

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **AVELEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Aveley, Essex

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 114836

Headteacher: Miss Nicola Shadbolt

Reporting inspector: David Westall  
2414

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 December 2002

Inspection number: 247497

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stifford Road  
Aveley  
Essex

Postcode: RM15 4AA

Telephone number: 01708 865868

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Pastor Alan Field

Date of previous inspection: 24 – 27 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Art and design Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education The Foundation Stage	
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 257 pupils on roll, aged from 4 to 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average, while the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Five pupils have statements of special educational need, and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. On entry to the school, children's overall standards are generally very low.

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

This is an improving school, which is benefiting from the good leadership and management skills of the headteacher, who took up her post in 2001. The teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress, overall, in English, mathematics and science from their very low starting points on entry to the school; and those in the reception and the Year 6 classes benefit from particularly effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are a credit to the school. There are weaknesses, which include: pupils' achievements in a minority of subjects; aspects of teaching; and the roles of co-ordinators. On balance, however, the school's strengths and sound achievements outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are good and she provides the school with a clear sense of direction.
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good.
- Children in the reception class and in the Year 6 class benefit from particularly effective teaching.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development and very good provision for their social development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- Parents find the headteacher and staff easy to talk to, and generally hold the school in high regard.

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

- Pupils underachieve in science in Years 1 and 2, in art and design and design and technology in Years 3-6, and in religious education, across the school.
- There are important weaknesses in some elements of the teaching.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' standards and progress require improvement in most subjects.
- Most co-ordinators need a clearer view of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects in order to target areas for improvement.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made adequate progress since the last inspection in 1997. Evidence suggests that progress had been barely satisfactory until the current headteacher took up her post in 2001, due to long-term difficulties with the school's leadership and management. However, the pace of change has increased since then, and is evident in the improved progress pupils are now making in English, mathematics, science and history in Years 3 to 6. Indeed, the school's most recent National Curriculum test results contrast very significantly with those published in the last inspection report: in 1997 only 36 per cent, 33 per cent and 21 per cent of Year 6 pupils reached the expected standard in English, mathematics and science respectively, compared to 72 per cent, 72 per cent and 92 per cent in these subjects in 2002. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. In other respects, improvements are less evident: there are still weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures, in planning for continuity in pupils' learning in some subjects, and in the monitoring roles of co-ordinators. In addition, the percentage of unsatisfactory lessons is little changed since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	D	C
mathematics	D	D	D	C
science	E	E	C	B

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

The table shows the results of the Year 6 statutory tests in 2002 were below the national average in English and mathematics but were in line with the average results of similar schools. In science, the 2002 results were in line with the national average but above the results of similar schools. The percentages of pupils achieving the expected levels in these subjects considerably increased in 2002, and the trend in the school's results is now above the national trend. Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 6 are below national expectations in English, mathematics and science but represent satisfactory achievement, given children's very low standards on entry to the school.

Standards are broadly average in history, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and music in Year 6. However, pupils underachieve in art and design, design and technology, and religious education – and standards are too low in these subjects in Year 6. In geography, there was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks and respect each other's opinions.
Attendance	Attendance for the academic year 2001-2002 was well above the national average, and represents a very significant improvement on attendance for the previous two years.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in nine out of every ten lessons. Good, and occasionally better, teaching was evident in just under half of all lessons. Pupils in the youngest and oldest classes in the school benefit from particularly effective teaching while, overall, the teaching is otherwise broadly satisfactory in the school. However, the relatively high proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is a cause for concern.

Teaching in the reception class is a strength of the school. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of young children, and provides ample opportunities for them to take part in practical and purposeful activities. As a result of the effective teaching, they receive, children make a good start at the school and develop positive attitudes to learning.

The teaching is satisfactory, overall, in English, mathematics, history and ICT in Years 1 to 6, and in geography and music in Years 3 to 6. In science, weaknesses in teachers' planning in Years 1 and 2 mean that pupils are set inappropriate tasks and make insufficient progress in their learning. However, in Years 3 to 6, science teaching is satisfactory and results in pupils' sound progress in the subject. Insufficient evidence was available to judge teaching in other subjects or age groups. However, evidence from pupils' achievements in art and design, design and technology and religious education shows the teaching does not enable pupils to make enough overall progress in these subjects.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers usually capture pupils' interest well and pupils respond by concentrating on their work. The teaching enables pupils to make mainly sound progress in their learning in Years 1 to 6, and the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is clear evidence of some high quality teaching, particularly for pupils in the Year 6 class, but there are also important weaknesses which need to be rectified in the school. These include the



need for some teachers to increase their knowledge about the subjects they teach and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievements.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the reception class benefit from a rich range of well planned opportunities to develop their learning. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall, and meets statutory requirements. However, continuity in pupils' learning is not fully secured in some subjects, including in science, art and design, design and technology and religious education, where pupils' achievements are restricted.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for pupils' social development, and good provision is made for their moral development. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority. However, the school's procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress and standards need to improve, particularly in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has good leadership and management skills and has provided the school with the clear sense of direction it needed when she was appointed. Her clear thinking, determination and good interpersonal skills are significant strengths, and the school community recognises the beneficial impact she is having on the quality of education at Aveley. She is ably assisted by the recently appointed assistant headteacher who also provides a good role model through her effective teaching of reception children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a committed governing body which provides sound support and ensures that statutory requirements are met.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, governors and co-ordinators for English and mathematics analyse statutory tests carefully. The headteacher regularly observes lessons and provides teachers with valuable feedback which benefits their professional development. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics fulfil their roles well but most co-ordinators have limited strategies for monitoring their subjects. Consequently, they are not in strong positions to identify strengths and weaknesses, or to target areas for improvement with sufficient accuracy.
The strategic use of resources	The school has accumulated reserve funds which are unacceptably high, due to weaknesses in strategic management prior to the current headteacher's appointment. However, the headteacher and governors are carefully considering the best use of the finance, and the school is making sound use of its annual budget allocation. The principles of best value are now being soundly applied.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<p>They believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff are easy to talk to;</li> <li>• children have good behaviour;</li> <li>• teaching is good and children make good progress;</li> <li>• the school is improving under good management.</li> </ul>	<p>Some parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more information on progress;</li> <li>• more extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings are a little less favourable than parents' views about teaching and pupils' progress, and show that both are satisfactory overall. Otherwise, the inspection supports parents' positive views. The school provides parents with satisfactory information about their children's progress, and there is a sound range of extra-curricular clubs.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to the school, children's standards, overall, are very low. Children make good progress in their learning in the reception class, as a result of effective teaching. Nevertheless, overall standards are low when pupils enter Year 1.
2. The results of the standard assessment tests (SATs) for pupils in Year 2, in 2002, were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results do, however, represent an improvement on those achieved in 2001, since the percentages of pupils reaching the expected level increased from 63 per cent to 78 per cent in reading, from 65 per cent to 75 per cent in writing, and from 80 per cent to 93 per cent in mathematics.
3. In Year 6, in 2002, the SATs results in English and mathematics were below the national average but in line with the average results of similar schools. In science, they were in line with the national average but above the results of similar schools. These results also represent an improvement on those achieved in 2001, since the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in Year 6 rose from 51 per cent to 72 per cent in English; from 59 per cent to 72 per cent in mathematics; and from 78 per cent to 92 per cent in science. The trend in the school's SATs results in Year 6 is now above the national trend, and is a reflection of the improved progress pupils are generally making at the school. When compared with the results achieved by the school when it was last inspected, the 2002 results are dramatically higher. The percentages of pupils reaching the expected level in English in Year 6 in 1997 and 1998 were only 36 per cent and 24 per cent respectively; in mathematics the percentages reaching the expected level were 33 per cent and 26 per cent respectively; and in science the percentages reaching the expected level were 21 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.
4. In English and mathematics, inspection findings show that pupils make satisfactory progress from their low starting points in Year 1. Although overall standards are well below average in Year 2 and are below average in Year 6, they represent sound achievement and reflect the satisfactory teaching pupils generally receive in these subjects. Overall, there is no significant difference in the levels of attainment of boys and girls.
5. Most Year 2 pupils join in confidently with their teacher when reading aloud and the more advanced learners can read simple books on their own. However, few read fluently and many do not observe the cues presented by the punctuation in order to convey the tone of voice and the pauses that the author clearly intends should influence the reader. Year 2 pupils generally enjoy writing and the more advanced learners are beginning to adapt the style of their writing to suit its intended audience. They write simple stories and produce short notes and captions to record work in other subjects. They form their letters accurately and neatly, and they usually demarcate sentences appropriately, using full stops and capital letters. However, the writing of many pupils has weaknesses in spelling, capital letters are sometimes confused with lower case letters, punctuation is erratic and handwriting inconsistent. Their writing lacks clarity and coherence, and their style is often stilted because they consistently use short, simple sentences. Their powers of expression – as in their spoken language – are weak, and their general vocabulary is too limited.

6. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils can read both fiction and non-fiction texts appropriate for their age. However, some still struggle to decode unfamiliar words. As in earlier years, they use too few strategies to work out how to pronounce words and how to work out what is meant. The more advanced learners in Year 6 recognise and understand the characteristic features of different texts, and can apply their knowledge, for example, when writing convincing playscripts and newspaper reports. The handwriting and use of punctuation by the lower attaining pupils are much improved in Year 6, but their writing still lacks depth and detail. Many pupils still struggle to express their ideas clearly and few have learned to combine ideas successfully within balanced complex sentences.
7. In mathematics, about half of the pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory grasp of basic number facts. They can identify number sequences, for example by counting in twos, tens and fives, have a basic understanding of length, weight and capacity and know the names of a range of common two and three-dimensional shapes. Few pupils exceed the expected level for their age because they are not sufficiently skilled at using and applying their mathematical knowledge, and find it difficult to explain their mathematical thinking. In Year 6, about two thirds of pupils calculate accurately using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The most advanced learners have a secure understanding of the equivalent values of decimals, fractions and percentages. However, pupils' understanding about space, shape and measure is below average. Year 6 pupils, in common with those in younger classes, often find it difficult to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems, and their ability to talk about their strategies, or to present their working methods in written form, is underdeveloped.
8. In science, inspection findings show that pupils are currently making unsatisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, largely because the work set for them does not consistently match their needs. Standards are well below average in science in Year 2. The majority of Year 6 pupils demonstrate average standards but the learning difficulties of a significant minority mean their attainment is understandably below average, and relatively few pupils exceed the expected level for their age. As a consequence, overall standards in Year 6 are below average, although pupils' progress is mainly sound from their very low starting points at the beginning of Year 3.
9. In physical education and music, standards in Years 2 and 6 are average, as they were when the school was last inspected. Pupils' progress is sound in both subjects. In ICT, the standards in the work seen were broadly average and pupils are now making satisfactory progress in the subject, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. In art and design and design and technology, standards are average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. When the school was last inspected, standards in art and design were below average in both Years 2 and 6, but were average in design and technology. In these subjects, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 but are underachieving in the older classes. In religious education, standards are below expectations in both Years 2 and 6, and pupils' overall progress is unsatisfactory. When the school was last inspected standards were also below expectations in Year 6 but were satisfactory in Year 2. In geography, there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about pupils' standards. In history, there has been a marked improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average in Years 2 and 6. Current standards are average in these years, and pupils are now making satisfactory progress in the subject.

10. Many of the pupils identified as having special educational needs have learning difficulties associated with aspects of literacy and numeracy. Some pupils also have learning difficulties associated with social, emotional and behavioural needs, and a few have physical disabilities which affect their capacity to learn. The school makes wide-ranging and flexible provision for all these pupils, and all make good progress in relation to the very precise and appropriate targets in their individual education plans. The most able pupils in the school generally make satisfactory progress.

