

INSPECTION REPORT

GREAT BRADFORDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Location: Braintree

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114984

Headteacher: Mr J W Couves

Reporting inspector: Mr M J Weaver
9352

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 247522

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marlborough Road Braintree Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Hobster
Date of previous inspection:	12 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9352	Mr M J Weaver	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9958	Mr T Page	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes</p> <p>Values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
21066	Mr B Bowen	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	
18524	Mrs A Shaw	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Art</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Educational inclusion</p>	<p>How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>
32180	Mr D Sleightholme	Team inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Religious education</p> <p>Special educational needs</p>	
27243	Mr I Tatchell	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p>	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school shares a site with the adjacent infant school, the majority of whose pupils transfer into the junior school. There are 409 boys and girls on roll with almost one third of pupils travelling from outside the catchment area. Ninety-six per cent of pupils are of white British origin, with very few pupils of minority ethnic origin. Only five pupils speak English as an additional language, which is slightly above the national average; none of these pupils is at an early stage in using the English language. Approximately one tenth of pupils have special educational needs, primarily for specific and moderate learning difficulties, with only one pupil having a Statement of Special Educational Needs; this is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a happy and caring school that is effective in enabling pupils to achieve above average standards in English by the end of Year 6 and provides a satisfactory level of education overall. The school has sustained its caring ethos in all of its work, provides well for pupils' welfare, health and safety and fulfils most of its aims well. The leadership and management are satisfactory and sound educational direction is provided by the headteacher. Much teaching and learning seen during the inspection were good, but taking pupils' work over time into account, teaching is satisfactory resulting in pupils making only satisfactory progress during their time in school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school enables pupils to achieve above average standards in English by the time they are eleven due to good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and the effective use of assessment information. Specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6 is effective.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good enabling them to make good progress in their learning; the few pupils in school with English as an additional language make very good progress in their learning.
- The information provided for parents is good; pupils' annual reports are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and attendance are good and the quality of relationships between pupils and with adults is very good. Attendance is good, being above the national average.
- The school provides well for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Provision for their moral development is good and it is very good for their social development.
- The spending of specific grants for pupils with special educational needs is good; the school's financial controls are efficient. Governors are committed to the school and support it well.

What could be improved

- Standards in all subjects, particularly in mathematics and science.
- The leadership and management of all key staff including subject co-ordinators.
- The use of assessment information in mathematics and science to drive up standards at a more rapid pace.
- The adequacy of the accommodation to meet the needs of the curriculum and the range of clubs provided after school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998, when teaching, whilst a strength, was merely satisfactory overall. Since that time teaching has improved, particularly in Years 5 and 6, with specialist teaching in several subjects across the curriculum. Standards have improved in design and technology and information and communication technology and are now in line with the national expectation. The curriculum remains broad and balanced but is one hour short of the national intended minimum teaching time. The recording of assessment information has improved in all subjects but insufficient use is made of the information to target and track pupils' learning in order to improve the rate at which pupils learn. The management structure has been modified since the last inspection but key staff still do not receive

planned release time to lead and monitor the strategic work of the school effectively, and responsibilities are delegated unequally. As a result the leadership and management are less effective than reported previously. The school has made good progress in a number of areas since the last inspection by addressing most of the key issues from that time, but has yet to fulfil those relating to co-ordinators monitoring teaching and learning in lessons and, ensuring that all teachers make effective use of the assessment information available. The overall trend in test results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science since 1998 is in line with the national trend.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	B	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	D	D	E	
Science	E	D	C	D	

The above table shows that in the national tests in 2002, pupils reached standards that were above average in English, average in science but below average in mathematics. When the results are compared to similar schools, based on the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, standards were average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. The overall trend in test results in English, mathematics and science since 1998 is broadly in line with the national trend. The targets set for 2003 are realistic and show a higher expectation in pupils' attainment in mathematics.

Inspection findings based on current Year 6 pupils are that standards are above average in English with pupils making good progress in their learning. Standards being achieved in all other subjects are average and pupils are making satisfactory progress. English is promoted well across all subjects of the curriculum and numeracy in subjects is developed satisfactorily. Not one of the pupils with English as an additional language is at an early stage of English acquisition; they make very good progress overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and work with interest in lessons; they demonstrate good attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school, particularly in the small playground with very little inappropriate behaviour evident.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and are a strength of the school. Pupils and staff treat one another with respect but insufficient opportunities are planned to promote pupils' personal development in finding out information for themselves using books and computers.
Attendance	Good. The level of attendance is above the national average as pupils

	are keen to attend school.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 and learning is satisfactory overall with good and some very good teaching being seen during the inspection, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils make good progress in English as a result of teachers using assessment information effectively to set achievable targets for pupils' learning and to track the progress they make. This is not common practice across the core subjects and pupils make only satisfactory progress in mathematics and science, as they are unaware of how they might reach the next level in their learning. As a result, pupils' progress during their time in the school is only satisfactory overall. More rapid progress could be made if the good practice in English were extended consistently to other subjects. The school is aware of this need to consistently implement this good practice in mathematics and to introduce it into science. Pupils with special educational need are well supported and make good progress in their learning. The teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum is good; it is satisfactory in teaching numeracy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum covers all subjects of the curriculum and religious education, although the nationally intended minimum teaching time is short by one hour.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and learning assistants are adept at supporting these pupils and develop effective individual education plans for each pupil.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good, although none of the pupils having English as an additional language are at an early stage of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision is very good for their social development and good for their moral development. It is satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development but more opportunities are required to develop pupils' awareness of living in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Procedures for child protection are very good. Procedures for pupils' personal development are good, whilst procedures for their academic performance are generally satisfactory. More effective use of the assessment information is required.

The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home and in school is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED?

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. The headteacher gives satisfactory educational direction for the work of the school with good guidance for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Senior managers are committed to the school's vision and aims but the responsibilities they carry are unequally distributed. The role of subject co-ordinators is insufficiently developed, as they do not monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very committed to the school and have a good grasp of many aspects of the school's provision, using their skills well to help shape the schools' direction. They have yet to ensure that all of the key issues from the last inspection are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school views its progress critically in many areas but does not sufficiently challenge the use of the assessment information available or ensure that the co-ordinators have sufficient release time to fulfil their responsibilities.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. Specific grants are used effectively for pupils with special educational needs enabling them to make good progress. The principles of 'best value' are applied well in using specialist support to improve its work and gaining specialist external advice, but the school has yet to challenge key aspects of its work effectively.

The number of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum is good and they are well supported by an adequate number of learning assistants. Despite the good quality building for Year 3 pupils and the very effective maintenance of all buildings by the school caretaker, the accommodation does not adequately provide for the needs of the curriculum owing to the low quality of the demountable classrooms and the limitation they have on pupils' practical activities. Learning resources are otherwise satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are expected to work hard and make good progress as a result • Teaching is good • Parents feel comfortable in raising concerns or suggestions to the school • Behaviour is good • Their children enjoy school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given • Information about how well their children progress • The range of after school activities

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive comments made by parents; whilst teaching seen during the inspection was good, it is satisfactory over time and pupils to make only satisfactory progress during their time in school. Homework is fully supportive to developing pupils' learning and the quality of information, particularly relating to children's progress is very good. Few after school activities are provided and a wider range could be implemented.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment that are broadly average, although approximately 16 per cent of pupils have below average standards in reading. Pupils' attainment in English is good as a result of good teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, supported by the effective use of assessment information to target and track their performance. Pupils' learning is only satisfactory in mathematics and science. This is primarily because of the lack of effective use of the wealth of assessment data available in school, the lack of target setting for individual pupils and failure to track their learning against the targets. This is unsatisfactory; it does not replicate the good practice made in English nor build sufficiently upon pupils' prior attainment and does not make best use of the school's setting of pupils in mathematics in Years 4 to 6. More recent use of assessment to set targets has been introduced in mathematics but is not yet used consistently.
2. Pupils' performance in mathematics is lower than average at both the expected Level 4 and Level 5 by only three per cent and two per cent respectively. The lower attainment in mathematics and science is brought about by insufficient use of the assessment information available. Taking all three core subjects into account, pupils' performance is satisfactory. The overall trend in test results since 1998 is in line with the national trend.
3. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 pupils' achievement in English is above average, whilst it is in line with the expected average in mathematics and science. The earlier concerns of the difference in boys' and girls' attainment are no longer present. Despite the school's plan to maintain low numbers in classes as a means of improving pupils' performance, the expected gains has not been achieved. Although pupils are placed into groups in lessons appropriate to their ability, more could be achieved through the good teaching that is present, should assessment data be used effectively.
4. The school's targets and planned actions to improve standards in 2002 were appropriate for sustaining the progress required to keep in step with national average. Clear focus was given to specific areas for improvement in the all subjects of the curriculum. This focus however, has not sufficiently led to the expected improvements partly as a result of the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons by senior staff and subject co-ordinators. Although co-ordinators have been involved in monitoring teachers' planning, they have not been aware of how effectively the plans have been implemented. This has led to subject co-ordinators not having the necessary awareness of the quality of teaching in classes in order to ensure that targets for pupils' learning are well planned and tracked.
5. Inspection findings show that pupils' achievement is in line with the average in all other subjects and pupils make sound progress overall. Attainment in religious education is sound overall and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have made good progress in design and technology and information and communication technology since the last inspection, when their achievements in these subjects were below national expectations. This has been as a result of effective planning to successfully address the areas of weakness and by the well-organised use of the specialist teaching skills in Years 5 and 6. Pupils receive teaching in all strands of the design and technology and information and communication technology curriculum. Information and communication technology is now used to support many of the subjects and pupils demonstrate effective skills in using computer resources; more opportunity to use computers for their own research, particularly in drawing from the Internet and more regular use of computers in all subjects could improve standards further. Improvements in design and technology have occurred through the well planned use of specialist teaching in Year 5 and 6, with strong links with some other subjects and assessment of pupils' achievement against the National Curriculum.

