost all subjects. A few children achieve very high standards in mathematics. Achievements are very good in music and some children do very well in aspects of art, design and technology and information and communication technology. The energetic leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are having a strong impact on standards. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Children achieve good standards in almost all subjects, with very good standards in music.
- The headteacher and senior management team are highly influential in helping teachers to change their classroom practice to bring about rising standards.
- Very good teaching overall, with some excellent teaching in English, music, information and communication technology and design and technology. Very good specialist teaching for children with special educational needs.
- The very good partnership with parents and strong links with the community enhance achievement significantly. Children are cared for very well.
- Excellent attendance, very good standards of behaviour and attitudes to school, play a very important role in children's achievements.

#### **What could be improved**

- A long term vision for the development of the school over the next four years. This should safeguard the current strengths of the school and the pace of development in order to improve standards further, particularly in comparison to similar schools. The plan should direct and unite the energy and enthusiasm of governors, senior management and staff. In this way, a clear understanding about the distinctive roles and responsibilities of all groups and their part in the development of the school can be clarified.
- Minor issues for improvement include: a) the consistent provision of more challenging work for the brighter children in English and science; b) increasing children's experience of good quality literature, which enthuses them about books and gives many ideas for story writing; c) the role of the learning support assistants so that they are effectively deployed in all classes to raise standards; e) making sure the work for children with special educational needs is appropriate in all lessons.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good progress in dealing with the key issues and criticisms in the last report. Standards have improved in all subjects, rising sharply in music, design and technology and religious education. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators have increased opportunities to check the work in all classes and this has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching. Policies and programmes of work for all subjects, support teaching and learning very effectively, so that children make good and sometimes very good year on year progress in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. Children's achievements are checked rigorously. Information from these checks is used very well to plan work that challenges children to work hard. However, there is still work to be done in challenging the brighter children in English and science. Provision, including an outside play area, for the under fives is now good. In addition, accommodation has been improved significantly to provide a very good information and communication technology suite and library. A much stronger

partnership with parents and very good links with the community are having a significant impact on achievement.



## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			*similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	A	B	C
mathematics	C	B	B	C
science	D	C	C	E

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average      E

\* schools with under 8% free school meals. The school is close to the top of this band.

Standards are good. Since 1996, the school has improved standards in English, mathematics and science. The table indicates that in 1999, the school was doing well in English and mathematics when compared to all schools. In the same subjects, it achieved similar results to schools with children from similar backgrounds. Science was the weakest of the three subjects, but standards have improved in the past year.

The school's targets for 2000, 76% of children to reach levels expected nationally in English were accurate and were met precisely. The target of 72% in mathematics was exceeded. Targets are not set in science, but over 90% of children reached the national level. Children with special educational needs did well. All achieved at least level 3<sup>1</sup> in all subjects. Similar targets for 2001 are likely to be exceeded. Following detailed analysis of children's recent progress, targets for children's achievements at the end of Year 6 in 2002 have been raised, rightly, to more challenging levels, 83% in English and 85% in mathematics. The school is on course to reach these. Improvements in teaching, learning and the curriculum brought about by the committed response to the previous inspection are taking time to work through the school.

Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that children aged seven and eleven are achieving good standards in all subjects, except music where standards are very good and religious education, which is satisfactory. In art, design and technology and information and communication technology, some children are achieving very good standards. Children read well but do not read a sufficiently wide range of books to enthuse them and gain ideas for their own stories. Children with special educational needs make very good progress in meeting the targets set for them when they work in small groups or individually with the specialist teacher. Work in some classes is not always set to the right level for them and this hinders their progress. At the age of five, children achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development and mathematics. They do well in all the other areas of learning<sup>2</sup> except in communication, language and literacy where achievement is similar to that found in other schools.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are enthusiastic, keen to attend school and often

<sup>1</sup> Levels go from W, level 1, level 2 (nationally expected level at age seven), level 3, level 4 (nationally expected level at age 11), level 5 and level 6 (sometimes found in primary schools but usually found in secondary schools).

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the levels children are expected to achieve at age five, in six areas of learning, for children in reception - communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development, personal, social and emotional development.

	become absorbed in what they are doing.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. As children behave very well they can concentrate and work hard in their lessons without interruption.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Older children are trusted to work in the computer suite without the constant supervision of the teacher. They do not betray this trust.
Attendance	Excellent.

Children learn at a good and sometimes very good rate as they attend school regularly, have very good attitudes towards their work and behave very well, so there is little interruption to their studies. Children take pride in presenting their work in an attractive manner and do their best at all times.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In lessons observed, all the teaching was satisfactory or better. 6% was excellent, 24% very good, 44% good, and 26% satisfactory. English is taught well, which allows children to write in an interesting way, using accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. Although children read well, surprisingly they do not enjoy it as much as other areas of the curriculum. Their knowledge of stories and authors is limited and hinders the breadth of experience they can draw on in their own stories. Mathematics is also taught well, so that children can use these skills in the other subjects, for example, geography and science to solve problems and analyse data. Teachers' planning is thorough and very effective, allowing children to build up their knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate as they move through the school. A warm sense of humour and teachers' enthusiasm for learning are catching. Imaginative and stimulating lessons have the children 'sitting on the edge of their seats' and motivate them to do very well. Teachers know the children very well and set targets for improvement regularly. This too motivates children to do their best. Teachers use a wide range of learning activities to meet the different ways children learn. In doing so, they have limited the difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Brighter children do well in mathematics, instrumental music and art, but often work is too easy for them in English and science. In the reception class, teaching is good, but tasks are not always as demanding across all areas of experience. Children make better gains in their learning when teachers make clear links with different areas of the curriculum, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, writing and art.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the reception class and Years 1 and 2, very good in Years 3 to 6. There are many opportunities for children of all abilities to learn through practical activities, which link different areas of the curriculum and make learning real and exciting. Opportunities in music and links with the community significantly enhance the curriculum for the older children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Specialist teaching enables children to make very good progress, especially in literacy. The school is very successful in promoting children's confidence and self-esteem. There is a small amount of work to do to improve support in classes.
Provision for pupils'	Very good provision for children's social development in which the school

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	council and annual residential visit are important elements. Provision for children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The care and interest the school takes in the children means they are confident and learn well.

The significant improvement in the school's partnership with parents means they are consulted on issues such as the organisation of mixed age classes, and their views are valued. Substantial financial help from parents has improved resources. High parental support with homework assists children's good progress. Children often learn from real situations, visits to places of interest, both local and farther afield. Art, music, drama, investigative science, information and communication technology are taught enthusiastically and enrich children's experiences. Teachers check children's progress very well and have a very good view about their achievements and what they need to do to improve.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The energetic and determined drive of the headteacher and senior staff to improve standards over the past four years has been successful. The school's aims and values are reflected very well in its work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities appropriately, but have yet to agree with the staff, the school's long-term strategic development and how this should be managed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and key staff have a very good understanding of what works well and why. They take very positive action to resolve weaknesses and raise both the quality of teaching and standards.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Recent improvements to the accommodation, especially in information and communication technology, the library and under fives are having a significant impact on standards.

There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The success of the school rests on the determined and energetic drive of the headteacher and senior staff, to improve standards in all subjects and raise the quality of teaching, so that it is consistent and all children receive a high standard of education. The vision and commitment to develop the school in the longer term and raise standards further are shared between the governors, senior management and staff. However, ways of working together to achieve this are not. Each group has a different view about the ways that the school should develop. The lack of a long-term plan that is shared and agreed among these groups means some energy, enthusiasm and talents are undirected. Governors ensure the resources are used to the full benefit of the children, but they have yet to apply them fully to children's standards of achievement, quality of teaching and other improvements, especially in relation to other schools.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The significant improvements made since the last inspection.</li> <li>Children's standards of achievement.</li> <li>The quality teaching.</li> <li>The aims and values the school promotes.</li> <li>High standards of behaviour.</li> <li>Very good relationships with parents.</li> <li>The school is led and managed well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about children's progress.</li> <li>Arrangements for homework for children in Years 3 to 6.</li> <li>More opportunities for activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support fully the parents' positive views. The consultation meetings about children's progress are sufficient, but the annual written reports could be improved. While parents would like to see improvements, arrangements for homework in Years 3 to 6 are good and there are very good opportunities for children in these year groups to take up activities outside their lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

- 1 Taking into account results of national tests and lesson observations, standards are good for children aged seven and eleven. This is a significant improvement since 1996 when standards were judged to be typical of most schools.
- 2 National tests for children aged eleven in 1999 confirm that standards were better in English and mathematics, than in other schools nationally. Setting children in ability groups to learn mathematics did much to help some achieve standards normally expected in secondary school. Standards were similar to other schools in science. When compared to schools with children from comparable backgrounds, results were broadly the same in English and mathematics and well below average in science. However, thorough and detailed analysis of achievement and progress of children currently attending the school, indicate standards are rising significantly in all subjects. Teachers make it clear to children how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- 3 The substantial improvement in the quality of teaching is enabling more children, especially in reception to Year 5, to do at least as well as and frequently better than children in other schools. In analysing its data, the school has set itself challenging targets for the percentage of children to achieve nationally expected levels in English (83%) and mathematics (85%)<sup>3</sup> in 2002. These are higher than the targets for the year 2001. On current performance the school is on course to reach these targets.
- 4 The school has recognised the challenge of improving its results when compared to schools with children from similar backgrounds. As the number of children on roll entitled to free school meals has reduced significantly over the past two years, results have become average, rather than better than those in similar schools. That said, evidence from research by an independent organisation and the local authority shows that the very good teaching in the juniors is building on what children know when they leave the infants at age seven. This enables children to make much faster progress than those in other schools in English and mathematics. Efforts to raise achievement are being tackled in a determined and successful way. However, the lack of a long term plan means there are differences of opinion between governors, headteacher and senior management and staff about the best way to go about this. Bright children are challenged very well in mathematics, but there is still work to do in English and science.

- 5 Checks on what children know and can do on entry to the reception class show that

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<sup>3</sup> Nationally expected level at age 11 is level 4. Level 5 is a higher standard and level 6 is normally expected in secondary school.

children have a very wide range of abilities, from those with special educational needs to very bright. While many have good speaking and listening skills, very few are able to read, and so achievement is mostly similar to that of other four year olds starting school. Good and sometimes very good teaching in the areas of learning means that at the age of five, standards are very good in personal, social and emotional development. They are good in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development, but typical of achievement for five year olds in communication, language and literacy. Children's very good levels of independence and ability to play together well are much better than in many schools. This is continued throughout the school, where there are many opportunities for children to use their initiative and make decisions about their work, which improves standards.