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

11. Pupils enjoy coming to school. More than once, pupils were heard making positive and entirely spontaneous statements about school as if to confirm to themselves their pleasure at being in such a warm and welcoming place. For example, a very young pupil in the learning development centre, busily occupied on a reading task, suddenly catches sight of the brightly decorated Christmas tree, casts his gaze around the homely room and, without any prompting, says, more to himself than to anyone else, 'I'm happy at school.' In a very different context, pupils late for a booster mathematics class held before school officially starts are heard to lament the fact that they might be late and will miss the beginning of the session. These examples simply confirm what is evident in all lessons and which emerge in any discussions held with pupils: they like school, and they value learning, even if, as is often the case, they find some skills difficult to master. A pupil who has recently changed schools talks to an inspector and says how much better she finds this school than her last because the atmosphere is so friendly and there are so many interesting things to do and clubs to attend. In lessons, pupils are willing learners who do their best. Although the social skills of many pupils are poor when they join the reception class, almost all learn quickly to observe the conventions they are taught, and from Year 1 onwards most pupils take turns when answering questions and listen politely when others speak. In the younger classes, some pupils lack the confidence to answer questions within large class groups, but they still follow proceedings with interest and are happy to interact with adults and other pupils in smaller groups and in one to one situations. Although some younger pupils find 'sharing' a difficult concept, they gradually learn to share resources fairly, without resorting to arguments or sulking. When required to work independently, most pupils try hard to apply what they have been taught. However, a significant number of lower attaining pupils, some of whom have special educational needs, are slow to master reading and writing. As a consequence, they remain dependent on adult help to organise and record their thoughts for longer than is usually necessary, and, in mainstream classes, are not always given the resources that would help them achieve greater independence.
12. At the time of the last inspection, the behaviour of some pupils was a cause for concern, and there was a relatively high number of fixed-term exclusions. Evidence from the current inspection shows that there have been far fewer exclusions in the past year than previously, and that poor or inappropriate behaviour is now the rare exception. Behaviour is judged to be good, whether in lessons, in the playground, at lunch or in assembly. There is no inspection evidence to show that learning in lessons is disrupted by poor behaviour; pupils themselves state explicitly that there is no bullying; and behaviour in assemblies and around the school is orderly and respectful. During assemblies, pupils listen quietly to stories with moral themes, and they take opportunities to reflect on what they have heard, and to pray, both solemnly and seriously. In discussion, for example at a meeting of the school council, pupils from Years 3 to 6 demonstrate a keen sense of fairness and justice during their deliberations. In religious education lessons and in some English and history lessons,

- pupils of all ages show an ability to empathise with others' feelings and to have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
13. Relationships at all levels are constructive, supportive and friendly. Older pupils, in particular, care for one another, quickly rallying to the aid of a classmate who looks upset. They readily volunteer to help younger pupils, for example by filling water bottles or by setting out playground equipment. It is this same sense of social responsibility which motivates them to raise funds for charities, while pupils of all ages enjoy submitting proposals to the school council with the aims of making the school community increasingly harmonious and securing equality of opportunity for all.
  14. Pupils of all ages take pride in carrying out their various responsibilities and duties, whether simply by taking registers to the office or, as in the case of older pupils, by setting up the hall for assemblies, manning the corridors or monitoring classrooms during 'wet-play' at lunch-times. From the youngest to the oldest, pupils also take pride in contributing towards shaping the school through the work of the school council which has been set up to involve and to represent them. Overall, however, pupils are perhaps slightly less effective in taking responsibility for their own learning. In the main, this is because they are not sufficiently encouraged to do so, particularly in a few classes where the teaching, however unwittingly, fosters dependency. For example, in some lessons, tasks and resources are not matched well to pupils' capabilities, and pupils therefore have neither the means nor the skills to tackle the tasks they are given without adult help.
  15. Attendance for the academic year 2001-2002 was well above the national average, and represents a very significant improvement on attendance for the previous two years. Registration procedures fully meet statutory requirements and pupils are appropriately expected to work on tasks such as handwriting during registration sessions. Although the majority of pupils come in good time, there are a few who consistently arrive late and this has a negative impact on their learning.

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

16. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in nine out of every ten lessons observed during the inspection. Good, and occasionally better, teaching was evident in just under half of all lessons, which is similar to the situation when the school was last inspected. Pupils in the youngest and oldest classes benefit from particularly effective teaching while, overall, the teaching is otherwise broadly satisfactory in the school. However, the relatively high proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is a cause for concern, and has changed little since the last inspection.
17. Teaching in the reception class is good overall, and some very good teaching was seen during the course of the inspection. The reception teacher has a good understanding of the needs of young children, and provides ample opportunities for them to take part in practical and purposeful activities. The reception teacher and her assistant make an effective team, and the teaching is stimulating and captures children's interest. Children are encouraged to think for themselves, and good use is made of open-ended questions such as 'Why do you think that?' or 'What do you think will happen if ...?'. Few opportunities are missed to promote children's learning. For example, when sharing out puppets the teacher asked 'Will there be enough for everyone?' and encouraged the children to count themselves and the puppets to find out. As a result of the effective teaching they receive, children in the reception class develop positive attitudes to school and make good progress in their learning.

18. In English, in Years 1 to 6, the teaching is mainly satisfactory. However, there is a considerable range, from unsatisfactory to excellent. The most effective teaching, in the Year 2 and Year 6 classes, is characterised by teachers' high expectations and very secure subject knowledge. These teachers are particularly adept at assessing pupils' answers to questions and building immediately on points that need development or clarification. However, some teachers lack the subject expertise to maximise learning opportunities as they arise, overlook significant weaknesses in pupils' work and do not provide pupils with sufficiently informed and focused guidance to help them to improve. Overall, the teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress from their low starting points in English at the beginning of Year 1.
19. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils benefit from very good mathematics teaching in the Year 6 class, and the overall quality of teaching in the subject enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in the school. Teachers are particularly effective when they are able to use their own mental dexterity with numbers to help pupils to overcome misconceptions, and demonstrate how to break down complex calculations into simple steps. For example, the Year 6 teacher gave very clear explanations of how to compile, record and interrogate data, and then taught a two-step approach to calculating the average or mean. Pupils are fully involved when teachers have high expectations and the work is well matched to their learning needs. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on division, not a sound could be heard as pupils practised their newly acquired skills, trying to complete as many sums as possible before the end of the lesson. There are, however, some important weaknesses in mathematics teaching in some classes and these have a detrimental effect on pupils' progress. These include teachers' insecure subject knowledge, low expectations for pupils' potential achievements, and work which is poorly matched to pupils' mathematical learning needs.
20. In science, the teaching observed in Years 1 and 2 ranged from unsatisfactory to satisfactory during the inspection but was satisfactory overall. However, teachers do not consistently match the tasks to pupils' scientific learning needs, and pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is too slow as a result. In Years 3 to 6, science teaching is satisfactory overall, but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure, and pupils in the oldest class benefit from particularly well-informed teaching. However, some teachers would benefit from training to improve their knowledge and understanding, including the requirements of the National Curriculum. In addition, unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by slow pace in lessons, superficial questioning and low expectations.
21. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in history and in ICT across the school, and enables pupils to make sound progress in these subjects. In geography and music, insufficient lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, but it is satisfactory, overall, in Years 3 to 6. In art and design and design and technology, too few lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work and teachers' planning shows that teachers in Years 3 to 6, in particular, require training to increase their knowledge in these subjects and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievements. In religious education, timetabling arrangements also meant that too few lessons were seen to judge the overall quality of teaching. However, evidence from pupils' standards and from teachers' planning, including the time allocated for the subject and the lack of emphasis given to some key elements of pupils' learning, show that the teaching is not enabling pupils to make adequate overall progress in the subject.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is well organised, thorough, and usually very well matched to their differing needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) teaches basic literacy skills to a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6; two trained learning support assistants (LSAs) teach a similar course to pupils in Years 3 and 4; and the personal, social and health education co-ordinator, a trained counsellor and also the special educational needs governor, teaches a small group of pupils from Years 1 and 2 - the 'Sunshine Group'- within the Learning Development Centre. Evidence from lessons observed, from the scrutiny of pupils' work and from assessment records related to pupils' progress over time shows that the teaching in each of these situations is effective. The staff involved all plan for the wide-ranging needs of the pupils they teach, and their planning takes full account of each pupil's personal targets. Planning also pays due regard to pupils' curriculum entitlement. For example, pupils in the Learning Development Centre are taught at an appropriate level to access the early stages of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, as well as having excellent opportunities to develop social skills within a friendly, warm and safe environment. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 who are withdrawn from the literacy hour in their mainstream classes, nonetheless follow a full literacy hour programme. Through very careful planning and detailed collaboration with their class teachers, the SENCO and the LSAs involved make sure that the content of lessons matches that studied by pupils' classmates but that, where necessary, learning is broken down into smaller steps and draws on work from earlier parts of the programmes. All staff involved work hard to make sure that pupils have ample opportunities to learn those concepts and skills they find difficult and to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Lessons are highly focused and purposeful, and no time is lost. In addition to working in groups such as these, each pupil also benefits from regular periods of time each week with an LSA in order to work closely on his or her individual targets. All staff involved in the support of pupils with special educational needs, whether in mainstream literacy and numeracy lessons, in small groups or in one-to-one activities, are well briefed about what pupils are expected to learn and to achieve. They are also involved in observing and recording the progress pupils make, and this information is used well to inform future planning. When appropriate, pupils with physical disabilities have access to special equipment designed to assist them in their learning and detailed in their individual education plans.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into their mainstream classes for work in subjects other than English and mathematics, and sometimes, in Years 3 to 6, also work within lower ability sets drawn from two year groups for literacy and numeracy. While provision for pupils with special educational needs is also effective in some of these teaching groups, it is not always the case. In some lessons, additional adult help serves to increase pupils' dependence, especially when resources and tasks are not matched appropriately to pupils' capabilities and needs.
24. When pupils are withdrawn for extra support in literacy or numeracy, the timing is varied to ensure they do not regularly miss other subjects. Teachers are careful to avoid gender stereotyping in lessons and responsibilities are allocated fairly between boys and girls. Although the school receives no specialist support teaching for traveller pupils, their needs are fully recognised and met through sound planning and support.
25. Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers usually capture pupils' interest well and pupils respond by concentrating and persevering with their tasks. The management of behaviour is good, and satisfactory use is made of the time available in most lessons. Teachers' lesson planning is usually sound, and identifies what pupils are expected to learn.



Support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning; and satisfactory use is made of homework to reinforce and extend what is learned in school. Overall, the teaching in Years 1 to 6 enables pupils to make mainly satisfactory progress in their learning. There is clear evidence of some high quality teaching, particularly for the Year 6 class, but there are also important weaknesses which need to be rectified in the school. In summary, some teachers: do not have sufficient knowledge about some National Curriculum subjects; have low expectations about pupils' potential achievements; allow lessons to move at too slow a pace; and use superficial questions which do not probe pupils' understanding and help to identify the next stage of learning.

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

26. Children in the reception class benefit from a rich range of well planned opportunities to develop their learning, including for their personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum provided for these children is a strength of the school and contributes significantly to their good progress. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is satisfactory overall, being broad and reasonably balanced. It meets statutory requirements, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. Sufficient emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and the national strategies for these key areas of pupils' learning are being soundly implemented. Numeracy and literacy skills are consolidated and extended in other subjects as pupils use these to access and accomplish tasks. For example, pupils use a history text in the literacy hour and use their mathematical skills when calculating the results of scientific investigations.
27. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed taught time in Years 3 to 6 and extended its hours to address the concern. Following the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has reviewed its curriculum plans and begun to look at the allocation of time to subjects and units of study. An outline curriculum map has been drawn up to achieve greater balance between subjects. However, continuity in pupils' learning is not fully secured in art and design, design and technology and religious education, and this results in pupils' progress being mainly unsatisfactory in these subjects. In science, weaknesses in planning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 also leads to underachievement. In geography, the cycle of study by the paired year groups gives pupils a spasmodic experience of the subject and adversely affects continuity of learning. Although the school is beginning to use guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, coherent schemes of work are not securely established in some subjects. Collaborative planning by teachers in the paired year groups is undertaken conscientiously but, because of limited ongoing assessment information, does not always take enough account of what pupils already know, understand and can do.
28. A developing programme is making good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school identifies this as an important part of its work, and uses 'circle time' sessions to discuss and resolve issues. Work on sex, drugs and health education is often linked to work in science and reinforced through other subjects such as physical education. The school is currently reviewing and developing its provision for these in collaboration with the local health authority and the police. Citizenship is well supported and practically reinforced by the operation of the school council. Good, well-targeted opportunities are provided for pupils' personal development at suitable stages of their school career. Pupils with difficulties in Years 1 and 2 are well supported by additional features like the Sunshine Nurture Group, and

Year 6 pupils benefit from the annual residential visit that develops their independence and social skills effectively. Extra-curricular provision, including through lunchtime and after-school clubs, is satisfactory.

29. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is effective. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs through a strong programme of additional support. Various groupings and arrangements for one to one support ensure that these pupils are given particularly effective help in literacy and numeracy. A small group of pupils from Years 1 and 2 also receive skilled help to develop social skills within a safe learning environment. The personal, social and health education co-ordinator, also a trained counsellor, provides appropriate support for a number of pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. Other effective forms of support for special educational needs pupils include programmes such as the Early Literacy intervention programme and Family Fischer Trust support for literacy in Year 1, the Additional Literacy Support for pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5, and courses in Basic Literacy skills for small groups of pupils in Years 3 to 6. The 'Springboard' mathematics programme in years 3 to 6 and 'booster' mathematics classes for pupils in Years 5 and 6 support pupils' mathematical development.
30. The school shows good commitment to equal opportunities in its curricular provision. Setting arrangements for English and mathematics help cater for pupils of different abilities and support those with learning difficulties particularly well. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and all pupils have open access to sport and out of class activities. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. All can benefit from going on visits, including those involving residential stays, regardless of ability to pay.
31. The resources of the local community are appropriately used to support the curriculum. Pupils visit the church and carry out traffic surveys in the village. Older pupils have the opportunity to visit a nearby activity centre to learn activities such as kayaking, and local businesses are willing to sponsor events at the school. Visitors such as the school nurse and the community police officer are regularly invited to the school and monthly assemblies are taken by representatives from local churches. Pupils are encouraged to think about others less fortunate than themselves by participating in charity fund-raising events.
32. The school has established strong links with partner schools and the further education college. This benefits the pupils by increasing their opportunities and support and by ensuring a smooth transition when moving to senior school. Pupils meet others through sporting events and other activities organised by the local group of schools. Staff can attend training days to hear keynote speakers talk on educational developments. The school, jointly with another local primary, is employing a home/school partnership co-ordinator to help parents, and this links well with the proposed adult learning classes to be run in school by the local further education college. There are close relationships with the secondary school, which include a series of physical education lessons being taken by a Year 7 teacher who gets to know the children in the oldest class before they transfer. Good provision is also made to identify and meet the needs of the small number of pupils who might find the move to secondary school particularly challenging.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own feelings and emotions in the course of personal and social education; and some opportunities to reflect on the emotions of others in other subjects of the curriculum such as history and English. They are also

encouraged to share problems and concerns with trusted classmates who are then invited to make suggestions that might help. The provision of counselling within the school gives very good opportunities for pupils to talk through their feelings with a trusted adult. Prayer and reflection are features of assemblies. Pupils are given opportunities to express joy in the course of their own singing and this was particularly evident in the course of Year 1 and 2 practices for a performance of 'Hosanna Rock'.

34. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's behaviour policy provides a clear moral code and is consistently implemented throughout the school. The school places a particular emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for their actions and they are given good opportunities to explore and develop moral values. For example, they have considered the rights and wrongs of stealing and of betraying a friend, both through exploring fictional stories and in relation to their own lives. They have also considered the rights and wrongs of the rules and punishments in schools in Victorian times and, as part of personal and social education, considered the rights and wrongs of playground behaviour in their own school. The quality of relationships between all those who work in the school provides a good model for the relationships and interactions of fairness and integrity which the school seeks to promote.
35. Provision for the social development of pupils is very good. A strength of the school is its promotion of respect for self and others, and encourages pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem. The headteacher places a particular emphasis on social courtesies and thoughtfulness for others and sets a very good example for pupils to follow by the way she treats them. She greets every pupil that she meets in the corridor by name and a 'Good morning' and expects a similarly polite response in return. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to work with each other, either in pairs or in small groups in the course of lessons and when, for example, older pupils share books with reception children. After-school activities, visits to places of educational interest and whole-school productions also provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to work together and meet with others. The school council provides very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within the school community, and a forthcoming visit to meet the mayor is planned to help pupils to develop a sense of how their local community works. The school also encourages pupils to develop their understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world by organising a regular programme of charitable events.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils are given sound opportunities to explore their own culture, for example, in the course of English, history and music. Opportunities are also given for pupils to develop their understanding of other cultural traditions, particularly in music, for example, when they sing songs from a range of cultural traditions, including Jewish and Caribbean cultures. In addition, an Afro-Caribbean storyteller has visited the school. Extra-curricular clubs also provide sound opportunities for cultural development.

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

37. The school is a community where the importance of care and the fostering of high self-esteem underpins the good support which it provides for its pupils. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and have established good communication links with parents which benefit pupils' development. Relationships throughout the school are based on encouragement, trust and respect. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion, where each child is valued and supported to play a full part in all aspects of school life. A particular strength of the school is the early recognition of social and developmental difficulties in pupils and the investment in sensitive and

well targeted support to help them develop good social skills and positive attitudes to learning. The effectiveness of this support is evident in the improvement in the behaviour of pupils and in their mainly sound academic progress as they move through the school.

38. Child protection issues are well handled by the school and all adults have a clear understanding of the need for awareness and the reporting of causes for concern. Pupils have appropriate lessons covering drugs education and the school nurse helps with the sex education programme for the oldest pupils. Aspects such as healthy eating and personal safety have appropriate coverage through the school. Each week, pupils have the opportunity to discuss aspects relating to their personal development, difficulties and feelings; and this helps them articulate any worries, learn more about the impact of unkind behaviour on others and develop positive attitudes to school.
39. The school is very successful at promoting good standards of behaviour and, as a consequence, the rate of exclusions has fallen significantly over the last two years. Pupils know what is expected of them and are keen to take on responsibilities in school; and this helps them develop a respect for property and take care of their environment. Positive values are promoted in assemblies and, once a week, the assembly is used to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the pupils. Bullying and instances of name-calling are infrequent and the headteacher is always informed when pupils have been given 'cool down' cards so that she can appropriately document incidents and take action to resolve problems. Sensitive and effective support is provided for smaller number of pupils who find it harder to concentrate in lessons or who have frustrations that can lead to aggressive behaviour.
40. The school regularly monitors attendance and is using the home/school partnership co-ordinator to emphasise with some parents the need for regular and punctual attendance by their children. The school uses 'first day follow up' to contact parents if their children are not at school and they have not notified a reason for absence. This good practice not only ensures that children are always accounted for but also stresses to parents the importance of education. The school organises a series of visits for children starting at the school to help them become familiar with the buildings and routines before they start, and to give parents the opportunity to meet staff, learn about school expectations and ask any questions.
41. The school has well-established procedures for medicines, accidents and emergencies. The governors make a significant contribution to ensuring that lines of responsibility for health and safety are clear and that all those using the school buildings and grounds are familiar with safe practice. Pupils are appropriately reminded of safe practice in lessons and at playtimes. Following the reorganisation of the playgrounds, the staff are careful to escort younger pupils across the car park when they need to come to the main building for assemblies or at lunchtimes. The school and buildings are kept very clean and tidy and provide a safe and secure environment for pupils.
42. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well. Information is used very effectively to provide specific support for pupils' needs through individual counselling and a variety of support groups. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils' stages of personal development and set pupils meaningful personal targets for improvement. These targets are often prominently displayed in the classrooms and teachers encourage and support pupils well in achieving them. The popular breakfast club gives pupils a positive start to the school day and ensures they are ready to learn. The 'cool kidz' club provides safe after school care for pupils whose families

cannot collect them at the end of the school day. The pastoral and learning needs of children not living with their natural parents are appropriately recognised. Sensitive support is available for children with particular medical, pastoral or emotional needs, including anger management programmes and counselling.

43. When the school was last inspected, procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress and standards were unsatisfactory. Although satisfactory improvements have been made in assessment in the reception class and in English, mathematics and science, there are still no established, coherent assessment procedures in other subjects. Overall, therefore, the school has made unsatisfactory progress in rectifying the weaknesses identified in the last inspection.
44. In the reception class, recently implemented procedures ensure that assessment information is carefully recorded and matched to the planned curriculum so that children's progress will be clearly charted and easily compared. Children are assessed on entry to the school, using baseline tests, and data from these are being well used to support and inform this process.
45. In English, mathematics and science, the school is now making better use of assessment information as a tool for monitoring and informing planning. Analysis of past national tests is being used to identify possible areas of weakness. Data from tests and tasks is compared with other schools both locally and nationally to identify areas requiring improvement. Use is being made of end of year tests to set targets for the coming year in English and mathematics and information from this is being used to inform the process of agreeing the school's targets with the local education authority. This process, however, is still developing and the school is not yet able, easily, to track and compare the progress of pupils or classes. Good use has already been made of computer software to analyse test results and check for possible differences between the achievements of boys and girls in all year groups. The school is now making regular use of national and commercial tests to assess pupils in English, mathematics and science, and these help to inform teachers' half termly assessments of pupils' achievements in these subjects. Overall, assessment in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory, although outcomes from assessment are not always used with sufficient precision to inform the next steps in learning or to set short-term targets for improvement. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress in science is significantly restricted when the tasks set are not appropriately matched to their needs.
46. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, assessment procedures are generally at an early stage of development. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection, and is unsatisfactory. New policies provide clearer guidance but assessment procedures have yet to be agreed and consistently implemented. Current procedures are largely reliant on individual teacher's methods of assessing and recording and their variable knowledge of the required curriculum. In some subjects, co-ordinators are beginning to assemble a collection of pupils' work to illustrate expectations and help teachers plan future work although these are still at very early stages. In all subjects, teachers make informal ongoing assessments of pupils' progress based on their response to questions and the marking of work. The quality of these assessments is variable and the process is generally not sufficiently rigorous or robust to provide meaningful information. As a consequence, teachers are often uncertain about what pupils already know, understand or can do and this is reflected in the spasmodic progress pupils sometimes make. The quality of teachers' marking is too variable. In many cases, pupils are given general praise but little specific advice about the strengths of their work and what they need to improve.

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

47. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to build up a firm partnership with parents. Parents recognise the school as improving, and are unanimous in their praise for its openness and in the approachability of all the staff. This means that there is a high level of trust by parents that the school always has the children's interests at heart, and that they will be kept informed on any incidents or concerns that the school might have. Consequently, they are also happy to share their concerns or give information about home circumstances that might have an impact on their children, so that appropriate support can be given. There was no evidence to support the view of some parents, expressed in their questionnaire returns, that the school does not work closely with them.
48. The prospectus and other school documentation give clear and comprehensive information and also include helpful suggestions such as books suitable for different ages that children might enjoy. Parents are also given booklets about how to help their children at home but these are rather formal and lack simple practical activities that are easy to understand. The school gives clear indications about the amount and type of homework to be set and homework diaries are used, particularly for younger pupils, to record reading tasks. Parents enjoy reading the informative weekly newsletter. They feel that the opportunities to come into school, for assemblies or to see work completed during the year at the summer term open day, are giving them a better idea of what is taught.
49. Although questionnaires indicate that some parents are not happy about the information they receive on their children's progress, further investigation suggests that most of this stemmed from these parents not having a clear idea of what pupils are being taught. The school accepts that there is scope to increase the amount of information given on the curriculum and there are plans to include the topics for each term in the newsletters and to hold occasional workshops. Parents have the usual opportunities to discuss progress and targets for improvement with teachers each term; and annual written reports give sound indications of attainment and progress during the year.
50. For their part, parents are supportive of the school's aims and the implementation of its behaviour policy. A few parents help regularly in classes or accompany trips; and the newly formed parents' association is organising both social and fund-raising events which help parents to become more involved in school life. Although the majority of parents are giving sound support to their children's learning at home, a significant minority are not hearing them read regularly and a few also are disrupting their children's education by not ensuring regular attendance or punctuality. This is having a negative impact on the standards they achieve. The school has rightly recognised these problems and has recently employed a home/school partnership co-ordinator specifically to address these issues as well as to encourage parents to develop their own skills and knowledge. The school has made accommodation available as a 'drop-in' centre for parents to meet with her and where she is available to assist parents in their dealings with outside agencies when necessary.
51. The school makes every effort to ensure that parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately informed about their children's progress and included in regular reviews of their progress. Evidence shows that many parents value the school's work on their children's behalf and support the school in its efforts by working with their children at home. However, there are some parents who cannot

always attend meetings and who, for a variety of reasons, feel ill-equipped to help their children with academic work.

52. The school provides before and after school care for children whose parents may have work commitments. Care is taken to ensure that parents who may not be proficient at reading are aware of the content of school newsletters and other documents. There are plans to offer classes at the school to help parents with numeracy and literacy. The buildings are fully accessible to users of wheelchairs and there is disabled toilet provision.

