

INSPECTION REPORT

SILVER END PRIMARY SCHOOL

Witham

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114828

Headteacher: A Daisley

Reporting inspector: J Woodcock
1624

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th September 2002

Inspection number: 247496

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Infant and Junior
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Silver End Witham Essex
Postcode:	CM8 3RZ
Telephone number:	(01376) 563353
Fax number:	(01376) 584249
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	G Lord
Date of previous inspection:	12 th – 13 th June 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1624	J Woodcock	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9420	D Martin	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? Finance
5862	S Heaney	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
18524	A Shaw	Team inspector	Music Religious education Foundation Stage	English as an additional language Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
20063	G Slamon	Team inspector	Science Geography History Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress (assessment)

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Silver End is bigger than other primary schools, with a current roll that is equivalent to 310 full-time pupils aged between 4 and 11 years. It serves the socially mixed ward of Witham Silver End and Rivenhall in Witham. Attainment on entry covers a wide range of abilities but the proportion of five-year-olds entering the school with typical or higher attainment is well below expectations in reading and writing, and below expectations in mathematics. One per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and one pupil is at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has identified 40 pupils as having special educational needs; direct comparisons with the last inspection are not possible because of the changes in the way information is collected. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs; as a proportion, this is below the national average and similar to that at the time of the last inspection. The proportion receiving free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school is low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school. By the end of Year 6, the standards pupils achieve when compared with those in previous years have been rapidly improving. The 2002 National Curriculum test results for Year 6 pupils show that standards were above average in mathematics, average in science but below average in English. A high proportion of teaching is very good and pupils are enthusiastic learners. The school has effective strategies for promoting educational inclusion for all pupils. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, governors, and key staff. There is a strong commitment by a dedicated and very hard-working team of staff to continue to bring about school improvement, raise standards and share effective practice. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make very good progress and achieve above average standards in mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Their relationships with each other and with adults are very good.
- Teaching is very good or excellent in one in three lessons.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and key members of staff are of high quality.
- The curriculum is planned well and provision for activities outside the classroom is very good.
- The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very good.
- The staff work together as an effective team to improve pupils' achievements.

What could be improved

- Standards in English.
- The opportunities for pupils to improve their independent learning skills.

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 continued to improve significantly since the last full inspection in September 1998. It was removed from special measures after the visit of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in June 2000. Standards have risen, especially during the last year, the quality of teaching has improved considerably and the effective leadership of the headteacher, governors and key members of staff continues to give the school a strong sense of direction and purpose. The key issues identified by Her Majesty's Inspectors have been addressed well. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. Teaching is now good and often very good. Senior staff have become actively involved in the management of the school. Standards have improved in mathematics and science. Standards in English have improved from being well below average to below average, and continue to be the main priority for school improvement. Standards have also improved in history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	E	E
mathematics	C	E	E	E
science	C	D	E	E

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Since the last full inspection in September 1998, standards have improved. This was confirmed in 2000 by Her Majesty's Inspectors, who reported that, although standards were lower than national averages in English, reading continued to improve, but writing was some way behind for pupils aged eleven. They also reported that standards in mathematics and science were broadly in line with national averages for pupils of this age. Since 1998 the school initially concentrated on improving the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 by the age of seven, and Level 4 by the age of eleven. Test information for eleven-year-olds shows that the proportion of pupils achieving these levels of attainment was slightly higher than the national average in mathematics and science, but slightly below average in English. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 continued to be well below average in all three subjects. In all three subjects, boys achieve higher standards than girls. Girls achieve significantly lower standards than girls nationally, particularly in reading, writing and science. Therefore, by the end of Year 6, test results in 2001 for all pupils were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science; they are also well below the average for schools that have a similar intake, as reflected in the above table. By the end of Year 2, test results in 2001 were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics when compared with all schools and similar schools.

Since 2001, the school has changed its priorities and teaching methods to meet more fully the needs of more-able pupils as well as other pupils. As a consequence, the test results for 2002 are the best the school has ever achieved. They show a significant improvement in mathematics and science. Standards in English have also improved, but not at the same dramatic rate. Girls continue to underachieve in reading and writing. However, the school has achieved its statutory targets in English and exceeded them in mathematics. The standard of work seen in the third week of the new school year was average in mathematics but below average in English and science. This represents an improvement in performance since the same time last year. In the current Year 6, pupils are making good progress and are on course to achieve above average standards in mathematics, average standards in science, and below average standards in English. The school is likely to achieve the challenging targets it set for 2003. Standards in literacy and numeracy continue to improve from the below-average attainment that pupils have on entry to school. However, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to widen their vocabulary and to use and apply their speaking, listening and reading skills in other curriculum subjects. At this stage of the school year, Year 6 pupils' achievements in art and design, history, information and communication technology, music, and religious education are satisfactory. Achievement in geography and design and technology is unsatisfactory; it is good in physical education, particularly in dance. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve well when compared with their prior attainments.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are keen to learn and have a strong desire to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are well behaved. They are aware that oppressive behaviour such as bullying will not be tolerated; no racist or sexist behaviour was seen and pupils reported none.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships with others are good. They have respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils are keen to be involved in all activities offered by the school. However, they have too few opportunities to develop independent learning skills.
Attendance	Good. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

By the end of Year 6, pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm for learning make a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and to the improving standards being achieved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Good

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

Overall, teaching is good. In just over six out of ten lessons seen, teaching was good; it was very good or excellent in over a third of lessons; three lessons were unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In almost every year group there were examples of very good teaching. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics and information and communication technology is very good. Teaching in science, history, physical education and religious education is good. Teaching in English, art and design, design and technology, geography and music is satisfactory. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good.

Throughout the school, lessons are well prepared and planned, with interesting and stimulating activities that add to the pupils' enjoyment of learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and expect them to work hard. Pupils work at a brisk pace with sustained concentration and are keen to improve. The direct teaching methods used have contributed significantly to raising standards. However, some learning is passive and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. When they are given such opportunities, for example, in mathematics, the standard achieved by higher-attaining pupils is very high. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving their learning goals.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, and caters very well for the differing interests and needs of the pupils. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the statutory curriculum. All pupils have equal access and the opportunity to participate fully in all learning experiences. However, there are too few opportunities to extend pupils' speaking skills throughout the curriculum. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision and support enable pupils to make good progress. A team of well-briefed teaching assistants is used effectively to support learning. Targets set for pupils are realistic and achievable.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good. The pupils are fully included in all activities and are very well supported by teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory, although only limited opportunities are provided to raise pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring pupils' achievements and for staff to be aware of pupils' social and emotional needs.

Overall, the school's links with parents are good. However, parents' expectations are changing and they wish to receive more information about their children's progress and how they can support their learning at home and in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The strong lead provided by the headteacher and deputy head sets high expectations for the school community, and they are very well supported by other key members of staff. The staff are hard working and operate effectively as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors work effectively through committees to meet their statutory responsibilities. They are well informed and effective as critical friends, particularly in monitoring the school's achievements and the budget.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring arrangements are good. Test results are analysed and used well to help determine priorities. Effective action is taken when weaknesses are identified.
The strategic use of resources	The budget is managed well. The school seeks to gain very good value for money in all its expenditure.

The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent. She is supported very well by the deputy headteacher, who is an outstanding teacher. Together they set high expectations and lead by example. The school's evaluation of its performance is good and identifies accurately strengths and weaknesses. The planned use of the current budget surplus meets the school's priorities well. The school is staffed well. Resources for learning are good. The accommodation provided is very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are well behaved. • Their children are taught well and are making good progress. • Teachers are approachable. • Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>An analysis of the 86 pre-inspection questionnaires shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 per cent of parents responding have concerns about children being set the right amount of homework. • 18 per cent of parents have concerns about the information they receive about how their children are getting on. • 16 per cent have concerns about the ability of the school to work with parents.

The inspection team endorses parents' views about the strengths of the school. Parents believe that Silver End is a good school. Inspection evidence shows that the school has a homework policy that gives good advice to parents on the frequency of homework. However, its implementation lacks consistency. The parents receive regular and appropriate information about their children's progress, but it is not always clear or sufficiently specific to indicate how they can support their children's learning. The school works well with the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The 2001 National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science; they were also well below the average for schools that have a similar intake. The proportion of pupils achieving high standards was well below average in English, mathematics and science. Between 1998 and 2000, test results declined, but since the last inspection two years ago they have started to improve, initially slowly but at a much faster rate during the last year. This was confirmed in 2000 by Her Majesty's Inspectors, who reported that, although standards were lower than national averages in English, reading continued to improve. However, writing was some way behind for pupils aged eleven. They also reported that standards in mathematics and science were broadly in line with national averages for pupils of this age. The tests show that boys achieve higher standards than girls in English, mathematics and science. Girls achieve lower standards than girls nationally, mainly because of a lack of confidence and weak speaking and listening skills.
2. Since 1998 the school initially concentrated on increasing the numbers of pupils achieving Level 2 by the age of seven and Level 4 by the age of eleven. Test information for eleven-year-olds shows that the proportion of pupils achieving these levels of attainment was slightly better than the national average in mathematics and science, but slightly below average in English. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 continued to be well below average in all three subjects. Since 2001 the school has changed its priorities and teaching methods to meet more fully the needs of more-able pupils as well as other pupils. As a consequence, the test results for 2002 are the best the school has ever achieved. They show a significant improvement in mathematics and science. Standards in English have also improved but not at the same dramatic rate. Girls continue to underachieve in reading and writing. However, the school has achieved its statutory targets in English and exceeded them in mathematics.
3. Standards in literacy and numeracy continue to improve from the below-average attainment that pupils have on entry to school. Trends show that from 1998 to 2002, by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 has increased from 52 per cent to 75 per cent in English and from 30 per cent to 83 per cent in mathematics. Standards in science also increased from 52 per cent in 1998 to 85 per cent in 2002. Following the changes in emphasis in teaching since Her Majesty's Inspectors reported in June 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving a Level 5 by the end of Year 6 has increased. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 has improved in mathematics from 15 per cent to 35 per cent and from 20 per cent to 48 per cent in science. However, in English the proportion of pupils achieving these higher levels has declined from 24 per cent to 13 per cent, mainly because of the underachievement of girls in reading and writing; standards in boys' reading have also declined. Overall, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to widen their vocabulary or to use and apply their speaking, listening and reading skills in other curriculum subjects.
4. The standards of work seen in the third week of the new school year were average in mathematics but below average in English and science. This represents an improvement in performance when compared with the work produced at the same time last year. In the current Year 6, pupils are making good progress and are on course to achieve above average standards in mathematics, average standards in science, but below average standards in English. The school is likely to achieve the challenging targets it set for 2003. At this stage of the school year, Year 6 pupils' achievements in art and design, history, information and communication technology, music and religious education are satisfactory. Achievement in geography and design and technology, is unsatisfactory; it is good in physical education, particularly in dance. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve well when compared with their prior attainments.
5. Nearly all children in the reception classes are making good progress towards attaining the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage of education. Their personal, social and

emotional development is improving. Communication, language and literacy skills are developing well but continue to be below expected levels. Many children are making good progress in ordering and sequencing numbers and mentally calculating simple number problems. They show appropriate gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world, but standards are below expectations. Children's physical and creative development is at the expected level for their age.