- 6 At age seven, standards have fluctuated with children achieving very good results in tests in reading, writing and science in 1998, but average results in 1999. In 1999, in reading and writing, they were typical of the national average compared to all schools but well below average in reading and below average in writing, when compared to similar schools. Girls did slightly better than boys in all subjects. This variation stemmed from a lack of continuity of good teaching. Action taken to improve the situation was successful. The school also analysed the results for strengths and weaknesses in achievements and used the information well to set targets for individual improvement. However, there is evidence that brighter children are not being challenged as well as they might be in English and science.
- 7 In current work, children's achievements at age seven and eleven are good in all areas of the curriculum except music where they are very good and religious education, where they are satisfactory. Some children achieve very well in aspects of information and communication technology, design and technology and art. This stems from the consistently good and sometimes very good quality of teaching experienced by the children as they progress through the school. Teaching is very demanding and pays good attention to teaching basic skills in all subjects.
- 8 From the scrutiny of work and lesson observations, there is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. This is because the school has considered very carefully the different ways in which boys and girls learn. Teachers provide many different kinds of activities that capture children's interest and enthuse them about learning so they achieve well.
- 9 Children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are good. Children in the infants and juniors are confident when expressing their point of view. They discuss their work enthusiastically, keen to share their success and understanding. Dramatic productions, especially in Years 5 and 6, do much to promote children's confidence in public speaking. Children acquire quickly a range of skills to help them read well. Teachers in all year groups encourage children to use their good reading skills to find out information for other subjects. Surprisingly, children's knowledge of different authors is limited and reading is not a pursuit that many children enjoy.
- 10 Writing in both the infants and juniors reflects the children's imagination and confidence in expressing ideas. For example, young children wrote imaginative letters of apology from 'the wolf' to 'grandma' during literacy sessions about 'Little Red

Riding Hood'. An older child described 'Aunt Spiker' in Roald Dahl's book 'James and the Giant Peach', "As tall as the starry sky, like a giraffe with her head held high". Mostly, children's work shows good spelling and punctuation. Handwriting is usually neat so that work is well presented. Junior children usually write in a consistent style, but do not always join their letters.

- 11 At age eleven, children are competent mathematicians. Throughout the school, teachers develop the children's speed and efficiency in mental arithmetic. Children are taught the importance of mathematics in other subjects, such as history, geography, science, information and communication technology and design and technology. This gives real purpose to learning mathematics. For example, in geography, children used different kinds of graphs to analyse information about favourite holiday destinations. They also created a table of different prices for holidays. The table included practical examples such as price reductions of 25%, costs for a child or self-catering, hotel and currency conversions.
- 12 Children aged eleven know about the important scientific processes of experiment and investigation. They devise simple experiments and know that it is important to make the experiments fair and accurate. Results are recorded neatly in charts and tables which form scientific reports.
- 13 Very good teaching in some lessons, resources and purposeful links with other National Curriculum subjects are raising standards in information and communication technology significantly. Many children have computers at home and the school is increasing substantially, children's knowledge and skills in the subject, especially in Year 4.
- 14 Achievements in music are very good. This is because there are several teachers with good qualifications and expertise in teaching music. They enthuse the children to reach high standards in singing, composition and instrumental music. Over half the children learn to play a musical instrument well. The school orchestra and choir are very successful in promoting children's achievement and enthusiasm for music.
- 15 Standards have risen sharply in religious education from a low base in 1996. A new programme of work has only been implemented for a short time and so children aged eleven, have not yet learned as much as they might have done. Appropriate time is set aside for the subject so the syllabus is taught properly.
- 16 Good standards in all other subjects stem from:
  - the good amount of time set aside to teach them;
  - purposeful links between subjects, especially history and geography;
  - use of the local community to make learning real;
  - many opportunities to use initiative. For example in art, children's paintings reflect the use of artistic skills and imaginative ideas;
  - good teaching which allows children to be creative, especially in design and technology;
  - a broad programme of games, dance, swimming and gymnastics in physical education;
  - thorough programmes of work which support children's year on year development of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 17 The percentage of children on the school's register for special educational needs is less than in other schools. A specialist teacher gives additional support to children with specific needs, individually or in small groups. Provision and teaching for special educational needs was a strength of the school in 1996. This is still the case.

Specialist teaching is very good and children make very good progress towards the demanding targets set out for them in their individual education plans. Children know well how they are progressing towards their targets. This together with very good relationships between the children and specialist teacher means children have high self-esteem and achieve well for their abilities. Clear programmes are set out for all children to follow up in class. This is done well in some classes with the additional help of learning support assistants. In others, the work is not followed up consistently and learning support assistants, other than those who work specifically with the special educational needs co-ordinator, are unsure about their role in raising achievement.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 18 Children's attitudes to learning are very good from age four to eleven. Children are eager to come to school and show keen interest in lessons and other activities. They show good concentration, work hard and co-operate very well when working in small groups. There are many very good opportunities for children to use their initiative. For example:

- finding out geographical and historical information about Kelvedon;
- writing and compiling the school magazine 'Hot Stuff';
- composing imaginative poetry and stories;
- taking part in the 'Anglia in Bloom' competition;
- performing carols on a local radio station.

The school's ethos of promoting self-motivation and a lively enquiring approach to learning has been implemented fully and successfully. It is a significant factor in the drive to improve standards.

- 19 Behaviour is very good and has improved since the last inspection. A new behaviour policy was introduced in 1999, following extensive consultations with the children and their parents. Children are very clear about expectations and show high levels of respect for the school rules. High standards of behaviour are a consistent feature in lessons, the playground and the dining hall. A particularly good example was observed during a rainy lunchtime. The children were fully absorbed in play activities in the classrooms and computer work or counting coupons to exchange for books in open areas of the school. Relationships and behaviour were high quality throughout. Very few instances of bullying are reported. There were no exclusions during the last year. Parents are fully justified in their very positive views of children's behaviour.

- 20 Relationships and the provision for personal development are very good. All staff show a warm, friendly and supportive approach which sets a good example and gives children confidence to learn from their mistakes. The children are polite, helpful to one another and to visitors. Children's personal development is enhanced significantly by the close links with St. Mary's Church and the local community. This



enables children to participate in special projects, such as; the Anglia 'Best Bloom' school award, which the children won in 1999; the development of the wildlife area in the school grounds; and entertaining the local elderly. Children take pride in carrying out their responsibilities around the school in a mature manner. These include looking after the library, keeping the school tidy, making sure other children behave well, electing house captains and contributing to the work of the School Council. Year 6 children give support to those in the reception year and publish a very informative and amusing termly magazine. Older children are trusted to work in the computer suite with a minimum of supervision. They do not betray this trust.

- 21 A stimulating programme of school visits to places close to the school and further away, extends children's knowledge and experience. Children live as Tudors for a day at Kentwell Hall and this makes learning lively and real. The orchestra and choir contribute to a number of local events. After school clubs for sport, music and gardening activities have a total membership of over 180 children. Nearly one sixth of the parents replying to the questionnaire feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection evidence does not support this view.
- 22 Attendance is excellent and higher than at the time of the previous inspection. In the academic year 1999/2000 attendance rose to 96.3% and there was no unauthorised absence. This compares very favourably with the national picture for primary schools in recent years. Punctuality is very good. Teachers make a prompt start to lessons throughout the day. All these factors help to enhance children's achievements substantially.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

- 23 In 1996, teaching was judged to be good in Years 1 to 6 and sound for children in the under fives. It was very good for children with special educational needs. However, 10 lessons were unsatisfactory as teachers' expectations were too low, so that work did not match children's needs and abilities, especially in the under fives. A key issue at the time of the last inspection was to raise the level of teachers' expectations across the curriculum, particularly for the brighter children.
- 24 Since 1996 changes of staff and the strong influence of the headteacher and senior staff have improved the quality of teaching substantially, so that it is now good in the under fives and very good overall in the rest of the school. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory, with 30% very good or excellent and 44% good. This plays an important role in children's achievement and progress as they move through the school. Weaknesses identified during the last inspection have been overcome, although there is still some work to do in raising achievement of brighter children in English and science. Excellent teaching in some lessons increases children's knowledge, skills and understanding rapidly in music, information and communication technology, design technology and English. This is because teachers have high level skills and expertise in these subjects which they convey to the children in imaginative and creative ways.
- 25 In the under fives, teaching is very good in personal, social and emotional development. Activities successfully promote children's abilities to help each other, especially with fastening buttons and shoes after physical education lessons; listening to each other and their awareness of the needs of other children. Children with special educational needs are supported very well so that they settle quickly and become effective members of the class. Teaching is good in the other areas of

learning. Many practical experiences make learning real and purposeful especially when teachers link the different areas of experience. For example, children took on the role of doctor and patient in the doctor's surgery. In doing so, they played creatively and learned the importance of writing for prescriptions and designed posters to show how to find the surgery.

- 26 Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together and provide very good role models for the children. They have good understanding of the needs of children of this age. Planning of what children should learn in the long and short term is thorough and implemented very effectively. Expectations of what children can do are very high. This very positive and encouraging atmosphere allows children to try out their skills, especially in writing and speaking in front of the class, without fear of making a mistake. Their efforts are valued highly and this gives them confidence to do their best, work independently of the adults and behave very well. Teachers ensure time is used profitably and support staff are deployed very well. Frequent checks on children's progress, especially for children with special educational needs, means tasks are planned to meet their particular needs.
- 27 Much of the very good teaching, in the infant and junior classes stems from:
- thorough planning, which allows teachers to build systematically on what children have learned before. Lesson plans are detailed. Teachers make very clear to the children, at the beginning of the lesson, what they are going to learn. This means children are clear about what they have to do and how it builds on previous work;
  - teachers' high expectations of what children can do. This means that tasks challenge children intellectually to make decisions about their work so that they use skills learned in other subjects creatively. Teachers prepare captivating, original and demanding tasks which motivate children to work hard and become absorbed in interesting work and behave very well;
  - a wide range of teaching methods, practical, written, investigative and problem solving activities, individual and group work, which suit the different ways children learn and achieve best. This use of a variety of methods is very effective and is having a significant impact on standards across the curriculum, especially minimising the difference in achievement between boys and girls.
  - very good questioning which stimulates children's thoughts and allows them to extend their ideas;
  - very good checks on children's progress, which are made clear to the children, so that they know the ways in which they need to improve;
  - teachers' good knowledge and level of expertise in all subjects of the National Curriculum, but especially music, art and information and communication technology. This is particularly true in mathematics, where advice has been sought from the local secondary school, so that work meets brighter children's needs and enables them to achieve at a very high level for their age;
  - basic skills in all subjects are taught well. Good attention to mental arithmetic skills means children are proficient in this aspect of mathematics. Literacy skills are taught well, although older children do not join their letters in a fluent joined style as much as they should.
- 28 Teachers use a good range of practical resources, visits to places of interest and visitors who share their specialist skills, to deepen and extend children's learning. Learning support assistants carry out a wide range of duties which support both teachers, and children. In classes where teachers have made clear what the assistant is to do and what children are to do and learn, the support is very effective. In these cases, they intervene when they notice children are making errors, or they ask questions that challenge children's thinking or carry out observations to help teachers plan new work for particular children. In some lessons they take

responsibility for children with special educational needs, or small groups of children, teaching skills such as the names and sounds of letters, adding much to the teacher's introduction and enabling progress. However, this is not consistent throughout the school.