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

53. When the school was last inspected, in 1997, a headteacher had been recently appointed, and had made a good start. However, appropriate procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning had yet to be established and the requirements for teacher appraisal were not being met. Following the inspection, the school experienced an extended period of difficulty due to the illness of the headteacher and the need for a series of acting headteachers. Indeed, there were periods when the school had no acting headteacher to provide leadership. The local education authority identified the school as a cause for concern in 2000, and when the current headteacher took up her post in 2001 there was very considerable scope for improvement. The SATs results were too low in Year 6, and evidence suggests that the school lacked direction. Pupils' behaviour also needed improvement. The 'new' headteacher has tackled these difficulties with determination, energy and skill. Her effect on school improvement is marked, and governors and parents recognise the beneficial impact she is having on the quality of education provided at Aveley. She is also held in high regard by pupils, and her leadership has helped to improve their behaviour so that it is now a strength of the school. Through her good leadership, she provides staff with a clear sense of direction and promotes a positive team spirit in the school.
54. The headteacher analyses the results of statutory and non-statutory testing carefully and helps staff to target areas for improvement. She regularly observes lessons, across the school, and provides teachers with valuable feedback which benefits their professional development. The effect on her work is shown in the school's improved SATs results in 2002, and in the fact that the trend in its results is now above the 'national' trend. The headteacher's good management skills are evident in the school development plan, which clearly identifies areas for improvement and is well organised. She has worked effectively with staff and governors to formulate this plan, which is a valuable management tool. Procedures for the performance management of staff are sound, and statutory requirements are now met.
55. The recently appointed assistant headteacher is already beginning to make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school, and provides a good role model for her colleagues through her effective work with reception children. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics fulfil their roles well but most co-ordinators have limited strategies for monitoring their subjects. Consequently, they are not in a strong position to identify strengths and weaknesses, or to target areas for improvement with sufficient precision. When the school was last inspected, the monitoring roles of co-ordinators were underdeveloped, and it appears that very little progress had been made in rectifying this deficiency until the appointment of the current headteacher last year. The headteacher has made a good start by guiding the work of the co-ordinators for the key subjects of English and mathematics, but recognises there is still work to be done in relation to the roles of most other co-

ordinators. This priority is appropriately included in the current school development plan.

56. The school benefits from a committed governing body which is providing sound support and ensures that statutory requirements are met. A range of appropriate committees is established and are functioning efficiently. The governors discuss the results of statutory testing carefully and have a sound awareness of the school's performance. The governors with particular responsibilities for literacy and special educational needs are staff members and are well informed, while the governor with responsibility for numeracy is new to the role and is beginning to develop his knowledge and understanding. The governor with particular responsibility for health and safety makes a valuable contribution by inspecting the premises, and the chair of governors has given useful advice to improve ICT resources. The governors are appropriately involved in the formulation of the school development plan, and are well aware of the school's key priorities in the current educational year.
57. The school carried forward nearly £100,000 into the current financial year to supplement its annual budget. This sum is unacceptably high, and evidence suggests it has been accumulated as a result of weaknesses in strategic management prior to the appointment of the current headteacher. Discussions with the headteacher and governors show they are thinking very carefully about the best use of these funds to benefit pupils' learning, and this reflects the improved sense of purpose and direction in the school. The principles of best value are now being soundly applied.
58. The SENCO is very effective in her role. Although employed on a part-time basis, she often gives generously of her own time in order to ensure that administrative and organisational matters are dealt with appropriately. She is well supported in her work by the headteacher, and also by the special educational needs governor. The special educational needs governor fulfils her numerous roles well. She invests considerable time and skill to support young pupils in the Learning Centre, leads counselling sessions for pupils of all ages who need them, and co-ordinates personal, social and health education across the school. These roles, and the closeness of her work with the SENCO, mean that she is well informed about special educational needs work. Although she is in some respects too close to provision to act as an objective 'critical friend' in her role as governor, her work in the school is much valued at all levels. She ensures, through the governing body, that all statutory requirements in regard to special needs provision are met. A real strength of special educational needs provision lies in the very good communication amongst all staff involved in special needs work. While the headteacher, SENCO and special educational needs governor constitute what is, in effect, a 'core' group giving very good leadership and direction to special needs work, LSAs also play a very significant role and their input also has a marked impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The SENCO ensures that staff are appropriately trained for the roles they fulfil and for the pupils with whom they work. The speed of the exchange of information about the welfare, work and progress of all pupils with special educational needs is impressive. It means that pupils' progress is monitored very closely and that support can be modified quickly, when necessary, to meet newly identified needs. The SENCO also works hard to ensure that class teachers are fully involved in planning provision for the special educational needs pupils in their teaching groups. She involves them in drawing up targets for pupils' individual education plans, monitors plans to check their suitability, and contributes to teachers' planning for lower attaining groups within mainstream classes. There are effective arrangements in place to make sure that pupils transferring to secondary school are well prepared for the change and that continuity and progression in their learning are secured. Links with outside agencies and



specialists involved in advising and supporting special educational needs work in schools are strong and work in the best interests of the pupils concerned. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place, and are consistent with Code of Practice recommendations.

59. Equal opportunities and inclusion have a high priority in the school and considerable investment is made in the provision of extra support staff and teachers to meet the needs of pupils, be it emotional, behavioural or medical. The school has a sound race equality policy and appropriately monitors and reports the occasional instances of racist name-calling.
60. The recruitment and retention of teachers are issues in the school, and these appear to be common difficulties for many schools in the area. At present, there are sufficient teachers and, collectively, they have the experience and expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. However, there are weaknesses in the knowledge of some teachers about subjects of the National Curriculum, including among the four teachers who are unqualified in this country. They would benefit from well focused in-service training to rectify these weaknesses, which are particularly apparent in science in Years 1 and 2 and in art and design and design and technology in Years 3 to 6. While performance management is having a beneficial effect on teachers' work, and the school's procedures for inducting new staff are broadly satisfactory, there is scope to provide more support for teachers who are unqualified in this country. More needs to be done to enable these teachers to observe good practice, both at the school and at other schools, and to ensure that specialist teachers can observe and inform their practice. The school's healthy finances mean it is in a particularly strong position to ensure that these teachers are given the best possible support.
61. Resources for learning are satisfactory, overall, although there are weaknesses in the provision for reception children. Library book provision is currently limited but this is being rectified. The accommodation provides sufficient space and is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff. Recent work has improved the entrance area, the accommodation for staff, and has created a new 'food technology' room. However, some classrooms do not have running water. There is adequate playground space and a large playing field but the outdoor environment for the youngest children, in particular, needs to be improved to provide more opportunities for learning.
62. This is an improving school, which is benefiting from the good leadership and management skills of the headteacher. The teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress, overall, in English, mathematics and science from their very low starting points on entry to the school; and those in the reception and the Year 6 class benefit from particularly effective teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are credits to the school. There are weaknesses, including in pupils' achievements in a minority of subjects, in aspects of teaching and in the roles of co-ordinators. On balance, however, the school's strengths and sound achievements outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

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

63. In order to raise standards, improve the quality of teaching, assessment and the co-ordination of subjects, the headteacher and governors should:
  - Raise standards by:

- (i) improving the progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 in science by ensuring tasks are appropriately matched to their learning needs;
  - (ii) improving the progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6 in art and design and design and technology by increasing teachers' knowledge and expertise and ensuring that planning secures the sequential progression of pupils' key skills in these subjects;
  - (iii) improving the progress made by pupils in religious education in Years 1 to 6 by ensuring that all elements of the subject are given sufficient attention. (see paragraphs 8, 9, 20, 21, 27, 106, 108, 110, 113, 116, 118, 120, 121, 122, 153, 154, 156)
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach; have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' potential achievements; do not allow the pace of learning in lessons to become too slow; and use well focused questions to check pupils' understanding and identify the next steps in learning. (see paragraphs 18, 19, 20, 21, 25 and 60)
  - Implement assessment procedures so that, in all subjects, the school is able to judge pupils' progress and standards in order to match the teaching to pupils' needs with greater consistency and accuracy. (see paragraphs 46, 117, 121, 127, 136, 142, 152 and 157)
  - Ensure that the monitoring roles of all subject co-ordinators enable them to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects with sufficient precision to target areas for improvement. (see paragraphs 55, 111, 117, 122, 127, 142, 146, 152 and 157)
64. In addition to the key issues above, the governors should also consider the following, less important, issues for inclusion in the action plan.
- Improve the learning resources for reception children, particularly for mathematics, construction, role play and outdoor play. In addition, the outdoor area used by these children is too barren to stimulate and support their learning, and should be improved. (see paragraphs 61 and 66)

## 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	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	24	30	8	0	0
Percentage	1	18	31	39	10	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 point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	257
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	73

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	73

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	21	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	17
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	31	30	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (63)	75 (65)	93 (80)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	16	17
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	31	36	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (70)	90 (78)	93 (83)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	14	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	20
	Girls	14	11	13
	Total	26	26	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (51)	72 (59)	92 (78)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	17	19
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	19	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (43)	81 (57)	86 (63)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	252	5	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*This 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)	8.56
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Average class size	26

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	301

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	841,819
Total expenditure	826,370
Expenditure per pupil	2,920
Balance brought forward from previous year	83,293
Balance carried forward to next year	98,742

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	261
Number of questionnaires returned	60

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	37	3	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	5	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	47	2	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	48	8	7	3
The teaching is good.	53	42	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	48	17	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	30	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	33	48	10	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	47	43	7	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	57	7	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	52	18	3	5



## **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**

65. Children enter the reception class in either the September or the January of the year in which they become five and spend either two or three terms there. During the inspection there were just 12 pupils in the class, although a further 20 were expected to start in the following term. Children visit the school three times before starting on a full-time basis.
66. Nearly all the children have attended some form of pre-school experience and for most of them this is at the pre-school which is housed on the school site. There are insufficient links with the pre-school at present but plans are in hand to address this as soon as possible. The reception class is housed, along with Year 1 and 2 classes, in a building which is separate from the main school. The classroom accommodation is not ideal, having windows that do not open, no warm water and an uneven floor. However, it is of a good size and the new reception teacher has created a rich environment for learning with a wide range of well planned activities and displays to help children to learn through play and talk. The outdoor area, by contrast, is poor and requires urgent attention in order to bring it up to an acceptable standard. Once again the school is fully aware of this and has plans for improvement. Resources for children in the reception class are unsatisfactory overall. Although the teacher makes very good use of what is available, often augmenting them with her own materials, a great deal needs to be done to improve the range and quality of materials that are available, particularly for mathematics, construction, role play and outdoor play.
67. Planning in the reception class is good and is clearly reflected in the way the class works. The curriculum covers all six areas of learning and activities are purposeful, coherent and well structured. Although the attainment of many children is low at the end of the reception year this represents good achievement in relation to their very low starting points on entry. They learn how to participate as part of a group, improve their literacy and numeracy skills and broaden their experience of the world about them. As such they are well prepared for the early stages of the National Curriculum.
68. Teaching in the reception class is good overall and some very good teaching was also seen during the course of the inspection. There is a well judged balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks and there are ample opportunities for children to take part in practical and purposeful activities. The teacher and teaching assistant make an effective team. They work closely together, and share responsibilities for groups of children and areas of the reception class. A notable feature is the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of pupils and of how young children learn best and this makes a significant impact on their well being, the progress that they make and their positive attitudes to school. New assessment procedures are in place and these are used well to help plan for the different needs of the children.
69. Provision for children with special educational needs is good and there are appropriate links with outside agencies when specific help is needed. There are good monitoring arrangements, which are used to inform planning for children's particular needs. This contributes to the good progress that children with special educational needs make.

70. The partnership between parents and the staff is good. The teacher works hard to involve parents and parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and of the work that the children are doing.

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

71. On entry to the reception class children's personal, social and emotional development is generally poor. Some lack confidence and others find it hard to work with their classmates. As a result of the good teaching they receive, children make good progress, develop positive attitudes to school and gradually begin to co-operate with others. Most children begin to concentrate because of the wide range of activities that are well suited to their needs and interests. The teacher and teaching assistant give sensitive encouragement to the more reticent children to help them try new experiences for themselves and this helps them to gain in confidence. In the course of whole-class discussions, handling a wide range of materials and textures, moving in response to music and in role play, children have ample opportunities to develop an awareness of their own feelings and gradually develop a growing knowledge of the language they can use to describe them. This results in children who do have problems and concerns being able to approach the adults who work with them to make their needs known. Children's growing ability to accept the needs of others, for example, when working together to make containers for fruit, makes a significant contribution to the positive relationships they develop with their classmates. By the end of the reception year they have a satisfactory understanding of the basic rules for working together, sharing and turn taking. Children have a developing knowledge of what is right and wrong and some understanding of the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. They can dress themselves and take care of their personal hygiene. However, many are over dependent on the adults who work with them for help with activities and they give up easily when difficulties arise.
72. Teaching for children's personal development is very good. Varied and suitable teaching methods include lively and effective participation with children's play, introducing props at appropriate moments and using questions skilfully to move learning on. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and take responsibility for deciding the activities they will take part in when they are not working directly with the teacher. They are given opportunities to demonstrate what they know and understand, both during the course of activities and in small and large group review sessions. This encourages them to think about what they have achieved, to take a pride in their work and to grow in confidence when talking with others.