- Good recording of pupils' progress through the curriculum is now maintained for all subjects but is an underused strength in the school's provision.
6. The literacy strategy has been implemented effectively, with good reinforcement of the use of literacy in all subjects of the curriculum; numeracy is satisfactorily implemented but could be more effectively developed to support pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects.
 7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in literacy and numeracy in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans and achieve well in the small withdrawal groups that are used to boost their skills. The quality of individual education plans has improved since the last inspection when they were too general. Targets are now more specific, and carefully set to match pupils' needs. The targets are realistic, and pupils' progress towards them in small steps is monitored closely.
 8. Pupils with English as an additional language have progressed very well overall. Most are very articulate speakers and need no additional help with their class work. They read confidently and can express clear opinions and understanding of their texts. Three Year 4 pupils were able to volunteer alternative words for 'bubbly' as 'lively', 'cheerful' and 'excitable.' This is clear evidence that their grasp of English has developed very well, even though one or two have been in school for less than two years. Their writing shows levels of attainment that matches the national expectation and means that they can cope with all other subjects. Pupils who need small group, or one-to-one assistance for help with their reading make good progress as a result of the efficient reading programme that is organised for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. They are attentive in class and eager to learn; they are particularly interested in lessons where they can apply their knowledge, or are involved in a practical activity, such as in a Year 6 class in making models of fairground rides using pulleys and gears. Pupils are keen to answer questions, demonstrating good speaking and listening skills; they are limited in developing more independent learning in searching for information themselves through using the Internet or school library, because teaching is often too direct and resources are not always readily available.
10. Pupils are keen to involve themselves in the life of the school. They take part in the extra-curricular sports available and cultural activities and go into the local community to sing, and read poetry at Kilkee Lodge. Pupils organise charity fundraising in support of specific projects such as providing food parcels for children in Eastern Europe and, clean water supplies for a village in Africa. Pupils are having an increasing say in which charities they wish to support and their choice demonstrates their growing understanding that there are children in the world who are less fortunate than them.
11. A democratically elected school council has recently been set up, with representatives from each class who report back to classmates during 'circle time'. There is also a well-organised notice board that keeps pupils informed about any matters under discussion. Pupils' initiatives have led to an increased range of games being available at lunchtimes, and a wider variety of food in the tuck shop. Currently, school council members are discussing the practicalities of setting aside a small part of the play area for a quiet area for talking and listening with the view to helping pupils resolve their problems.
12. Behaviour is good, with very little disruptive talking in lessons. Pupils are courteous to each other and to adults. Pupils act sensibly when asked to work in pairs or small groups and are completely trustworthy. They take very good care of the school premises and learning resources and this has a positive effect of maintaining the good learning environment. Although there have been five fixed period exclusions in recent years, no pupils have been excluded permanently.
13. Pupils' personal development and their relationships have improved and are now very good. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils work well together in shared tasks such as in a Year 6 design and technology lesson in preparing components for a fairground

carousel in both cutting and assembling parts. Older and younger pupils develop good relationships with one another, many supporting other pupils who feel lonely at playtimes. Many pupils express confidence in being able to talk about their feelings to their teacher. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have developed very mature attitudes and conscientiously take on the role of monitor for a range of jobs that benefit all pupils that make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. The playground monitors, who promote constructive play in a relatively confined area, and those that run the tuck shop, provide excellent role models for younger pupils. Their 'management' of play, overseen by the midday supervisors, has had a very positive effect on pupils' behaviour such that afternoon lessons are rarely interrupted by playground squabbles.

14. Attendance is good, being above the national average, and only a very small proportion of pupils are late for school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching, although satisfactory overall, has many strengths and was good or better in just over six out of ten of lessons seen during the inspection, with better teaching being evident in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' learning is accelerated. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when a little over half of the lessons were good or better. The number of unsatisfactory lessons has reduced to less than one in ten.
16. The school has focused on improving teaching and gaining information on pupils' learning against each element of the National Curriculum subjects. This has been successful overall and has addressed the need to improve the recording of pupils' learning identified at the last inspection. The school has further sought to improve pupils' learning through having smaller class sizes and 'setting' for ability groups in mathematics. These strategies, however, have not produced the gains anticipated, primarily owing to lack of monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators and senior staff and, the insufficient use of the wealth of assessment information generated by teachers. Apart from in English, assessment information is not used sufficiently by teachers to plan future lessons. Pupils do not receive learning targets in core subjects for the end-of-year and the rate of their achievement is not tracked against targets; this results in the good teaching and hard work in recording pupils' achievement being diminished in its impact. The more recent use of target setting and tracking in mathematics is now being implemented and should bring about improvement in pupils' attainment and progress but is not yet used consistently across the school.
17. In the lessons that were of high quality, the teaching was stimulating, challenged pupils' thinking and enabled pupils of all abilities to make good progress in learning. Good examples were seen across a range of subjects, particularly in those subjects in Years 5 and 6 where specialist teaching has been developed effectively. The teaching of basic skills is good in English, with good links across other subjects; it is satisfactory in mathematics, where more links are needed to reinforce pupils' use and mathematical competence. Teachers' skills are good overall but their expectations of what pupils can achieve, the effectiveness of their planning, which does not always set sufficiently clear learning targets for pupils, results in pupils learning at a pace that is slower than possible. These weaker elements of teaching are reducing the impact teachers could have on pupils' learning. The two unsatisfactory lessons were due to insufficient teaching strategies to stimulate and sustain pupils' concentration and the teacher's weak management of pupils' behaviour.
18. The headteacher has redefined the role of the senior management team to more closely manage the major aspects of its provision including assessment, curriculum and the management and monitoring of teaching and learning. These strategies, however, do not sufficiently enable staff to undertake their key roles that would lead to standards being driven up. As a result, the monitoring of lessons for the quality of teaching and learning has not been undertaken although this was a key issue at the last inspection. Monitoring of lessons observed by senior staff has not focused

on the quality of learning and has not subsequently provided insight into how pupils' learning might be improved.

19. Teachers' management of pupils, support staff and resources is good, enabling pupils of all abilities to receive appropriate work. Teachers use learning support assistants well so that pupils with special educational needs who have difficulty in grasping ideas, accuracy in using technical language and mathematical concepts can play a full part. As a result these pupils make good progress in their work. All subjects of the curriculum are taught, with a high concentration on teaching English and developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum, enabling pupils of all abilities to progress effectively. Weaknesses in this area of strength are evident however, such as in science, where teacher's too low expectations result in pupils' written sentences being incomplete, presentation being poor and accurate spelling not being reinforced. Also teachers do not constructively mark pupils' work well enough to indicate to pupils how they could improve their work.
20. Teachers demonstrate strengths in ensuring that pupils are fully involved in lessons, particularly in older junior classes and build very well on the good relationships in school. Good examples of this also resulted in pupils having a keen interest in asking questions in order to learn, seen in design and technology lessons and in science, where they shared their ideas for improving fair testing. Many good teaching strategies help pupils to enjoy their work, which encourages them to be attentive and to concentrate. On many occasions this supported well the collaborative response pupils showed when working in pairs and in groups. Homework is consistently set in English and mathematics and in other subject areas such as art and design, design and technology and science in order to build upon pupils' work in lessons; although this was an area of concern to parents, inspection findings show that the homework set is good overall.
21. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good in the classroom, and in the small withdrawal groups where pupils receive extra support in literacy and numeracy. The withdrawal groups are created so that pupils' skills are given a boost in these areas, ensuring greater access to curriculum opportunities. Class teachers and learning support assistants work together closely to provide support for individual pupils and groups, using one education plan for small group support, where this is appropriate. Learning support assistants are well trained as a result of courses run within the school, or attendance at evening provision where they work towards specialist qualifications. All staff have positive attitudes towards pupils with special educational needs and this helps to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils achieve well in the classroom because of the carefully planned provision and because they are fully included in all activities.
22. Pupils with English as an additional language are taught well, mainly alongside the other pupils of their class. They are placed in groups of pupils with similar, often high, attainments and teachers ensure by sensitive questioning, that they are fully involved in the class activities and understand their tasks. Classroom assistants, who work with pupils in small groups or individually, are well trained in teaching reading. As a result, the pupils have an open, friendly and confident manner. They enjoy school and all feel welcomed by both pupils and adults as members of the school community.

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

23. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements and is well supported by national guidelines. It offers a broad and balanced learning experience for all pupils but the teaching time is still one hour each week short of the national average. This is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of consistency across the year groups in the value and use of the period of time before lunch, known as 'white time'. The school is fully inclusive and prepares the pupils for the next stage of their education; pupils with English as an additional language, although not at an early stage of English acquisition, enjoy full access to the curriculum. The teaching of religious education is fully in line with the

requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements.

24. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all core and foundation subjects. Appropriate links between subjects are planned well and they enhance and extend pupils' learning. Sex education and drug awareness are taught satisfactorily as part of the science curriculum. There is satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education. Strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy in a consistent manner are well established through the national strategies, but more emphasis is required in developing pupils' use of numeracy across the curriculum. Medium-term planning is agreed between the year groups and subject co-ordinators but the progression of subject skills across the year groups is still not in place. This deficiency was identified at the last inspection and as such is unsatisfactory. The regular provision of homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and attainment.
25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans for pupils with special needs are good and as a result the pupils make good progress. Plans are clearly written and targets are set to extend the learning of these pupils. The appropriate support required is identified and is provided either by the class teacher working in harmony with the teaching assistant or through the local support services. The school has developed good links with local agencies offering specialist provision; a speech and language therapist visits the school twice each term and the educational psychologist on three occasions.
26. The pattern of withdrawing pupils with special educational needs from classes, however, prevents full access to the curriculum for some pupils and their learning in the foundation subjects is impaired. At present this is not monitored and pupils may miss the same lesson each week. When they return to the classroom they sometimes find it difficult to join in with the rest of the class if the activity has moved on significantly from where they left it. The use of information and communication technology to support pupils with special educational needs is variable. During the week of the inspection pupils who receive learning support did not extensively use either classroom computers or those in the suite. The range of software is adequate but is not always appropriate to meet specific needs.
27. The planning and teaching of English, especially in Year 5 and 6, are a strength of the school. The teachers offer many opportunities across the curriculum to develop pupils' speaking, listening and literacy skills. Pupils' numeracy skills are less well developed and are not sufficiently reinforced across the curriculum. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the provision for design and technology and information and communication technology, where standards previously fell below the national average. A dedicated suite of computers is provided centrally for all pupils and each class also has a computer; the training needs of pupils and adults in information and communication technology have been a focus for development and provision for all pupils in this subject is now satisfactory. Further attention is planned with the introduction of the new computer room, which is shortly to be completed, for using information and communication technology across the curriculum.
28. The school satisfactorily identifies gifted and talented pupils and has a register for them. External provision is sought to meet their needs beyond what the school is able to offer, but provision so far has only been identified for one of the two pupils.
29. The narrow range of after school activities provides insufficient opportunity for all pupils to develop their skills and interests. This supports the perception of some parents. Those activities that do take place are open to all pupils of all ages. Pupils have opportunities to participate in team games such as football, and to sing in the choir. All pupils including those with special educational needs are fully integrated into all school activities including extra-curricular activities and making visits to local places of interest.
30. The provision for pupils' personal, health, social and citizenship education is good. There is a comprehensive scheme of work for all year groups and access to the curriculum through circle time, registration, and 'white time'. Health education is particularly strong and is supported by the

school nurse who assists in teaching sex education, and the police who talk to pupils about the use and misuse of drugs.

31. The school has good links with the local community, the infant school and the local secondary schools. Good practice and ideas are exchanged especially with the secondary schools. Visitors are welcomed into the school. They have included the local Member of Parliament who has talked to the school and some members of the school council have been invited to visit the Houses of Parliament. Opportunities to develop art and music throughout the school have also taken place. Effective use is made of the local environment and visits to museums and other places of interest promote learning well, in history and geography particularly.
32. Good provision is made for pupils' social and moral development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is sound but a weakness is evident in planning to promote pupils' multi-cultural education to prepare them for living in a multi-cultural society.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual awareness is mainly promoted through assemblies and religious education, where times of reflection are provided. The daily assemblies provide valuable opportunities for learning about Christianity and other religions and contribute to pupils' wider awareness of current events in the world. Occasions were evident when some pupils had a sense of awe in a science lesson, but planning for developing pupils' spiritual awareness across subjects is at an early stage of development.
34. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. There is a strong moral and social code and school and class rules that set boundaries for acceptable behaviour are agreed and clearly displayed in each classroom. Assemblies are effective in reinforcing the themes of moral and social care, which are clearly effective in preventing bullying in the playground, with pupils showing respect for each other and school property. Pupils are taught to care for one another, to distinguish between right and wrong and to help one another in school and in the playground.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school fosters good relationships and pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively in class. The school council meets regularly and encourages pupils to raise issues for discussion and resolution. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take initiative and responsibility, such as by being play monitors at break times and as school council members. Year 6 pupils take part in 'Crucial Crew' activities that test their responses to lifelike crisis situations and prepare them to be useful citizens, contributing well to the profile of the school in the local community.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop an understanding of their own cultural heritage through history and through the wider provision of western European art and design and music. The school has found it difficult to prepare its pupils for life in a multi-cultural society, and recognises that this is an area for development. There is too little exposure to world cultures through art and literature, and the school has been slow to celebrate the experiences of the very few pupils in school for whom English is not their mother tongue. Visitors to the school have included a Jewish historian who spoke about the era of Anne Frank, and various world faiths have been studied in religious education.
37. Pupils with English as an additional language enjoy full access to the studies organised in the school. They cope well with work that is clearly based, for instance, on British history or artistic expression. However, the school has paid insufficient attention to the opportunities that exist for the pupils generally to study aspects of the cultural and artistic traditions represented in their backgrounds. For instance, the school has not looked at the possibility of looking at famous artists from Spain, such as Goya and Dali, or the artistic patterns that Hindus use as aids to their prayers. Books on these are readily available in the school library. This is a weakness in the school's provision for the development of pupils' personal self-esteem as well as helping all pupils to know something of the variety of cultures represented in the school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, which is an improvement since the last inspection. There are clearly worded policies for pupils' safety on the premises and when undertaking school trips. Governors conduct an annual safety audit, whilst day-to-day concerns are monitored formally by staff and attended to by the site supervisor. First aid facilities are good with qualified personnel available to deal with minor emergencies and clear records are maintained. Child protection procedures are very good because staff are fully aware of their responsibilities, and the school has established a strong working relationship with support agencies. Confidential records are kept securely.
39. The personal support provided for pupils is very good. Health education is especially strong with the school nurse working closely with parents on sex education and sustaining a healthy lifestyle. Adults who work in the school are friendly and approachable. The midday supervisors perform an excellent pastoral role and keep teachers up-to-date with any emerging problems. Conversations with pupils indicate that the school has a happy and non-threatening environment. Academic support is less secure; although pupils know how well they have achieved, they do not receive clear guidance as to how they might further improve their work.
40. Since the last inspection, monitoring of attendance by the school office staff, first day of absence enquiries, and regular support from the educational welfare service have had a very positive impact on raising attendance. The good attendance is reinforced in communications with parents, and by the award of certificates that are valued by pupils.
41. The promotion of good behaviour is very effective. The school's ethos is very caring and this underpins the attitudes of the pupils that result in the absence of any oppressive or racist behaviour. Rules are applied consistently, and all pupils are aware of the school's expectations, which are clearly displayed around the school. There is a rewards programme appropriate to the age of the pupils and a system of support procedures should there be a need.
42. Assessment arrangements for recording what pupils know and can do are good in all subjects of the curriculum, except in art and design and physical education, where assessment routines have yet to be developed. Assessment at the end of units in science is unsatisfactory as it does not formally record pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in order to identify future individual learning needs, resulting in insufficient guidance for pupils to achieve at a higher level. The results of national tests are analysed for weaknesses from which generic targets are set for raising standards in core subjects. Whilst this is good, it has yet to ensure that the overall targets are used more effectively in planning work appropriate to pupils' individual abilities though the ability groups.
43. The procedures, however, lack rigour in measuring the performance of pupils against the National Curriculum levels at which they are working. Therefore this does not lead to pupils receiving sufficient information about how they might improve their work in order to achieve at a higher level. The wealth of data available on pupils' achievement against the elements of subjects is not used sufficiently to record pupils' performance analytically in the core subjects to ensure that targets are either set for the year end or measured against them. Hence, the tracking of pupils' learning to plan future lessons and to capitalise on what pupils are capable of doing is not being achieved, resulting in pupils making slower progress than that possible. This is a weakness that has been present in school for some years, having been highlighted as a weakness at the last inspection.
44. Rigour is applied in assessing pupils' progress against targets in English, where pupils make good progress as a result. This process has recently been introduced for mathematics, although not consistently, but this strategy and the practice of using data precisely have not been expected in science. A similar system developed for tracking pupils' performance against targets in information and communication technology has been made available to teachers for some two years, but is not being used consistently and is not monitored by the co-ordinator. This is unsatisfactory. Pupils' performance in information and communication technology is now average and covers all strands of the curriculum, but could be further improved if the tracking of pupils' achievement were given the emphasis intended.

45. The headteacher ensures that value added reviews are undertaken at the end of the academic year and has alerted teachers of the need to raise pupils' achievement by two-thirds of a level each year. This however is not broken down into realistic targets for the different ability groups. Also, whilst the overall achievement of pupils in each class is recorded at the start and end of the year, records do not identify pupils with special educational needs or by ethnicity to aid whole-school review to plan for achievable targets for those individuals.
46. The headteacher correctly places emphasis on raising the achievement of pupils whose learning is on the borderline of 'below average and average' and provides booster classes to meet their needs. Too often though, the booster class teacher does not have knowledge of what pupils are doing in class and she does not receive guidance on what pupils need to consolidate. This results in work for some pupils not linking sufficiently to what they do in class in order to maximise their learning.
47. The attainment of pupils with English as an additional language is assessed as part of the normal school provision. This is generally an appropriate strategy, as none have significant problems with making progress. Teachers are very sensitive in their management of pupils in class. However, insufficient attention has been paid to assessing the overall pattern of pupils' attendance at school to ensure that there are no common concerns in this area.
48. Pupils with special educational needs receive good educational support and guidance. Staff know pupils well, and pupils are able to relate to them and know whom to go to for guidance and support. One long serving member of staff is well known by many pupils and offers support to pupils appropriately when needed. The learning support assistants carry out regular assessments of pupils' achievement, feeding this information back to teachers and modifying individual education plans accordingly. This information also feeds into reviews where staff and parents discuss the pupils' next steps together.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents' views of the school are positive. The overwhelming majority who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaires agree that teaching is good, expectations are high, pupils make good progress, staff are approachable and help their children to become mature and responsible citizens. Some concerns were raised by a small minority of parents about the amount and frequency of homework given, information about their children's progress and the range of activities available for children outside lessons. Inspectors agree with most of the parents' views. Good teaching is evident particularly in Years 5 and 6 and in subjects where specialist teaching is given, but is otherwise satisfactory. The good benefits to be derived from this effective teaching however, is not being capitalised upon due to insufficient use of the assessment information available. This results in pupils' learning being only satisfactory over time. The amount of and status attached to homework are good and reporting on pupils' progress is very comprehensive. However, extra-curricular activities are too few in number to provide for the needs of all the pupils.
50. Information provided for parents is good overall; information about their children's progress is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Mid- and end-of-year pupils' reports highlight targets for improvement and show pupils' levels of attainment. Parents can also consult teachers at the termly parents' meetings and on any day after school.
51. The school publishes frequent and regular newsletters that keep parents informed about the life of the school. The folder style prospectus carries a wide range of information including details of the topics that their children will be studying and the home/school diaries involve parents effectively in the education of their children on a daily basis. The home/school agreements are effective in reminding parents of their responsibilities. The governors' annual report, however, lacks detail on how the school caters for pupils with disabilities.