- 29 Relationships between all staff and the children are very good. Teachers use a warm sense of humour and praise to ensure children are confident about learning well. A strong feature of the high standard of specialist teaching for children with special educational needs is the way in which children's self-esteem is raised. As a result, children feel very confident about their ability to do their best and make progress. Children's work is displayed attractively and shows the high value teachers place on their efforts. This raises children's self-esteem and pride in presenting their work well.
- 30 Children's work is marked conscientiously. Children know what they have done well and what they need to work on next. In lessons, teachers spend time well, checking children's progress, answering questions, correcting errors and evaluating work so that children can improve.

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

- 31 Very good progress has been made in improving the curriculum since the last inspection. All the areas of weakness noted in the previous report have been put right. There are policies and schemes of work in all subjects including science, geography, religious education and design and technology. This has brought about good standards across the curriculum, with standards rising sharply in design and technology and religious education. The curriculum is now a broad and vibrant one, especially in the juniors, with a strong emphasis on practical work and first-hand experiences. Teachers' imaginative ideas for classroom activities motivate the children to apply themselves so that they learn quickly. They are given choices, encouraged to be independent and to make decisions about their work and its presentation. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and standards in English and mathematics are rising steadily. In the juniors, the decision to teach children in Years 3 to 6 in ability groups in mathematics has contributed to improved achievement.
- 32 There are many strengths in the curriculum, particularly in music, but also in art and design and technology, where some work is of a high standard. Where possible these and other subjects are linked together to make work richer and more meaningful. For example, a project based on a study of Kelvedon involved English, mathematics, geography, history and art. Children researched the history of the area, gathered information about transport and interpreted it in graphs, and designed and made a banner representing the main aspects of the village. Specialist facilities on site include a covered swimming pool and a new computer suite. Maximum use is made of these to broaden studies in physical education and information and communication technology. The new Curriculum 2000 has been implemented well.

This together with the national guidance and school programmes of work, forms the basis of teachers' planning of what children should learn and when. Teachers take great care to ensure that children do not repeat work they have done before and that knowledge and skills are systematically built on from year to year.

- 33 The curriculum for the children in the foundation stage is good. It is based on the six areas of learning.<sup>4</sup> Teachers plan tasks carefully so that children learn and use skills across the different areas of learning. This promotes successfully, good standards across the curriculum. Children enjoy a wide range of practical, written and investigative tasks that are particularly effective in promoting their personal, social and emotional development. Children soon become confident, making decisions about their work. This raises their self-esteem and gives a good foundation for school life. Role play, for instance 'the doctor's surgery', extends and enriches children's communication skills. When they tell the class about the work they have been doing, most children are confident and articulate. National guidance for literacy and numeracy for children of this age is followed, giving children a good foundation for work in the National Curriculum. The outdoor area is new and the school is evaluating the way it can be used to best effect, taking into account the requirements of the new foundation curriculum.
- 34 Children with special educational needs enjoy a similar curriculum to their friends. They receive specific help to enhance literacy skills and, in a very few cases, to improve their behaviour so that they can learn well. Their full participation in all subjects of the National Curriculum raises their self-esteem and enables them to find success. This gives them the confidence and enthusiasm to work hard at subjects they find more difficult. Each child has a programme of work to be completed in class, linked to their individual education plan. This is implemented well in some classes, especially where there is a learning support assistant nominated to help children with special educational needs. In these classes, work planned by teachers meets children's needs. In others, work is sometimes too hard and children find it hard to keep up. Sometimes, learning support assistants are unclear about the way in which they can support children most effectively.
- 35 The headteacher and staff attach considerable importance to ensuring that the different groups of children in the school have an equal chance to benefit from its curriculum and teaching. They analyse assessment results carefully to make sure that the needs of boys and of girls are being properly met. Their policy for teaching and learning has made them very aware of the possibility of gender differences in opportunity, and as a result such differences have been minimised. They identify gifted and talented children, and try to ensure that their particular needs are met. While good progress has been made in this respect since the last inspection, more remains to be done. In English and science in particular, bright children, and those who learn the subjects quickly, sometimes find the work too easy.

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<sup>4</sup> Personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development.

- 36 The wish to be involved with the community underpins the school's mission statement. It takes part in numerous national and local initiatives to the benefit of the curriculum. For example, the 'Eastern Electricity Technology Project', which led to an award for developing a wildlife area within the school grounds. In a joint project with the local museum, children wrote songs and recorded them on a CD to celebrate the Millennium. They have worked with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican and maintained musical links with a local school for children with autism. Members of the local community, including grandparents, have visited the school to talk about their experiences during the Second World War as part of Year 6 studies in history and geography.
- 37 There is a very good range of extra-curricular sporting and musical activities. Children play football, netball, athletics and rounders and take part in sporting competitions between local schools with a good record of success. The school has a strong musical tradition. A very much higher percentage of children than normal receive tuition in instruments such as the recorder, saxophone, clarinet, guitar and violin, and there is a thriving orchestra and choir. The gardening club meets in the summer and is run by a school governor. These activities out of lessons significantly enhance standards in science, music and physical education.
- 38 Profitable use is made of visits to places of interest such as Kentwell Hall which is historically 'all so real' as one child described it. A school journey is organised to Wales each year, providing opportunities for children to learn about a different environment in another social setting. This is part of the school's good personal, social and health programme. Year 6 attend a day that is specially organised by the local emergency services to learn about the dangers of drugs misuse and their own safety.
- 39 When last inspected, moral and social provision was found to be good, there were some weaknesses in provision for spiritual and cultural development. The school has made good progress since 1996. The arrangements made for children to grow spiritually, morally and culturally are good. Provision for social development is very good.
- 40 In addition to the many opportunities provided in religious education lessons, and daily assembly, there are frequent occasions for children to reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes and values. In lessons they learn how events, such as the Second World War, may be seen in different ways, and they develop a tolerance of individual difference. They are moved by the experience of others, expressing in their writing how it felt to be a refugee or to be evacuated from their home. They respond to the beauty of the world around them, to its colours and variety. This can be seen clearly in children's drawings, paintings and work about the environment. They realise the duty on them to protect it. They learn the strength that comes from being able to say 'sorry', and the importance of fairness, honesty and justice. Parents are right in their high regard for the school's work in these areas.

- 41 Cultural development is promoted through activities such as theatre visits, library trips, visiting musicians and the regular Book Fair. The visits by a story teller who specialises in Dickens is a particularly strong feature of the programme. Older children happily take responsibility for younger ones, walking in pairs with them to church for main services, helping them at playtime and around the school. The school council gives an early experience of democratic procedures such as representing others, and voting. Children's have a strong sense of life in the school and in the village as a community. The school's good record of raising funds for charitable organisations is evidence of social responsibility in a wider world.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 42 There is very good provision for the children's welfare and guidance which means children learn in a very caring and supportive environment. This is much appreciated by the children and commended by their parents.
- 43 Effective arrangements have been established for dealing with health, safety and child protection. Concerns in the previous report arising from a health and safety audit were addressed quickly and procedures for the organisation of school visits improved. Safety considerations receive careful attention and are regularly reviewed by governors and staff. The personal, social and health education programme is good and includes provision for sex education and information about drug abuse. Staff have received training in first aid so that illness and accidents are dealt with properly.
- 44 The very good procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development, enable staff to track individual children's progress and school performance against all schools and schools with children from similar backgrounds. Records for each child are regularly updated and the information used well to plan targets for improvement. The recently introduced scheme by which children, with the help of teachers, set their own targets for improvement, especially in English and mathematics, has produced promising results. Children enjoy taking part in this process which gives them an incentive to do well.
- 45 The arrangements for monitoring behaviour are very good and show an improvement since the last inspection. Children's involvement in last year's review of the behaviour policy provided a fresh focus on behaviour. Their views were greatly valued and are reflected in the ten simple rules set out in the new behaviour code of conduct. The rewards for good behaviour are popular features. They include stickers, house points, displays of work, commendations from the headteacher and a record in the 'gold book' of achievement and success read out during assemblies. Instances of misbehaviour are dealt with quickly and fairly.
- 46 Children with special educational needs are fully integrated in all activities. Their needs are carefully considered and those with behavioural difficulties receive a high level of support so that they become effective members of the school community.
- 47 The systems for monitoring attendance are excellent. The previous report mentioned defects in the completion of registers and in follow up procedures. Such matters have been rectified. Teachers ensure registration is completed quickly and efficiently. Attendance records are exemplary. Unexplained absences are now followed up immediately by the welfare assistant. There is good liaison with the education welfare officer who visits half-termly. This means attendance rates are very high and have a significant impact on achievement.
- 48 A key issue in the inspection four years ago stated that the school should develop arrangements to assess children's work, ensuring that this assessment was then

used effectively to help plan teaching and learning programmes. The school has responded very well to this and now has very effective and comprehensive arrangements for assessing children's achievements and progress. Teachers make thorough, termly checks on what children know and can do in English, including reading, mathematics and science. This, linked to an equally thorough analysis of children's annual test results, has ensured that teachers know what to plan in order to meet their children's needs. These checks, together with improvements to the quality of teaching are largely why standards have risen over the last few years. Standards are continuing to rise steadily in these subjects, but it is taking time for improvements to work their way through the school.