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

73. The communication skills of the majority of children are very weak for their age when they first join the reception class: their speech and vocabulary are significantly underdeveloped. Although the children are taught well and are getting off to a good start, few are able to sustain concentration and participate in discussion for very long. Higher attaining and more confident children are keen to answer questions put to them by their teacher and other adults and, occasionally, also volunteer information or make comments without being asked. A few less confident children choose to remain silent during shared activities, although they follow proceedings with obvious interest and are clearly developing understanding and knowledge even when they seem reluctant to show what they have learned by speaking up within the class group.
74. During a lesson seen, the children are very well supported by the class teacher and by LSAs. In this context, all children make good progress in relation to their starting

points. Helped by the teacher's very focused questions, higher attaining children can identify the main characters in the story of 'Handa's Surprise' although they are later unable to use inference, for example in order to say what a character might be thinking or feeling at particular points in the story. Nevertheless, all children enjoy the story for its own sake, and most already know that the person who writes a story is an 'author.' They enjoy looking at the pictures or 'illustrations', and almost all realise that we read books from front to back and that print carries meaning. When led by the teacher, all children join together to sing an alphabet song with great enthusiasm, justifiably taking pride in this very significant achievement. While higher attaining children form some letters accurately and are beginning to write independently or to copy individual words to record what they have learned, most children are still mastering pencil control and their emergent writing shows that they have not yet fully understood the link between the sounds of speech and words on the printed page. Overall, despite good teaching in reception, children's communication, language and literacy skills are still low when they enter Year 1.

### **Mathematical development**

75. When children enter the reception class their mathematical development is very low for their age. As a result of good, well focused teaching they make good progress in relation to their starting points although attainment remains low at the end of the reception year. Children begin to show an interest in numbers and in counting at an early stage because of the well-designed activities provided. For example, with support from the teacher they count numbers on a number line, count themselves in the correct order when wearing finger puppets with numbers on them and sing counting songs such as 'ten currant buns in a baker shop'. Every opportunity is used to promote learning about numbers. They are prominent in classroom displays and good use is also made of routines and procedures.
76. Children begin to develop an early understanding of shape and space in the course of taking apart cartons and cardboard boxes. They also build models and enclosures with construction toys such as playmobil. However, there is a dearth of such equipment in the reception class and also of other important resources for mathematics, including two and three-dimensional shapes and wooden blocks. The lack of outdoor resources such as wheeled toys and climbing apparatus also limits pupils' ability to learn about space and position.
77. Children have opportunities to fill and empty containers using both sand and water and, as a result, begin to learn the language and meaning of full and empty, more and less. Practical experiences such as wrapping parcels, weighing them and holding them in their hands to compare the differences, help children to develop an early understanding of weight. When making paper hats they develop an early understanding about length as they cut various lengths of paper and check that the hat will go round their heads.
78. The teaching of mathematics is good. The teacher demonstrates an enthusiasm for the subject and presents the work on mathematics through purposeful and practical activities, which interest the children. For example, weighing parcels in the role-play 'post office', counting how many cubes balance the parcels and buying stamps for the equivalent amount. She makes very good use of directed teaching to promote children's understanding of mathematical terms such as 'more than' and 'less than' and makes good use of talk to help children develop their mathematical vocabulary in the course of their play. There is very effective use of everyday activities, such as registration, to promote the use of counting and number recognition. Planning takes

into account children's different attainments and reflects high expectations for them all.

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

79. A scrutiny of planning, displays and children's work shows that children are helped to understand past and present in relation to their own lives and to the topics they study. For example, through classroom routines they learn to sequence the days of the week, and develop their awareness of the changing seasons. During a topic called 'Ourselves' they learn to consider change within their own lives: they come to recognise that they are no longer 'babies' but 'children', and that, one day, like their parents and teachers, they too will be 'adults'. During a walk around Aveley, they are taught to recognise the differences between new buildings and old, paying particular attention to features of St. Michael's church which date back to medieval times. They had looked at their village, made models and computer generated pictures of the houses and recorded what they had seen on their walks including key buildings such as the sweet shop, hotel, church and garage.
80. Children are making good progress in the use of ICT. They have used the classroom computers to produce and label pictures of faces, arrange blocks in patterns and to generate geometric shapes. They know how to open programs and use the mouse to make and confirm choices. Two worked, with very good support from their teacher, to create a picture of the pineapple in 'Handa's Surprise'. Both showed sound control of the mouse, knew how to choose colour and effects and one remembered how to print the finished pictures.
81. Children have ample opportunities to learn to cut and stick paper, and to make simple models using recycled materials. During the inspection, they were making good progress when creating their own Christmas cards. However, their construction skills are generally below average for their ages.
82. Good teaching helps children begin to develop their scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, during the inspection, they looked at various light sources including torches. However, a significant proportion struggled to grasp simple instructions and found it difficult to communicate their ideas. Overall, children's knowledge and understanding of the world are well below average at the end of the reception year.

### **Physical development**

83. Children enter the school well below average in their physical development, particularly in terms of their manual dexterity. They make good progress in the reception class and by the time they enter Year 1 are closer to, but still below, the Early Learning Goals. The teaching seen was good.
84. In the session seen in the hall during the inspection, children responded well and were attentive to their teacher. As they skipped and ran they made good use of the available space. They worked well with their partners to improve their rolling, throwing, catching and kicking skills as they passed a ball between them. Well focused teaching ensured that they made good progress in improving the accuracy of their throws, rolls and kicks. In the classroom, children's finer manual control, although improving with practice, is less developed, as is evident in their use of pencils, brushes and scissors.

85. Resources for outdoor activities are unsatisfactory and the outdoor area needs to be improved to provide more opportunities for learning. The reception class has access to a fenced outside area but this is barren, undeveloped and the fencing is in need of repair. There are no large wheeled toys and, although there is some new small equipment, there are no other facilities to enable use of the area for outdoor developmental or creative work and play.

### **Creative development**

86. Children respond very well to opportunities to express their ideas when singing and moving to music. They learn a range of songs by heart, sing them enthusiastically at an early stage and accompany themselves with appropriate movements and mimes. They enjoy exploring different kinds of sounds, for example, those made by twanging elastic bands, crunching tissue paper and shaking buttons and have made their own musical instruments which shake and rattle. Overall, their music skills are satisfactory for their ages.
87. Children benefit from opportunities for role play, and make good progress when engaging in art activities. They are encouraged to look carefully at natural resources as well as pictures by famous artists, and to create their own expressive pictures. Children are able to make very simple pictures using print techniques and collage. Overall, however, their art skills are below average for their ages, despite good teaching.

### **ENGLISH**

88. In spite of the good progress made in the reception class, most pupils' communication and early literacy skills are low when they enter Year 1. In the national tests of reading and writing for pupils aged seven, the school's results have been consistently low since 1999. In 2002, the reading results were again well below the national average and were below the average results of similar schools. The results of tests in writing were well below both the national average and the results for similar schools. When examined in closer detail, however, these most recent results represent a marked improvement on those for the previous year: in reading, the percentage of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected standard for their age rose by some 15 per cent, while there was a ten per cent increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard in writing. Although, in 2002, the school's results in the national tests in English for pupils aged 11 were below the national average, they were broadly in line with the results of similar schools. The results show that 72 per cent of all pupils reached the expected standard and reflect a 21 per cent increase in the percentage of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected standard for their age when compared to the results in 2001.
89. At the time of the last inspection in 1997, standards were judged to meet national expectations in Year 2, but to be below national expectations in Year 6. Indeed, only 36 per cent of pupils achieved the expected standard in English in 1997, and this reduced to 24 per cent in 1998. Current inspection findings show that, in relation to their low starting points on entry, pupils make satisfactory progress overall throughout their time in the school. Marked variations in the performance of pupils in different classes broadly reflect pupils' capabilities, and there are relatively few higher attaining pupils. Attainment is well below average in the current Year 2 cohort, and is below average in Year 6. Evidence from lessons observed and from the scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that the best progress is made by pupils in the Year 6 class as a result of very effective teaching. Significantly, in all age groups, pupils attain higher

standards during discussions in lessons than they do in independent written work and in tests. Many pupils depend heavily on teachers' questioning and on adult intervention to help them structure their thoughts and their language. As at the time of the last inspection, their general vocabulary remains weak, although their knowledge and understanding of the technical terms needed to discuss their learning in English and in other subjects, are generally sound.

90. Most pupils in Year 2 listen to stories with enjoyment and to their teachers with interest. They know, and observe, the conventions of turn-taking, and they listen politely when others speak. Few pupils speak confidently; their answers tend to be simple and short, and their thoughts are not always expressed as clearly or as audibly as they might be.
91. Most pupils are willing to answer questions about the characters and events in a story, and they know how stories are structured, with a beginning, a middle and an ending. They can explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and they know what is meant by words such as 'title', 'author' and 'illustrator'. Most pupils find it easier to talk about what happens in a story - the plot - than to use inference and work out, for example, how a character might be feeling, or what he or she might be thinking. They join in confidently with their teacher when reading aloud together. However, although higher attaining pupils can read simple texts accurately on their own, few pupils read expressively or fluently, and many do not observe the cues presented by the punctuation in order to convey the tone of voice and the pauses that an author clearly intends should influence the reader. Many lower attaining pupils use too narrow a range of reading strategies, and their phonic knowledge is insecure.
92. Most pupils in Year 2 enjoy communicating their ideas in writing. The highest attaining pupils organise their ideas well and are beginning to adapt the style of their writing to suit its intended purpose and audience. They write simple stories without much detail or description, and they produce short notes and captions to record work in other subjects. They form letters accurately and write neatly, though not always in a joined-up style of handwriting. They use what phonic knowledge they have to spell unfamiliar words, and they usually demarcate sentences accurately, using full stops and capital letters. The writing produced by pupils identified as being 'average' and 'below average', within the context of the school, is developing satisfactorily but has many weaknesses. Most of these pupils are able to produce work which complies with the task set in terms of its content and form, for example when writing a set of instructions in a logical order. However, their work has many 'secretarial' weaknesses: spelling is particularly weak, capital letters are sometimes confused with lower case letters, letter reversals are not uncommon, punctuation is erratic and handwriting inconsistent. The written language of many pupils lacks clarity and coherence: the style is often stilted because they consistently use short, simple sentences. Their powers of expression - as in their spoken language - are weak, and their general vocabulary is too limited. A few lower attaining pupils still struggle to build words in order to communicate their ideas. In Year 2, still at a relatively early stage in their development given their low starting points, many pupils still find it difficult to combine, simultaneously, the very many skills needed to produce effective writing.
93. Most pupils in Year 6 are good listeners and speak confidently, whether within a small group or before larger audiences, for example in class or when answering questions in assembly. They use relevant technical terms when talking about their learning in English and, for the most part, they have learned to adapt their speech in order to suit different audiences. In history lessons seen, the most able pupils are able to give very competent and informed answers to questions about their lives as 'Victorians' during

'hot-seating' activities. However, in science, pupils' use and understanding of appropriate scientific vocabulary are often rather limited. There are still many lower attaining pupils whose awareness of the differences between their own spoken language and Standard English is not well enough developed. Their grasp of the structure and grammar of spoken and written forms of Standard English is poor, and their general vocabulary remains limited. As is to be expected, the same weaknesses that characterise their speech also adversely affect the standard and quality of their written work. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the Year 6 class are taught very well indeed and, as a result, they are now making good progress in all aspects of their work in English. Higher attaining pupils recognise and understand the characteristic features of different types of text. They are also able to apply their knowledge, for example to write convincing playscripts and newspaper reports. Lower attaining pupils adopt some of the characteristic features of such texts, and their handwriting and use of punctuation show a marked improvement over time. However, their writing often lacks depth and detail and has other, technical, weaknesses. Many pupils still struggle to express their ideas clearly and few have learned to combine ideas successfully within well balanced complex sentences. Poor spelling and grammatical inaccuracies which reflect colloquial speech rather than Standard English remain significant weaknesses. Some lower attaining pupils draw on too few strategies to help them with spelling, and their knowledge of phonics is in some cases so underdeveloped that they find it difficult even to achieve an 'approximate' representation of some words.

94. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils can read both fiction and non-fiction texts appropriate for their age. They read for enjoyment, for interest and in order to find things out, for example in relation to topic work. Higher attaining pupils read reasonably widely, and respond with understanding and empathy. Most pupils can talk about their preference for a particular genre, and some can explain why they prefer certain books to the film versions they have seen. Lower attaining pupils are well supported by books from the school's structured schemes and, in the main, read accurately if not always fluently. However, some pupils occasionally still struggle to decode unfamiliar words. As in earlier years, they use too few strategies to work out how to pronounce words and how to work out what is meant. Pupils' poor general vocabulary and the difficulties they experience with inference are two other very specific weaknesses which affect their understanding of what they read.
95. The teaching of English is mainly sound, sometimes good, and occasionally excellent. There is also a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. All teachers' lessons are planned well and teachers make sure pupils are aware of what they are to do and to learn. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, and, as a result, pupils are willing to learn and to do their best. Teachers manage pupils well, and are therefore able to proceed smoothly through the various activities they have planned. The better teaching seen, in Years 2 and 6, is characterised by high expectations and very secure knowledge of the subject. In each of these classes, teachers are confident and are therefore able to respond to learning opportunities as they arise. They are particularly adept at assessing pupils' answers to questions and building immediately on points that need development or clarification. They encourage pupils to acquire the necessary skills to become independent in their learning, for example by promoting self-checking strategies and the use of available resources such as dictionaries and word-banks. Their lessons are conducted at a good pace and no time is lost. Less successful lessons have some of these characteristics but also have some significant weaknesses. Some teachers lack the subject expertise to maximise learning opportunities as they arise; some focus only on the specific objectives they have planned to address in the lesson and therefore overlook other,

significant weaknesses in pupils' work; and the feedback given to pupils by some teachers, whether verbal or written, is not analytical enough to help them improve their work. The best teachers use highly focused questioning to involve pupils in the evaluation of their own and others' work, and they also demonstrate high achievement through activities such as shared writing and the rigorous analysis of model texts. In lessons judged to be just satisfactory, teachers' expectations are rather too low, questioning tends to be too general rather than focused and there is a lack of meaningful evaluation.

96. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' written work strongly indicates a bias in a few classes towards the practice of routine skills and exercises at the expense of more creative work in English. Weaknesses in pupils' spelling and reading, including the use of phonic skills, point to variations in methods and practice between classes, and to a lack of planned progression over time.
  
97. The English co-ordinator joined the school only at the beginning of this academic year. With the support of the new headteacher, she has moved quickly to appraise herself of what needs to be done to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. She is already aware of some significant weaknesses and is taking measures to address them. For example, she has been instrumental in organising staff development on guided reading, and she is continuing to devote energy and time into building up a suitable collection of reading resources. She has monitored teaching in Years 1 and 2, and has given feedback to the staff concerned. She has involved local education authority advisory staff to help teachers with planning, and she is drawing up plans for the new library, including a long-delayed exchange of library stock through the schools' library service. With the headteacher, she is putting in place assessment procedures which will fill existing gaps in some year groups and which will allow for a more rigorous and useful analysis of pupils' performance. All available evidence shows that, since the last English co-ordinator left and until the new headteacher was appointed, any effective management of English had lapsed and resources declined. The new co-ordinator is an experienced and talented teacher who has the insight and determination to bring coherence and consistency to procedures and practice across the school as a whole and who has high expectations for what all pupils should achieve. She is aware that much needs to be done, and has made a very good start.

## **MATHEMATICS**

98. On entry to Year 1, pupils' mathematical skills are generally low. The results of national tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have been consistently well below the national average since 1999. Although results for 2002 are still well below average for Year 2 and below average for Year 6, they show an improving trend. Indeed, the Year 6 results are in line with the average results of similar schools. The percentage of pupils who reached the levels expected for their age is higher than in previous years and in Year 6 is over twice as high as it was at the time of the last inspection. The evidence of the inspection reflects these improvements. Overall standards are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6 but this represents satisfactory achievement given pupils' low starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Well-focused leadership and management of the subject and very good teaching in Year 6 are significant factors in the improvements that have been made in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the good support in class lessons and additional group work. The progress of higher attaining pupils is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, but too few pupils attain at the higher levels in Years 1 and 2.



99. The evidence of the inspection is that by the end of Year 2 about half of the pupils have a sound grasp of basic number facts. For example, they are able to identify number sequences, such as counting in twos, tens and fives and demonstrate that they can carry out simple calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They have a basic understanding of length, weight and capacity and are beginning to tell the time. They know the names of a range of common two and three-dimensional shapes, and also something about their properties. These pupils do not achieve at the higher levels, however, because they are not sufficiently skilled in using and applying their knowledge of number to solve problems, and they also find it difficult to explain their mathematical thinking and to record their calculations in written form. Pupils who achieve below average levels do not fully understand the patterns and relationships that exist between numbers.
100. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their skills in using basic number operations. By the time they reach Year 6, about two thirds of pupils calculate accurately using multiplication, division, addition and subtraction and make use of decimals to assist calculations related to money and measurement. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have a secure understanding of the value of each decimal place and the equivalent values of decimals, fractions and percentages. Their skills in using their knowledge of mathematics to solve problems, however, are underdeveloped as is their ability to talk clearly about their strategies for working out their answers and to present their working methods in written form.
101. Pupils' understanding of shape, space and measure is below average. They know some of the geometrical properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and can calculate the perimeter and area of shapes based on rectangles. Their knowledge of angles and ability to solve problems using their knowledge of shapes is not sufficiently developed. They can identify and draw two-dimensional shapes in different orientations on a grid using coordinates in the first quadrant. However, they have not yet developed their skills in locating and drawing shapes using all four quadrants. Pupils' skills in handling and interpreting data are satisfactory and they are beginning to make use of ICT in the course of this work.
102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 6 and there were significant strengths in Years 2 and 3. Pupils make good progress in these year groups. In the best lessons, the teachers' good knowledge and understanding of mathematics enable them to give very clear explanations and lively demonstrations. As a result, pupils are interested in their work and settle quickly to tasks because they fully understand what they have to do. In good lessons, the teachers use questions well to help pupils to develop their skills of logical reasoning. This is particularly effective when teachers use their own mental dexterity with numbers to help pupils to overcome misconceptions and demonstrate how to break down a more complex calculation into simpler steps. Planning is most effective when it clearly identifies what pupils are to know and be able to do as a result of a lesson or series of lesson. Tasks are then carefully sequenced to build on what has gone before. In the best examples, teachers adapt their planning as a result of evaluations of what has been learned. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson where the teacher had identified that many pupils had not fully understood the work on simple fractions in a previous lesson. Her planning had been adapted accordingly. Where teachers have high expectations of pupils and have a clear understanding of their different needs, lessons proceed at a good pace and work is well matched to the different abilities in the class. Pupils are fully involved in learning in these lessons and high levels of concentration are evident.

103. Evidence from other lessons and from pupils' work indicates that there are important weaknesses in teaching that slow down pupils' progress in some classes. These include low expectations of what pupils can achieve, a slow pace to lessons, an insecure knowledge and understanding of the subject and a poor match of work to pupils' differing needs and abilities. In some lessons there is an over emphasis on instruction and control and insufficient opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and develop the skills of independent learning. As a result, pupils in these classes are over dependent on their teachers and teaching assistants for tasks that they should be able to do for themselves. Less confident pupils are fearful of making mistakes and give up quickly when they meet difficulties. Marking is variable. The best marking includes helpful comments that allow pupils to know what they have to do to improve. However, examples of poor marking are also evident, particularly in Years 4 and 5, where it is not sufficiently rigorous and opportunities are missed to help pupils overcome the root causes of their mathematical misconceptions.
104. There are more assessment procedures in place now than at the time of the last inspection and overall, they are satisfactory. Non-statutory national tests are used at the end of Years 3 to 5, in addition to statutory tests in Years 2 and 6. Good use is made of the results to set long-term targets and to identify pupils who need additional help. The extra classes that are arranged for these pupils are a good example of the school's commitment to improving standards. For example, booster classes, which begin at eight o'clock in the morning and which meet the specific needs of different groups of pupils, are led by the Year 6 teacher and are held on a regular basis. Some teachers' use the objectives identified in the national numeracy guidance to make regular checks of pupils' progress and use this information to plan appropriate work and set short-term targets. However, others do not, and there is a need to develop greater precision in the school's assessment guidance so that it closely reflects the National Curriculum levels of attainment and supports teachers in the identification of the next steps in learning for individual pupils.
105. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator was appointed two years ago and since then has achieved a great deal. Planning has been improved and resources have been audited and updated. The co-ordinator has observed teaching in all classes and, as a result, has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject with which to inform her action plan for improvement.

## **SCIENCE**

106. On entry to Year 1, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are low, despite their good progress in the reception class. The percentage of pupils judged to be reaching the expected standard in the statutory teacher assessments in science in Year 2, in 2002, was broadly in line with the national average and above the average results of similar schools. However, the percentage exceeding this level was well below the national average and the results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that pupils are making mainly unsatisfactory progress in their learning in Years 1 and 2, and their overall standards in the subject are well below average in Year 2. When the school was last inspected, pupils' standards were judged to be average in Year 2.
107. The results of the SATs in science in Year 6 were in line with the national average and were above the average results of similar schools. These results were a very significant improvement on those achieved in the previous three years. For example,

while 78 per cent of all Year 6 pupils reached the expected level for their age in the 2001 tests, this figure increased to 92 per cent in 2002. Inspection findings show that pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is uneven but satisfactory overall. While pupils mark time in some lessons, they achieve particularly well in Year 6 as a result of very good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 3 to 6, while the most advanced learners make adequate progress overall. Current standards in Year 6 are not as high as those achieved in the 2002 SATs, mainly due to the increased percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6 cohort. Overall standards in Year 6 are below the national average but represent satisfactory achievement given pupils' very low starting points at the beginning of Year 3. When the school was last inspected, in 1997, standards were also judged to be below average in Year 6. However, the 1997 and 1998 SATs results contrast very significantly with the school's 2002 results in science, since only 21 per cent and 24 per cent of Year 6 pupils reached the expected levels in these years respectively. It is clear that good progress has been made in raising standards in Year 6 in recent years.

108. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have not recorded more than three pages of science work this term, and some of this is inappropriate. For example, pupils' learning in the first part of the term focused on elements normally addressed by much older pupils, and which were not part of the required Programme of Study for them. It is clear that these pupils derived very limited benefit from attempting to learn about the phases of the moon, and it is surprising that teachers believed the work to be appropriate. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the tasks that were set were less significantly flawed but still needed to take closer account of pupils' stage of development and learning needs. Most Year 2 pupils can identify a range of sources of light, although many find it difficult to differentiate between natural and made light sources. They have yet to make comparisons between sources of light including their brightness, and some do not understand that shining objects are not light sources. Their skills in conducting very simple investigations are underdeveloped.
109. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make sound progress when learning about healthy eating and the need for exercise. They also understand that some foods and drinks can damage their teeth, and make satisfactory progress when learning about the human skeleton. In lessons observed during the inspection, most pupils in Years 3 and 4 made sound progress when testing the temperature of their skin before and after exercise, although their understanding of the principle of fair testing was underdeveloped. In Year 5, pupils can generally distinguish between materials which occur naturally and those which are made. However, their use and understanding of appropriate scientific vocabulary are limited, and they are not sufficiently sure whether changes to some materials are reversible. Some Year 6 pupils find it difficult to identify the conditions which cause evaporation and condensation. However, most in the Year 6 class can conduct systematic investigations, following the guidance from their teacher, and understand how sieves, filter paper and evaporation can help to separate materials. In lessons observed in this class, very effective teaching enabled pupils to make good progress in scientific enquiry so that most reached the expected standard for their age. The majority of pupils demonstrate average overall standards in Year 6 but the learning difficulties of a significant minority mean their attainment is understandably below average, and relatively few pupils exceed the expected level for their age. As a consequence, overall standards are below average in Year 6, although pupils' progress is mainly sound in Years 3 to 6.
110. The quality of teaching in science in Years 1 and 2 ranged from unsatisfactory to satisfactory during the inspection, but was satisfactory overall. However, an analysis

of teachers' planning and pupils' completed work shows that teachers do not consistently match the tasks set in science to pupils' learning needs. As a consequence, although teaching was broadly satisfactory during the inspection, pupils' overall progress in science in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching in the lessons seen ranged from very good to unsatisfactory but is satisfactory overall and is reflected in pupils' mainly sound progress. Teachers' lesson planning is generally sound, although the needs of the more advanced learners need to be given more careful consideration by some teachers. All teachers have positive relationships with their classes and this has a beneficial impact on pupils' learning in science lessons. They listen to their teachers attentively, are usually keen to answer questions and behave well in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure, and pupils in the oldest class benefit from particularly well informed guidance and instruction. However, some teachers would benefit from training to enhance their understanding of the subject, including the requirements of the National Curriculum in science. Teachers' explanations are usually clear, and scientific language is appropriately introduced and reinforced in most lessons. The most effective teaching, in the Year 6 class, is characterised by the teachers' enthusiasm and high expectations for pupils' achievements. She ensures that no time is lost in science lessons – "You have 3½ minutes left to complete your predictions" – and is particularly skilled in posing searching questions for pupils which help to identify the next steps in their learning. Unsatisfactory teaching is evident when teachers do not match the lessons to pupils' learning needs, when the pace of learning is too slow, when questions are too superficial to probe pupils' understanding, when expectations about pupils' potential achievements are too low, and when opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to use appropriate scientific language. There is scope to make more use of ICT to support pupils' work in science. Assessment procedures in the subject are broadly satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in the medium and long-term planning for the subject, which are clearly shown in the inappropriate work sometimes set for the younger pupils, and the school is appropriately seeking to introduce a more coherent scheme of work.