6. Children entered school with weak skills in speaking and listening, as measured by baseline assessments. By the end of Year 2, their speaking and listening skills are below average, but all pupils enjoy discussing the books they are reading. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to talk in a lively manner when giving their opinions of books. They listen attentively to their teachers and are confident when speaking to an adult in a small group or one-to-one situation. However, pupils have only limited opportunities to answer the teacher's questions or to talk purposefully with peers about their developing ideas. When they are given opportunities to discuss their experience and feelings, standards improve. They have too few opportunities in lessons to practise their speaking and listening skills through role-play and drama. Teachers' plans clearly identify the subject-specific key words and phrases needed to help widen pupils' vocabulary and to communicate effectively, but in many lessons opportunities are missed or not made explicit to develop this work. In lessons where this happens the pupils make good progress and achieve higher standards, such as in mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education.
7. Children entered school with weak skills in reading, as measured by baseline assessments. Reading standards are uneven across the school and are below national expectations but improving. Progress has been made since the last full inspection and Her Majesty's Inspectors' report in June 2000. Pupils are eager to read and most can explain what they like best in their current reading book. However, they do not use the full range of strategies for reading text. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 read using contextual clues in sentences to help them understand meaning, but less confident readers make mistakes when reading aloud and this detracts from their reading comprehension. Pupils in Year 2 understand the structure of books but are not able to explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction. By the end of Year 6, pupils are developing good library skills and enjoy helping younger pupils to select appropriate books. The planned and structured teaching of letter recognition and letter sounds is helping to raise standards. The plans for the teaching of reading are precise and detailed. They offer a coherent and well-focused approach and indicate that the progress made since the last inspection will be sustained.
8. Children entered school with weak skills in writing, as measured by baseline assessments. Standards in writing across the school are variable and generally below national expectations, but improving. Progress has been made since the last full inspection and Her Majesty's Inspectors' report in June 2000. Pupils are able to express themselves in writing. They have good opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Pupils can write interesting sentences and imaginative stories. Older pupils in Year 6 are improving their skills of drafting, editing and publishing their stories. Written work is monitored well and individual targets, which pupils understand, are set. Spelling is usually correct and handwriting is developing well. Lower-attaining pupils can write in sentences, but their use of punctuation is not always correct. Higher-attaining pupils are sequencing sentences well, choosing words for variety and interest. When pupils are given the opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their learning, standards of writing improve, particularly for lower-attaining pupils.
9. Children enter school with sound numeracy skills. By the end of Year 2 they have made good progress and many are able to add and subtract two-digit numbers. Most pupils can recognise multiples of 2, 5, and 10, and some know the difference between odd and even numbers. They can name and recognise some two- and three-dimensional shapes such as squares, rectangles, triangles and cubes. Pupils enjoy working with money, recognising the value of different coins and solving simple problems. The majority of pupils are able to collect information and to represent their findings using bar charts and pictograms. They are keen to share their solutions to problems, giving reasons for their answers being correct. In most classes the use of number songs and rhymes not only enhances pupils' mathematical progress but also their language development. Pupils' numeracy skills are used well to improve learning in other subjects, particularly in handling data collected as part of investigations in science. By the end of Year 6, standards continue to improve, with more than one in

three pupils achieving above average standards. They can successfully multiply three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. Higher-attaining pupils can confidently calculate and solve problems to two decimal places. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress in improving their numeracy skills when partitioning two-, three- and four-digit numbers. They are able to explain their methods well because the key words and phases they needed for effective communication were well taught by the teachers. Gifted mathematicians show an ability to think mathematically when solving complex problems and achieve very high standards. Pupils have a good knowledge of symmetry and two- and three-dimensional shapes. Handling data is well developed, particularly when skills in information and communication technology are used to construct diagrams and graphs.

10. Children enter school with weak scientific knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made sound progress but are held back by an inability to explain their work and make appropriate observations. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge of life processes, living things and physical processes. Pupils enjoy investigating what happens to different materials when they are bent, squashed, twisted or stretched, and record their findings appropriately. Higher-attaining pupils understand the principles of conducting a fair test. By the end of Year 6, most pupils appreciate the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat. In their work on materials and their properties, pupils are beginning to understand the condition needed for substances such as water to change from a solid to a liquid and then a gas. They have a sound knowledge of how to build electrical circuits using bulbs, batteries, wires and switches. Pupils used this knowledge well when making burglar alarms. They are beginning to understand how to use the forces that act on a body to make it move or remain stationary.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior achievements, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In most cases, the detail in pupils' individual education plans means that targets are clear and understood by the teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, the work undertaken is focused and teaching assistants are able to give very good support. There are good up-to-date records and procedures for monitoring progress of these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good; this is an improvement since the last full inspection and Her Majesty's Inspectors' report in June 2000. In 70 per cent of lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good or better because of effective teaching. They enjoy school and are eager to learn. Pupils willingly participate in the other activities provided by the school. During lessons pupils concentrate well and show enthusiasm when the quality of teaching makes lessons interesting. This was particularly evident during a Year 6 mathematics lesson when higher-attaining pupils worked hard to solve increasingly-complex number problems. Pupils with special educational needs are developing positive attitudes to learning and are growing in confidence. They enjoy coming to school and feel valued and supported by the teachers, the teaching assistants and other pupils.
13. Pupils are well behaved and considerate of the needs of others; this is an improvement since the last inspection, 95 per cent of parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree. Behaviour in class and around the school is good; high standards are set and pupils respond well. The school's aims and values are reflected in class rules that are clearly displayed in each teaching area and address well the impact of pupils' actions on others and the need to respect an individual's feelings. The school continues to have no incidence of exclusions. Pupils play and work well together, sharing equipment, and there is no evidence of bullying or inappropriate behaviour. They are polite and friendly to each other, staff and visitors. The school is an orderly community and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti around the school grounds, and learning resources and property are treated with respect.
14. Pupils' personal development, social and health education, and experience of citizenship are good; this is an improvement since the last full inspection. Pupils' personal development is good. New pupils learn quickly to adjust to routines and are soon settled into the life of the school. All pupils are polite and friendly, and follow instructions carefully. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. Pupils are politely inquisitive and readily engage in conversation. They demonstrate a

natural courtesy to adults without prompting and relate well to each other and to all members of the teaching and support staff and visitors. Pupils have good opportunities to show initiative and to exercise personal responsibilities, which they do with enthusiasm and maturity. For example, pupils are briefed well by their peers and then participate fully in meetings of the School Council. Others act as librarians or reading buddies for younger children and carry out various classroom tasks. However, pupils are less successful at organising their own work and taking responsibility for their learning. They have too few opportunities to develop independent learning skills, particularly in English, mathematics and science. However, when pupils are given the opportunity, such as in information and communication technology, to work collaboratively or independently, their progress is very good and standards rapidly improve. The school's setting of individual targets does help pupils to be aware of how to improve, but they are not used consistently by teachers to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are aware of health and safety issues, particularly in design and technology, science and physical education lessons. They have good opportunities to discuss with teachers and visiting health professionals issues relating to healthy living.

15. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils are very good and a strength of the school. This is having a significant impact on pupils' progress and the standards being achieved since the last inspection. Pupils are courteous in their dealings with each other and with adults. They are friendly in their approach to visitors and, for instance, during meal and playtimes, form very good relationships. Pupils show great respect for the feelings of others. They are encouraged to reflect on their own values and beliefs, for example, during assemblies and personal and social education lessons. Pupils understand very well the impact of their actions on others. A feature of the school is the caring attitude among pupils from different age groups. In the playground younger pupils play well with older pupils and are included in all the activities provided. Older pupils take seriously and enjoy the opportunities at break-time to help younger pupils form friendships with others. Pupils can distinguish between right and wrong based on a sound knowledge of the moral code taught at home and school. They are beginning to appreciate cultural diversity, and no racism or sexist behaviour was seen during the inspection and none reported by pupils or parents.
16. Attendance is good. In the academic year 2000/2001 the overall attendance rate was above average and unauthorised absences were below the national average. In the last year the overall rate has declined slightly because of an increase in authorised absences. The punctuality of pupils arriving for the morning session is good. They settle to work quickly and this helps them to make good progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, teaching is good. In 62 per cent of lessons teaching is good or better; it is very good or excellent in 30 per cent of lessons; three lessons were unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is better than in most schools and is a significant improvement since the last full inspection and Her Majesty's Inspectors' report in June 2000. In almost every year group there were examples of very good or excellent teaching.
18. Teaching of the children under five is good overall. Teaching is very good in the infants. In the juniors, teaching is good. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and citizenship, is good. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good; these pupils are helped to overcome their difficulties by the effectiveness of the teaching assistants.
19. The teaching of mathematics is very good, with 50 per cent being very good or excellent. The teaching of science is good, including 13 per cent that is very good or excellent. The teaching of English is satisfactory, with one in three lessons being good. Since the last full inspection in 1998, teaching has improved significantly in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Years 2 and 6, because of more effective teamwork, better planning and improvements in teachers' subject knowledge and methods of working, and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teaching of information and communication technology is very good. Teaching in history, physical education and religious education is good. Teaching in art and design, design and technology, geography and music is satisfactory. Overall, these developments are reflected in the improvements in the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science from being below

expectations on entry to at least average and sometimes above average in these subjects by the age of eleven.

20. Where teaching is excellent, the lessons are exciting and challenging for the pupils. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's very good subject knowledge, high expectations and stimulating introduction helped all pupils improve their counting skills when using three-digit numbers. The questioning was perceptive, demonstrations were excellent, and the pupils were actively involved in the learning, which helped generate a brisk and productive rate of work. In Years 1 and 2, very good relationships and the active involvement of the pupils helped create an excellent learning situation in which they became increasingly skilled in changing the shape of materials by squashing, bending, twisting and stretching them. They communicated their findings well through the very good use of key words and phrases that had been introduced at the beginning of the lesson. Higher-attaining pupils recorded their observations successfully, using well-constructed sentences and appropriate diagrams. In an excellent English lesson in Years 5 and 6, high expectations, good pace and well-designed group work helped pupils acquire a better understanding of complex sentences. The pupils worked quickly and eagerly and made good progress. However, their progress, particularly that of girls, was slowed by their lack of confidence in expressing themselves orally and in writing. The teacher worked hard to improve the self-esteem of the pupils by praising them for their efforts and providing sensitive and constructive advice to help them improve.
21. When teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well, and relationships are very good. This helps create a good ethos for learning. In Year 2, the teacher's very good use of story telling, photographs and music helped stimulate pupils to express their thoughts and feeling through dance. Teaching assistants supported pupils with special educational needs very well. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher's effective use of photographs of symbolic food helped pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Jewish faith. In a lesson on information and communication technology in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's very good subject knowledge and effective demonstration helped pupils to use spreadsheets well to enter data and formulae. This helped them to predict and check results when calculating the area and perimeter of different-sized rectangles. In a musical session for the reception and infant classes, the very good management of a large group of pupils and the enthusiastic use of voice and actions by the teacher enhanced the pupils' learning and enjoyment of the song, "Clap hands and follow me". In the reception class, the very good use of common words and sounds helped the children to make good progress in improving their speaking and reading skills. The teacher and nursery nurse had created a warm and caring learning environment in which the children enjoyed the challenges set and thrived.
22. Where teaching is good, nearly all pupils increase their knowledge and skills appropriately by the end of the lesson. Basic skills and subject content are clearly explained and there is a good emphasis on correct terminology, such as in a class in information and communication technology in Years 3 and 4. In a history lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils improved their understanding of the growth and development of Silver End and were engrossed and keen to contribute ideas because the tasks set met their differing needs. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils were given good opportunities to develop their creative abilities by discussing the use of musical instruments and to practise and demonstrate the importance of pitch, tempo and rhythm when developing group compositions.
23. Teaching in the reception year is good. Good knowledge of how children learn, high expectations and clear explanations help them work with sustained concentration and enjoyment, for example, when reading from big books. The teacher used perceptive questions to assess children's knowledge and skills, and to indicate how they could improve. The range of activities provided is good, but teaching does not always take full advantage of opportunities that develop in each area of learning to help the children improve their speaking skills and vocabulary. Relationships are very good, and teaching assistants and nursery nurses are used effectively.
24. There are satisfactory or better levels of subject knowledge and expertise among the teachers in most subjects. Lessons are planned well and the tasks set meet the differing needs of pupils. All the staff are technically competent in teaching phonics and other basic skills. The teaching methods used in English and mathematics follow those of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies; they have been implemented successfully and standards have been improving since their introduction. The

direct teaching methods used are effective in raising standards from being well below average to below average levels in English and above average levels in mathematics. However, pupils have only limited opportunities to work in small groups or individually to develop their own independent learning skills, and this is limiting their progress in some lessons. When they do have such opportunities to engage in group discussions, write more freely, plan their own investigations, and use and apply their knowledge, progress is often very good. For example, standards are better than average in aspects of mathematics, music, personal and social education, physical education and religious education when these opportunities occur. In all subjects teachers need to reinforce the key words, phrases and definitions as pupils work in groups or individually, as a significant number forget between one lesson and the next. Assessment at classroom level is good and this is helping teachers to improve their planning for the next lesson. The teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and encourage them to overcome difficulties. At the end of lessons, more could be made of checking pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, reinforcing language development and providing opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt and the progress they have made, in order to improve further. Homework arrangements are satisfactory and there are appropriate systems for communicating with parents.

25. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, time was not used well and a significant minority of pupils were not engaged in the task set because of too much teacher talk, such as in a science lesson about magnets for Years 3 and 4. In an art and design lesson, for the same years, the work was not planned well. In a geography lesson for Years 5 and 6, the teacher's subject knowledge was not good enough to promote demanding work.
26. In English, mathematics and science, the rate at which pupils learn and make progress is good or better in most year groups. Almost all pupils extend their knowledge or skills by appropriate amounts, and their understanding deepens. Work is pitched appropriately to meet the differing needs of pupils. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 6, mental work at the beginning of the lesson deepened pupils' understanding of sequencing numbers. By the end of the lesson, higher-attaining pupils were confidently using and applying their knowledge to solve increasingly-complex money problems. They also showed an increasing understanding of how to think mathematically. Pupils' learning and progress in writing have improved since the last full inspection report from being well below average to below average two years ago, but they are continuing to improve. Progress in reading is at a much slower rate because of pupils' lack of confidence, fluency and limited vocabulary, and standards remain obstinately below average. However, better teaching has helped to move standards from being low at the time of the last full inspection to below average two years ago. The introduction of the Early Years Research programme, which focuses on the five key reading skills, is rapidly improving pupils' progress and the standards achieved. In science, the pupils are making good progress because of a recent improvement in teachers' subject knowledge, the planning of the subject, particularly the increased emphasis placed on scientific enquiry, and setting more-demanding work for higher-attaining pupils.
27. Although the number of lessons observed in non-core subjects varied, in most subjects the teaching is effective. In the substantial majority of lessons, pupils know what they must do to improve to meet the individual learning targets set by the teachers. However, they have only limited opportunities to develop their own independent learning skills. In all subjects, teachers' planning has identified the key words and phrases needed for pupils to communicate effectively, but only limited use is made of these at the beginnings and ends of lessons to reinforce learning. When they are used explicitly, pupils' progress and standards improve.
28. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are good. Teachers use imaginative ideas for developing pupils' skills in listening, expressing feelings and reflecting on experiences. In Years 5 and 6, very good planning and good modelling of spoken English helped pupils to begin to discuss the consequences of decisions making and dealing with personnel dilemmas; for example, being invited to two friends' parties on the same day or what action to take when anti-social behaviour is exhibited by others. They all understood that irresponsible or insensitive behaviour might have unfortunate consequences. Speaking and listening, and note-taking opportunities, were well used and thoughtfully directed by the teachers, but the vocabulary used by most of the pupils to express themselves was limited. One higher-attaining pupil was very confident, fluent and coherent, and used a wide

vocabulary. In Years 3 and 4, good use is made of pictures and challenging questions to help pupils to explore the ideas of happiness and sadness. The pupils learned about their own thoughts and feelings, and showed respect for those of others. However, some pupils had difficulty in explaining themselves because of their lack of confidence and limited vocabulary.

29. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching because it is carefully planned jointly by the teachers and teaching assistants; this is a significant improvement since the last full inspection. Their approach is very professional in the provision they make for these pupils. The pupils are fully integrated into all lessons and are set tasks appropriate for their abilities. They are able to contribute in lessons in such a way that their efforts and achievements can be praised effectively. These pupils are extremely well supported by teaching assistants, who understand well their learning needs. Other pupils behave sensibly, sensitively and responsibly towards these pupils. Resources for these pupils are satisfactory, although the use of computers and software to support their learning does not yet form a part of the repertoire of most teachers.
30. The teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Teachers build upon the language experiences pupils receive at home, respecting and celebrating their cultures and traditions. The pupils are fully included in all activities. They receive very good support from teaching assistants, who work well with the class teachers in planning and designing appropriate activities to meet their differing needs. Hence, pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.

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

31. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets well the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs; this is an improvement since the last full inspection report. The main weakness in provision is that there are too few regularly planned opportunities for extended pupils' speaking and listening skills through the curriculum. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. All subjects are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school gives good emphasis to literacy and numeracy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good. All pupils have equal opportunities and access to the curriculum.
32. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is broad, balanced and of good quality. Activities are relevant and suitably based in play, and this interests and motivates the children to take part. The curriculum provides the children with challenging work that ensures a smooth transition into the National Curriculum. The curriculum is enriched through some imaginative teaching and an effective balance between whole-class, teacher-directed and child-chosen work.
33. Curriculum planning is good, and weaknesses noted in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Policies and schemes of work in all subjects now guide planning and provide continuity in pupils' learning. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and standards are rapidly improving. Provision has been strengthened by teaching pupils in groups based on their prior attainment, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and mathematics is now a strength of the school. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has not been successful in raising standards as rapidly as in mathematics because there is not enough emphasis placed on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills in English and in other subjects. However, the school's involvement in the Early Reading Research Project is helping to rapidly improve pupils' progress in reading throughout the school; this was well reflected in the National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds this year. There is a growing emphasis on investigative and experimental science, which needs to be extended to allow pupils more freedom to plan and carry out their own investigations. Provision for information and communication technology has improved greatly with the development of the suite where pupils learn and apply the basic skills. They are being provided with an increasing number of opportunities to apply these skills in other subjects. Religious education is firmly based on the local agreed syllabus. All subjects have an appropriate allocation of time. The governing body's curriculum committee is well informed and meets regularly to monitor, evaluate and review the curriculum with the

senior management team and co-ordinators. Each governor responsible for a subject area regularly visits the school to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their area of interest to help inform the school development plan.

34. Resources are used from within and outside the school to enrich the curriculum. There is a detailed programme of personal, social and health education that provides well for sex education and teaches awareness of the misuse of drugs. The involvement of the local health authority, police and fire service in these programmes ensures that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues, and are given accurate facts as part of their preparation for adult life. Although pupils transfer to a number of secondary schools at the end of Year 6, the school has forged good curricular links with them, particularly in mathematics. Gifted mathematicians enjoy the regular and challenging opportunity of working with the head of mathematics from a local secondary school. Pupils are well prepared socially for the next stage of their education. However, the school recognises the need to develop their independent learning skills in all subjects so that they are better prepared academically for secondary education. There are good links with playgroups, which children attend before they enter the reception class. This helps them to get to know staff and eases the transition to more-formal education. A homework policy is in place, clearly setting out a programme to support the curriculum; it gives good guidance to parents on how they can support their children's learning. However, parents reported that its implementation is inconsistent; the inspection team agrees. Homework is not used effectively to help develop pupils' independent learning and research skills.
35. In addition to the statutory curriculum, the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for boys and girls. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to participate in competitive sports. They participate with enthusiasm in the Building Club, country and modern dance, choir, mixed football, basketball, chess, cross-culture club, information and communication technology and the choir. The school has very good links with the local community which strongly support to the curriculum. Visiting speakers are used well, such as when giving pupils a first-hand account of the effect of rationing during the Second World War. Parents and visiting artists share their expertise successfully with pupils during the popular Arts Week. Visits to places of cultural and educational interest, such as the Natural History Museum, Hedingham Castle and the Barbican Theatre, as well as an annual residential trip for Year 6 pupils, further support the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. The displays of work done on visits to Colchester and Chelmsford Museums and Hedingham Castle reflect the value for pupils of these experiences.
36. The school provides effectively for pupils of all ages, gender and ethnic diversity. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunities for all pupils to make good progress in lessons. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion. The school successfully meets pupils' special educational and physical needs, including those of pupils who speak English as an additional language, by providing a good level of very well-trained support. Teachers use this high-quality support well to ensure that these pupils are fully included in lessons. The individual education plans and statements of educational needs are carefully drawn up and accurately identify new targets for pupils' development. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils; their needs are met well in mathematics, where setting arrangements and visits from secondary school teachers provide stimulating experiences. The school participates in the Braintree Initiative, in which pupils experience a range of activities with others of similar ability. However, the needs of these able pupils are not always met successfully in lessons where there are too few opportunities for independent learning and the development of research skills.
37. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, but there are only limited opportunities for them to gain a better knowledge and understanding of cultures other than their own. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The daily act of worship meets statutory requirements, is broadly Christian in content, and contributes significantly to pupils' appreciation of the spiritual aspects of life. Assemblies are prepared well, carefully developed and presented with sensitivity and integrity. They contribute not only to the spiritual development of pupils but also to their moral, social and cultural experiences. In school and class assemblies, the tone is set by using calming music. Stories are told with dramatic clarity in order to help pupils understand and think about their messages, often in relation to complex ideas such as bravery, sharing and selfishness. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they participate fully, sharing ideas and

experiences, and are able to think quite deeply when given opportunities for quiet reflection in follow-up activities with their teachers. Collective acts of worship give pupils good opportunities to celebrate and worship through literature, drama, dance and music. They make a significant contribution to the school's sense of community and to the sharing of common values.

38. Provision for moral education is very good. Stories in assemblies, the use of class rules and the underlying ethos of the school help to promote values such as fairness and respect. A positive discipline policy is in place which rewards good conduct, and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, have clear expectations of behaviour. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, and the school's rules are discussed frequently and displayed prominently. There is a coherent and well-understood system of rewards and sanctions across the school. Pupils are self-assured and will talk to adults during break times to seek their advice before disputes arise. When incidents happen, teachers help pupils through discussion to appreciate the effect their actions have on others. Teachers and all other adults in the school have very good relationships with pupils and provide good role models to which they can relate. Teachers praise pupils for their kindness, consideration, effort and progress, and deal with transgressions quietly and unobtrusively.
39. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. They relate to one another, to staff and to visitors very well. They understand basic social conventions and work effectively to support each other when given the opportunity. Pupils respect their teachers and appreciate the ways in which they help them to learn and be kind. They feel very positive about themselves as members of the school community and show high levels of self-esteem. Pupils show their concern for less fortunate people in the world by collecting for a number of charities both locally and internationally based. Lessons in personal, social and health education contribute significantly to pupils' knowledge, understanding and skill in these areas. They enjoy these lessons and can discuss dilemmas arising from everyday experience with care and thoughtfulness. Pupils are able to consider not only their own perspective but also the ways in which others might view events. However, they have yet to develop the skills independence and taking responsibility for their own learning.
40. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. Pupils have a developing understanding of their own culture, particularly in history, geography and religious education. Opportunities to recognise and appreciate their own cultural heritage are also provided in music and art, and when they read or listen to extracts from literature and poetry. Displays around the school show that some attention is given to different countries, cultures and faiths, but the multicultural dimensions of the taught curriculum continue to be underdeveloped. It lacks an appropriate range of activities to help teachers raise pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures; the school is aware that this is an area for further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. There are good procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe and looked after well; this is similar to the judgement of the last full inspection report. Child protection arrangements are securely in place. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are very good. The school makes good use of its own, and external, expertise in the teaching of healthy living.
42. Pupils are provided with a very caring, happy and supportive learning environment. Parents are pleased with this and say that their children like school. The good provision for pupils' welfare and guidance identified in the last inspection report continues to be a strong feature of the school. Procedures for child protection are good and well understood by staff. Teachers have undertaken training to ensure that they are aware of the issues. Midday supervisors are well briefed when there may be concerns about a child, and links with outside agencies, such as school nursing, are very good. Governors are well informed about child protection legislation and supportive guidelines; they implement them effectively.
43. The procedures for monitoring health and safety are good. There are regular safety inspections, and appropriate action is taken where necessary. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including citizenship is good. Effective first-aid arrangements are in place for dealing with

accidents and illness, and there is a consistently high standard of pastoral care. A healthy lifestyle is promoted well in lessons. Effective use is made of visiting health professionals to enhance pupils' learning. Regular risk assessments before external trips, checks on structures, the testing of equipment, and fire drills are all organised well. The school has been made aware of some minor items relating to health and safety that may require attention. A policy with appropriate guidance is in place for staff to follow to ensure that pupils have safe access to the Internet.