- 49 The school has developed a simple system for tracking children's progress, focusing on those who need extra help, and highlighting those who are progressing quicker than might normally be the case. Thus, school targets are becoming much more accurate in reflecting the rising achievements across the school. As a result, planning, teaching and learning are much more focused on what children need to learn to do well. Teaching junior children in ability groups for mathematics is proving valuable in providing increasing challenge. Achievement is, at times, very high. Marking is improving well. Teachers are regularly commenting on strengths and weaknesses, and setting children targets for improvement in their books. They are encouraging children to take note of what they are saying by allowing a few minutes at the start of lessons so that children can read and act on them.
- 50 Children with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans that include challenging targets for improvement. These are appropriate and reviewed regularly. The progress of children with specific difficulties, whether learning or behavioural, is checked frequently by the special educational needs co-ordinator to maintain a programme of support which develops children's confidence in learning.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 51 Parents are very pleased with the school and praise the significant improvements made since the last inspection. These very positive views are fully justified. There is an extremely high level of satisfaction with the standards children achieve, the quality of teaching and the way the school is led and managed. Parents also appreciate the attitudes and values promoted and the high standards of behaviour.
- 52 The school's partnership with parents is significantly better than in 1996. There is a welcoming atmosphere and queries are handled in a friendly and competent manner. Parents are given good advice about the work children are to cover. They are invited to curriculum meetings and to an open evening in the summer when they can see children's work. Full information about current events is included in the weekly newsletters. The governors' annual report gives a very helpful account of the year's

activities and the annual meeting is well attended. The school values parents' views, for example, in the consultation arrangements about the home school contract and the introduction of mixed age classes.

- 53 The majority of parents are now impressed with the quality of information about children's progress and with the homework arrangements, although 20% of the responses to the questionnaires disagree. Inspection evidence shows that parents receive very good advice about their child's progress at the consultation meetings with teachers. There is, however, scope for the annual written reports to include a sharper emphasis on standards and areas for development.
- 54 Parental involvement in the work of the school is very good. They help with reading and activities during lessons. Others assist with swimming and educational visits. Parents offer encouragement and guidance to the children in completing work undertaken at home. Homework arrangements have greatly improved since the last inspection. The revised homework scheme introduced in September 1999 is successful and has been further improved this term by a more consistent approach in the work set for children in Years 3 to 6.
- 55 The parent teacher association organises many successful fund raising activities including an annual fireworks display for the village. Proceeds are used well to improve facilities and educational resources for the benefit of the children.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 56 Leadership and management are very good, especially that of the headteacher and senior staff. They have a very clear view of the educational direction the school is taking and the kind of school this should be. This is a significant improvement since 1996 when the headteacher was new to the school and was said to be giving a strong lead in developing the school curriculum. In the last four years this has been built on to give an energetic and determined drive to improve standards in all aspects of the school, but especially teaching and learning and the children's standards of achievement. The success of this can be seen in the strong team of high calibre teachers and rising standards across the curriculum. In the case of religious education, design and technology and information and communication technology standards are rising sharply. This determination has also won the school additional



funds from national initiatives to improve provision, especially for the under fives, for information and communication technology and the school grounds.

- 57 A key issue in 1996 was to develop the role of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators so that they had opportunities to check the quality of teaching and disseminate good practice. The high standard of teaching found during this inspection shows a very good response and commitment to this issue that has been very successful in improving teaching and standards.
- 58 Co-ordinators, including members of the senior management team, have responsibility for the standards in their subjects. English and mathematics co-ordinators have checked the successful implementation of national initiatives. Co-ordinators know well the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and provide support for teachers to improve their skills and practice. This was very clear in information and communication technology. The co-ordinator has produced detailed, but easy to follow instructions for teachers and children to learn how to operate computer programmes. This has enabled teachers to raise their skills and knowledge considerably so that children learn at a fast rate. The children can follow the instructions too, after the teacher's introduction, and work confidently and independently.
- 59 The needs of the children are paramount. A very good teaching and learning policy has been implemented successfully and consistently throughout the school. This sets out the expectations for teachers of the varied ways in which children learn and methods teachers should use. As a result the differences in achievement between boys and girls have been minimised. This policy is monitored continuously, but informally and rigorously by the headteacher. Teachers are expected to change weaknesses in their practice, that are identified during observations by the headteacher or co-ordinators, immediately. An effective, but informal annual review of teachers' work, which has impacted standards in individual classrooms, is being replaced by the implementation of a new system of performance management, stemming from a national initiative.<sup>5</sup>
- 60 The strong commitment to improvement is reflected in the results of national tests for children aged seven and eleven, which have risen over the last four years. They have remained better than most schools in mathematics and English. The number of children having free school meals is less than it was four years ago and this means the school has to work harder to improve standards in relation to similar schools. The headteacher and staff analyse national and school test results, information from the local authority and a research project to confirm their view that the school is doing well in helping children to achieve good standards.
- 61 Over the past four years there have been changes in staff and members of the governing body. This has given the school opportunities to recruit able teachers with specialist skills, for example in art, music and information and communication technology to raise standards in those subjects. Governors, with specialist skills in finance, special educational needs and the community have been recruited to benefit the school. Together with the strong partnership with parents and children's school council, the school now has a number of determined and able interest groups who are

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<sup>5</sup> Teachers' classroom practice is to be reviewed through a formal process each year. Targets for improvement, including a target linked to children's progress are set. Headteacher performance is also reviewed annually.

eager to do their best for the school. The vision and commitment to develop the school in the longer term and improve standards further are shared among these groups. The ways of working together to achieve this are not. Each group has a different view about the ways that the school should now develop and the impact this will have on the community. The lack of a longer-term plan that is shared and agreed by all groups, and clarifies their distinctive roles, means some energy, enthusiasm and talents are undirected. Bringing this commitment and vision together to work for common goals, the development of the school and the impact on the community, is now where the school is looking to improve, as well as to raise standards in comparison to similar schools.

- 62 Governors are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities appropriately and have evaluated their effectiveness as governors. As a result they have introduced committees to replace working parties. This has enabled decisions to be made at a faster rate. Individual governors are well informed about literacy, numeracy and special educational needs as they have checked the successful implementation of national initiatives. Substantial improvements to the school grounds, led by a governor, have resulted in national awards for the school. Governors are less aware of the school's strengths in standards, leadership and teaching and how they can be used effectively to bring about further improvements.
- 63 Provision for children with special educational needs is managed very well by the special educational needs co-ordinator. As a result, there is very good co-operation and communication between part-time learning support assistants employed especially to support children with special educational needs and the co-ordinator. They have a clear understanding about the targets in children's individual education plans and how they can be reached. In individual or group sessions with the co-ordinator, children receive the precise help that they need, which enables them to make very good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- 64 The co-ordinator ensures all teachers have a very clear idea of the way in which children with special educational needs should be supported. She provides folders with activities, information about targets in individual education plans and checks on children's progress regularly. These are very informative and provide very good support to teachers. However, not all teachers use this information to provide work at an appropriate level for the children so they find it hard to keep up. Also learning support assistants are not always deployed effectively enough in some classes to improve children's knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 65 The policy for managing special educational needs is very good and up to date. It gives teachers and parents a clear indication about the way children are identified as having special educational needs and how their needs are to be met. Children with special educational needs, both learning and behavioural, are identified soon after starting school. They are given intensive help at an early stage. This policy is successful. Some children make such good progress in becoming confident, well behaved and acquire literacy and numeracy skills quickly so that they do not need specific additional help as they get older. Bright children are challenged well in mathematics. Teachers have good links with staff at the nearby secondary school so that they have obtained curriculum information and resources to provide work at an appropriate level for the brightest children.
- 66 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources have all improved considerably since the last inspection. Four years ago, inspectors commented on the:

- lack of an enclosed outdoor provision for the under fives;
- unattractive library;
- limited selection of information books available in the library.

Now, there is appropriate outdoor provision for the youngest children. The library is part of an attractive area made up of a very good computer suite and art area. It contains a very good selection of books which children use regularly as part of their studies. Purpose built and cleverly designed furniture in this area enhances learning for all children, particularly in information and communication technology. It provides a base for support staff to help children in all areas of their learning. It also enables children to work largely on their own initiative where they can be easily supervised. The school is almost entirely carpeted and this quietens the school considerably, thus enhancing children's learning. Outside, the grounds are attractively landscaped and are currently being improved further by the addition of a Millennium pergola project and mural to enrich the playground area. The site is secure and very well cared for. The classrooms are neat and tidy, well organised, and contain attractive displays of children's work and reflect the business-like approach to learning that pervades the school.

- 67 The school has a very good match of teachers who are trained and experienced to match the demands of the curriculum. There is a good balance of experience and considerable expertise in music, art and information and communication technology among the staff. Professional development has a high priority and staff receive training linked to the school improvement plan to enhance their skills in their areas of responsibility. This expertise and training has led to sharply rising standards in art, design and technology, music and religious education. There is an appropriate number of learning support assistants who provide a very effective level of support and expertise for children, particularly those with special educational needs, in most classes.
- 68 Resources are good in most subjects and used very effectively to enhance learning. They are very good in information and communication technology. The swimming pool is used well by children, staff and parents at set times during the year.
- 69 The headteacher and governors ensure that the school's resources are used efficiently to obtain the best for, and from, the children. Parental contributions through fund-raising also make a significant impact on the quality of opportunity available to the children. For instance through funding the indoor swimming pool, all children can learn to swim. The school is especially energetic in seeking, bidding for, and securing additional funds to improve its accommodation and learning equipment. The school budget is managed well, and the school benefits from membership of a consortium of schools, which share an experienced local education authority, finance officer. New technology is used well to track expenditure, and to model future spending alternatives. Annual spending priorities set out in the school development plan, and met through the budget, are carefully selected and costed. The high carry forward figure identified at the time of the last inspection has been spent to the children's advantage. Now a small but prudent sum of money is held back each year to meet any unexpected financial demands. There has not been a further financial audit since the last inspection.

- 70 The headteacher and governors show a very strong commitment to raising standards in the school. The effectiveness of their action programme to implement the recommendations of the last inspection is evidence of that commitment. They are meticulous in seeking competitive prices for goods and services, to the benefit of the children. While some governors have a clear idea of how the school's results compare with those of other schools, others are uncertain. This information is therefore not used fully when long term targets for children's achievements are set. Governors consult parents about issues affecting the school each year at their annual meeting. As yet there are no systematic arrangements to sample parents' views when spending priorities are set. The opportunity presented by the school council for children's views to be sought has not yet been taken. The school provides very good teaching, and secures good levels of achievement from the children. Although its costs are somewhat higher than in most comparable schools, it provides good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- 71 In order to secure the strengths of the school, sustain and support the pace of its future development and improve standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Agree a long term plan to illustrate the vision for the school's development which:

- i) Sets out the way the school will manage the future development of the school and the impact of this on the community;
- ii) Clarifies the distinctive roles and responsibilities of all involved in the school's development;
- iii) Projects expected improvements in standards in English, mathematics and science, especially in relation to similar schools;

Paragraphs: 4, 60, 61, 62.