111. The science co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and makes a particularly valuable contribution to pupils' achievements through her work as a very effective science teacher for Year 6 pupils. She analyses the results of statutory tests carefully, including in relation to the relative achievements of boys and girls, and has talked with pupils from classes across the school about their science work. She has appropriate plans to begin to observe science teaching, and recognises that her scrutiny of teachers' planning needs to be more rigorous in the younger classes so that pupils are not set inappropriate tasks. The co-ordinator also intends to provide demonstration science lessons for her colleagues. This would be very useful, particularly if the lessons were informed by needs identified through her lesson observations and scrutiny of examples of pupils' work. Resources for science are well organised and are sound.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

112. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe art and design lessons during the inspection. Judgements about pupils' progress and standards are made from a careful scrutiny of pupils' completed work.
113. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress in the subject is just adequate and overall standards are broadly average in Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress in the subject is unsatisfactory and results in standards being below average in Year 6. The

school has made very limited improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average in both Years 2 and 6.

114. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress when learning to mix their own paint colours, and their abstract paintings show a developing understanding of how colour tones can be used to create interesting effects. However, their drawing skills are generally underdeveloped, and their self-portraits are a little below average for their ages.
115. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have drawn their friends and pictures of family groups which take account of the relative sizes of the individuals. These drawings are mainly very simplistic and show a lack of attention to detail of line and texture. In Year 5 pupils have followed their teachers' instructions carefully to create abstract pictures which use simple printing and mark-making techniques. However, their finished work shows limited individuality; and opportunities are missed to draw pupils' attention to the abstract paintings of famous artists. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' drawings of shells and of their hands demonstrate that their observational and technical skills are below average. Little detail is shown, the use of shading is very rare, and the drawings are typical of the work of considerably younger pupils in most schools. Year 5 and 6 pupils mark time when creating a series of 'cartoon' faces to represent different emotions, usually by making simple adjustments to the lines which represent the mouth. They also make little progress when using a grid system to show perspective, through mathematical drawings of cubes of diminishing sizes.
116. There is insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching in the subject. However, the analysis of pupils' work show that teachers would benefit from in-service training to develop their knowledge and understanding in the subject, especially in Years 3 to 6 where pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Teachers' expectations of pupils' potential achievement need to be raised; at present work of only acceptable quality is being praised by some teachers. Teachers' planning does not secure the progressive development of pupils' key skills in the subject, and there are no coherent systems for assessing pupils' standards or progress.
117. The art and design co-ordinator is soon to return to the school after maternity leave. She recognises there is considerable scope to raise standards, and is keen to secure improvements. She has worked very hard to formulate a scheme of work for the subject, which should help to ensure that pupils make more consistent progress, and will be introduced next term. At present, there are no established procedures to monitor the subject. Resources for art and design are just adequate.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

118. Pupils make mainly satisfactory progress in design and technology in Years 1 and 2, and their standards are broadly average in Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is spasmodic in the subject, and is unsatisfactory overall. As a consequence, standards in Year 6 are below average and represent underachievement. Standards have been maintained in Year 2 since the last inspection but were average in Year 6 in 1997.
119. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have looked carefully at a range of bags to discuss their usefulness and construction. They have made satisfactory, simple designs for their own bags, and have described how they might be made, after experimenting with different joining techniques. Indeed, they demonstrate sound skills when using staples, masking tape, glue, paper fasteners and needle and cotton to join the

different parts of their bags, and become aware that some methods are more effective than others. Overall, they are demonstrating skills which are satisfactory for their ages.

120. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have looked at pulley systems, including in working models provided by their teacher. Most have a sound basic grasp of how they operate but require more opportunities to design their own simple models with incorporate pulleys. They are able, with help, to assemble pre-cut parts, provided by their teacher, to make identical models with pulley systems, and learn how to strengthen corners with card triangles. However, a significant minority of pupils find it difficult to explain what they are doing – and the task is a little too complex for them. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have designed and made model bridges using card and paper. They are able to make adequate written explanations of how they intend to make their models, but their design drawings lack sufficient precision. Their simple paper weavings are typical of the work of much younger pupils, and their basic stitching on 'binca' represents limited challenge. Their designs for Christmas cards, which incorporate their stitching with an illustration, represent underachievement.
121. Only two lessons were observed in design and technology, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. In the lessons observed, in Years 2 and 3, the teaching was satisfactory overall, although the task set for the Year 3 pupils could have been better matched to pupils' learning needs. Evidence from teachers' planning and from pupils' work shows there is no coherent strategy for the development of pupils' key skills and understanding in the subject as they move through the school. In addition, there are no rigorous assessment systems which help teachers to judge pupils' achievements and to inform their planning. Evidence suggests that teachers in Years 3 to 6, in particular, would benefit from in-service training in the subject to increase their knowledge and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievements.
122. The design and technology co-ordinator is keen to improve standards in the subject, and recognises that pupils' progress is too uneven. She has worked very hard to formulate a new scheme of work which will be introduced next term. This should have a beneficial effect on pupils' achievements but will need to be supported by in-service training for teachers. Although the co-ordinator readily provides advice to her colleagues, there are no established procedures for monitoring the subject. Resources for design and technology are just adequate.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

123. Standards at the time of the last inspection were average in Years 1 and 2 and below average in Years 3 to 6. It is not possible to reach a secure judgement about current standards as geography is not being taught in Years 1 and 2 this half of the term and there are only a very few examples of pupils' written work across the school. Evidence has therefore also been drawn from viewing displays, analysing teachers' subject planning, talking to teachers and pupils and looking at the previous year's work from Years 1 and 2. There were no examples of pupils' previous work in Years 3 to 6, and the few lessons observed in Years 3 to 6 do not provide a sufficiently broad evidence base to judge pupils' overall standards. The planned curriculum is appropriately based on national guidance and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. However, the cycle of study by the paired year groups gives pupils a spasmodic experience of the subject and adversely affects continuity of learning. Pupils' skills, particularly in mapwork, are not sequentially developed within the cycle. Pupils with special

educational needs are well supported in their lessons by their teachers and the well briefed teaching assistants.

124. Recording in Years 1 and 2 is clearly restricted by pupils' weak literacy skills. Their knowledge and understanding of the world outside their immediate locality are very limited, as is their recall of previous work. This continues to be a feature as pupils move up the school. Pupils in Year 2 recalled creating a plan of their route to school and recording specific features of Aveley. Their work showed how they had selected features of street furniture from a worksheet and drawn pictures of the church, shops and houses. Pupils in Year 1 had completed similar although more limited plans.
125. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have learnt about coastal erosion and the weather. In a Year 6 lesson pupils knew the names of the continents and made effective use of atlases to identify and place the longest rivers in the world. They identified the countries they flowed through and found their tributaries and estuaries. In a Year 5/6 class pupils showed limited recall and understanding of the main features of a river, its effect on the landscape and how it might limit or effect development of an area. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 used Ordnance Survey symbols to record features on an imaginary settlement on either side of a river. All recognised the need for a crossing and most understood the need for road links to the hospital, golf course, station or picnic site. Their overall understanding was variable and many had not considered who would be using these facilities and where they might live. Groups of more able pupils are extended by modified tasks. Those in a Year 3 lesson explained how co-ordinates could be used to locate Greenstead Green on an Ordnance Survey map.
126. In the four lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 teaching was satisfactory, overall, and ranged from satisfactory to very good. Where the teaching is strong teachers are careful to revisit previous learning before moving on to new. They make good use of a range of resources to convey their own enthusiasm, excite pupils and maintain their interest. In a Year 6 lesson, a world map, atlases, the overhead projector and the river display on the wall were quickly used to introduce, confirm and support tasks. This moved learning forward well and good use of questioning checked pupils' understanding and challenged and extended their thinking. Teachers often make good use of the end session to revisit learning, check understanding and tell pupils how well they have done, as seen in a Year 3 lesson. Teachers' own subject knowledge and confidence are variable and this affects the quality of learning. Teaching is less successful when teachers do not have a clear view of the purpose of the learning and how to extend and develop pupils' subject skills. This is also reflected in the marking of pupils' work, which is rarely more than encouraging. Pupils are interested in learning about the world in which they live and some have researched topics using the Internet to find out about cities and rivers. They listen to their teachers, maintain concentration and work well whether individually, in pairs or groups.
127. Since her take over of the subject, the co-ordinator has drawn up an action plan, audited resources and revised the subject policy. Monitoring is being developed through viewing teachers' planning, termly sampling of pupils' work and talking to pupils but is still at an early stage. Assessment procedures are undeveloped. Resources are adequate for current use, have been improved by the recent purchase of sets of atlases and would benefit from further additions such as aerial photographs and pictures of geographical features. Greater use should be made of ICT to support learning in the subject.

## **HISTORY**

128. At the time of the last inspection, a key issue in the report was to raise standards in history in both Year 2 and Year 6.
129. Inspection evidence from lessons observed and from the scrutiny of pupils' work and of displays shows that there has been a marked improvement in provision overall since that time. All available evidence now shows that, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of history as they move up through the school. Although progress is better in some classes than in others, most pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards which are broadly average for their ages.
130. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study people from the past and, building on work done in the reception class deepen their understanding of differences between 'then' and 'now'. For example, pupils in Year 1 are able to recognise the difference between the clothes they wear today and those worn in the past. They know that the late Princess Diana was a famous person and know something about her life and work. In a lesson seen in Year 2, pupils have a more profound understanding of why someone is considered famous when they learn about Florence Nightingale. They know, for instance, how Florence felt called by God to work as a nurse. Not only are they aware of what motivated her, but they also know how her work with wounded soldiers in the Crimea ultimately brought about changes in the way hospitals are run today, particularly in regard to the quality of care and standards of hygiene. By investigating pictures showing different stages of Florence's life, they are able to deduce that she came from a wealthy family, talk in a reasonably informed way about hospital conditions at Scutari and make simple but relevant comparisons with modern hospitals. They demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of chronology when they refer to key dates and events in Florence's life represented on a time-line. For example, they realise that Florence was born before Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother who died earlier this year.
131. In an extended study of Roman Britain, most pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrate a satisfactory level of understanding of the political and commercial reasons for the various Roman invasions in the first century AD. Their written work shows that they understand significant differences between the very organised invading armies of the Romans with their military training and (for those times) sophisticated weaponry, and the largely unarmed Celtic tribes they overthrew. They also know how the famous Celtic queen Boudicca took poison rather than fall into the hands of Roman captors.
132. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn about rich and poor in Victorian times. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding are revealed when they adopt roles of people from the period. For example, some pupils give convincing performances when they answer questions from their classmates about their lives as servants, while others answer as children of the rich. It is clear from their responses that they have accumulated a substantial amount of information, and also that they have developed sound insights into the different ways of life 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' in a Victorian household. By drawing comparisons between aspects of their own lives and those of people in Victorian times, they have become aware of significant similarities and differences between modern life and life at the turn of the twentieth century and are able to make relevant distinctions between the two.
133. The full range of evidence available shows that teaching is satisfactory overall, although good teaching was observed in both Year 2 and Year 6. All teachers plan their lessons well, and the practical methods used engage pupils' interest. For example, 'hot-seating' of characters from history is a favoured strategy which involves



pupils in devising and answering questions about history. In most lessons, teachers also involve pupils in enquiry methods which ensure that pupils use primary or secondary sources to inform their ideas about the past. Pupils are managed well in all lessons. However, the two-year rolling programme on which lessons are based offers no guarantee of progression in pupils' learning, and there are substantial differences in the amount of coverage of history from year to year and from class to class. For example, pupils in Year 3 have undertaken a far more rigorous study of Roman Britain than pupils in Year 4, and the coverage of the Victorian period is much more superficial in one class with Year 5 pupils than in the other, and much less informative in Year 5 overall than in Year 6. In a similar way, there are significant differences in the attention teachers give to pupils' acquisition of key historical skills such as understanding change, interpretations of history and chronology.

