

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHLANDS INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Pitsea, Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114995

Headteacher: Mrs S.Haskins

Reporting inspector: Mrs A.J.Pangbourne
23818

Dates of inspection: 25th-28th November 2002

Inspection number: 247523

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Winifred Rd
Pitsea
Basildon
Essex

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G.Harris

Date of previous inspection: November 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23818	Alison Pangbourne	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for the Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
12672	Edmund Adamus	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
11353	Janet May	Team inspector	Special educational needs Educational inclusion English Religious Education Physical education	
30457	David Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Northlands Infant School and Nursery is situated in Pitsea, near Basildon. It draws its pupils mainly from the local area, which comprises mostly of rented and local authority housing. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are well below average and 38 per cent are entitled to a free school meal. Children's attainments on entry to the nursery are well below average. At the time of the inspection, there were 154 full time pupils on roll with 78 children attending part time in the nursery. There were 32 pupils with special educational needs, ranging from general learning difficulties to emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is a broadly average proportion, and is likely to rise as two more intakes of children join the school. No pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is below average. There are few pupils from ethnic heritages and no pupils speak English as an additional language. There are a similar number of boys and girls. There is significant mobility amongst the pupils and attendance levels are well below average, despite the school's best efforts to encourage parents to bring their children to school. There has been difficulty in filling vacant teaching posts and the recruitment and retention of governors is difficult. The school is part of the East Basildon Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with several good features. Children start school with well below average attainments, particularly in speaking and listening. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, standards are below average but pupils are achieving well. The current Year 2 includes a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and attendance levels are poor. Standards in Year 1 are similar to those expected for their age and standards are rising. The quality of teaching is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and she is well supported by staff. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership and make a significant contribution to the very good ethos of the school, where all are valued.
- The quality of teaching is good and, as a result, pupils achieve well.
- It uses a special programme very effectively to raise standards in reading and spelling.
- Very good provision for spiritual and social development and good provision for moral and cultural development result in very good relationships and personal development and good behaviour.
- The very good provision of classroom assistants has a positive impact on standards in many aspects of the school.
- The good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they are well supported.
- The good curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes gives them a good start to their education.

What could be improved

- Standards in science are below average by the end of Year 2 because teachers lack confidence in assessing at the higher Level 3 and different tasks are not always planned to meet the needs of these higher-attaining pupils.
- Standards are below average in art and design, history, geography and music because the subjects have had a low priority until recently and teachers lack expertise in the subjects.
- The strategic role of the governing body to enable them to play a greater role in the management of the school.
- Cross-curricular links to raise standards in English and mathematics further.
- Despite the best efforts of the school, attendance is well below average and parents' contribution to their children's learning is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection, conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 2000. Standards are rising and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. The school has worked hard to address most of the issues identified then, successfully raising standards in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of good teaching has increased considerably and the way in which pupils work independently is now very good. There has, however, been little improvement in the role of the governing body. Difficulty in recruitment and retention of governors has contributed to this. Cost effectiveness has improved because the school thoroughly evaluates its spending to meet the needs of the pupils. The school is well placed to make further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	E	D	C	A	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	D	C	A	
Mathematics	E*	E	D	C	

Note: E* means that the school's performance was in the lowest five per cent nationally

Taking the years 2000 to 2002 together, results have been broadly below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. However, standards have been rising steadily. The school is doing well because many children have poor language skills on entry to school and attendance levels are well below average.

Inspection evidence shows that children are on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development by the end of the reception year. Few children are on course to attain them in any of the other areas of learning because they start school with such underdeveloped skills. They are achieving well. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science, art and design, history, geography and music. They are average in all other subjects. Pupils are achieving well. The current Year 2 includes a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and attendance levels are poor for many pupils. These factors impact negatively on the standards attained. Standards for pupils in Year 1 are similar to those expected for their age and standards are rising. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and the small number of higher-attaining pupils generally do well, but tasks in science are not always well matched to their needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they know that they are valued. They want to learn and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well and strive to meet the school's expectations of good behaviour.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for their actions. Relationships are very good between all members of the community regardless of race, background or gender.
Attendance	Well below average. A significant number of pupils have poor levels of attendance despite the school's best efforts to encourage good attendance. This has a negative impact on the standards attained.