44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Unexplained absences are followed up successfully, class attendance figures are closely monitored on a weekly basis and there is effective liaison with the education welfare service. Overall, registers are kept well and meet statutory requirements. However, there is some inconsistency in the manner in which lateness is recorded in the registers, and the statistics compiled by the school do not cover the whole of the academic year. Good arrangements for promoting high standards of behaviour have been developed after appropriate discussions with parents, staff and the pupils. There are simple rules for the pupils, rewards for good behaviour and appropriate sanctions for dealing with anti-social conduct. However, not all staff consistently use and apply the wide range of strategies available to them such as treasure box and smile awards as well as the traffic-light system of sanctions. The school has very good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour of all kinds, including bullying, and is about to introduce a new race-equality policy. All the elements of positive behaviour management are used effectively throughout the school. Teachers and other adults, including midday assistants, act as good role models for the pupils and this ensures that expectations of behaviour remain high.
45. The procedures and practices for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are both varied and satisfactory. A caring teaching staff knows the pupils very well, particularly their social and emotional needs. Effective use is made of circle time and the sex education lessons to track pupils' personal development. The school's council, the lunchtime relationship-building club and the family learning project enhance provision for personal development, as does a new project to teach pupils playground games. However, the school recognises that there is a need to give pupils more opportunities to work independently in subjects of the curriculum. The personal support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are dealt with sensitively and supportively. There are high levels of awareness among teachers and teaching assistants of the differing needs of these pupils. Other pupils give them constructive and appropriate support to help them feel valued members of the community. The arrangements for monitoring and promoting the progress of pupils towards the appropriate targets on their individual education plans are very good.
46. The school has a very clear and comprehensive assessment policy, which gives very good guidance to staff. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are good overall. The procedures in place for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are particularly effective and are helping to raise standards. There has been very good progress made in this area since the previous inspection. This is mainly due to enthusiastic and well-informed leadership by the headteacher and her deputy in this area of the school's work. There is now a clear understanding of the purpose and use of assessment. Teachers' plans make clear that they will assess learning in respect of the objectives they have set. At the beginning of lessons, teachers make clear to pupils what they are to learn and what teachers are looking for. This helps them evaluate the work at the end of lessons and gives pupils a good understanding of the progress they are making. Although there is a clear marking policy in place and work is regularly marked by teachers, written comments do not always indicate to pupils how they might improve their work.
47. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. In English, mathematics and science, work is assessed and outcomes are recorded to show the knowledge, understanding and skills they have acquired. Teachers work with individual pupils to set challenging yet realistic targets. An indication of the effectiveness of the school's system for tracking the progress of each pupil and the use of assessment to support learning is that the great majority of pupils achieve their targets each year. The challenging statutory targets set for pupils in Year 6 were met last year, except in literacy, which was one per cent under target. Standardised and optional tests are used well in setting these long-term targets for individuals as well as for each year group. Very good use is made of Target Tracker to monitor individual and cohort achievement.

48. The school's good use of assessment data to guide planning underpins many of the improvements made since the last inspection. Assessment data and test results are analysed to plot the fluctuations in attainment from year to year. This enables the senior management team, governors and subject co-ordinators to identify clearly any areas for improvement. For example, analysis showed that reading was an area for development, so the school introduced the Early Reading Research Project, which is successfully helping to raise standards. The coordinators of English, mathematics and science now plan to moderate pupils' work with individual teachers to standardise teachers' judgements on attainment. The school is also working towards developing a consistent school system for all other subjects linked to recent national guidance. The school has effective arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the Foundation Stage of learning.
49. There are very good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are fully aware of the different needs of these pupils and consequently help them to meet the targets set in their individual education plans and statements. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of educational needs. As well as the well-maintained register of special educational needs, it has also drawn up a register of gifted and higher-attaining pupils. Teachers are becoming aware of the specific needs of these pupils and are beginning to provide for them through challenging teaching at all stages of lessons. This has been particularly successful in mathematics, where the school uses assessment very well to teach pupils in groups based on their prior attainment, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and as a result standards have improved dramatically during the last year. The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is assessed carefully and records are kept as part of each school profile. The class teacher and the deputy head who is responsible for pupils with English as an additional language work together well to set academic and social targets for each pupil's next stage of learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school has developed a good partnership with parents and carers; this is a similar finding to that of the last full inspection report. Parents' views of the school as expressed in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting were very positive. They value the accessibility of staff and the high expectations that staff have for the pupils. Parents are delighted by the progress their children are making and by the aims and values fostered by the school. Only a small minority had some concerns about the amount of homework, the quality of information on pupils' progress and the school's ability to work closely with parents.
51. The headteacher places great emphasis on good links with parents and works hard to achieve them. Good-quality information is provided through a diverse range of publications and events, such as the weekly bulletin, homework and reading diaries, and curriculum evenings for parents. Parents are also provided with very useful information on the topics that their children will be studying, with advice on how they can help them at home. Parents have recently been consulted in a survey and have participated effectively in the development of a variety of school policies, such as one for managing pupils' behaviour positively.
52. The school prospectus and governors' annual reports are clear and easy to read, and meet statutory requirements. The annual report to parents contains details of achievement in all curriculum subjects and in personal and social skills. There are clear targets for further development and good opportunities are available for parents to discuss their children's targets with the class teacher.
53. Parents are actively involved in work of the school and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They regularly come to the school to help with classroom activities, particularly reading. Parents value the opportunity to assist on school trips and help with the annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils. They are active participants in the special curriculum events such as the recent arts and crafts week and, where appropriate, with the family learning project for parents and their children. Parents support well the home/school agreements when pupils start school, but this is not reinforced later when pupils are mature enough to make their own comments.

54. Parents of pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties are informed at an early stage and provided regularly with information about the progress of their children. Parents are always fully involved in any of the review procedures and are provided with information on how they can help their children. Ninety-seven per cent of the parents who returned their questionnaire said that they find the staff approachable. Parents are confident that any concerns that they have will be listened to and acted upon. They are particularly pleased with the induction procedures when their children first start school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The leadership and management of the school have improved significantly since the last full inspection, when they were judged unsatisfactory. Shortly after the appointment of the new headteacher, three years ago, Her Majesty's Inspectors reported in June 2000 that the leadership and management of the school were sound and developing well; they are now very good overall.
56. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are excellent. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher, who is an outstanding teacher. Together they set high standards and lead by example. Their evaluation of the school's performance identifies accurately its strengths and weakness. The headteacher has a very clear view of how she wants the school to develop. This is conveyed to staff and they share her commitment to providing top-quality education for pupils. The school's aims are met very well. The headteacher has high expectations of staff and provides them with positive and constructive advice on their performance. Very good teamwork, effective planning and clarity of purpose are exemplified in the high expectations that staff have of pupils and in the stimulating environment that supports learning. Coordinators are working hard to develop their subjects. They recognise the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and give effective advice, support and guidance to their colleagues, such as in English, mathematics and science.
57. The governing body shares and affirms the headteacher's plans for the future educational direction of the school, is fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses, and takes effective action to bring about improvements; this is a significant improvement since the last full inspection. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. It works effectively through appropriate committees. Governors are well informed, interested and enthusiastic about the school. They fulfil their role as critical friends effectively, particularly when monitoring the school's performance, the budget and the quality of teaching. Governors with specific responsibilities for the curriculum, numeracy, literacy and special educational needs visit the school regularly and have very good working relationships with the teachers and pupils. Parent governors are particularly effective and gain valuable insight into the working of the school while supporting pupils' learning. This has helped governors acquire a better knowledge of the problems the school experiences; for example, the need to improve the provision for the teaching of pupils in the infants and the acoustics of the building.
58. All staff and governors are involved in the process of identifying priority areas for improvement, based on a careful analysis of the current situation. The school development plan is constructed well and clearly identifies costs, training needs and success criteria to bring about continuous improvement over the next two years. A system for target setting is well established. It involves all staff in analysing pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and in identifying what pupils need to work on to make further improvements.
59. Good analyses of test results and a detailed system of tracking the attainment of individual pupils have been developed by the headteacher and key members of staff. These have enabled the school to identify as areas for improvement pupils' writing, the performance of girls in reading and the need to increase the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment English, mathematics and science by the ages of seven and eleven. Challenging targets have been set for cohorts of pupils, and many teachers set class and individual targets, particularly in core subjects. Teachers are constantly striving to raise pupils' levels of achievement. In addition, the analysis provides a secure framework upon which the school can plan effectively and judge value for money.

60. The headteacher and key staff regularly and rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning by direct classroom observation. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Subject coordinators play a more prominent role in the management of the school; this is an improvement since the last inspection. They regularly monitor samples of pupils' work across the school in order to gain a better understanding of their levels of attainment and of what needs to be improved; this is good practice. Together with the headteacher, they have set realistic and challenging targets for improvement for their areas of responsibility, which are clearly identified in subject action plans.
61. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good and the co-ordinator has already begun using her expertise in this area to build similar provision for those pupils in the school whose first language is not English and for those who are gifted and talented. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the funds available are used effectively, including money made available for the school's main budget. The code of practice is fully complied with. School records and other documents are detailed and regularly kept up to date. The targets set in pupils' individual education plans are realistic and give good guidance to teachers on what has to be achieved. The involvement of all staff in planning together for these pupils is a very good feature of provision, as is the early identification of individual needs. Many of the teaching assistants have had specific training about teaching these pupils and this has helped improve pupils' self-esteem and their achievements, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Overall, provision has improved significantly since the last full inspection.
62. Teachers are well qualified and sufficient in number to provide a good education for the pupils. All teachers hold subject responsibilities that enable the curriculum to be efficiently delivered and monitored. In the reception class, there is good provision of a teacher and nursery nurse to meet the full range of learning experiences for children under five years of age. Teaching assistants are experienced and knowledgeable; they have a very good level of expertise and give good support and guidance to the pupils in their care. The school office is managed in a friendly and efficient manner and provides a welcoming point of contact for parents and visitors. The midday and kitchen staff enjoy good relationships with pupils and adults. The school is clean and well maintained internally and externally by the dedicated caretaker and cleaners.
63. There are very good procedures in place for introducing new staff to the policies and routines of the school. Newly-qualified teachers are provided with time and good support from an experienced mentor. The threshold assessment procedures are well in place. The professional development of staff is very good; it is linked well to the school development plan and affords training that is beneficial for staff and the school. Teachers and teaching assistants train well together and share a commitment and determination to bring about school improvement. The training in literacy and numeracy, for example, has had, and continues to have, an impact on raising standards.
64. The accommodation provided is very good. The school building is welcoming and spacious, and provides a pleasant environment in which to work. The building is well maintained and kept in a very clean condition. Outside, the grounds are pleasant and attractive, with a good number of designated play areas for the pupils, as well as places for quiet reflection and relaxation. The large hall and a carpeted studio are used well for a wide range of activities. The library or book zone is colourful and inviting; it has an adequate number of books that are used well by pupils of all ages. The facilities provided for the education of children in the Foundation Stage are good. The school has a good range of learning resources, which teachers and pupils use well; this is an improvement since the last full inspection. The computer area is developing well and used effectively, and pupils' achievements are improving rapidly.
65. Financial control and administration are good. The school has effective and efficient working practices to plan, manage and monitor its finances. The budget is firmly linked to the school development plan and reflects well the educational needs of the pupils. Records of financial decisions are accurate and clear. Specific grants received by the school are used for the purposes for which they are intended and there is a detailed record of how the money has been spent. Financial statements are prepared and submitted to each meeting of the governing body and all the recommendations of the latest

external audit have been implemented successfully. The budget surplus is planned is being used well to improve the buildings and grounds and provide more teaching assistants.

66. The school successfully applies the principles of best value. It analyses its performance using national and local data to evaluate the standards that pupils are achieving and to identify areas for improvement. The school makes very good use of information and communication technology to improve its administration. Appropriate records are computerised and are kept well. Safeguards are in place to ensure the security of information stored electronically. The school continues to seek good value for money when purchasing resources and services.
67. At the time of the last full inspection, the school was giving unsatisfactory value for money. Pupils' personal circumstances are similar to those of pupils in all schools nationally, but their attainment on entry to school is below average. They make good progress and their achievements are now broadly in line with national averages or better, except in English. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good. The quality of education provided, particularly teaching, is good and often very good. The leadership and management of the school are very good. Currently, unit costs are above average for a school of this size. Since the last full inspection, the school has rapidly improved; it is an effective organisation and gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. To bring about improvements, the headteacher and staff, with the support of the governing body, should:

- raise standards of English by:
 - i) making the systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the teaching of speaking, listening and reading more effective so that good practice is identified and shared, and any shortcomings are quickly remedied;
 - ii) planning more systematically the teaching of speaking and listening skills;
 - iii) providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects of the curriculum;
 - iv) helping pupils to widen their vocabulary through the explicit teaching of subject-specific key words and phrases at the beginning of and during lessons to enable them to communicate more effectively;
 - v) encouraging pupils to talk purposefully with each other about their thoughts and feelings and to explain their work;
 - vi) creating more opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through role-play and drama;
 - vii) increasing the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment in reading and writing by providing more targeted support;
 - viii) improving the performance of girls in reading and writing;

(Paragraphs 1 to 10, 20 to 27, 31, 33, 59, 81 to 90, 96, 98, 107, 115, 117, 119, 120, 127 and 135)

- improve pupils' independent learning skills by:
 - i) creating more opportunities for them to work in small groups to explore through practical work the knowledge, skills and understanding being acquired after direct teaching has been undertaken;
 - ii) encouraging them to plan their own investigative and experimental work in mathematics and science.