52. Parents involve themselves effectively in the life of the school. A small core of parents assist in classrooms by listening to pupils read and provide help on specific projects such as making bread. Others support pupils on school visits. There is a 'Friends' organisation that raises funds for the school by organising social events; their school discos are very popular and are effective in involving the whole school community. Funds have been raised for the benefit of the school and a substantial sum has been earmarked as a contribution to the fitting out of the new information and communication technology suite.
53. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are welcomed into the school for formal and informal discussions. The special educational needs co-ordinator is available for consultations with parents at most times and operates an 'open door' policy for those who want to drop in at the end of the school day. Similarly, the governor for special educational needs is available regularly and makes a special effort to attend parent/teacher consultation evenings so that parents may discuss any issues or concerns. Parents receive copies of their children's individual education plans and are invited to review meetings so that they may comment on progress and agree the next steps with the school. There is also a process in place for the

management of the annual reviews of pupils who have a statement of special educational need. These review meetings are held in accordance with the appropriate timescale and all those with an interest in the child's education are invited to attend.

54. The school is sensitive and caring in ensuring that parents of pupils with English as an additional language are welcomed in school. As with all pupils, they are met by the headteacher and class teacher on admission. After two weeks, they are contacted again to ensure that there are no problems. After this time, parents are kept in touch through the usual newsletters, home/school workbooks and school reports. In cases, where parents might need translated documents, the specialist unit set up by the local education authority is able to provide them. However, insufficient screening has taken place to monitor attendance at parents' evenings or involvement in their children's work at home through comments in the home/school records.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school in setting a good ethos in which pupils can learn, providing a caring environment and seeks to maximise pupils' learning through smaller than average class group sizes. Whilst these are good they are not sufficiently supported by a vision that ensures effective planning to enable pupils of all abilities to achieve their potential. The many routines and good supportive documentation identified at the last inspection, whilst still present, have not been sufficiently utilised to ensure that standards continue to be driven up.
56. The headteacher has recently reviewed and redefined the senior management team and re-delegated major aspects of the school's work to this team. This has resulted in an inequality of responsibility amongst the team but without sufficient release time to undertake the responsibilities placed upon them. This may be alleviated to some degree through the school's and governors' review of its commitment to small class sizes, which is due to be undertaken shortly. Leadership by co-ordinators is satisfactory in monitoring teachers' planning and planning in year groups, but subject co-ordinators' lack of monitoring lessons prevents them from being aware of the strengths in teaching and learning in their subjects.
57. Governors are effective in fulfilling their role overall and are aware of the school's actions to improve standards. They are not sufficiently aware, however, of how the school is planning to raise standards in a systematic manner. They are fully involved in discussing the school development plan and review progress made over time. They identify that the smaller class sizes have not achieved the expectations held and are seeking to establish how this might be remedied. All statutory policies are in place, including racial and equal opportunities policies that ensure that the school is inclusive.

58. Governors have a clear view of the school's finances and ensure that specific funding is spent well. The work of the administration and bursary staff is effective in enabling the smooth running of the school. The headteacher and governors are aware of the principles of best value and have sought advice on how teaching throughout the school might be improved and how higher achievement in mathematics may be reached. The school has raised the quality of teaching but clear strategies for raising standards in mathematics have yet to be developed. Governors satisfactorily compare pupils' academic progress with that of schools nationally and locally and are seeking to identify higher attaining schools from which to develop their own systems for improving pupils' learning. Effective tendering systems are in place to ensure best value from specific service providers. The school and governors have yet to sufficiently challenge the work of the school to ensure that learning targets are clearly identified based on the good quality information available or that managers are enabled to fulfil their roles. This is an area for improvement.
59. The school development plan is sound and provides a generally strategic overview over the medium-term period, with appropriate action plans in place for addressing the areas most requiring improvement; it does not include any defined monitoring and evaluation of the plans being pursued. Professional development is firmly established in the school for all full-time staff and is supported by action planning for each teacher. These plans have been closely linked to the school development plan, together with planning for staff in-service training, although no courses have been planned for since March 2002.
60. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well organised by the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants. All are committed to ensuring that pupils are well supported and successfully included in the full range of school activities. Learning support assistants are well trained and have access to a range of training opportunities within school and from outside providers. All learning support assistants are included within the school's performance management system and have personal objectives they are working towards. Learning support assistants meet as often as they can, but this is often difficult because some of them perform dual roles in school by working as lunchtime supervisors. Meetings between teaching staff and learning support assistants are also difficult to arrange. The infrequency of meetings limits opportunities to discuss issues, but learning support assistants attend staff in-service training days when they can and all ensure that records are kept fully up-to-date.
61. There is no named co-ordinator for the provision for pupils with English as an additional language. As a result, there has been little monitoring of the general curriculum with regard to their needs and aspirations. However, in general, these pupils are included in all school activities and they are well integrated into the school community as a result of the open and welcoming attitude of all staff, including senior managers.
62. The school has a generous ratio of teachers to pupils but this is offset by a relatively small number of general classroom assistants. Although administrative costs are high, which in part reflects the physical separation of the office areas, agreement has been reached effectively to reduce this cost by the reduction of a receptionist. The induction of new teaching staff is effective in ensuring that they have knowledge of the school's policies and procedures, and a basic understanding of the needs of their pupils. Newly qualified teachers receive good support from the school's programme that follows the local education authority's model.
63. Learning resources are adequate to ensure the delivery of the National Curriculum but access to them remains unsatisfactory in science and art and design, especially for those pupils who are situated in the demountable buildings. Library provision is weak but the school has advanced plans to develop a resource centre once the new computer suite is established.

64. Despite the very good provision for pupils in Year 3 and the very effective maintenance of the school buildings by the caretaker, six classrooms are unable to meet the needs of the curriculum and hinders the learning opportunities. None of the school's classrooms has running water, although sinks are located in the school corridors. The hall is small for the number of pupils on roll and is used as a thoroughfare, which is intrusive, when it is being used for physical education. The outside play areas are too small, especially when the generously sized school field cannot be used in wet weather.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to improve further the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) Raise standards by:
- extending the good practice of assessment and target setting for individual pupils and rigorously track their progress in order to inform future lesson planning to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities in mathematics and science (*)
 - ensuring the work of the booster groups to build effectively on pupils' progress by linking it more closely to their learning in class
 - ensuring that the handwriting policy is consistently implemented to improve pupils' handwriting
 - continuing to identify and disseminate good teaching practice within the school across all subjects of the curriculum
 - developing pupils' independent learning by giving pupils regular access to information and communication technology and books (*).
- (paragraphs 1-5, 73, 76, 85, 92, 94, 102)*
- (2) Implement changes without delay to the leadership and management of the school by:
- developing the role of subject co-ordinators to conduct monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms (*)
 - redefining and developing the strategic leadership and management of the school, ensuring that an equal workload is agreed for each member of the senior management team
 - providing all co-ordinators with planned release time to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively
 - determining and implementing ways of improving the adequacy of the accommodation to meet the needs of the curriculum (*)
 - ensuring that all statutory reporting to parents is fulfilled
- (paragraphs 51, 56, 64, 79, 87, 97, 102, 108, 113, 119, 124, 137,143)*
- (3) Improve the quality of curriculum provision by:
- implementing the national minimum intended teaching time, ensuring that curriculum planning is consistent across and between all year groups (*)
 - developing the provision for enabling pupils to live in a multi-cultural society (*)
- (paragraphs 23, 26)*

The school is aware of its need to develop areas shown with ()*

Other areas the school should consider:

- allocating and co-ordinating the provision and leadership for pupils with English as an additional language
(paragraphs 61, 74)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	71

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	19	27	26	2	0	0
Percentage	0	25	36	35	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	409
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

Special educational needs	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	47

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	54	50	104

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	45	34	45
	Girls	44	37	45
	Total	89	71	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86(78)	68(65)	87(87)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	35	39	38
	Girls	40	44	43
	Total	75	83	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72(69)	80(71)	78(78)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
392	5	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

0
1
1
2

0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	25.5

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	157.66

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	850,148
Total expenditure	864,874
Expenditure per pupil	2,120
Balance brought forward from previous year	88,396
Balance carried forward to next year	73,670

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	408
Number of questionnaires returned	122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	43	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	57	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	55	18	0	2
The teaching is good.	55	42	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	43	1	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	30	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	39	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	43	8	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	43	0	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	42	12	4	12