Minor issues which the school should address are:

- a) Provide, consistently, more challenging work for the brighter children, especially in English and science;
- b) Enable children to experience a rich variety of reading experiences so that they improve their knowledge of authors and stories;
- c) Clarify the role of the learning support assistants so that they help to raise standards in all classes;
- d) Ensure work for children with special educational needs is appropriate in all classes;

Paragraphs: 4, 9, 17, 28, 64, 78, 87, 88, 94.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	86
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	24	44	26	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	328
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	56

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Infants)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	26	32	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	20	25
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	48	48	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (91)	83 (95)	93 (96)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	25
	Girls	28	29	31
	Total	50	54	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (87)	93 (96)	97 (96)
	National	82 (78)	86 (82)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Juniors)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	29	14	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	22	24
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	35	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (79)	79 (69)	81 (76)
	National	70 (79)	69 (69)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	24	20
	Girls	12	14	11
	Total	33	38	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (88)	88 (75)	72 (79)
	National	68 (80)	69 (70)	75 (71)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	301
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	25.2

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	133

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	645,210
Total expenditure	632,994
Expenditure per pupil	1,744
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,742
Balance carried forward to next year	51,958



## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	328
Number of questionnaires returned	112

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	46	5	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	59	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	62	13	4	4
The teaching is good.	45	45	1	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	46	17	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	36	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	54	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	54	10	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	38	47	6	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	45	5	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	52	10	4	13

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Standards in music have risen substantially in the past three years.

## **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**

- 72 A key issue at the time of the last inspection was to improve provision for the under fives so that it matched the required areas of learning for children of this age. While standards for children aged five were judged to be similar to those in other schools, children's progress was hampered by the lack of appropriate experiences for learning. Since 1996, determined action has been taken so that provision is now good. There is a good clear policy about the way children of this age are to be taught and a detailed programme of work that is based fully on the six nationally required areas of learning. This programme has already been adapted to take into account new national guidance for the foundation stage<sup>6</sup> introduced in September 2000. These are used effectively to plan good teaching and learning activities and raise achievement.
- 73 The appointment of a co-ordinator for the early years has led to the foundation stage receiving good leadership and development. Taking into account work from last year's reception classes and from observations of the current class, children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Standards in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development are good. In communication, language and literacy, standards are similar to the national picture. This means children make a good start to their education and acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding they need for the National Curriculum.
- 74 Children are admitted to the school at three points during the year. Those admitted at the beginning of the current term are making good progress. The organisation of the day and the activities are appropriate for the age of the children, particularly as an additional teacher is working with the class on a part-time basis. The good teaching<sup>7</sup> and learning sessions are those that make purposeful links across more than one area of learning. An example of this was when children had an 'afternoon in a hot country'. They made flags, constructed tents, used their senses in tasting exotic fruit and played with sand and water. The children created a travel agency and that provided a good opportunity for writing. They developed a good range of creative, linguistic and artistic skills through this project and improved their knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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<sup>6</sup> Foundation stage includes children aged three until the end of the reception year.

<sup>7</sup> Detailed information on the quality of teaching in the foundation stage is in the section 'How well are pupils taught?'

- 75 Very good provision and teaching for children's personal, social and emotional development means children settle well into school and achieve high standards in this area of learning. Staff relationships with each other and with children are courteous and caring. They provide very good role models that are reflected in children's high standards of behaviour. For example, when dressing after a physical education lesson, children were observed spontaneously offering to help each other with fastening buttons and buckles. Activities are planned so that staff can encourage children to ask questions of others. This is effective in developing children's awareness of others' wants and needs. In discussions, children understand that when someone is holding 'Mickey Mouse' it is their turn to speak and others must listen quietly. Children sustain their concentration on activities for good lengths of time, supported well by staff. Children are praised for their efforts and achievements in a way that makes them understand why the praise is given. They respond well to this and strive to achieve well.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

- 76 Children's speaking skills are well-developed on entry to school. Staff help children to build on these skills by giving them good opportunities to share their news or explain the work they have been doing. Children speak clearly, ask sensible questions and listen to each other. They are confident in speaking within a large group. They enjoy talking to each other about their activities and in their play. Although there are still some aspects of language to develop, such as explaining how things work or drawing conclusions, children are already well on the way to achieving standards expected by the age of five.
- 77 In literacy sessions, teachers give children good and frequent opportunities to attempt their own writing. For example, writing news, or prescriptions in the 'doctor's surgery'. Some children have already grasped how to write simple words, but others are at an early stage in forming their letters. Teachers praise children's success and give good support to help them improve. This achievement is typical for the age group. However, from the scrutiny of work there is evidence that this good start is not built on, as there is an over use of undemanding work sheets which limit the opportunities for children to extend their developing literacy skills.
- 78 Children are currently at the early stages of learning to read. Few children can read when they first start school. Children are making steady progress and standards are similar to those in other schools. They are beginning to see the connections between writing and reading. Teachers support them well by writing children's news on a whiteboard and reading it back with them. 'Big books' containing popular stories are used successfully to help children associate words and print at the start of literacy and some numeracy sessions. Children know that the pictures in books help them to tell the story. Children take books home regularly. Parents are encouraged to talk with their children about the pictures in the books as well as read the text and this enhances progress. Reading is taught well according to national guidelines for children of this age. However, this is not giving children the skills and enthusiasm for books which contributes to faster progress.

### **Mathematical development**

- 79 Good teaching means children are making good progress in mathematics. Many are on course to reach standards expected at the age of five and some are already doing better than this. Children sing number rhymes that reinforce counting forwards and backwards to ten. They use words such as tall and short when sorting objects into different groups. They order numbers correctly from one to five and some, from one to ten. Teachers provide interesting tasks to capture children's enthusiasm for learning mathematics. For example, children were asked to use the number frogs in a story they knew to work out pairs of numbers that added up to five. Children were taken on a walk around the school to see if they could recognise basic shapes such as squares, rectangles and triangles. Opportunities for measuring objects are linked to counting activities. For example, after a story about monsters, the teacher provided pictures of different sized monsters. Children counted them, put them in order of size and measured them with cubes. These activities made learning real, purposeful, interesting and helped children to learn at a good rate.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- 80 Teachers make good connections between different areas of learning in their planning for knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result children's learning is enhanced. In an activity where children had to use their senses to guess the contents of a plastic cup, they identified the smell of coffee and lemon and gave reasons for their likes and dislikes. They explored the textures of materials using their sense of touch. In activities such as these, children gain a breadth of knowledge and good understanding about the world around them through exploration and discussion.
- 81 Children know about the way things grow by planting seeds and measuring the growth of seedlings. In this way and by observing the changes in the seasons, children develop their understanding of the passage of time. On a visit to Mole Hall, children deepened their understanding of the features of living things, which they illustrated in detailed paintings. Teachers give children good opportunities to explore their ideas. In one session, children experimented with the sounds made by materials such as newspaper, cellophane and wood as well as musical instruments.
- 82 Children know how to use computers to create and paint faces linked with the theme about themselves. They move pictures around the screen to match clothes to different sized teddy bears.

### **Physical development**

- 83 Children's physical development is good. They have regular opportunities to use the swimming pool, when it is open, and the school hall. In physical education they are well co-ordinated. They stretch and pull themselves along or over equipment using different parts of their body. They practice jumping, making their body into different shapes as they do so. They work hard to improve these shapes and 'hold them' when they have landed. Children were aware of the impact of energetic movements on their bodies as the teacher drew attention to their rapid heartbeats. While the outdoor area is now secure, it has not been fully developed to enable children to use it regularly, or independently, for physical development. Action is underway to ensure it is used to best effect.

### **Creative development**

- 84 The quality of teaching in this area of learning varies according to the teachers' strengths. It is better in art and music, where tasks are challenging and promote opportunities for children to make decisions about their work, than in the provision of

creative play and design and making. Overall it is good.

- 85 Children are achieving good standards in music. They sing a variety of songs and rhymes tunefully. In a music session, good links were made with the work done about the sense of hearing to help them understand the notion of pitch. Children listened to a tape of noises heard about the house and made thoughtful suggestions about what they might be and whether they were loud or soft. They then used percussion instruments to make soft and loud sounds. The teacher used a very effective 'traffic light' system of raising and lowering a green card. This gave the children a clue about when to start, make their sounds louder or softer and stop.
- 86 Children use a wide range of media, such as paint, collage, and pastels to produce imaginative and creative pictures to a very good standard. This was seen in work on snow, where children selected fabrics to 'dress the snowman'. They created a magical effect by adding glitter to paintings of a snow scene. In design and technology, children know how to join paper so that 'teddy bears' they have cut out have moving limbs. The teddy bear was drawn by the teacher and gave children little chance to draw and make one to their own design. This was surprising as other areas of experience enhance children's initiative. In role-play, children take on different roles in a 'doctor's surgery'. They write appointments in a diary and keep patients' notes. The play in this setting was more creative than that in the 'home corner' as it offered more challenge and interest.

## ENGLISH

- 87 The last inspection four years ago judged standards of English as similar to the national picture for children aged seven and eleven. Speaking and listening, reading and writing skills were satisfactory. Since then, the National Literacy Strategy has been effectively and conscientiously introduced by the school. This has had considerable impact, improving standards. The quality of teaching is now very good in many lessons. Children with special educational needs are taught very well, individually and in small groups. They are supported well in most lessons so that they make very good progress towards meeting targets in their individual education plans. However, teachers throughout the school miss opportunities to challenge brighter children. Although work is planned for them, it is not always hard enough to make them persevere and reach higher standards.
- 88 National test results for children aged eleven, who left in July this year, remained similar to those in all schools nationally. This is partly because 25% of the children had specific difficulties with reading and writing. While the children made very good progress, their difficulties prevented them reaching the same standard as their friends. Also the new system for setting children individual targets to improve their rate of progress had not been implemented. Inspection findings are that standards have risen to better than in most schools in all areas of English. The thorough analysis of checks on children's progress show that standards are set to rise further this year and next. The target for children aged eleven to reach the expected standard in English in 2002 in national tests is being raised to 83% to reflect this.
- 89 At age seven and eleven speaking and listening skills are good. Children speak confidently and thoughtfully to adults and each other. Infant children discuss their work with eagerness, confidence and some excitement. They listen well to their teachers and to each other when they work together in groups. In a Year 1 class, a small group of children were writing a story for an imaginary teddy bear so that it would 'go off to sleep easily'. The group spent some time discussing whether they

needed to be quiet while writing the story in order to 'get the mood right'. In the end they decided they should be very quiet, so that the teddy would go to sleep quickly.