(Paragraphs 14, 24, 27, 33, 34, 36, 39, 45, 90, 97, 99, 102, 114 and 117)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	19	26	26	3	0	0
Percentage	4	25	34	34	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	310
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.0	School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	24	19	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	21
	Girls	15	17	18
	Total	34	37	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (73)	86 (83)	91 (90)
	National	84(83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	23
	Girls	17	17	19
	Total	37	37	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (78)	86 (90)	98 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	26	19	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	25
	Girls	13	10	15
	Total	28	28	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (71)	62 (59)	89 (81)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	20	24
	Girls	13	11	13
	Total	26	31	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (56)	69 (53)	82 (66)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
264	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	11.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.2
Average class size	31.0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	273

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	773825
Total expenditure	740473
Expenditure per pupil	2519
Balance brought forward from previous year	49317
Balance carried forward to next year	82669

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

317

Number of questionnaires returned

86

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	53	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	38	6	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	56	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	43	16	10	1
The teaching is good.	58	37	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	35	16	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	39	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	43	1	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	37	47	14	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	41	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	55	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	50	10	2	9

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

All significant issues raised by parents are included in the parents' summary in the report.

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

69. Children are eligible to enter the reception class during the term of their fifth birthday. They attend in the morning for the first two weeks and then full time thereafter. At the time of the inspection there were 11 children on roll; eight of them were still under five. Most children have attended a local play-group and the leaders are invited to the school each term to share their knowledge of the children. Parents are invited to meet the teacher before the formal start to the term to discuss their children's present progress. This information forms the first part of the child's school profile. These procedures are good and allow time for the children and parents to learn about the organisation and curriculum of the school and therefore the children settle quickly and happily into the school. The school has secured a strong team of early-years practitioners who understand the curriculum well, ensuring that teaching and learning are a strength, and also work hard to promote the pupils' social and emotional wellbeing and the development of a positive attitude to learning.
70. Children enter the reception with a wide range of abilities and experiences. Last year's baseline test results taken at the end of the first seven weeks show that the majority of children enter school with below average levels of attainment for their age. Many children have poor speaking, listening, reading and social skills. However, the good teaching and learning opportunities offered help them make good progress in all areas of learning. The class teacher expects that, by the end of the year, the majority of children will attain the Early Learning Goals in four of the six areas of learning. However, only 75 per cent are expected to achieve them in language, literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world.
71. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and sometimes very good. Teaching is planned well, drawing on the "stepping stones" in the Foundation Stage curriculum, with all members of staff showing very secure subject knowledge. Teaching is usually very practical and visual. Staff review previous work and the effectiveness of lessons thoughtfully and use the information collected well to plan the next stage of learning. They choose resources well to help engage the children's interest and to motivate them. Staff often use children's misunderstandings or errors to support learning for the whole group. They use praise well to ensure that children understand that their contributions are appreciated and valued. Children of all abilities enjoy school and quickly develop very positive attitudes because of the good teaching. They learn to listen, share, and respect their peers and the adults with whom they come into contact. The teaching of children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. These children are quickly identified and receive appropriate support to meet their differing needs. Parents are given good advice by the teacher on how they can support their children's learning.
72. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is broad and balanced, planned well and of good quality. Activities are relevant and suitably based in play, and this interests and motivates the children to take part. Staff quickly adjust activities to meet the individual needs of the children; this helps them make good progress. The curriculum is enriched through some imaginative teaching and an effective balance between whole-class, teacher-directed and child-chosen work. Children are given good opportunities to experience a wide range of activities in the outdoor education areas; this enhances their physical development. Opportunities for role-play helped children to explore the social and talking skills associated with a visit to a doctors' surgery. The Early Reading Research programme has been introduced recently into the school, and focuses upon the acquisition of the five key reading skills. The children enjoy the three short daily sessions and make good progress with phonics and word recognition after only three weeks of term.
73. Leadership and management at the Foundation Stage are good. The teachers and nursery nurse work as a very effective team. The team is well qualified and a high priority is given to their continuous professional development in school development planning. In this way the highest level of support is offered to the children, which contributes well to the good progress they make. Staff carefully record children's achievements; this information is used well for planning and to help set good levels of

challenge for children with differing needs. Staff share with parents these records of their children's progress, to set targets with them and finally contribute to the report which families receive at the end of the year. More-formal assessments of children's reading, writing and number skills contribute towards a smooth transfer to Year 1 of the National Curriculum. Resources for learning are very good. The recent development of the outdoor area provides very good opportunities for the children to improve their gross motor skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

74. Since the last full inspection report, the school has made many improvements to the education for children under five years of age. These are reflected in the good quality of teaching and learning, improved assessment procedures and the appropriate Foundation Stage curriculum, and therefore standards are improving and the children make good progress in all areas of the learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

75. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and standards are improving. The teacher and nursery nurse are caring, listen with respect to the children, and teach them to become independent, to behave well and to show concern for others. This is reflected in the good behaviour that the children show in the classroom and around the school; for instance, when moving together to the studio for music or to the computer suite. The staff understand the personality and abilities of each child, guiding and supporting them so that they learn to persevere with a task until they succeed, as was seen in the case of one child with special needs. Therefore, children gain in confidence and self-esteem, and are developing their independent learning skills. They learn to help one another; for example, when dressing and undressing for physical education or playing with dolls and prams. Children learn to make choices as they decide on the different activities needed to show Humpty Dumpty's fall. For example, two children used a computer program to build up the wall whilst others build a wall with large plastic blocks, using a tool set complete with spirit level. The high expectations of the staff promote very good attitudes to school that help the children in the Foundation Stage to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and to achieve the standard expected nationally.

Communication, language and literacy

76. A significant number of children enter school with poor speaking and listening skills. The staff listen with respect to children speaking, encouraging them to participate and thereby enriching their vocabulary. At the time of the inspection the children had been in school for a very short time, but after only nine days with the Early Reading Research programme many children know the initial letter sounds and can identify words that rhyme. For example, the higher-attaining children create rhyming couplets about Humpty Dumpty that the teacher recorded on a board, giving them an understanding of the printed word. Children with special educational needs make good progress as the adults encourage and help them to participate fully in all activities. The children use their phonic knowledge to read their names and many look at books with enjoyment and understanding. The staff praise the efforts of the children as they attempt to write independently. Most can hold a pencil correctly and, by the end of the reception year, the teacher expects that 75 per cent of the class will have achieved the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning; this is below average.

Mathematics

77. The teacher expects that the large majority of children will achieve the expected standard in mathematics by the end of the Foundation Year. The children are beginning to count confidently and reliably to ten and beyond. They respond enthusiastically to number rhymes and associated actions. The teacher makes good use of the classroom environment and apparatus to enhance learning, and to build children's mathematical vocabulary and understanding. Children learn to work cooperatively in pairs and groups, consolidating their numerical skills. The teacher uses every opportunity to provide work that meets the differing needs of the children and consequently they make good progress in mathematical knowledge and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children have many opportunities to develop a good understanding of the world by the end of the reception year. Computers are used confidently by children, who begin to use the mouse competently to draw simple shapes and to place items of clothing on a teddy. The opportunities provided by the computers help to develop children's manual dexterity, and also support language, reading and mathematical skills. In a good lesson, children were beginning to learn positional language to describe their routes to school and the position of features in the classroom such as the doors, windows and the teacher's desk. By the end of the reception year, due to the good provision offered by the teacher, 75 per cent of the children are likely to attain standards in line with those expected nationally in their knowledge and understanding of the world; this is below average.

Physical development

79. The children make good progress in their fine and gross motor skills. They take advantage of the outside play area, which provides stimulating and imaginative learning opportunities. Children use it to run, leap and jump, showing different body positions and shapes. In the classroom the children develop and practise fine motor skills by successfully using scissors, pencils, paints, brushes play-dough and glue. By the end of the reception year most children make good progress and are expected to achieve average standards in this area of learning.

Creative development

80. Good opportunities are given for children to develop their creative abilities through good teaching and the careful selection of resources and games. The children successfully explore colour, texture and pattern as they create Humpty Dumpty's wall using paper and glue. The teacher and nursery nurse plan together to provide good opportunities to enrich the children's vocabulary. This was observed during the children's first music lesson in the studio. They use the percussion instruments enthusiastically to accompany the story of the Magical Musical Sounds, and listen to the variety of sounds they made and recorded. They develop their speaking, listening and dramatic skills very well as they use the playhouse for imaginative activities. Children learn to concentrate, and to communicate and talk about their feelings; for instance, when building or playing in the role-play area. By the end of the reception year the majority of children are expected to have made good progress across a broad range of learning experiences and attain typical standards for their age.

ENGLISH

81. The current standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are below average; teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Those with special educational needs make good progress. Standards, progress, the quality of teaching and the use of assessment have improved since the last full inspection. Over the past five years there has been a rising trend in attainment, although the rate of improvement has not matched national trends.
82. Early indications are that, in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, standards are likely to be below average; however, this is an improvement on previous years. The rate of improvement is slower in English than in science and mathematics, and the performance of girls at the age of eleven fell below the national average for their age group. In Year 2, standards are likely to be average and the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels is likely to be above average. If confirmed, these are the best results the school has achieved for many years. They have been achieved by good teaching, better planning, improved methods of working, higher expectations and hard work. The inspection team found attainment in English at the ages of seven and eleven to be below national expectations. However, given the well below average attainment on entry to the school, pupils show good progress, particularly in reading and writing by the age of eleven.
83. The speaking and listening skills of seven-year-olds are below average, but all pupils readily engage in conversations about reading and their work. Eleven-year-olds are able to talk in an engaging and lively manner when discussing books, their experience of being in school, their views of themselves as

learners and their aspirations. All pupils listen attentively to their teachers and are confident when speaking to an adult in a small group or one-to-one situation. However, in many English lessons pupils have only limited opportunities to answer the teacher's questions or to talk purposefully with peers about their thoughts and developing ideas. When pupils are given opportunities to discuss their experiences, ideas and feelings with one another, standards improve. They are able to offer well-formed accounts of their views and can ask questions that are significant and worthy of further attention. In those lessons where pupils are required by their teachers to engage in conversation and to give full answers to the questions asked, their attainment is higher than when they are passive listeners and learners.