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

66. Results of pupils' achievement in the national tests have improved since the last inspection at a rate higher than that seen nationally. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 is also higher than average. The previously reported difference between boys' and girls' attainments is no longer significant. Inspection findings are that standards are continuing to rise, particularly in speaking and listening, and writing, where their achievement is good; in reading it is satisfactory. Careful tracking of the pupils' attainments indicates that most pupils who have been in the school for the four years have made good overall progress. Substantial improvements have been made since the last inspection in ensuring a continuity in co-ordination of the subject and placing a high priority on developing pupils' understanding of, and ease of using, the many different forms of writing.
67. Across the school, the pupils display high standards of speaking and listening. By the end of Year 6, the majority are confident speakers, able to express their opinions clearly in a logical manner. In drama and role-play situations, they select suitable forms of language to suit the character. Most pupils listen attentively to the teacher's probing questions and take account of the views of others. These skills are used very effectively in other subjects such as history when, after carrying out research into the lives of children in the past.
68. Most pupils enjoy reading and the school encourages pupils to take books home to read. The majority of pupils enter the school with well-established fluency in reading and by Year 6 most pupils enjoy independent reading from texts they have chosen. They express their preferences in reading materials, read with good expression, show an understanding of character and add tension to a story by modulating their voice. Some of the average attaining pupils, however, choose their own books with text that is too difficult for them. Their progress is slower: on occasions teachers do not adequately supervise pupils' book choice.
69. Teachers use assessment information well to arrange further support in intensive one-to-one instruction sessions to good effect with lower attaining pupils. Those pupils' learning needs are assessed and they have three short periods of practice each day, which helps to reinforce their word building skills. Pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries and thesauri to find out the meanings of words and to use words that make their work livelier. From Year 5 onwards, most pupils know how to use an index and glossary. Higher attaining pupils are familiar with the ideas of skimming and scanning information texts to identify key words. However, pupils do not make sufficient use of the library, CD-ROMs, encyclopedias or the Internet to carry out independent research into individual areas of interest. When pupils were seen to use these aids, the work was largely the same for all pupils and was closely directed by the teacher.
70. The teaching of literacy has been well adjusted in the school in order to provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing. This has meant that time for group reading has been reduced and this is now often covered, alongside the teaching of spellings, in a session at the end of the morning. This time is used more at the discretion of the individual class teacher and it has led to a variable amount of supervision by the teacher of pupils' reading. Some pupils now have insufficient experience of reading to an audience and their expression and fluency is limited.
71. The good emphasis on extended writing in its many forms has led to considerable gains in pupils' skills in written communication. Year 3 pupils have generally well-established skills in communication that are solidly built upon each year. They learn to distinguish fact from fiction; build up an idea about different sorts of character and words that are used to describe them and study and use different ways of starting a story to make it interesting. Year 4 pupils use past and present tenses well in story writing and begin to use speech marks, and rhyming words and

similes in poetry. As part of their recent work, pupils have used computers to write for different audiences. They understand that there are different purposes for writing, each with a different style, such as listing rules, giving instructions, and writing recipes. This is developed further in Year 5 where pupils learn about metaphors, direct and reported speech and the forms in which it is written and begin to grasp the different categories of words, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and their function in the sentence. In one lesson, a quarter of the class struggled with this when the teacher's explanation failed to identify the nouns correctly, as the text used inappropriate forms of verbs functioning as nouns or adjectives. However, other pupils showed a clear understanding and imaginative use of onomatopoeia; for instance one pupil wrote, 'I heard a clicketty-clack followed by a whoo, whoo, so I knew it was the ghost train.'

72. In Year 6, the breadth, depth and extent of the pupils' writing are very impressive. In their grammar exercises, they learn about root words, the different uses of commas, suffixes and prefixes, and different ways in which to set out texts, as in play scripts. They carry out research into the lives of different authors, and use this to create their own biographical style of writing. Pupils learn to identify the different sections of realistic texts into their setting, development of plot, the climax and resolution. They put this skill to good effect in writing their own adventure stories.
73. The standard of handwriting varies from class to class and from pupil to pupil. Although there is an agreed handwriting style and common writing pen, pupils do not appear to have been taught how to hold the pen appropriately. Pupils who write acceptably often print most of their letters. Others whose handwriting is less neat are given exercises in writing books where lines are set very widely apart, yet some teachers encourage the pupils to write letters all the way to the top and bottom. This results in an unbalanced style, which is on occasions worse than their normal use. The school is not yet ensuring consistency in handwriting to lead to improved standards of presentation.
74. The school provides small group booster classes for pupils in Year 6 during literacy lessons to bring their work up to the expected level for their age. However, the lessons are not closely enough related to their identified targets for learning, the work is largely unrelated to the themes of their work in the rest of the week and is often of a standard lower than that of which they are capable of achieving.
75. Pupils with English as an additional language generally reach standards in writing that are at the expected level or higher, and they need no extra support. They make very good progress, using their knowledge of Standard English very well on paper. Pupils with special educational needs often have worksheets prepared for them by the teacher that enable them to gain access to the normal work of the class, providing lists of the key words that they will need. On occasions, they are supported in class by learning assistants who are well prepared by the class teacher. These pupils make good overall progress.
76. Overall, the teaching of English is satisfactory, ranging from very good to satisfactory. The overwhelming majority of lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 were good or better, whilst teaching in Year 3 and 4 was only satisfactory overall. This indicates a rapid acceleration in learning in Years 5 and 6. This indicates that the school has some way to go to achieve a consistent approach overall. Features of very good and good teaching include a high degree of subject expertise, high expectations, good planning allied to a good pace, blended with a clear enthusiasm for the subject which readily conveys itself to the pupils. In the satisfactory lessons, most teachers accepted predictable responses from the pupils without promoting more creative ideas. On occasions, the lesson lost pace through an overlong introduction leading to restlessness of several pupils. A strength in teaching across the curriculum, is the skilful use of questioning to develop pupils' speaking abilities. In all subjects, class and small group discussions are used to help pupils explore their ideas and knowledge in extended ways.
77. Pupils respond very well to the teachers, they are enthusiastic and take pride in the success they make. Teachers readily praise the pupils' response to questions enabling pupils' sense of self-esteem and confidence to grow. Teachers mark the pupils' work well and consistently, pointing

out ways of improving. Five out of six Year 6 pupils were able to identify their current targets for learning, and this is indicative of the relevance that they see in their work. In class, behaviour is normally good or better. Pupils work together sharing ideas willingly and, at such times, the level of noise reflects a busy, purposeful working atmosphere.

78. The reports of their children's progress are clear in identifying pupils' successes and levels achieved. They generally indicate areas for improvement although some targets such as 'to demarcate and lay out significant dialogue' may be inappropriate for parents to follow. The home/school reading record booklets are less consistently well used.
79. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator is relatively inexperienced in the role, but has set a clear future direction based on the need to ensure that individual pupils know clearly what is needed from them to achieve the next level of attainment. The quality of teaching has been monitored by the headteacher and deputy across the school with a focus on the effective teaching of writing skills, but pupils' learning was not monitored. Resources are generally plentiful and accessible, although the library and technological resources are underused.

MATHEMATICS

80. Standards have varied over the last few years but have been below average for the last two years. Evidence from inspection findings indicates that by the end of Year 6 standards have improved during the current year, with pupils now reaching standards that are in line with the national expectations for Year 6. This improvement is brought about by the time spent on curriculum planning within the numeracy strategy, higher teacher expectations and support for pupils within three broad ability groups. Taking the findings of the scrutiny of work into account, however, pupils make only satisfactory progress over time.
81. Most pupils explain confidently how they do mental calculations. They use the four rules of number competently and apply them correctly when solving problems. Many can convert fractions to percentages and calculate fractions and percentages of given numbers. Pupils use and interpret graphs and higher attaining pupils are particularly competent at calculating perimeter and area. Most pupils know their tables; they have a sound understanding of estimating and solving problems using a variety of mental computations and employ efficient methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Higher attaining pupils measure angles accurately and know that the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180 degrees. Year 5 pupils used their number skills satisfactorily in a geography topic to carry out a traffic survey collecting and recording information about local traffic conditions in Braintree. Year 6 pupils worked well in groups to calculate the costs of making cocktails agreeing and costing the ingredients needed.
82. Since the last inspection the school has raised teachers' subject knowledge and expectations. Resources have improved, and the use of new technology is developing. Assessment of pupils' progress is now a regular feature across year groups through the use of the school's recently updated assessment procedures linked to the National Curriculum levels. The use of information about pupils' achievements in mathematics is being increasingly used to determine pupil groupings, lesson planning and target setting but is not being used consistently.
83. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the support they receive in lessons. Teachers' planning generally takes account of pupils' individual education plans. The additional help from learning support assistants is directed towards pupils in lower ability groups or sets and pupils with special educational needs, making a good contribution to their lessons. However, lower attaining pupils selected for the Year 6 booster group, although provided with appropriate and challenging work in the lower ability sets in Year 6, are not always provided with work linked to areas identified as requiring additional support when taught in the booster class.
84. There are many examples of mathematics being used in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 use the computer suite to put information about themselves into a database. They also put their Egyptian studies into the correct time zone using class time lines. Year 4 pupils use their numeracy skills in science, recording measures such as temperature in the 'keeping warm' unit of work Year 5, carrying out a survey of water using a water diary and calculating the amount of water used at home over a set period. Year 6 pupils develop their use of spreadsheets to work out costs of a family shopping trip and investigate and record the contrasting temperatures of different countries across the globe. Most pupils use their

measuring skills in designing and making items as part of design and technology lessons. However, there are too few planned opportunities overall for pupils to use numeracy across the curriculum.

85. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good and often very good. It was good or better in over two-thirds of the lessons seen. This has improved since the last inspection. Despite the good levels of teaching, however, pupils make only satisfactory progress over time. Pupils' personal mathematics targets are agreed and often displayed at the beginning of their mathematics books, but are not systematically completed. Teachers plan carefully, using the numeracy strategy to match work to the differing needs of pupils. Individual pupils' records have recently been developed so that all teachers and pupils are aware of the next steps to be taken to develop pupils' learning. The scrutiny of pupils' work from the beginning of the academic year shows the value of the school's grouping of pupils by ability. Recent staff training has also raised teachers' expectations of pupils.
86. Teachers are effective in helping pupils to explain their methods when doing mental and written calculations. Often this is with the whole class or group, which helps pupils both to think through what they have done and to reflect on alternative ways of arriving at accurate solutions. However, in a few lessons the final part when all pupils come together lacks vigour as too little time is given for pupils to reflect on their learning. Teachers and learning support assistants use questioning very effectively, which helps to reinforce pupils' understanding of the concepts taught. This worked well in a Year 5 lesson where the teacher's questions helped pupils understand equivalent numbers such as $2/10 = 1/5$, the explanation being given by some pupils. Learning support assistants make an important contribution to the learning of the low ability and special educational needs pupils, which is good and often very good.
87. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The numeracy development plan has identified strategies to raise standards of teaching and learning of mathematics. The school has established a rigorous system for collecting data on pupils' performance, which helps teachers to adapt their planning as necessary. The school has yet to extend this good practice to refine and develop target setting in mathematics to ensure that lesson planning enables pupils to reach their predicted end-of-year targets.

SCIENCE

88. Standards are satisfactory overall. The previous performance of girls in science was in line with the national average and higher than that of the boys but no evidence of significant difference was seen during the inspection.
89. During the week of the inspection, pupils' achievement was satisfactory. Much of the work recorded in exercise books reflects the overall satisfactory standard. However, there is little evidence to see that pupils have the opportunity to choose their own form of recording. The scientific standard of work seen in Years 5 and 6 was higher than that of Years 3 and 4, partially due to the specialist teaching in the older classes, but the standard of presentation in Year 5 is weaker than Year 6.
90. Pupils' work shows that they are able to predict results and they acquire the understanding and use of scientific language in all ability groups. In one very good lesson seen in Year 3 pupils investigated the properties of materials and observed the qualities, textures and patterns of a range of materials under an interactive microscope. Their powers of descriptive language developed as they described a sponge and noted its porous qualities and the intricate pattern of a non-slip surface. Pupils recorded their observations accurately and appropriate to their abilities. Year 4 pupils investigated differences between solids and liquids, recording their findings as the class teacher pours measured liquids from one container to another. Pupils noted that the volume of liquid remains the same. Three quarters of the pupils made satisfactory progress in their own writing up of the investigation. The less able pupils used a suitable worksheet to record the

- results. This practical activity consolidated their understanding of the volumes of liquids but did not give them sufficient opportunity to conduct the exercise for themselves. All pupils make satisfactory progress in their scientific knowledge and in their listening and speaking skills.
91. Pupils in Year 5 extend their knowledge of food groups by independent investigations. They make very good progress in their investigative skills as they prepare their findings to report back to the class. Pupils work collaboratively to collate food groups understanding that carbohydrates provide the body with energy. Pupils with special needs are very well supported by the teacher and make good progress in their ability to analyse and tabulate results. Year 6 pupils extend their knowledge of forces by using a force-meter accurately. They consolidate their scientific terminology through effective questioning by the teacher that tests their knowledge and understanding of friction and forces.
92. The quality of teaching seen during the week of the inspection was good, but taking the analysis of pupils' work into account it is only satisfactory over time. Although the quality of planning is satisfactory, it is too closely allied to the units of work rather than pupils' needs and abilities. There is little evidence of pupils working independently to further investigations. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. The work is differentiated to suit the abilities of those pupils with special educational needs but not to the more able pupils. There is not enough evidence of independent enquiry recorded in pupils' written work in all year groups and there is an inconsistent approach to marking by teachers throughout the school, which does little to raise standards. Opportunities for constructive advice and encouragement are not always apparent in every year group and marking is not consistent across the school. The management of pupils is good and pupils are encouraged to take time to think through hypotheses to provide answers.
93. Resources are used well and teachers work very well with the teaching assistants to provide a satisfactory learning environment. The lack of water in the classrooms and the inadequate space in some of the outside classrooms prevents pupils from investigating aspects of the subject themselves. Science is linked in an imaginative way to other subjects, seen when a colourful space display linked science to music and art. Speaking and listening is a feature of most lessons as teachers encourage pupils to explain and expand upon their hypotheses. However, information and communication technology is not used to advantage to promote learning and independent research.
94. Assessment procedures follow the completion of each unit of work but the individual tracking of pupils' progress is not in place. This is unsatisfactory. Individual pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum are not formally recorded and future individual learning needs are not identified. The lack of assessment procedures for individual pupils highlights the need for a greater emphasis of key skills and a consistency across and between the year groups.
95. Despite the good teaching and learning seen during the inspection, the quality of learning is only satisfactory. Pupils enjoy science and can recall investigations and experiments that display their scientific language and knowledge. Pupils concentrate and work together very well. They make good progress in the investigative processes and have good attitudes to all aspects of the subject. All pupils are fully included and pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning assistants and make good progress; pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress.
96. The co-ordination of the subject is good, following a period of uncertainty. The policy and scheme of work are followed closely across the school. Resources for the subject are satisfactory but there is a need for more CD-ROM's to enable pupils to conduct their own research and for them to use the computers to extend their own methods of recording. This finding mirrors the last inspection.
97. The co-ordinator monitors the planning of work and provides staff with appropriate resources but does not monitor teaching and learning in classes. This has prevented the identification and sharing of good practice and expertise.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Standards are satisfactory by the end of Year 6. This finding is the same as at the last inspection.
99. Pupils study the works and techniques of famous artists such as Rousseau, Van Gogh and Clarice Cliff. They learn to evaluate the work of the ancient Egyptians, to design and make tablets and tiles and to use and model with clay in order to make monsters. Pupils in Year 3 use their observations of the local park to study the shape, texture and patterns of trees. They use a variety of media including hessian and learn the terms 'silhouette' as they represent a tree in the moonlight, but the opportunity for the more able artists is not apparent in the samples of work seen and pupils' creativity is insufficiently developed. Year 4 pupils study the designs of Clarice Cliff and compare and contrast her work with the work of Van Gogh. They attempt to draw in the style of Clarice Cliff and the more able artists replicate the form and structure, the colours and perspective of the painting. The progress of pupils is impeded, however, by the use of coloured pencils rather than paints. The difficulties of working in a classroom without access to water is highlighted as the lack of water to create the vibrant painted colours of the work is apparent.
100. Year 5 pupils learn to make hats to represent a fable character. They make good progress as they design and make their hats from papier-mâché, materials and paint. The planning involves an understanding of pattern and texture and the complexities of hat design. Pupils evaluate their work in note form making satisfactory progress in their art and design skills. Pupils in Year 6 build upon their existing skills to draw satisfactory portraits of their friends after studying faces they have chosen from magazines and papers. They discuss the work of Gainsborough, Picasso and David Hockney and realise the differences that exist between artists of different generations. Pupils have too few opportunities to study art from a variety of non-Western cultures and pupils' awareness of a multi-cultural society is not sufficiently developed.
101. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall and is an improvement upon the last inspection. Based on the scrutiny of work, however, teaching over time is only satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and expectations have risen owing to well-focused in-service training. The quality of displays around the school is good and shows links to other subjects such as science, music and physical education. Pupils are encouraged to observe, discuss and experiment with a variety of techniques and media. Lessons are clearly planned and well structured, reinforcing pupils' skills and techniques. A strength of the teaching is the number of opportunities for speaking and listening, thereby enhancing the range of vocabulary and knowledge. The quality of learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard to create and evaluate their work. Pupils keep their best work in scrapbooks but sketchbooks are only used by Year 5 and are to be introduced throughout the other year groups. This should help to raise the standard of presentation and creative drawing and to encourage more rigorous evaluation by pupils and teachers.
102. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. It adds to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. However there is insufficient emphasis to practise a more independent approach so allowing talented artists to develop their work. At present there is no monitoring of teaching; monitoring of lesson plans and the lack of individual assessment prevents the planning of lessons to be more closely linked to the needs and abilities of the pupils. The use of information and communication technology is not used for pupils' individual research.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards are satisfactory overall but good in Year 5. This is an improvement upon the findings of the last inspection, when pupils' attainment was below average.
104. Throughout all year groups, pupils consolidate their design and technology skills in learning to develop ideas, plan and communicate them, choose their own materials and processes and to

produce satisfactory and at times good work that they later evaluate. Year 3 pupils focus upon packaging to identify its purpose and application, learning to construct a net using flattened cardboard boxes and to identify the joining tabs. The pupils take care to cut accurately, so developing their motor skills.

105. Pupils' sewing skills are developed further in Year 4, such as during a project to make a money container using a choice of fabrics and fasteners, learning which stitches are stronger when joining two pieces of material. Pupils also have a good idea of the processes involved in making a torch, choosing the appropriate tool required and developing an understanding of the materials and their uses. Some pupils make torches for a variety of purposes such as for use in a power cut, for reading under the bed and for use on a bicycle. The pupils evaluate their designs and products critically. The designs are carefully drawn and illustrated and their evaluations are constructive and honest.
106. Year 5 pupils begin to research musical instruments and learn to make toys with moveable parts using a cam mechanism. They produce good plans that show complicated constructions with very detailed drawings and explanations, showing awareness of the health and safety features necessary in design and technology. Their completed products reflect the good standards they achieve. Year 6 pupils developed their understanding of the use of gears and components to construct a pulley mechanism found in a fairground carousel. They enjoy planning and making their own designs and work co-operatively in pairs and groups. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and they have a good understanding of the technical language required.
107. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. It is good however in Years 5 and 6 because the school effectively uses teachers with specialist skills to teach across the year groups; they plan and use resources effectively and manage pupils well. This practice is not yet developed in Years 3 and 4 and the good practice to be gained is not shared amongst all staff. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subject although weaknesses were identified where younger pupils were not being taught the necessary planning and design skills. Pupils enjoy the subject and follow instructions well. Good instances of these were clear seen in Year 6 where pupils listened attentively to the teacher's explanation, and questioned principles of design to gain more understanding. Overall, the subject contributes soundly to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development.
108. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has made significant improvements since the last inspection. The subject policy addresses cross-curricular links, health and safety practices and is fully inclusive. Resources are labelled and stored safely. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not undertaken but photographic evidence provides some assessment opportunities. Although the units of work are assessed at their completion, the recording of individual pupils' progress, skills and understanding of the subject is not, and inhibits the further raising of standards.