- 90 Junior children listen thoughtfully to their teachers and each other. Their opinions are sought by adults and valued, and as a result, they speak coherently and with confidence. They respond sensibly to questions and many make very perceptive comments during discussions. In a Year 6 lesson on how to write a curriculum vitae, one child wanted to know if a criminal record should be written down, and if so, what the consequences would be for the writer. While children are articulate, there is still work to do in enhancing children's skills in formal ways such as, debates and speaking competitions.
- 91 By the time the children reach seven and eleven, standards of reading are good. Infant children read confidently. When they come to a word they cannot read quickly, they try to sound out the letters, or use pictures to help them guess. Their bright, colourful books usually excite them. They talk about their favourite characters, comparing them to people in their own lives, often commenting how similar they are. They do a lot of reading both at school and at home. Parents support their children wholeheartedly with their reading and this is helping children to achieve good standards.
- 92 Junior children read challenging books, such as Arthur Ransome's novels and Michelle Magorian's 'Goodnight Mister Tom'. They retell stories confidently, explaining favourite characters. Teachers give children the skills to read well with understanding. Children find out what difficult words mean by re-reading the page concerned, getting the general meaning and then making intelligent guesses. This shows children's increasing and developing skills as readers. Most read regularly at home, although the quality of their home/school reading record book lessens as they get older. Younger children's home/school books contain a wealth of information about how children read at home and at school, the difficulties and successes they have. Older children's books increasingly show only a date, title of book and number of pages read. Thus, both home and school lose opportunities to continue the effective communication about how well children are reading.
- 93 Children's research skills are good. They use the newly refurbished library well and know how to find the books and the information they require quickly and confidently. Many use computers to find information and older ones are already exploring the Internet to help them with their studies.
- 94 Children's knowledge of different authors and their books is surprisingly limited and they are not developing a real enjoyment of reading. This makes it harder for children to draw on a wide range of ideas in their own story writing.
- 95 Infant children write well. By the time they are seven, children mostly write in a neat, well-presented style. They can write about events in the order in which they happen, spell most common words correctly and have a good try at spelling more complicated

ones. They are starting to make their writing more personal and exciting through a developing use of words showing a widening vocabulary. One child wrote of a visit to the Millennium Dome, "when I woke up on the day of the visit, I was so excited I just wanted to burst all over the place!"

- 96 Children are confident writers. They always know for whom they are writing. This is because their teachers are very careful to make links between writing tasks, the reasons for the writing and who will end up reading it. This was very apparent in Year 1 where children were very excited about writing a story for a teddy bear, and in Year 2/1 where children had written passports for themselves as part of their work on holidays. They write poetry, stories, accounts and descriptions, letters and lists and are making good progress in these different types of writing.
- 97 Junior children also write well. At the age of eleven, their work shows a wide vocabulary, good use of adjectives and adverbs, correct use of paragraphs and longer, more complicated sentences. They usually write in a consistent style, although not always with joined letters. Some examples of very good writing observed during the inspection included a poem written by a Year 4 child entitled "The Kleptomaniac" and another in Year 6 called "Autumn". These show that children are not only developing good language and writing skills, but they are also being encouraged by their teachers to be creative and imaginative in their writing.
- 98 Teachers have successfully improved the quality of children's writing in other subjects and this is an important development since the last inspection. In history, children wrote a comparison of "Goodnight Mister Tom", "The Silver Sword" and "Carrie's War", explaining how each story defines the Second World War from different people's viewpoints. Some of this writing is of an excellent standard, both linguistically and historically. Overall, children's editing and drafting skills are satisfactory. Their growing skills in writing, coupled with very good teaching and their own very good attitudes to learning, ensure that they make good progress in all subjects where writing is both essential and important.
- 99 Teaching standards are very good in the infants and juniors and have improved significantly since 1996. This high quality teaching is reflected in children's progress, positive attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and enthusiasm for English. It is characterised by:
- stimulating and imaginative introductions to lessons, resulting in children's increased interest and motivation;
  - very good relationships between adults and children, ensuring high self-esteem and confidence;

- very good levels of subject knowledge, teachers know what they are talking about;
- high expectations of behaviour and work. Children work hard and try their best because teachers encourage them to do so;
- relevant and useful targets set for each child to improve some aspect of their work in English;
- a very good range of resources used effectively to support and help children learn more quickly and efficiently;
- very thorough and detailed planning so that teachers know what they are teaching and when. Teachers explain clearly what children are to learn at the beginning of the lesson so that they understand what they have to do;
- very good assessment procedures that ensure teachers know how their children are performing;
- effective use of homework to support learning in future lessons.

## MATHEMATICS

- 100 The school is doing well in mathematics. There has been a significant rise in standards since the last inspection where standards matched the national picture. In 1999 results of national tests for children aged eleven show that standards were better in mathematics than in other schools nationally. In 2000, the school's target for 72% of children to reach the national expected level at age eleven was exceeded. The school has now set a challenging target of 85% of children to reach the expected standard in 2002. This target is higher than originally anticipated. Much of this is as a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the teaching in ability groups within the juniors and, the overall good planning of what children should learn and when. Current work shows that standards are good. More children than in other schools at age seven and eleven are achieving and surpassing the nationally expected levels. A small number of junior children are reaching a very high standard that is normally expected in a secondary school.
- 101 Thorough attention to the development of mental and oral skills in all classes has improved children's speed and proficiency in number work. Children enjoy these sessions, particularly when they work to a tight time limit to solve problems. Lessons have a strong emphasis on numeracy and its application to other subjects such as geography, science and design and technology. In information and communication technology, for example, older children learn to use a spreadsheet correctly to price items on a menu and to calculate the total cost, for example, the cost of a fish and chip dinner.
- 102 Considerable time invested in lessons for the infants, to counting, reading, writing and ordering numbers is very productive. By the age of seven, children know by heart all addition and subtraction facts to 10, and work out simple multiplication and division sums accurately. The additional learning about multiplication tables and number facts with parents at home is raising standards. Children enjoy drawing two-dimensional shapes and name the properties of common solid shapes correctly. They measure and compare lengths using centimetres, record this information on a bar chart and then answer questions about it. All learn to estimate the weight of objects using standard measures and many can tell the time accurately on a 12-hour clock.
- 103 By the age of eleven, most children are competent mathematicians. Many can add,



subtract, multiply and divide and apply these skills to practical situations and sums involving money, fractions, decimals and percentages. They solve problems involving ratio and proportion and understand simple algebraic equations. Previous work shows evidence of skill in drawing angles with the aid of a compass and protractor and measuring them accurately to the nearest degree. In Year 3, children took their own body measurements using metres and centimetres, and enjoyed making a paper skeleton using these statistics. In grid work, children plot co-ordinates and construct two-dimensional shapes from them. They know how to present data in a variety of forms, such as pie diagrams and bar charts, and select which one is best to show the information clearly. Often children use their mathematical skills in other subjects such as geography, where they work out distances and scales on Ordnance Survey maps.

- 104 Children with special educational needs are mostly well supported, especially when the learning support assistant is clear about what she is to do. A few children have difficulty in keeping up with everyone else if they are not well supported and tasks planned for them do not meet their needs.
- 105 Teaching is mainly good with over half the lessons in the juniors being very good. Teachers successfully make the mathematics curriculum practical and interesting by sharing their enthusiasm with the children. As a result, children respond favourably to the subject and have very positive attitudes. They work hard and do not waste time and their behaviour is very good. They are encouraged to take care and pride in their work and often share moments of fun with their class teacher. Many reach a high standard because of the good teaching and their own enthusiasm.
- 106 Teachers' planning is thorough and based on the National Framework for Numeracy. It takes account of the needs of the children and the targets for improvements that have been agreed for each child and the school as a whole. In this way, performance is checked accurately and progress tracked closely as children move through the school. Teachers make clear what children are to learn at the start of each session so that all understand the purpose of the lesson. Teachers spend considerable time making their own high quality resources which children treat with respect. Activities are planned carefully so as to encourage children to work in groups as well as on their own. Homework, including learning multiplication tables, is done well, supports work done in class and enhances progress.

## SCIENCE

- 107 The last inspection found that the standards of children aged eleven, were in line with the national picture, while those of the seven year olds were higher. One of the key issues was to raise expectations of bright children, who were not doing as well as they might. While most science teaching was satisfactory, a new work programme had recently been introduced for the older children, and was not yet fully effective.
- 108 A great deal of successful development work has taken place since then. Children's progress is carefully checked at regular intervals, lessons are now planned in greater detail. The achievements of both the seven year olds and the eleven year olds are now better than in most schools. This is a much better level of performance than that indicated in the 1999 national tests and assessments, when standards were found to be close to the national picture, but well below those in schools with a comparable

intake of children. The results from tests for children aged eleven in May 2000, confirm inspection evidence of good standards. They also show a rising proportion of children aged eleven, achieving higher standards<sup>8</sup>. While this represents a very good response to the last inspection, there are still lessons in which the work is not hard enough for those children who learn science quickly.

- 109 The science programme includes learning about plants and animals, materials, and forces. Children do well in all these aspects of the subject. By the time they reach the age of seven, most children classify everyday materials according to how they are used. They know why plants need roots and flowers, and that they develop from seeds. They have begun to understand how light and sound travel to the eye and the ear.
- 110 By the age of eleven, children have built effectively on these solid foundations. Most have a good knowledge of electricity, and can build circuits. Some distinguish parallel and series circuits, and insert switches and other devices. They understand the importance of forces such as friction and air resistance in day to day life. They classify materials as solid, liquid or gas, explain how materials change their state, and the different ways mixtures can be separated. They use keys to classify animals by their characteristics, and they have a good understanding of the functions of the different parts of a plant. Children with special educational needs also do well in science, especially in the juniors, because they receive help when needed, particularly in recording the outcomes of their experiments.
- 111 In their lessons, the children all learn the important scientific processes of experiment and investigation. The younger children predict the outcomes of simple experiments set up under their teachers' guidance. They record their results carefully, often in tables or pictures. By the age of eleven, they can devise simple experiments of their own, and know how to control the factors affecting the accuracy of their tests. They record their results neatly in scientific reports, in diagrams, charts and tables.
- 112 Teaching in science is good, with some very good teaching in Year 6. The main strengths of the teaching lie in the good practical and experimental work set by teachers. Many of the lessons are imaginative in content and presentation, well organised, and very interesting to the children. Teachers expect the children to be able to cope with complex ideas, and to work hard throughout the lessons.
- 113 In one very good Year 6 lesson, the children were extending their knowledge about circuits. They held hands in a large circle, with the teacher playing the part of the battery. A hand squeeze circulated the group, like an electric current. The children discussed whether it mattered which way around the circle the squeeze travelled. One pupil then acted as a buzzer set into the circuit. He 'buzzed' while the current was sustained, but stopped when it was interrupted. Subsequently the children went on to construct real circuits of their own, and to insert pieces of different materials found around the room. They learned about electrical insulators and conductors, and the teacher then helped them link these ideas with their earlier learning about heat transmission and insulation. The lesson was successful because the teacher understood the subject well and had planned exciting activities which called for effort

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<sup>8</sup> Children are expected to achieve level 4 at age 11. Children achieving higher standards achieve level 5 and on some occasions level 6 which is normally expected in secondary schools.

and concentration from the children. When children work as hard as this, with this level of interest, they learn a lot in a short time. A common weakness in some lessons is the absence of any extension task to challenge the children who learn science quickly and easily. Their work is often little different from that of their classmates.