84. Reading standards are uneven across the school and, overall, are below national expectations but improving. Progress has been made since the last full inspection and Her Majesty's Inspectors' report in June 2000. Pupils aged seven and eleven enjoy reading, and read with their parents or carers. However, they do not use the full range of strategies for reading text, and the less confident readers make mistakes and lose fluency when reading aloud. Most pupils try to read unknown words by sounding them out or by recognising familiar parts within the words. Higher-attaining eleven-year-olds used the meaning of a sentence to help them understand and read those words that were new to them. Pupils are eager to read and most can explain what they like best in their current reading book. Seven-year-olds understand how books are structured and can explain where to find the title as well as the name of the author. They were unsure about the name of the illustrator and unable to explain which texts were fiction and non-fiction. The most able eleven-year-olds read with enjoyment and expression, understand the nature of different kinds of writing, and know which kinds of text they prefer to read. They can locate and use texts from the library effectively and are aware of the ways in which the Internet can be used as a source of information. Those pupils who act as librarians have a good grasp of the way in which the library is organised. They are already well equipped with the skills they need to help younger readers become more confident in using the recently established library as a resource for learning. The planned and structured teaching of letter recognition and letter sounds to the youngest pupils increases their knowledge and understanding of the printed word. When teachers provide subject specific vocabulary at the beginning of lessons in other subjects, such as mathematics, science, history, geography and art, pupils are able to use their newly acquired vocabulary to discuss their work and are then able to recognise these new words when reading. The plans for the teaching of reading, which draw on the National Literacy Strategy, are precise and detailed. These plans offer a coherent and well-focused approach to the teaching of reading across the school and indicate that the progress made since the last inspection will be sustained.
85. Standards in writing across the school are variable and, overall, are below national expectations but improving. Progress has been made since the last full inspection and Her Majesty's Inspectors report in June 2000. The plans for the teaching of writing, which are well formed to ensure that pupils engage in a range of different writing styles that are modelled on those from the texts read in class, offer support for the continued improvement of pupils' attainments in writing. All work is marked regularly and teachers explain why pupils' writing is of good quality or note how it might be improved. Written work is monitored well and individual targets, which pupils understand, are set. The use of a structured approach to the teaching of writing is helping to raise standards. Teachers draw pupils' attention to the ways in which, for example, narrative writing involves the author making decisions about the characters, the setting and the sequencing of events, and gives pupils guidance on the development of their own writing. The quality of pupils' initial drafts is enhanced still further when the shared reading of texts also explores the finer detail of the author's choice of vocabulary, sentence structure and paragraphing. Teachers encourage pupils to adopt similar strategies when refining their own writing.
86. A spelling journal is used well to identify words that pupils need to learn. These words are drawn from their written work, are learned for homework and are checked on a weekly basis. Pupils work together in a highly responsible and enjoyable way when checking their learning of specific words, but there are insufficient checks to assess that the words they have learned are used correctly in their own writing. Pupils' workbooks are neat and in good condition. Their handwriting becomes increasingly clear and controlled as they move through the school and the standards achieved are at the expected level for pupils aged eleven.

87. Literacy skills are used when pupils explain their understanding of aspects of mathematics, record their work in science, note ideas in religious education and summarise their learning in history and geography. However, there is only limited use of information and communication technology to support the teaching of literacy. Although the recently established suite of computers is used well to teach keyboard, information retrieval and word-processing skills, the pupils' use of literacy skills for research, personal expression, collaborative and independent learning and thinking across the whole curriculum does not form an established part of the school's English policy; this is unsatisfactory.
88. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory levels of subject knowledge and work from well-developed plans, which have precise teaching objectives drawn from the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons plans identify the methods to be used and the tasks set meet the differing needs of the pupils. Class teaching and small group work are managed well. Pupils are well behaved, compliant and keen to learn. Most lessons adopt the structure expected by the National Literacy Strategy, but teachers do not always use the end of their lessons to check sufficiently what pupils have learned and to correct misconceptions. However, teacher assistants play an important role in recording and monitoring pupils' progress and achievement, particularly pupils with special educational needs. This information is shared with teachers and offers a useful strategy for the setting of short-term targets for individual pupils at the start of lessons.
89. When teaching and learning are good, lessons are paced well, are challenging and have a clear learning focus; pupils have time to think and to discuss ideas before answering questions, and their progress is good. For example, in a lesson with pupils in Years 5 and Year 6, the lesson began with all pupils reading from a text, *'Goodnight, Mr Tom'*. Key words were identified by the teacher and written out clearly on the whiteboard for pupils to discuss. Pupils were asked to consider how the author used these particular words to make complex and interesting sentences, but, before giving their answers, pupils talked about their ideas with a partner. All pupils were actively engaged in the lesson and keen to explain their answers to the teacher's questions. Pupils were enthusiastic about their writing and were praised when sharing their own examples of well-formed, complex sentences with the teacher and the rest of the class. Higher-attaining pupils discussed with confidence the imagery in the text; others considered whether they preferred to read or watch the story. Lower-attaining pupils prepared key ideas on post-its, which they then placed in the correct sequence to reflect the story so far. This good practice is not being sufficiently identified and shared with colleagues to raise standards from being below average to average or better. When teaching and learning are satisfactory, pupils do make progress from a low baseline but not at a sufficient rate to match national trends. In other subjects, speaking and listening skills are not taught systematically. Teachers give too few opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through role-play and drama; when they do, standards improve, such as in personal and social education, and physical education, particularly dance. Most teachers' plans identify well subject-specific key words and phrases. However, these are not always taught explicitly at the beginning of and during lessons to enable pupils to widen their vocabulary and to communicate more effectively; when they do, pupils make very good progress, such as in mathematics and information and communication technology.
90. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Planning is firmly based on the national teaching framework for literacy. The coordinator, who only joined the school at the beginning of this term, already has a clear idea about what needs to be done to raise standards after discussions with the headteacher and other staff. Opportunities are planned to help her monitor and evaluate the teaching, especially of oracy and reading skills. Test results and data are analysed well by the headteacher and key members of staff, and used to set targets for improvement, and this has led to a steady improvement in writing standards since the last inspection. The standards achieved in reading have been slow to improve, despite improvements to the quality of teaching since the last full inspection report. However, since the introduction of the Early Reading Research project last year to improve teaching and learning, standards have risen rapidly, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. Assessments are used well to set targets for pupils' learning; this is an improvement since the last full inspection. Those pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and have equality of access to the curriculum with specific learning plans and the provision of additional support where this is needed. Learning resources are of good quality. The school library is a stimulating, well-organised area and used appropriately and regularly by the pupils. The use of other subjects to develop literacy skills and the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning are

underdeveloped. The school's action plan for English identifies key areas for development, including giving further attention to pupils' speaking and listening skills, as well as to their reading, writing and spelling. However, these plans do not emphasise the ways in which pupils can become more confident in their learning through more-focused and systematic planning of the teaching of speaking and listening. There is only limited attention given to the ways in which pupils' learning can be made more interesting by adding variety to their work so that they can become more-independent learners. The headteacher and coordinator recognise that these are important areas for development and form the basis of the next phase in raising standards.

MATHEMATICS

91. The current standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are average, and higher than the test results in 2001; teaching is very good and pupils make good progress. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Those with special educational needs make good progress. Standards, progress, the quality of teaching and the use of assessment have improved since the last full inspection. This is a significant improvement since the last full inspection report.
92. Since 1998 the school initially concentrated on improving the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 by the end of Year 2 and Level 4 by the end of Year 6. Test information shows that this has been achieved successfully. During the last two years, the school has focused on increasing the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of performance. This has been very successfully achieved, particularly in Year 6, because of teachers' high expectations, improved planning and better methods of working. However, boys continue to achieve higher standards than girls; girls underachieve when compared with girls nationally.
93. Early indications are that, in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, standards are likely to be above average. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment is also likely to be above average. In Year 2, standards are likely to be above average and the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels is likely to be well above average. If confirmed, these are the best results the school has achieved for many years. They have been achieved by very good teaching, better planning, improved methods of working, higher expectations and hard work.
94. The Year 6 pupils use a good range of methods for calculating numbers. They can successfully multiply three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. Higher-attaining pupils can confidently calculate and solve problems to two decimal places. Lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in improving their numeracy skills when partitioning two-, three- and four-digit numbers. They are able to explain their methods well because at the beginning of the lesson, the key words and phrases they needed for effective communication were well taught by the teacher and followed up by teaching assistants as the lesson developed. Gifted mathematicians were challenged by the task of demonstrating the development of their mathematical thinking when solving complex money problems and they achieved a high standard. Their communication skills and use of correct mathematical language were exceptional. The scrutiny of work showed that the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of inverses using approximate estimates, ratios and percentages. They have a good knowledge of symmetry and two- and three-dimensional shapes. Handling data is particularly well developed, with the majority of pupils being able to demonstrate the conclusions of their investigations using diagrams and graphs. In a lesson for pupils in Year 2, the higher-attaining pupils were adept at finding the missing numbers in sequences up to 100. Most pupils can recognise multiples of two, five and ten, and some know the difference between odd and even numbers. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that by the end of last year they could name and recognise some two- and three-dimensional shapes such as squares, rectangles, triangles and cubes. Pupils understand words such as "half", "double", "more" and "less than", and are beginning to estimate with reasonable accuracy. They apply themselves well to the tasks set and respond enthusiastically to questions. Pupils are confident and work constructively together; they are keen to share their answers to problems. An appropriate and balanced range of mathematical topics is covered. Skills in information and communication technology are being used well to support work in data handling.
95. Pupils have very good attitudes toward the subject. They show this by their willingness to answer questions and to display their calculations on small individual boards in mental numeracy sessions. Many pupils say it is their favourite subject and have a quiet confidence about showing others their work. The numeracy lessons are successful in creating positive attitudes to the subject and making it interesting. This helps the pupils to persevere and concentrate well. These attitudes are shared by all pupils, including those with low attainment or special educational needs. Pupils' behaviour is very good and this enables them to listen to instructions and gain from each other's views. Work in a majority of the pupils' books is neat and usually well presented. Homework is often interesting and challenging, particularly in Years 5 and 6. It is marked well with appropriate supportive comments, which help to further reinforce pupils' positive attitudes to the subject.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and pupils make very good progress. In a large proportion of the lessons, teaching is enthusiastic and explanations are based on a sound knowledge of the subject and of pupils' common errors and misconceptions. Planning is very good and follows the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy. This helps most lessons to be of good pace and interesting. Planning identifies well the key words and phrases that pupils will need to use during the lessons. These are particularly well taught at the beginning of lessons and continuously referred to as the work progresses. This is very good practice and helps pupils to communicate effectively using appropriate mathematical language. The objectives of the lessons are shared with the pupils, and the work set meets their differing needs. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in numeracy activities. They receive very good support from teachers and teaching assistants. There is generally a good match between the work set for these pupils and their prior attainment, which enables them to make good progress in most lessons. In Years 5 and 6, groups of pupils of similar attainment are formed for teaching; this organisation has helped raise standards, and higher-attaining pupils are challenged well. Teaching is often dynamic and pupils make very good progress. Teachers question pupils regularly to check their understanding of mathematical ideas. They give the pupils an appropriate amount of time to reflect on their work before answering. In Years 1 and 2, teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well. Pupils work with enthusiasm and sustained concentration, and are well supported by sympathetic but demanding teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants carefully explain the purpose of each phase of the lesson; therefore, pupils know what they are doing and how they can improve to achieve their individual targets. These are identified in clear, specific sentences in the pupils' mathematics books and are regularly revised as they progress. The analysis of pupils' work supports the judgement that teaching over time is very good and that pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
97. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The coordinator is very effective and is an outstanding teacher. A knowledgeable and skilled team of teachers and teaching assistants who work very hard supports her well. The curriculum is well planned and takes good account of the key objectives outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator has successfully led many initiatives to improve the subject since the last full inspection. The introduction of teaching pupils by their prior attainment has been very effective in raising standards. Initiatives to encourage gifted pupils who love mathematics have been very successful; for example, the inter-school mathematical challenge competition and regular lessons this term from a local secondary head of mathematics. This has helped to raise the status of the subject in the school and many pupils report that it is their favourite subject. Test results are analysed well and used by the coordinator to develop an overview of the standards achieved in the subject. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The action plan for developing the subject is good and shows a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Consequently, the professional development of staff is particularly good. The coordinator is aware of the need to revise and improve the teaching of the use and application of mathematics, and to increase the opportunities for pupils to design their own investigations. Pupils' numeracy skills, particularly data handling, are used well to promote learning in other subjects. This is supported well by the use of appropriate skills in information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

98. Pupils currently in Year 2 attain standards that are below those expected for their age. They enter the school with below average attainment in literacy and communication skills and, by the end of Year 2, a significant number still experience problems when explaining their work and making task-related observations. Teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 show that standards were likely to be below average when compared with those in all schools nationally because too few pupils attained standards above those expected. Early indications are that in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 there has been a considerable increase in the number attaining levels above those expected, and standards are likely to be average overall. This is a significant improvement since the last full inspection report. Boys and girls are improving but girls underachieve when compared with girls nationally, particularly the proportion achieving higher levels of performance. The school is aware of this discrepancy and is seeking ways to redress the imbalance. In good lessons, teachers expect all pupils to play an active role in all aspects of the lesson. However, it was noted in some lessons observed, where pupils were expected to sit and listen to the teacher for an

inappropriate length of time, a significant number, particularly girls, lost interest and played a passive role and did not make progress.