GEOGRAPHY

109. Standards in geography are at the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
110. Year 3 pupils study maps and plans of the school and the local area. They identify shops and services on a local map and plot their route to school. Year 4 pupils use their knowledge of maps to investigate how they would get to India. They compare life in the Indian village of Chembakolli with their own in and around Braintree and make good use of books, pictures and photographs to help them understand what life is like in Chembakolli. Year 5 pupils use their geographic skills to investigate local traffic conditions, collecting and recording information in Braintree town centre. Information about different types of vehicles, the speed they are travelling and the number of passengers are recorded and discussed and displayed on their return to school. Pupils have sufficient knowledge to debate their findings and describe how the town centre has been made safe and easy to use for pedestrians and shoppers. Year 6 pupils use the Internet to help them

compare and contrast temperatures around the world. They use the BBC weather website and compare the weather and daytime temperatures in two mountain

environments, the Alps in Europe and the Andes in South America. Working in pairs, pupils collect the information needed to agree or disagree with the hypothesis set by the teacher that it is hotter in the Alps compared with the Andes.

111. Since the last inspection the school has made good improvements to the teaching of geography, including the introduction of a new scheme of work based on national guidelines, improving the continuity of programmes of study across the school. Resources have improved and now include a variety of measuring equipment including a flow meter to measure river flow; the use of new technology by pupils is developing. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress are now a regular feature across year groups that are linked to the National Curriculum levels.
112. Teaching is sound overall, but lessons seen during the inspection were good and often very good, showing improvements compared with the quality of teaching recorded at the last inspection. There is a good focus on helping pupils gain appropriate knowledge of geographical facts. Aerial photography, national and world maps of different scales are used well throughout the school, supported by use of CD-ROMs and the Internet. Objectives for the lesson are always planned and shared with the pupils, enabling them to know what it is they are to learn. A strength of teaching is the planned opportunities for pupils to use their geographical skills when visiting local and contrasting areas, with good study use made of the River Blackwater, which runs alongside the school. Visits to Harwich and Frinton provide the contrast between town and coast. Pupils answer geographical questions posed by the teacher and higher attaining pupils enjoy the challenge of using a variety of resources to find answers to questions posed. Teachers' good use of the environment and high expectations are reflected in pupils' attitudes and interest in tasks set. Pupils are well behaved and work well individually or as part of a group because of the teachers' effective planning and management of pupils. Very good co-operation between pupils of all abilities and between boys and girls were observed in lessons. They worked well together, for example in the computer suite accessing the Internet and locating the information needed.
113. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator provides clear support and guidance in relation to the programmes of study and the quality of curriculum planning is very good. The school has made good use of the nationally recommended units of work for the subject. However, the opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning has yet to be established. The developing use of information and communication technology and specialist geography teaching to Years 5 and 6 is having a positive impact on standards achieved by pupils.

HISTORY

114. Standards in history are at the expected level by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily during their time in school. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
115. Most pupils gain a secure knowledge and understand of aspects of life in the past and have a clear understanding of change over time. Year 3 pupils' research skills develop as they engage in an in-depth study of life in Ancient Egypt, which includes a visit to Saffron Walden museum where they see a range of Ancient Egyptian artefacts, some of which they can handle. Pupils develop skills in researching from books, artefacts, pictures, computers to interrogate CD-ROMs and the Internet. The results of pupils' work are shared with other pupils through presentations and interactive displays. The skills and knowledge pupils acquire in Year 3 are built upon in Year 4 where pupils learn about the dates and periods of occupation of groups who have invaded and settled in Britain. A visit to Colchester castle enhances their study of aspects of life in Roman Britain by providing evidence of a Roman settlement.
116. Pupils make good use of maps and time lines to place their studies in an historical context. Year 5 pupils know about the origins of Tudor kings and queens and higher attaining pupils show a

good level of knowledge about particular monarchs. They visit Kentwell Hall to experience Tudor life, dress in Tudor clothes and ask questions about life at this time. Year 6 pupils extend their knowledge of the Victorian era on a visit to Braintree museum, dressing as Victorian pupils to participate in role-play activities, handling artefacts that enhance their historical knowledge, an experience they enjoy and record within classroom displays. Pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet to research on how life has changed in their locality. Pupils clearly enjoy their work in history and recall their role-play experiences in detail remembering what it felt like to be in a Victorian classroom. They enjoy looking at the excellent displays of past and present history topics in corridors and classrooms.

117. Since the last inspection the school has produced a scheme of work based on national guidelines, improving the continuity of programmes of study across the school. Resources have improved, visits extended and the use of new technology is developing. Recording of pupils' progress is a regular feature across year groups using the school's assessment procedures that are linked to the National Curriculum levels.
118. The teaching seen during the inspection was of a high standard, all lessons seen being at least satisfactory and often good or better. Analysis of pupils' work, however, shows teaching to be only satisfactory over time. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons reflects the very good relationships between pupils and with their teachers. Classrooms are managed well and visits are very well chosen to support pupils' learning. The use of specialist teachers and learning support assistants ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. Teachers value pupils' contributions to questions and mark and assess their work well. The pupils' presentation of work in their books or for display is of a good standard, particularly the work associated with visits.
119. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory and there is an action plan to develop aspects of work in history. The new co-ordinator is improving the quantity and quality of resources linked to study units and good use is made of the locality for historical visits. However, opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor planning and teaching and learning have yet to be made available.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are close to national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards of attainment were below those expected nationally. All pupils now receive a broader curriculum that is planned to ensure clear progression in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. The time allocation to this subject has increased since the last inspection and is now enough to cover the curriculum appropriately. However, during the week of the inspection the computer suite was underused when compared to the planned timetable. Many of the pupils have computers at home, and this is contributing to the higher standards of attainment of some of the pupils, particularly in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also make sound progress.
121. Work displayed in the computer area indicates that Year 3 pupils have been manipulating sound. They have used composition software to create and refine tunes and satisfactorily print out the score. To make their compositions more interesting pupils added percussion instruments to it. Classroom performances indicated the extent to which pupils had succeeded in using computer software to enhance their compositional skills in music. As part of their recent work, pupils in Year 4 have used computers to write for different audiences. They have listed the ingredients they would need in order 'to create a cosy, happy classroom', word-processing their lists, and using a drawing program to make the presentation attractive. In order to complete the activity, pupils had to demonstrate they were able to use a number of skills including 'undo and redo' and 'saving and editing'. Pupils in Year 5 satisfactorily evaluate information and present their results, using annual weather statistics to identify monthly sunshine hours and to represent data in bar chart form. The displayed results contain some intentional mistakes that observers are invited to identify, based on knowledge of traditional weather patterns. Year 6 pupils used spreadsheet modelling effectively to calculate the cost of a party, inputting cost details and creating a formula that

enabled them to calculate the costs. Once these steps have been taken, pupils are able to 'model' the effect of changing variables, such as increases and decreases in the number of items required. They are able to explore permutation of these variables soundly.

122. Planned work is mapped to the subjects of the National Curriculum, to ensure that the key skills and programmes of study are fully covered. In this way the school has decided to cover the curriculum through other subjects, and not use the computer suite exclusively for the teaching of information and communication technology skills as a separate subject. This works well when class teachers use computers to support subject teaching. However, teachers did not consistently use computers in classrooms and opportunities to extend pupils' learning were missed. The use of computers is not sufficiently monitored to check for coverage against the agreed planning, and therefore some programmes of work are not fully developed. During the inspection week, however, some teachers used computers in history, geography, mathematics, science and music lessons.
123. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory, with some good teaching observed in the computer room. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall. Strengths in teaching include good subject knowledge and the use of appropriate terminology to develop pupils' technological awareness. Good questioning by the teachers enables them to check pupils' understanding on a day-to-day basis. The teaching is most effective when teachers have the confidence to use the full range of equipment available, such as when a Year 6 teacher used the school's laptop and projector for demonstration purposes and when teachers used a range of equipment to support their teaching, especially in lessons in non-core subjects. Weak classroom organisation, however, occasionally inhibits some pupils' learning; in a Year 3 lesson a little under a quarter of the pupils were unable to see the teacher's demonstration resulting in their being unsure of how to complete the activity.
124. Leadership is satisfactory. Satisfactory progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the last report, but there are still a number of unsatisfactory elements; the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is a weakness because the co-ordinator has not received time to monitor lessons and the strengths and weaknesses in teaching have not been identified; assessment systems are under-developed as they do not reflect the way the curriculum is organised. Pupils' self-assessment records link directly into statements on the pupils but do not support individual target setting. Some records are not monitored and a number of those seen were out of date or not completed.
125. The classroom computers are stand-alone machines and do not link in to the school's network. This limits the learning opportunities that can take place in the classroom. Resources for the subject have been addressed satisfactorily since the last report, with grant funding being spent wisely on setting up the computer room with a range of appropriate software. The school has installed a link for Internet and e-mail connections but this currently underused as pupils do not have regular opportunities to send and receive e-mails. Peripheral devices to support pupils' learning are now used more widely than at the time of the last inspection, with good examples of this in science and design and technology. As a result, the school is addressing the control element that was not evident at the time of the last inspection.