- 114 The children thoroughly enjoy their science lessons and have very good attitudes to the subject. They join in discussions and experimental work with great enthusiasm. They are confident in putting forward their own ideas and predicting what might happen in their experiments. They work neatly, and are proud of what they produce. Their enthusiasm and consistent hard work help bring about the good standards now seen in the school.

## **ART**

- 115 When the school was last inspected in 1996 standards in art were better at age seven than at age eleven. There was no scheme of work and insufficient emphasis on three-dimensional work. There has been significant improvement since that time. Only two lessons were seen during this inspection, but the scrutiny of children's work from last year, displays around the school, teachers' plans and the programme of work, show that by the age of seven and eleven children achieve good standards for their age. In some individual cases standards are higher. This is particularly so in painting, drawing and composition. For example, observational drawings of shoes and a watercolour of an owl.
- 116 The systematic development of artistic skills in the context of other subjects contributes to the good standards. Infant children working on self-portraits viewed themselves on different metallic surfaces such as spoons, cheese graters and colanders. They drew clear representations of the distorting effects. Following a visit to Bethnal Green Toy Museum, infant children painted enlargements of postcards of teddy bears. They included remarkable detail and impressions of texture in their pictures. They also created portraits of people in history such as Queen Victoria, layering material over a painting, creating an effective three-dimensional finish.
- 117 Some junior children demonstrate very high standards in using tones of colour to create effects such as paintings of dolphins leaping through the sea. Still life paintings of wild flowers illustrate children's keen observational skills as they include fine detail in their pictures. In turn they apply these skills to detailed observational drawings of plants in science. Children use a good range of media skilfully. They mix media such as charcoal and chalk or wax crayons and paint to produce different effects. The oldest pupils produced imaginative paintings based on their families' favourite things. This involved mixing colours, applying them skilfully and composing objects such as pets, toys, computers and books within the setting of the house and garden carefully to represent their ideas. Children have less experience of working with clay or other modelling materials. This is an area that requires further development. Much design work is imaginative and leads to creative models that are linked effectively to design and technology.
- 118 Children have very good attitudes towards the subject. They take pride in their work which often shows originality and use of initiative. In the lessons seen they worked sensibly and with interest. In one lesson children discussed their work with each other showing keen interest in helping each other to improve. The high value attributed to children's work is apparent by the way in which teachers display it. This

raises children's confidence and provides good examples of standards that can be achieved for others to follow. The 'gallery' where selected work is framed and displayed is a particularly good example of this.

- 119 Although only two lessons were observed, teaching is good. Teachers have received considerable support and advice from the subject co-ordinator who is a skilled artist. This has had a significant impact on standards. Planning is thorough and underpins the systematic progress children make in the acquisition of knowledge and skills across the school. For example, printing in an infant class incorporates simple but effective uses of print motifs and colour. In a junior class children make the print templates from observations of cut fruit. They overlay the print with different colours and add further lines of colour for detail.
- 120 In the lessons observed, teachers asked good questions that challenged children to think and observe closely. In one junior class lesson about patterns, children were given the opportunity to experiment with different motifs found on a range of fabrics. They were encouraged to think of different ways of creating patterns and reflect on those which they preferred and why. Skilful interventions were made to help individuals to improve their work. This maintained a good pace of work. Computer programs are used very effectively to enhance standards in art, especially when children carry out work on shading colours and repeating patterns.
- 121 The co-ordinator has drawn up plans to give pupils experience of large scale mural work and models for the school grounds. These are very promising as a means of extending children's experiences in art.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 122 The last inspection four years ago commented that standards in design and technology were unsatisfactory and that children did not make enough progress. There were no guidelines to help teachers and little development of skills as children moved through the school. Since then, the school has worked very hard to improve, and now, standards in design and technology are good overall. In some individual cases they are very good. Guidelines exist that show teachers what to teach and when. Clearly defined activities are outlined for each year group. Much emphasis has been placed in teaching skills, for example joining materials, cutting, designing and making. The way that teachers bring other subject skills into design and technology is both effective and imaginative. It is now a much stronger, well taught subject and all children make good progress, including those with special educational needs.
- 123 Four lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching for both infants and juniors is good overall. Sometimes it is excellent. This high standard of teaching promotes children's very good attitudes towards learning. One infant class was involved in making sliding mechanisms for use in a storybook. Children were very involved in planning their own ideas after the teacher's thoughtful and well prepared

introduction. One child decided to "do flowers in the background and a busy bee is going to come and collect the nectar!" Children were challenged to produce ideas and designs of their own. They really enjoyed the task, discussing their work effectively with adults, showing progress in the development of designing, cutting, drawing and planning skills.

- 124 In a lower junior class, a really stimulating and imaginative introduction by the teacher had children sitting on the edge of their seats; their enthusiasm carried on for the whole lesson, involving some quite difficult measuring, thinking and planning. They had to design a package for a tube of toothpaste. They used mathematical skills and the idea of a fair test. They had seen how poor packaging caused an egg to break, whilst good packaging protected it; how bars of chocolate sent through the post and delivered to the school in various packages had arrived in different states. Children persevered with measuring, scoring and cutting out card to protect the tube of toothpaste, despite some difficulties and setbacks.
- 125 In upper junior classes, children were busy designing and making slippers from a range of materials, using many of the skills they had previously learnt. They were totally absorbed in their work, creating highly original designs, and clearly benefited from teachers' expert and careful management and organisation. They too persevered, working happily together, and enjoying the task hugely. Their evaluations of their work were perceptive and thorough, helping teachers to accurately assess the levels of understanding children had of the task.
- 126 A scrutiny of planning shows that food technology is also covered. A range of models was on display during the inspection. Musical instruments made from wood, card and cork were effectively planned and evaluated by children. Model cars and other forms of transport, used children's scientific knowledge of designing circuits, cogs, pulleys and gears. They were of a high standard, robustly made and again, effectively planned and evaluated. In discussions with a few children, they clearly remembered models they had made, the skills used and the difficulties they had in designing and planning. All children made good progress.
- 127 The co-ordinators have worked hard to raise the subject's status. They provide informal support for teachers, and monitor planning so that they are assured children are making progress from year to year. Their assessments of children's abilities are improving and beginning to show a clear progression. Currently, one of the co-ordinators takes photographs of children's models. They are considering developing this to show the skills both acquired and required in each age group. Resources are readily available for planned tasks and support children's increasing skills. This adds much to the standards achieved by the children.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

- 128 By the age of seven and eleven, children achieve a good standard of work in geography and history. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, especially in history. Teachers use a range of strategies to make their lessons interesting and meaningful and this raises standards substantially in knowledge and skills of both subjects. For example in Year 4, teachers demonstrated how the River Nile in Egypt used to flood. Year 6 children recall much of their studies in both subjects, reflecting on special moments such as the visit to Kentwell Hall when 'it was great to dress up' in period costume and re-enact Tudor customs and domestic life. Some would like to visit St. Lucia having studied the scenic geography, whilst others had some doubts, particularly about the effect of factory pollution on such a small

island. On return from a visit to a toy museum, infant children painted lifelike models of old dolls that they had seen.

- 129 Children acquire a very good foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in the infants and early stages of the juniors, when geography and history are linked together effectively. Children learn to compare and contrast their village with other places such as Egypt. In Year 2 for instance, a story about a boy in Cairo was effectively used to show the different forms of transport used in Egypt compared to England. This was developed further when older children used the British Museum web site to find out more information about ancient Egypt.
- 130 Children know about the local customs and people in Kelvedon and compare these to other countries. They use Ordnance Survey maps well to locate towns that are north, south, east and west of the school. Studies of Victorian times are made more memorable in Year 4 by looking at local and national history. Good use is made of a digital camera to photograph and record information about old buildings in the village. One, a hairdresser's, still belongs to grandparents of a child at the school. History was brought alive for Year 6 recently when two grandparents talked about their memories of the Second World War. Their written accounts have been effectively used as a primary source of information in lessons.
- 131 Behaviour in lessons is often exemplary. Most children are eager to learn more about their own and others' cultures and are avid for knowledge. They work hard, draw and write neatly, often using a computer to record their experiences. In group work, they support each other well, exchanging and valuing each other's contributions. This was evident in a Year 6 literacy hour when children articulately presented their home research on famous characters in history such as Henry VIII and Florence Nightingale.
- 132 Teaching is mainly very good. Much energy and forethought is given to planning and to making resources which motivate children and make them want to learn more. Videos are used effectively to enliven topics such as the one on Egypt. In one history lesson in Year 1, a child compared photographs by saying 'photos with no colours in them are old, and those with lots of colours in them are new'. Teachers are skilful at asking questions to find out what children know and understand. In this way much useful information is shared in class discussions when children listen attentively to each other. There are occasions when children follow up a very interesting introduction by repeating facts on a worksheet rather than continuing to find out more for themselves. Progress in literacy and historical research skills are hindered by this.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 133 At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology were similar for children aged seven and eleven to those in other schools. Resources were satisfactory. However, there was no policy or programme of work to guide teachers to help children build their skills year on year to higher standards. The progress children made depended on the confidence teachers had in using computers. Teachers were more confident in Years 3 to 6. There was no agreed system for checking children's progress.
- 134 The weaknesses have been tackled very well so that standards are now good at age

seven and eleven. There is a very good programme of work that outlines what children need to learn, when and how. Built into this are the standards children are to achieve each year. Criteria to show teachers when children have achieved a National Curriculum level are very clear. This is allowing standards to rise faster earlier in children's school careers. For example, children in Year 4, are achieving very high standards. Children aged eleven, have not had the benefit of the current high standard of teaching, or access to the now very good resources, throughout their time in school. They know how to use spreadsheets, and simple word processing programmes and the Internet. They are not yet confident in setting up their own pages of work from the very beginning, establishing the page size, frames, fonts or preparing information for presentation to a wider audience.