134. Pupils' experience of history is enriched by visits. For example, pupils studying the Victorians have benefited from a visit to a 'Victorian school' where they have had the chance to dress and, for a brief while, to live as children of the period. During 'book week', pupils in Year 6 informed the rest of the school about the works of Victorian authors such as Charles Dickens and H.G Wells. In some classes, most noticeably in Years 2 and 6, teachers make relevant links between history and English. For example, they encourage pupils to develop reading skills while finding out about history, and to engage in role play in order to present historical perspectives.
135. The co-ordinator has had responsibility for history only in recent months since the appointment of the new headteacher. In that time, she has already done much to appraise herself of teaching and learning, and she has a sound overview of provision. Her initial priority, of necessity, was to introduce a scheme of work and to raise standards in Years 2 and 6 in order to address the weaknesses identified in the last OFSTED report. Teachers now benefit from the introduction of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance for history and from a two-year rolling programme, which, whilst in need of evaluation and review, has given shape and direction to the teaching of history across the school. The co-ordinator has also been proactive in trying to ensure that all teachers understand the criteria used to assign National Curriculum levels to pupils' work. All teachers have sampled work by, and 'agreed' levels for, the pupils in the year groups they teach. Plans are also in hand for the co-ordinator to observe lessons in order to monitor standards, teaching and learning more closely than has been possible to date.
136. In addressing identified priorities, the school now needs to ensure that schemes of work secure progression in pupils' learning of key skills from year to year, and that pupils in each class receive their full curriculum entitlement in terms of coverage of the subject. Additionally, resources need to be enhanced so that young and weaker readers have access to suitably accessible information books and other resources. Assessment in history needs to inform teaching and learning more clearly. Finally, although there is evidence to show that some teachers use ICT to good effect to support work in history, most noticeably in Year 6, there remains scope to extend its use in other years, and also to incorporate the use of databases to initiate and underpin historical research.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

137. Standards in Years 2 and 6 were broadly average in the work seen, and pupils are making satisfactory progress in the subject. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection, and is largely due to improvements in resources, teacher confidence and the adoption of national guidelines as the basis for planning in

- the subject. There is now a computer suite for whole-class use as well as computers for individual use in classrooms. All have Internet access. The very recent purchase of laptops and a projector has extended this capability further. Two-thirds of the teachers have benefited from national training and this will be extended to all teaching assistants next term. Subject plans now cover the full National Curriculum Programme of Study and include control technology and modelling. These initiatives mean that the school is now well placed to move forward.
138. Pupils throughout the school confidently log on, select the program they are to go to use and know how to save work to be retrieved for later use. Younger pupils save work on their own disk and older pupils know that for larger files they need to save on the hard drive. They recognise icons on the tool bar, know how to select from drop down menus and confidently use the mouse to select and confirm choices. Pupils in Year 2 creating pictures of Florence Nightingale make good use of the colour palette and techniques in a paint program they have used before. They know how to insert text and correct errors although poor literacy skills limit most to a very brief sentence or phrase.
139. Teachers are careful to build on pupils' previous work and encourage use of the correct terminology. Year 6 pupils learning how to create a hyperlink in preparation for multimedia presentations move confidently between screens and programs. However, their familiarity with the keyboard varies and is not always as developed as expected. Often those who are more accomplished have computers at home. Pupils already know how to link sounds to pictures and to create presentations. Within the paired year groups, classes largely follow the same topics. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils fill outlines on a festive plate with colour before creating their own black outlines for stained glass windows. Many quickly learn that the colour will leak if there is a gap.
140. Information and communication technology is being used to support learning in other subjects and, although this is not yet a consistent feature across the school, there are examples of good practice. It is well used to support and encourage pupils with special educational needs in their literacy work; and the nurture group in Years 1 and 2 entered data about drinks for presentation as a graph. Examples in the corridors show wider use of graphs in numeracy to present data about books or television programmes. Year 6 pupils are using the laptops to draft and redraft literacy work, have used sensors to log and display temperature data in science and are mixing and recording music to make a CD. However, little use was seen of the computers in most classrooms during the inspection. Pupils use home Internet access to find information about rivers in Year 6 and the Earth in space in Year 2. The headteacher's good use of ICT to present an assembly about the Christmas tree raises the profile of the subject further and illustrates its possible use.
141. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls who often work together at the computers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers, teaching assistants and their classmates and achieve equally well. Pupils enjoy using the computers. They work well in their twos and threes, taking turns, making helpful suggestions, sustaining concentration for extended periods and often working largely independently.
142. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and some very good teaching was also observed during the inspection. However, in some lessons, pupils experiment with programs and develop skills incidentally rather than benefit from focused teaching. There is a close correlation between teaching and learning, with pupils making the greatest progress in lessons where teachers are confident, knowledgeable and have

a clear idea how to develop pupils' understanding. Assessment systems are in need of development for the subject, and procedures for monitoring teaching and learning have yet to be established. The co-ordinator recognises that procedures for monitoring teaching and learning require further development.

## MUSIC

143. Pupils attain average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. These findings largely reflect those of the last inspection. Pupils' achievements result from the range of opportunities for pupils' music making, not only in lessons, but also in choir, assemblies and local music festivals. The school does not yet offer instrumental tuition other than in recorder, but plans are in hand to address this issue and 'taster' sessions have already been held for pupils interested in learning the viola.
144. In Years 1 and 2, almost all the pupils are developing satisfactory listening skills. They sing well and with enthusiasm. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to control their voices to obtain the correct pitch, rhythm and expression. For example, during a practice of 'Hosanna Rock', they sang tunefully and with good expression to illustrate the different part of the Christmas story. Some songs, such as 'The Lullaby' were sung quietly and tenderly, whilst others were sung with great exuberance. One pupil sang a solo part particularly well: she was confident and all the words could be heard clearly. Other pupils were very generous in their appreciation of her efforts.
145. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 sing competently. Their ability to keep in tune is enhanced when they are accompanied by the piano and a confident adult singer. This was the case in a lunchtime choir practice when a teacher from the local authority music service visited the school as part of his regular support. Pupils sang 'Shalom Chaverin' with expression and maintained their part well, with a good awareness of the overall effect when they sang the song in the form of a round. In music lessons in Years 3 and 4, pupils worked well together to sing 'Row, row, row your boat' accompanying themselves with percussion instruments to emphasise the pulse. The school is beginning to make effective use of ICT in music and has been given good support for this by the local music service. A good example was a Year 6 lesson in which pupils used ICT to compose their own work. Having listened carefully to a selection of music presented by the teacher, they noted how sounds were blended together to create an overall effect. They then created their own musical patterns by selecting sounds and organised them on screen so that they blended together. During this task pupils worked well together, sharing their ideas, evaluating their compositions as they went along and agreeing changes. They used appropriate technical language and developed their understanding of how different kinds of sound can be organised, together with changes in pitch and tempo, to create different musical effects.
146. Not enough lessons were seen to give a judgement about the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. However, in Years 3 to 6 the teaching is satisfactory overall but is sometimes better. For example, the teaching by the local authority specialist is of a particularly high standard. The school is currently without a coordinator for the subject but it has received good support from the local authority music service. Class teachers take their own music lessons and although some are not fully confident in teaching the subject, they have responded well to the challenge. The school recognises that it needs to update its scheme of work to support teachers and to develop the role of the coordinator. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and they are well stored in the room that has been set aside for music.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 in physical education are average, which is a similar position to that found by the last inspection. All aspects of the subject are planned during the year, including outdoor and adventurous activities in Year 6 both as part of

a residential visit and at a local outdoor pursuit centre. Swimming at the local centre has now been extended to all pupils from Year 2 onwards and by Year 6 many can swim well in excess of 25 metres. Boys and girls achieve equally well as do pupils with special educational needs who are fully integrated into lessons. The school is making use of national guidelines as the basis for planning in the subject although the current practice of focusing, in the paired year groups, on games, gymnastics or dance for a whole term does not lift pupils' performance in the way broader coverage would. The school is aware of this and is considering how best to implement change.

148. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked enthusiastically to improve their throwing and catching skills. All made good use of the space available, behaved sensibly and were aware of others as they practised throwing and catching. Skills were reinforced well when, after practising with their partner, pupils in Year 2 applied these skills well to a game of 'piggy in the middle'. Under the direction of their teacher, pupils in Year 1 showed increasing accuracy as they threw the beanbag to their partner and as they gained confidence a few extended this by catching it with one hand.
149. Skills, knowledge and understanding are being developed as pupils move up the school. In Years 5 and 6, pupils refined their skills as they accurately passed and received the ball whilst on the move. Techniques were improved and extended as they learnt to intercept and block passes before they applied and consolidated this in small group games. Teachers' clear instructions and demonstrations support this well as does the Year 7 specialist from the local secondary school working with Year 6.
150. As pupils move through the school they are developing an understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies and its importance to health. By Years 5 and 6 pupils are able to maintain repetitive physical exercises for extended periods. Whilst pupils enjoy these activities and improve their stamina they do not increase their skills, knowledge and understanding and consequently their overall performance is not improved.
151. Teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory and is satisfactory, overall, enabling pupils to make mainly sound progress. Teachers are generally aware of safety issues and pupils, who clearly enjoy their PE lessons, are all suitably clad. In Years 3 and 4 barefoot work improves the sensitivity of their gymnastic work well. In the stronger lessons there was careful preparation and a clear understanding of how skills should be developed. Suitable explanation of the task coupled with continual demonstration and coaching meant pupils achieved well as they moved briskly through the activities. In the weaker lessons lack of explanation left pupils unclear about what was required of them. Pupils, throughout the school, have insufficient opportunity to reflect and offer views on their own or others' performance or time to improve. Teachers' confidence and subject knowledge also varies from class to class and are significant factors in the quality of pupils' work. In Years 3 and 4, pupils in one class made good progress in applying twisting motions to work on apparatus with increasing precision and quality. Their teacher made good use of demonstrations and coaching to ensure that they took good account of their own work and that of their classmates to improve. In another class, a lack of clear instruction and guidance left pupils unclear about what was expected of them.
152. The subject is currently without a co-ordinator and the headteacher is providing interim cover. Monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject is largely through viewing teachers' planning and there are currently no arrangements for assessing pupils' progress. The two halls, large field and hard play areas provide good facilities

for the subject. Equipment for gymnastics is adequate but that for small games would benefit from review and renewal. Provision is extended by competitive sport, including netball and mixed football, an annual sports day, visitors such as Stomp Dance Company and the current work for the Healthy Schools award.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

153. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are below the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. Evidence from pupils' work, planning documentation and lesson observations indicates that their progress in the subject is unsatisfactory overall. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are now lower than at the time of the last inspection and there has been no improvement in standards in Years 3 to 6.
154. As a result of visits to the local church and the strong links that the school has with the churches in the area, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of some of the important features of the Christian religion. They know many of the stories from the Bible, such as the story of 'The Good Samaritan', and have a satisfactory understanding of how the Bible teaches Christians about the way they should live their lives. However, pupils' awareness of other religious traditions represented in the United Kingdom is not sufficiently developed and there is little opportunity for pupils to make comparisons between them. Pupils have a very limited understanding of what it means to belong to a particular religion other than Christian because there are few opportunities for pupils to hear authentic accounts from other faith believers and to visit their places of worship. The school has a range of artefacts from other faiths and appropriate use is made of these to help pupils develop the correct technical terminology to describe them. However, pupils' understanding of how these artefacts are used as symbols to express beliefs is not well developed. Limitations in the amount of time provided for religious education and weaknesses in assessment and planning contribute to pupils' unsatisfactory progress, overall, in the subject.
155. Few religious education lessons were seen during the inspection so it is not possible to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The lessons observed were satisfactory, overall, and a particular strength was the good relationships that teachers had with their pupils. This resulted in an atmosphere of mutual trust in which pupils were willing to share their deeper thoughts and ideas with their teachers and with each other, knowing that they would be listened to and taken seriously. For example, in one lesson the teacher shared an experience from her own childhood when her friends had let her down. This led to the pupils sharing stories about their own personal experiences. The rights and wrongs of these situations were also addressed during the discussions.
156. The school now makes use of the locally agreed syllabus and the QCA scheme of work, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Although this ensures that the requirements of the agreed syllabus are broadly met, there is insufficient guidance on how the needs of each age group can be addressed within the two year rolling programme of themes that the school sets out. This results in older pupils working at the same level as younger pupils and prevents them from making the progress that they should. The time given to the subject varies between classes and is unsatisfactory overall. There is a particular lack of correlation between the time available for religious education and the time suggested by the QCA modules of work.
157. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Although the coordinator has improved the school's stock of Bibles and other resources since the last inspection, her role in checking standards, teaching and learning in the subject

have not been developed and so she does not have the information that she needs to plan for improvements. There are no formal assessment systems for religious education and this contributes to pupils' lack of progress.