99. The school identified investigative science as an area of weakness and there is now an increased emphasis on scientific enquiry throughout the school. This has resulted in improved standards since the time of the last full inspection in 1998. Other reasons for the higher standards are the improvement in the quality of teaching and better assessment procedures for tracking pupils' progress. The school now carefully analyses its test results to identify weaknesses in provision and to guide its curricular planning. Although there is now a proper emphasis on teaching the important skills of scientific enquiry, more-able pupils are provided with too few opportunities to conduct a series of observations independently, to choose apparatus for a range of purposes, plan its effective use and draw conclusions consistent with evidence. In some lessons seen, activities were too teacher-directed, and assessment information was not well used to provide challenging tasks for different groups of pupils.
100. The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons was good overall. The analysis of pupils' work supports the judgement that teaching over time is good, and those pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Teaching was good in over six out of ten lessons but unsatisfactory in one. In the best lessons, interesting tasks are well chosen, with a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to apply their enquiry skills to find things out for themselves. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 was consistently good or better, and more variable in Years 3 to 6. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils spent too long sitting as the teacher spoke to the class. In consequence, many pupils lost interest and concentration, and the pace of their learning was too slow.
101. Throughout the school, teachers working together well plan their lessons thoughtfully and prepare resources well in advance so that no time is wasted. Pupils are taught to use correct scientific vocabulary and are given an understanding of the need for fair tests. However, teachers do not reinforce sufficiently the vocabulary and definitions used as pupils work in group or on individual tasks because a significant number of pupils forget scientific definitions between one lesson and the next. Pupils are taught the importance of making predictions before carrying out experiments. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and most motivate them to work carefully and productively. In an excellent lesson in Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils were highly motivated to investigate what happens to different materials when they are bent, squashed, twisted or stretched. The quality and pace of learning were very high because the teacher and the teaching assistant continued to challenge pupils' thinking as they worked. Therefore, by the end of the lesson, pupils were able to describe how the shape of some materials can be altered, and had acquired the correct scientific terminology to describe their findings.
102. Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject. In lessons where they are challenged by the teaching they behave well, concentrate on what they are doing and work hard to overcome difficulties. These good attitudes make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. A good example of this was seen in a lesson for Years 5 and 6 where the teacher challenged pupils to devise methods for separating simple mixtures. They were encouraged to discuss methods in groups and did so enthusiastically. Consequently, by the end of the lesson, all pupils could explain how they would separate sand and water by filtration. Higher-attaining pupils went on to explain how a solution of salt and water could be separated by evaporation. In those lessons that were otherwise satisfactory, there was not a good enough balance between direct teaching and independent learning. Too much time was spent in whole-class teaching and, therefore, teachers do not rigorously challenge pupils at different levels as they work on tasks. Well trained, dedicated teaching assistants are effectively used to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, so that they make similar progress to that of other pupils in lessons. The school's commitment to inclusion is evident.
103. The range and quality of the curriculum are good. An analysis of pupils' work shows that all aspects of the subject are given due attention. Pupils generally have a good understanding of life processes and living things because this aspect is well taught. By the end of Year 6, most pupils appreciate the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat, describing them in scientific terms such as "food chains", "predator" and "prey". Work shows that they use keys based on observable features

to assist in systematically identifying and grouping living things. In their work on materials and their properties, pupils are taught to identify various situations in which changes such as evaporation and condensation will occur. In the area of physical processes they are taught to build circuits, using batteries and other power supplies, and to use switches to make electrical devices function. They apply this learning, for example, when devising and building burglar alarms. By the end of Year 6, pupils are beginning to understand the different forces that act on body, for example, stationary objects revealing a balance of forces and moving objects an imbalance.

104. Most teachers expect work to be neatly presented, and the quality of their marking is generally good, with comments that challenge pupils to think about how their work can be improved. Opportunities for pupils to record their work in detail mean that the subject makes an effective contribution to their writing skills. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is also well supported, as they measure temperature, mass and capacity, and record their findings graphically; for example, when they represent the time taken for pulse rate to return to normal after exercise. There is an increasing use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Opportunities to visit the local environment and other places of scientific interest enhance the curriculum as well as pupils' spiritual and social development.
105. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision. The subject action plan is appropriate and well constructed; it places an emphasis on improving provision for higher-attaining pupils and raising the standards achieved by girls. These are also priority areas in the school's improvement plan. The subject co-ordinator offers good advice to colleagues and monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work regularly. The coordinator's role in monitoring teaching to help ensure consistent good practice is developing well, and local authority advisers provide appropriate training. Pupils' understanding and knowledge are regularly tested, and clear targets for improvement are set. Resources for teaching and learning are good and used well. High-quality science displays in classes and around the school are informative and celebrate pupils' work.

ART AND DESIGN

106. This report is based on just three lesson observations seen during the second week of term, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and the subject coordinator. Currently, standards are below national expectations for pupils aged seven and satisfactory at the age of eleven; this is a similar finding to that of the last full inspection report. Displays of pupils' work show that they are provided with a curriculum that offers scope to develop a good range of techniques using pencils, charcoal, crayons, pastels, paint and collage to explore colour, patterns and texture. There is also evidence of work with clay. These displays demonstrate that pupils have a keen practical understanding of colour, line and shape and that they can arrange their work in interesting and attractive ways, giving particular attention to the ways in which their images are set against different backgrounds. Some of the pupils' work involves a response to direct observations while others' work reflects their feelings, sensitivity and imagination. They are also inspired by their study of the work of significant artists. Most of the pupils' work is in two dimensions but shows only limited use of the layering of a range of different materials or media. The school is decorated with aesthetically pleasing, brightly coloured displays, providing all members of the school community with attractive modelling from the visual arts.
107. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Year 6 pupils talk with considerable enthusiasm about their art work, but they struggle to find the correct vocabulary to express themselves. They are skilled in their use of art materials and understand that their work can be improved by evaluating it through discussion with peers and with their teachers. Pupils also look carefully at paintings and artefacts around them for ideas to improve their work. These older pupils enjoy their artwork and are proud to share it and explain it to an interested adult. Although Year 2 pupils enjoy drawing, painting, printing and working with clay and textiles, they have considerable difficulty talking about their work because of their lack of subject specific language with which to communicate their knowledge and understanding.

108. From the limited evidence available, teaching and learning are judged to be satisfactory. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 work from a carefully-prepared long-term plan, have satisfactory subject knowledge and are able to direct pupils' attention to the key artistic features that they wish them to adopt in their work. They manage pupils appropriately when observing, discussing and sketching different parts of the classroom
109. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator is an enthusiast who understands the importance of the arts in pupils' learning. An appropriate policy has been developed to support teachers in all aspects of their planning and gives good guidance on key teaching points. In these plans, emphasis is given to pupils' use of relevant vocabulary when exploring and discussing different media, techniques and the processes of design. Resources for learning are adequate, including a computer, which pupils use with enthusiasm. The coordinator is in the process of refining the curriculum in the light of an evaluation of pupils' work and to match it with the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's guidance for art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. This report is based on just three lesson observations seen during the second week of term, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and the subject coordinator. Currently, standards are below national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven; this is a similar finding to that of the last full inspection report. Displays of pupils' work and their workbooks show that they are provided with a curriculum that offers scope to develop skills in cutting and joining when building artefacts from paper, card, textiles, plastics and wood. There were some examples of pupils using basic structures when designing and building, but fewer showing the use of mechanisms. Pupils do gain some understanding of the design process, and Year 6 pupils have examined products in order to find out how they were constructed. However, pupils' records of their designs and modifications are limited.
111. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy the subject but find it difficult to talk about their experience and were unable to recall what they had done in Year 1. However, pupils in Year 6 talk with enthusiasm about their work and were keen to explain that you can build and make things and sort out what is not working. They expressed the view that it is was good fun learning about the subject. The pupils' obvious enjoyment offers considerable scope for further developments, particularly in terms of practical problem-solving and evaluative discussions of what makes a particular design work effectively.
112. The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school but is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. In the best lessons, teachers work hard to provide pupils with the vocabulary they need in order to discuss their constructions, such as in a lesson for Years 1 and 2 when pupils started to build a model vehicle with wheels and axles, using doweling and card. In Years 3 and 4, planning was satisfactory, but the objectives of the lesson were not clear and towards the end of the lesson, pupils became restless, particularly those with special educational needs.
113. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum is planned to help pupils gain the knowledge, understanding and skills expected in the National Curriculum. Planning is clear and detailed, giving a sensible framework to support improvements in pupils' attainments across the school. The coordinator collects samples work as part of the process of monitoring pupils' achievements and progress. He has a good understanding of the subject and has prepared an appropriate action plan for its development. The plan emphasises the need to increase pupils' ability to use relevant vocabulary and to find better ways of recording their experience of designing, making and evaluating artefacts. Good attention is given to the particular health and safety aspects of the subject. Resources are satisfactory and used well.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Standards attained by pupils are below those expected for the end of Year 2 and Year 6; this is similar to the finding of the last full inspection report. Although the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, other evidence shows that the important skills needed to investigate places and environments have not been consistently developed to an appropriate depth. A

significant number of pupils enter the school with little awareness of the world outside their own locality. They do not have sufficient access to resources such as maps, globes, atlases and plans at varying scales to develop an understanding of significant places and environments in the world. Although teachers are now making greater use of these sources of information, it is clear that the skills required to research independently have not been systematically developed. This lack of emphasis on developing the skills so important to this subject has resulted in unsatisfactory achievement over time. This is particularly true in the case of more-able pupils.

115. Evidence from displays and pupils' work shows that, by the end of Year 2, pupils have been given good opportunities to undertake fieldwork. They draw simple maps of routes round the school and identify well-known features on local maps. Pupils are taught to express views about making the local area safer. They identify different types of buildings in their locality and how these have changed over the years. Planning shows that pupils are challenged to describe how other places, such as the seaside and an island, differ from their own locality. They learn about different means of transport, how places differ, and how physical features influence the climate, when following the route taken by Barnaby Bear as he travels to contrasting localities. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils demonstrate an awareness of localities beyond their own, but many still have a very limited grasp of geographic vocabulary.
116. A strength of the subject is the way teachers use the local environment to stimulate pupils' interest and to heighten their awareness of environmental issues. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught the importance of recycling waste and they carry out a survey of pollution in Silver End and understand how litter, noise and graffiti affect the environment. In a good lesson where pupils were considering the development of the village, the teacher built effectively on their own knowledge and experiences. The well-paced teaching and the interesting range of strategies inspired pupils to discuss how the village had changed and why these changes came about. Planning and pupils' work show that teachers continue to teach them the importance of caring for the environment. When they make a study of Colchester, for example, they investigate why people originally settled there and carry out traffic surveys during visits to the city. They develop a sound understanding of the relationship between location and economic activity. By the end of Year 6 they know about physical and human features of different places when comparing these with their local environment. Two areas for improvement in teaching are the systematic development of research skills and opportunities for writing using the correct geographical terminology. These are hindered by an over-reliance on activity sheets. When challenged by the teaching, pupils behave well and work hard. Staff report that pupils are good ambassadors for their school when on trips to the local area and further afield.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Of the three lessons seen during the inspection, two were good and one was unsatisfactory. An analysis of pupils' work, together with evidence gained in lessons, indicates that teaching is now satisfactory overall. Teachers carefully plan lessons and resources. Although pupils are taught the correct terminology in lessons, many forget words and terms. This shows the importance of pupils being expected to research information for themselves, so that they will more easily understand and remember important facts. The increased emphasis on the use of sources of information was seen in a good lesson in Years 5 and 6 where pupils were actively engaged in identifying mountain ranges of the world using photographs and relief maps. The class teacher continued to challenge and guide pupils as they worked in groups and this resulted in learning objectives being met. The good pace of pupils' learning in this lesson was the direct result of the teacher's high expectations, based on positive relationships and the quality of support given to pupils with special educational needs. These good relationships and the good use of support staff are features of all lessons. In the lesson that was unsatisfactory, the class teacher's uncertain knowledge of the content of the lesson meant that pupils were not given clear, precise explanations or challenged as they worked. As a result, their learning in this lesson was unsatisfactory.
118. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Recent guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is now supporting teachers' planning. The co-ordinator has already identified that the results from assessment need to be used more rigorously to help plan and build on what pupils know, can do and understand. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development and their sense of citizenship.