- 135 Children in Years 4 and 5 are very confident in using the computer to find information from the Internet and to make repeating patterns. In one lesson, children gained access to the British Museum web site and found information about the Ancient Egyptians. They selected relevant information for inclusion in their project work. Children in the same year group quickly designed a small motif, for example of a fish, and learned how to copy it to make a repeating pattern. Children knew the computer programme and knew how to select different colours to get the effect they wanted. Much of the work was creative and imaginative. In Year 5, children know how to select shapes, rotate them and colour them in using different textures, such as wood, or fabric effect. This work was linked to mathematics, where children were learning about 'nets' to make a three-dimensional box. The children had to select the shapes to design the net and 'fill them in' with the texture they wanted for the finished box.
- 136 Scrutiny of work shows that children aged seven, know how to word process their work, change the font, its shape and colour and draw pictures using 'paint' programmes. Children with special educational needs make good progress in computer skills and use them to enhance their skills in literacy.
- 137 Children's attitudes to learning on the computer, especially in the juniors are exemplary. They are keen to learn and become absorbed in the tasks. They work very well together in pairs helping each other to develop their skills or ensure the task is carried out to a high standard. On occasions, children were observed completing tasks in the computer suite, without the supervision of an adult. Behaviour and attitudes were excellent. Children were confident in their skills and knew what to do without asking. Children with special educational needs, especially in Year 6, use computers very effectively to help them with their spelling and writing.
- 138 Few lessons were observed, but all that were seen were good and one was excellent. This stemmed from the enthusiasm of the teachers and the very clear focus of the knowledge and skill to be learned in each lesson. Teachers prepared very well. The co-ordinator has provided considerable support to raise teachers' confidence to a very good level. Detailed, clear instructions have been prepared for each lesson. These identify exactly what children are to learn and how. They include step by step instructions and pictures of the computer 'buttons' so that children and staff can carry out the task successfully and independently. Teachers use computers extensively for their own work and to provide labels for classroom displays. This provides a very good example to the children. They ensure that it is used successfully to enhance standards in other subjects, especially mathematics, science, art, history and

geography.

- 139 A very good, new computer suite has been established so that teachers give good attention to the subject and children learn new skills quickly. Many children have computers at home and have confidence in operating them. The curriculum adds much to children's knowledge and allows them opportunities to use computers to enhance standards in other areas of the curriculum. A very good assessment system makes it clear what the children are to learn, when and the National Curriculum level they are working at. This allows teachers to challenge children well so that they build successfully on the knowledge of computers and computer software that they bring with them from home.

## **MUSIC**

- 140 At the time of the last inspection, standards in music were judged to be similar to that in most other schools. There was an emphasis on composing and performing but listening and appraising was weaker. While the teaching was sound, teachers' expectations were sometimes not well matched to children's abilities. There were adequate resources. Since that time there have been major improvements and music is now a real strength of the school. Music has a high focus and at almost all times of the day music can be heard somewhere in the school. It contributes greatly to the liveliness and life of the school community.
- 141 Standards in music are now very good at age seven and eleven. The large number of children receiving instrumental tuition and taking part in music clubs and choirs is impressive and contributes fully to the high standards achieved. Skills developed through these activities and through class lessons complement each other. In class lessons children have many opportunities to sing and play instruments. They sing beautifully and with enthusiasm.
- 142 Children compose accompaniments to songs or themes as well as listening to and appraising the effects. In a Year 4 class, children selected percussion instruments to experiment and explore sounds and rhythm to accompany a song they have composed with the teacher. They rehearsed conscientiously and with the help of the teacher, made decisions about which groups' accompaniment should be used to layer sounds to create the best effect. By the end of the lesson they had created and performed the piece providing them with a great sense of achievement.
- 143 Positive links are made with art. Both infant and junior children produce detailed drawings of musical instruments. These are displayed in the music room adding to the character of this valuable teaching space. In a Year 3 class, children observed a picture of a sea view. They worked co-operatively in selecting a 'diagram card' that represented the various sounds that might be heard in the seascape. They recorded these on a long stretch of paper, giving thought to the frequency and duration of the sounds. Again the lesson ended with a lively performance with all children reading the score and being fully involved. Children were absorbed in their creativity, relishing the chance to use their initiative.
- 144 The teaching of music is mostly good. There are examples of very good and indeed



excellent teaching. The school benefits from the number of teachers on the staff with good musical qualifications and the well-qualified teachers who give individual instrumental music tuition. This has a significant impact on the quality of teaching and standards. Lessons are well planned. The best lessons are lively and balance well so that children learn new skills, increase their knowledge, including technical vocabulary, rehearse and complete a performance.

- 145 Teachers set high standards for singing. They encourage children to improve their singing through both instruction and demonstration. In large group hymn practice teachers remind children about their posture and breathing, holding notes and defining word endings. This results in children singing tunefully and thoughtfully. Children at the upper end of the school adapt the volume and tenor of their singing to the words of the song to convey mood and emotion.
- 146 The school has an excellent range and quantity of tuned and untuned percussion instruments that are used well and raise the quality of teaching and children's learning. On occasions non-specialist teachers lack courage in allowing all children to use untuned percussion instruments. This detracts from some children's full involvement and enjoyment of the lesson.
- 147 Children, especially in the juniors, receive rich and varied musical experiences. Performances by visiting professionals and staff recitals contribute to these. They increase the opportunities for listening to and appraising music. A programme of music for assemblies is drawn up to ensure that children encounter a range of musical and cultural styles. Anecdotes about the composers such as 'Listz was a bit of a show off but a brilliant pianist' bring the programme alive for children. There are links with the London Symphony Orchestra and junior children have been able to compose and perform with professional musicians. These links are now being extended to the infants and preparation is already underway for a musical collaboration. Children composed songs for the millennium that were broadcast on the local radio station. Through the enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinators, music evenings are produced where children of all ages perform. Many staff also work together to help produce musicals, such as 'Grease', where children perform with enthusiasm and joy, much to the entertainment of their parents in the audience.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 148 Standards at the time of the last inspection four years ago were satisfactory and children made satisfactory progress. Standards are now good. Children aged seven and eleven reach standards better than they are expected to do nationally, especially in swimming. The guidelines given to teachers to help them plan for what to do are comprehensive and useful in helping children to build on their skills year on year. The co-ordinator has been in post since the start of this term, but already has good ideas to develop and improve what is offered to children. Teaching in physical education is good overall, lessons are well planned and structured and children make good progress during them.

- 149 Children aged seven control their body movements well. They can move in a stiff, jerky way similar to robots. They can then adapt their movements during the lesson, changing to floppy and wobbly movements, as required by the teacher. Children behave very well, join in discussions with enthusiasm and benefit from the teacher's thorough preparation for the lesson.
- 150 At age eleven, children show good skills in hockey and dance. They know the basics of stick control, how to dribble, control the ball and keep it low when hitting. They persevere with good humour, although some find it difficult to maintain control of both stick and ball. They are taught well in these lessons and make good progress as a result. In a dance lesson, children developed movements that described actions such as throwing, catching and balancing, whilst imagining they were on a tightrope. They learned to follow their actions with their eyes and heads. Some refined their movements into graceful actions, using facial expressions as well as physical movements. The teacher demonstrated well, encouraging children to improve and have a go for themselves. The choice of music was excellent, and children were enthused by this.
- 151 In a gymnastics lesson, children refined and developed sequences of movements on apparatus, balancing, twisting, curling and travelling along bars and benches. They knew the importance of starting properly and finishing in a controlled way. Again, good demonstrations by the teacher, and by some children, helped the class to make good progress by the end of the lesson.
- 152 The co-ordinator has organised a programme of lunchtime and after school activities that extend and enrich children's education. Teams are entered for local football, rounders, netball and athletics events. School sports activities are organised in football, netball, swimming and tug of war. Annual sports days are held which further enhance sports provision.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 153 The school's programme of work in religious education was heavily criticised in the last inspection. Achievement was found to be unsatisfactory at age seven and eleven. Too little time was given to the subject, and there were weaknesses both in the quality of teaching, and in the narrowness of the subject. Improving the range of the work studied, and raising levels of children's achievements became key issues.
- 154 Since 1996, staff have worked energetically and successfully to put this right. There is now a good detailed programme of work to be followed by each class from week to week. It is correctly based on the syllabus set out by the local education authority. All teachers regularly teach religious education, and lesson planning is much more precise. Checks made on lesson plans help in achieving a consistent approach to the teaching of the subject in different classes.
- 155 The new programme of religious education work has only been in force for a short time, and consequently children have not yet learned as much as they would otherwise have done. Despite this, standards have risen sharply as children make good progress. By the ages of seven and eleven children's achievements in most aspects of the subject are now similar to those expected for children of this age. Children with special educational needs receive the help they need to do well in religious education.

- 156 Most seven year old children have learned about people who are special to them, and who care for them, such as, parents, friends and teachers. They know they belong to different groups of people such as families and school. Some have begun to appreciate that many people also belong to different faith groups, or churches, where members share common beliefs and practices. They know that churches are special places, and that important events such as weddings and christenings take place in them.
- 157 By the time they are eleven, most of the children can use a Bible independently to follow up references, and work hard, to successfully understand complex Biblical symbolism such as the notion of God as good shepherd. They have developed a solid base of factual knowledge about Christian belief and practice. They also know something of the history, religious festivals and practice of Judaism. In studying the Old Testament, and stories such as those of Moses, many have come to realise the importance of the history these two world faiths share.
- 158 Teaching was good in the majority of lessons in the infants and juniors. In the Infants classes, teaching was especially good. The good lessons were marked by the imaginative practical tasks the teachers planned to capture children's interest and develop knowledge and understanding. In one lesson, the children learned about the significance for Christians of baptism, as an entry to Christ's family. Children had brought to school photographs, christening gowns and christening party invitations to make a vivid classroom display. They were fascinated to hear the teacher tell them about what happened in a christening, and enthusiastically contributed their own ideas and experiences to the discussion. Next, some of the younger children in the class made zig-zag books in which they had to arrange in correct sequence a series of sketches of christening scenes. The older children made christening booklets with pictures and writing about what happens when a baby is christened. The teacher, who has considerable expertise in the subject, had chosen a teaching method guaranteed to absorb the children, and showed high expectations of their ability to understand some of the difficult ideas involved.
- 159 The children show very positive attitudes to their work in religious education, especially in the infants. They are attentive and industrious and work carefully and neatly. They are confident and articulate enough to put forward their own ideas, and they co-operate very well indeed in pairs or small groups. Their very good attitudes, combined with the good teaching techniques used, are bringing about rapidly rising standards in religious education.