MUSIC

126. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with the national expectation. This indicates that the findings of the last inspection have been maintained and there have been good improvements, especially in the organisation of the curriculum, the provision of teaching resources and the assessment of pupils' abilities.
127. Pupils achieve satisfactorily during their time in the school. In Year 3, pupils begin to compose their own musical accompaniment to poetry. Their singing is tuneful. This work is continued into Year 4, where pupils learn about playing notes together to produce harmonious effects. They begin to listen critically to music, responding to its mood. In one lesson, pupils listened to a

piece of music entitled 'The Castle', and their choices in pictorial form of what it might represent were mostly suitable, including being lost in a forest, wounded in battle, and drawings of castles. In Year 5 pupils are tasked to assess each other's compositions, which show an understanding of repeated patterns. They satisfactorily learn about musical elements such as pitch and harmony. Year 6 pupils successfully develop their own compositions into different styles, such as pop and rap. They assess well-known tunes to distinguish between their tone, rhythm, mood and message. In all years, pupils develop their own form of musical notation, using, on occasions, computer programs to show this in a clear form. However, the majority of Year 6 pupils are not competent enough in following traditional notation for their playing of pitched instruments to be fully effective.

128. Across the school, the majority of pupils sing tunefully, respecting the mood of the music. In assemblies, pupils' singing is accompanied by tape-recorded music but although they follow the words well on an overhead projector it is not particularly enthusiastic. In some singing lessons, the choice of music is not very inspiring. For example, 'Daisy Bell', as part of a Music Hall topic for Year 6 pupils, was difficult for them to master singing the rhymes 'do' and 'true' for extended note lengths. However, pupils with special educational needs are catered for well, often by being asked to work alongside others in small group work. In the small number of classes having pupils with English as an additional language, teachers ensure that they take a full part in the lesson by including them in question and answer sessions and in playing instruments in practical situations.
129. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. It was never less than satisfactory; it is often good and on one occasion during the inspection, it was very good. In a number of year groups, teachers who have specialist expertise teach music, and this is a good strategy, leading to appropriate gains in learning by the pupils. When teaching is only satisfactory, it is as a result of a lack of pace in the lesson, leading to some restlessness on the part of the pupils, and inappropriate fiddling with the instruments. In a very good Year 4 lesson on pitch and tempo, the lesson proceeded at a good pace and pupils asked to respond to the mood of the music showed appreciation of the rises and falls in the notes and their duration. Computer technology is used satisfactorily overall with some classroom performances indicating that pupils had succeeded in using a software program to enhance their compositional skills.
130. In most lessons pupils respond very well to the enthusiasm of their teachers. They pay full attention, and play instruments confidently and responsibly. On a couple of occasions during the inspection, a minority of pupils lost concentration on their tasks, but this was due in part to the cramped, hot nature of the demountable classrooms late in the day. Pupils respond well to the responsibility of being music monitors, ensuring that the instruments are taken to the classrooms before lessons begin.
131. The curriculum is well organised. National guidelines have recently been adopted using the resource of a commercial scheme, which contains the use of technological equipment such as electronic organs, CD-ROM, and tape-recorders. However, the school has not considered the use of music specifically chosen to include the variety of cultures represented in the school community, such as German composers, Spanish guitarists, or music from the Asian continent.
132. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator has worked enthusiastically to ensure that all members of staff know enough to teach the many strands of the curriculum, from singing to playing, composing and learning of the work of famous composers. Resources have been increased to a good level and they are maintained well. The co-ordinator has established a suitable system for maintaining records of the pupils' musical achievements, matching them against National Curriculum levels. However, the limited range of extra-curricular activities organised in school is not helping pupils to progress to the higher levels of playing ability. As a result, too few numbers of pupils are confident in reading music from the five bar scale. The school provides facilities for guitar tuition and for the Essex Music School Band on a fee-paying basis, in which a small number of pupils take part. Apart from a choir, which is formed for the Christmas term, there are no school clubs. The co-ordinator has recognised this omission, and has plans to re-start recorder groups in the near future. Overall, there has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Pupils achieve standards in line with the national expectations. Pupils were observed learning the rules and techniques of competitive games, such as hockey and football, expressing emotions such as greed and pleasure through dance, and devising sequences in gymnastics. The evidence of the standards achieved in these lessons, together with the teachers' planning documents indicates that the other strands of the curriculum, in athletics and adventurous activities, are at least satisfactorily met. Pupils have swimming lessons in Years, 3, 4, and 5, and currently four out of every five pupils have progressed to swim the basic standard of 25 metres by the age of 10. Overall, pupils' general progress and achievement are good.
134. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were observed in dance and gymnastics lessons. The standards achieved varied according to the expertise and enthusiasm of the teacher. In dance, they showed a lively appreciation of the music, learned new steps such as skipping, and showed initiative in devising their own interpretation of the hornpipe rhythm. In gymnastics, however, the pupils' sequence work was very limited and the pupils showed no awareness of the need to make their movements flow smoothly into a balance. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 show higher attainment, some of which is above average, when taught by teachers having subject expertise. In a gymnastics lesson, pupils were observed working in pairs to create extended sequences showing full awareness of their body extension, levels of movement and timing whilst maintaining a symmetrical pattern. They showed a good appreciation of the work of one other, making positive suggestions for improvement. In games lessons, pupils learn new skills, such as using the hockey stick, or dribbling footballs round a series of posts, and teachers provide appropriately more difficult challenges for the pupils who succeed more quickly. Progress across the school in pupils developing more awareness and use of their physical skills, alongside knowledge of the benefits of exercise, is good.
135. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for. Teachers ensure that they are clear about their tasks and are very conscious of the need to ensure a safe learning environment for all pupils, including those with visual or hearing impairment. Pupils who are overweight are included in all physical education lessons, and are given sensitive encouragement to succeed within their limits. In the few classes having pupils with English as an additional language, the pupils are fully integrated without the need for extra support. All pupils take part in swimming lessons, where due regard is paid to cultural sensitivities.
136. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, two-thirds were very good. Other lessons were equally divided between satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching. Features observed in very good lessons were the teacher's expertise, very clear demonstrations of techniques and very high expectations of pupils' concentration on improving their skills. Where unsatisfactory teaching occurs, it is the result of the teacher's inexperience and lack of sufficient knowledge of the strategies to improve weak sequence work. In such lessons, a minority of pupils quickly becomes restless; they tend to be disruptive and do not appreciate the commitment of others. In general, however, the pupils respond very well to the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject. They behave very well, learn to co-operate and play games in the right spirit of friendly competition. Boys and girls take a full part in all gymnastics and dance lessons, and in the best of them, their attention to their task is total.
137. Leadership is good. The curriculum is well organised, following recently issued guidelines. Assessment is not formally in place and there is a lack of monitoring of teaching and learning across the school. Athletics and outdoor adventurous pursuits are organised in the summer, alongside cricket and rounders. However, there is only a limited range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which inhibits the progress of pupils to the higher levels of attainments. The school provides facilities for a netball club to take place, as well as a soccer school, on a fee-paying basis, but there are few opportunities for inter-school sporting tournaments. The school has recognised this and there are plans to develop more in-school clubs in the near future.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Standards of attainment are in line with the locally agreed syllabus by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning as they move through school. These findings are the same as those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make progress at a rate similar to that of their classmates, based on their prior attainment.
139. A good long-term plan is in place to ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn about comparative religions by increasing their knowledge and understanding of different beliefs, customs and practices. The programmes of study are linked very closely to pupils' personal and social education, with pupils' developing understanding of relationships that enables them to celebrate and respect differences.
140. Year 3 pupils create their own church in the classroom to support their learning in Christianity and study Hindu beliefs and celebrations. They have become familiar with the story of Krishna's birth and the Hindu Festival of Janmashtami. Pupils are interested in these stories, and have opportunities to discuss them. In this way they are able to compare these events with their own experiences, especially those of birthdays. In a lesson observed in a Year 3 class, pupils were asked to sequence events, and create a class book about the birth of Krishna. Their reading demonstrated the good level of understanding they have about Krishna's birth and gave pupils an opportunity to use speaking and listening skills, drawing upon experiences developed in English lessons.
141. Year 6 pupils talked confidently about their work and especially of a recent visitor to school to talk about Judaism. The visit had contributed to the pupils' developing understanding of this religion, and they spoke with enthusiasm about what they now know about this religion, especially the significance of scrolls. They talked maturely about stories of the creation, and the many theories that have developed over the years. They are able to relate, and discuss, a number of theories clearly, justifying their belief by putting forward a persuasive argument.
142. In the two lessons taught during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. An analysis of pupils' work and displays indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory, overall, and there is evidence that good teaching has contributed to the quality of work on display throughout the school. The displays convey strong messages about the status of the subject. In Year 6, work is matched appropriately to pupils' different levels of ability. This is generally used effectively to ensure that pupils are able to make progress during the lesson, but this practice is not used by all teachers and some pupils struggle to complete the work. Marking of pupils' work is variable and in many cases is a tick only to confirm completion of the task. The best marking found in pupils' books identifies their strengths and weaknesses, with comments that help inform pupils of what they need to do to improve their work.
143. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has not been given any time to monitor the quality of teaching or learning. Resources are adequate, but were good at the time of the last inspection. This is because funds are not allocated to the subject in a strategic and systematic way, and gaps are now beginning to appear in the resources available. Assessment is under-developed as it is largely about producing statements for the annual reports, rather than ongoing assessment that informs teachers' and pupils' about the next steps in learning, based on what pupils can and cannot do. Visits to places of worship are extremely limited at present, as are the number of visitors coming into school to talk about their beliefs. This limits opportunities for pupils to develop understanding of other religions and beliefs from first-hand experience, in this largely mono-cultural school. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and a good contribution to their social and moral development.