HISTORY

119. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements, only three lessons in history were observed during the inspection. However, other evidence, including discussions with staff and pupils and an analysis of pupils' work in their books and on display, indicate that standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are below expectations. Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. This is an improvement since the last full inspection. Since many pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 joined the school with below average and well below average levels of attainment in literacy, the judgements on standards represent good achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Teachers and pupils have a great interest in history, and pupils are offered an interesting curriculum which builds well on their understanding of the past.
120. Pupils in Years 1 and Year 2 are encouraged to find out about the past by talking to older people, such as parents, grandparents and visitors from the local community. They are provided with simple sources of information, such as books and pictures, to stimulate their interest. A display of pupils' work shows that they are taught to recognise changes in their own lives as well as those of other members of their family through topics such as toys old and new, and seaside holidays then and now. An analysis of past work shows that they learn about the lives of notable people, such as Florence Nightingale, Samuel Pepys and Grace Darling. However, discussions with pupils show that, because of their weak literacy skills, many have trouble remembering names and facts, and relating episodes from stories about the past. By the end of Year 2, pupils show an increasing sense of chronology and start to perceive why people in the past acted as they did. Teachers make effective use of time lines to develop pupils' sense of time.
121. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to develop their sense of chronology and understand that the past can be divided into distinctive periods. Work shows that pupils make good progress in their learning. Completed work is well presented, showing pupils' interest in the subject. Teachers work hard to provide pupils with an interesting range of activities to stimulate their interest in the subject. Visits to places of historical interest such as the Colchester and Chelmsford Museums and Hedingham Castle are very well used to enrich the curriculum and to excite pupils' interest in the subject. The school also makes effective use of storytellers to role-play periods in British history, such as Tudor times. Good use is made of visiting speakers from the local community. During the inspection, a local woman was invited to speak to pupils in Years 5 and 6 about her experience of rationing during World War Two. She was very well prepared and had baked cakes and pies using ingredients used during that period. Her talk was very interesting and held the pupils spellbound. This resulted in very good understanding of that aspect of British history.
122. Displays show that the work of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is valued and celebrated. Well organised and presented booklets produced by pupils on Victorian England, for example, demonstrate how well the subject supports their writing skills as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are prompted to reflect on the plight of poor Victorian children and to consider what life was like for them. Pupils make good use of their word-processing skills to enhance their work and of the Internet to research information.
123. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good overall and pupils' past work indicates that teaching is good over time. Teaching was very good in one of the lessons seen, good in one and satisfactory in one. Strengths of the teaching are teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, and a good use of a range of artefacts and other sources of information to support pupils' learning.
124. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school's own scheme of work is used well to guide planning. The co-ordinator has identified the need to link this more closely to the recent guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority so that related assessment procedures can be used to track pupils' progress. Although the co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and teachers' planning, her role in monitoring the quality of teaching has not yet been developed. Resources for learning are good and the recently improved library facilities provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Overall, standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6; this is an improvement since the last inspection because the provision made for the subject is much wider, offering pupils a good range of learning experiences. The pace of development of the subject has significantly increased during the last two years because of improved planning, very good staff training and the availability of better and more reliable hard and software.
126. By the end of Year 2, pupils can operate a computer with increasing confidence. They worked hard, enjoying using the mouse and palette point to produce and colour a range of imaginatively drawn cats. Pupils are able to save and print their work successfully, such as when drawing graphs as the result of a survey about their bedtimes. Higher-attaining pupils talked with enthusiasm about working with a floor robot. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported and confidently participated in these lessons. By the end of Year 6, pupils can collect, sort and analyse information, and interpret their findings, such as when studying the effect of exercise on the human body. They used spreadsheets well, entering data and formulae correctly when investigating the area and perimeter of different-sized rectangles. Pupils can amend and combine a range of information from different sources when using a desktop publishing program. They are improving their word-processing skills of drafting, editing and presenting their stories as part of the Literacy Hour.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils respond well to the teaching and show good levels of interest and concentration. Teachers have little difficulty in motivating the pupils, whom they manage well. All pupils are keen to learn and listen attentively to the advice and clear instructions from the teachers. Relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils, are often very good; this creates a good ethos for learning and therefore many pupils make rapid progress. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in working with large groups of pupils before moving into small groups for more focused support. In the best lessons, the teachers' very good subject knowledge is used well to introduce, with clarity, the knowledge and skills to be learnt. Pupils' prior attainment is revised appropriately at the beginning of lessons and built on, so that the new knowledge and skills progressively develop. Very good attention is given to the acquisition of correct technical vocabulary so that the pupils can communicate more effectively with each other and their teachers. Teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of less confident pupils, particularly at the ends of lessons when teachers are assessing what pupils know, understand and can do.
128. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and has identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The subject's action plan is helping to order priorities and give its development purpose. All aspects of the subject are appropriately planned for in the scheme of work. The use pupils make of computers and the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding are being successfully recorded using a commercially-produced program. The provision of hardware and software is good. The school is keen to use pupils' computing capability to enhance their learning in other subjects. The training teachers have received has improved their knowledge, skills and confidence; such improvements have helped raise standards rapidly during the last year. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are beginning to be used well in some classes for work in English, mathematics and science, and to a lesser extent in art and design, history and religious education.

MUSIC

129. Overall, standards are satisfactory in the infants and juniors; this is a similar finding to that of the last full inspection. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and pupils enjoy musical experiences. Classes meet together in the hall to make music. Pupils sing pleasantly, in time and with reasonable intonation. They show a reasonable ability to follow the directions of the conductor of the lesson.
130. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to identify the pitch of notes. They attempt to use the pitch of their voices to describe the noise of a telephone. Pupils develop the idea of describing sounds and movements through their voices as they alter pitch, speed and volume to depict a variety of ringing tones. They learn appropriate musical vocabulary such as "dynamics", "pitch", "pulse" and "volume" through clapping, listening and moving to music. Pupils in Year 1 thoroughly enjoy singing together,

which they do with great enthusiasm and vigour. Their intonation is tuneful and good progress is made in interpreting the moods and styles of the songs. Some good features were observed in a satisfactory lesson in Years 3 and 4, where pupils learnt to change the tempo of songs. They consolidate their musical skills by listening to music by Debussy and observing the flow of the composition to depict the movement of water. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in using their voice as an instrument to produce gradual sounds, paying attention to phrasing and expression. They learn to perform in front of their peers, who listen with respect to their compositions. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in composing an accompaniment to the song "Kiss me good night, Sergeant Major", using non-tuned percussion and their voices; this work was linked well to their history studies of World War Two. They work in groups co-operatively, listening to one another to develop ideas. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress with the help of the teaching assistant. Pupils throughout the school, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with special needs, enjoy all aspects of music and make satisfactory progress. They respond to music with enthusiasm and enjoyment; it contributes very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. The lessons are well planned and build well on the pupils' prior knowledge and abilities. The tasks set match well the differing needs of the pupils. Resources are used appropriately, such as in Years 1 and 2, when the teacher used the chime bars well to play two notes of opposing pitch to emphasise high and low sounds. Expectations of behaviour are high and the pace of work is good. Therefore the pupils make very good progress in their learning by the end of Year 2 and good progress by the end of Year 6. Teachers encourage pupils to use correct musical vocabulary when performing, composing and appraising music.
132. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has many plans to improve the music facilities throughout the school, such as visits from experts and musical groups in order to provide pupils with the opportunity to listen to 'live' music. Class teachers' good knowledge of the subject and in-service training are helping to promote musicality and improve pupils' attainment, particularly in the infants. At the time of the inspection, formal assessment was not in place and there are no opportunities to monitor and evaluate pupils work. The accommodation provided and the resources for learning are good. However, the school has good facilities for information and communication technology that are not used fully for the development of composition in the juniors.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Pupils' achievements are broadly in line with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has access to good facilities for teaching swimming, and standards are at the expected level for pupils of this age. On entry to school, pupils have appropriate physical skills and continue to make good progress in their dance and games skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. All pupils follow a balanced curriculum over a year in units of work, which for the week of the inspection included dance, games and gymnastics. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They respond immediately to teachers' instructions and participate enthusiastically in all activities. Pupils co-operate well with others and thoroughly enjoy their lessons.
134. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to plan, perform and evaluate their movements successfully. They know and understand the importance of warm-up and cooling-down activities to protect the body from injury. Pupils are very aware of safety issues. They show increasing control when catching and passing a ball. They discuss in a mature manner how to improve their technique when performing a chest pass. Higher-attaining pupils are particularly skilful and show a good understanding of the tactics of small-team games. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in their throwing skills; they receive very good support from the teacher and teaching assistant. In Years 3 and 4, pupils show improving skills in a range of travelling movements. They use the key words and phrases, which were taught well at the beginning of the lesson, to express how they planned to improve their sequences. Higher-attaining pupils show a good understanding of using changes in direction, speed and levels to improve their performance. By the end of Year 2, pupils are improving their dance skills. They are able to plan, perform and evaluate a sequence of movements

successfully. They responded imaginatively to a range of stimuli when simulating the stretching movements of a cat. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, captured the mood and feeling of the music and achieved good levels of performance. All pupils participated fully in the lesson, using the key words and phrases discussed at the beginning of the lesson. This helped them communicate effectively with each other and the teacher. The pupils worked with sustained concentration and obvious enjoyment.

135. The quality of teaching and learning is good; it is often very good. Teachers have good knowledge of teaching dance, gymnastics, games and swimming; this helps them observe and analyse movements and give good advice to pupils on how to improve. Lessons have a clear focus, and the skills to be learned are demonstrated well. Teachers give clear instructions and check carefully whether pupils understand the tasks set, and the pupils respond with enthusiasm. Work proceeds at a good pace and pupils are expected to improve, such as in a Year 2 dance lesson in which progress was very good. In this lesson, very good use was made of photographs, percussion instruments and recorded music to stimulate the pupils' imagination. Pupils listen carefully and follow the teachers' guidance about working safely. Teaching assistants are particularly skilled in helping less confident pupils and those with special educational needs to improve. Teachers encourage the pupils to speak clearly and use appropriate words when commenting on the performance of others. This they do with increasing confidence. Consequently, the ethos for learning is good and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject are very good.
136. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and uses time well to monitor the planning of teaching, which is good. She has appropriate opportunities to assess the quality of pupils' learning and to share effective practice with colleagues. The school's policy and scheme of work give good guidance on teachers' planning and the development of knowledge and skills; it is being revised to meet new developments in the subject. The physical education programme is well balanced over a year. Good use is made of sports coaching staff to support activities. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to participate in competitive sport and extra-curricular clubs. Resources for learning are good and used well to promote learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. The attainment of pupils in religious education at the end of the infants and juniors is in line with the levels expected of the Essex Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be below expectations. Pupils across the school make satisfactory progress as they follow their studies of the major faiths of the world.
138. By the end of Year 2, pupils learn about Christianity, Islam and the Judaism. They made invitations to a party, which helped them learn about symbols and celebrations. Pupils, including those with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 6, pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with Hinduism and Judaism in addition to the other major faiths. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the nature of beliefs and the way in which they influence human life. They study the major festivals and develop knowledge of the language, literacy and symbols of the faiths. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils study the symbolism of fruit in Judaism and are beginning to understand how traditions have developed since Old Testament times. This lesson also contributed well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are aware of the need to be tolerant and respectful of faiths other than their own. Their spiritual development is also well catered for in the very good assemblies and class lessons that reflect upon the environment and the peoples of the world.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The scheme of work successfully links religious education to many other curriculum areas such as English, mathematics, science, history, geography, music and art. Teachers plan the lessons well and the work is matched successfully to the differing needs of the pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard and take a pride in the presentation of their work; this is often very good in Years 2 and 6. However, work sheets are used more frequently with lower-attaining pupils and this hinders the development of their creative or original writing. Overall, work is consistently marked with supportive comments, but little constructive advice is given about how pupils can improve.

140. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the standards of teaching and learning in the subject. The many improvements made include an improved scheme of work and a policy that provides very helpful advice for teachers. Resources for learning have been improved and are used well. The coordinator regularly monitors weekly plans and when appropriate observes lessons to assess strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Formal assessment does not take place, but parents receive a report at the end of the year recording pupils' progress, attitudes and achievements. The school has a good selection of books and artefacts that contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.