- The way in which pupils work in groups with the minimum of supervision is very good.
- The school uses a wide range of incentives and rewards to encourage good attendance but a significant number of parents are unable to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and leads to good learning. The quality of teaching is never less than good in the nursery and reception class, where all adults work together as a team for the benefit of all children. There are strengths in both Year 1 and Year 2, although the proportion of satisfactory, rather than good or very good, teaching was higher in Year 1. The teaching of English and literacy skills is good, enabling pupils to make good gains in their learning. A particular strength is the teaching of the 'Early Reading Research' programme, where brisk pace encourages pupils to read and spell words in unison. The quality of teaching in mathematics and numeracy is also good, particularly in the short mental arithmetic sessions during the day. Strengths in the quality of teaching include very good management strategies to ensure no time is wasted, very good use of classroom assistants and resources and a brisk pace that keeps pupils motivated. Pupils have a good understanding of their own learning because teachers explain the focus of the lesson and check their understanding at the end. They show very good levels of independence and try hard to succeed. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, class management skills are often weaker, with pupils allowed to make too much noise moving between activities and time being wasted. The school meets the needs of most of its pupils well. Tasks are planned to meet the needs of those who have special educational needs. A strong feature is the 'Gym Trail' activities where pupils develop their co-ordination skills through physical activity. There could be more challenge for higher-attaining pupils in science.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for children in the nursery and reception classes. A wide range of stimulating activities meet their needs well. Satisfactory for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. Some subjects have had a low priority and there is room for improvement in the development of literacy and numeracy in other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Targets on individual education plans are effectively used in lesson planning to ensure that tasks are well matched to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Very good overall. Very good provision for spiritual and social development. Good provision for moral and cultural development. Pupils

development	are suitably prepared for life in multicultural Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares for its pupils well. Good procedures for monitoring attendance, behaviour and academic progress. Assessment procedures are good.

- Parents have good views about the school, from which it receives good information. The school makes every effort to work with parents but many do not take up the opportunities that it offers. Few parents support their children with homework or with reading and this has a negative effect on progress.
- Assessment information is not always used sufficiently to identify and challenge higher-attaining pupils in science. When pupils work in special group sessions for literacy and numeracy, some pupils have been placed in groups that are not as closely matched to their needs as they might be.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior staff work very well together as a team. The recently-appointed headteacher has successfully built on existing good practice and introduced several initiatives that are successfully raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. There is difficulty in recruiting and retaining governors. There is no firm steer to the work of the governors and roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school analyses its performance to identify areas for improvement. For example, it has already identified that teachers may be under assessing in science and it has introduced structured approaches to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are targeted to raise standards. The generous provision for classroom assistants contributes positively to the standards attained. The classroom assistant with responsibility for support in information and communication technology makes a significant contribution to the standards attained in the subject.

- The school is very well staffed with a full time classroom assistant in each class. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and is shortly to be improved by the addition of a secure play area for the reception classes. Resources are good. The principles of best value are applied well.
- The lack of an established governing body means that the headteacher is unable to delegate some of their responsibilities to them.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like coming to school.• The teaching is good and the children make good progress.• Their children are expected to work hard.• Parents feel comfortable to approach the school with questions or concerns.• The school is well led and managed.• Their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents would like more activities to be provided outside lessons.

The inspection team supports the positive views held by parents. However, the team found that the range of activities provided outside lessons is similar to many infant schools and includes a good range of visits to places of educational interest.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average in all the areas of learning. Speaking and listening skills are particularly poorly developed. Most children transfer to the school from the nursery, although some children start in the reception classes with no pre-school experience. Children make good progress through the nursery and reception classes and achieve well, particularly in the development of language skills. At the end of the reception year, most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development because there is less emphasis on speaking skills in these areas. Few children are on course to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development because they start school with such poorly-developed skills. Poor attendance levels by a significant number of children also impact negatively on the standards attained.
2. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2, the results were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show that standards were well below average. This is a significant improvement on the results for 2001 where standards were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics and science. Standards have steadily risen in reading, writing and mathematics over the past three years. Standards in science have remained well below average. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the school was advised to concentrate on raising standards in English and mathematics while it was subject to Special Measures. Consequently, science was somewhat neglected. Another reason for the low standards is that teachers lack confidence in assessing at the higher Level 3 and last year fewer pupils were assessed at this higher level than might be expected. This depressed the overall results in the subject. The school has done well to raise standards so successfully in reading and writing in view of the poor language skills and erratic attendance of many of the pupils. Few pupils receive support with reading at home. There is also significant mobility amongst the pupils, with about 21 per cent of last year's Year 2 joining the school during Year 2.
3. Compared with schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals- between 20 and 35 percent- attainment in 2002 was well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. This suggests that the school is doing well. The previous inspection judged that results in the statutory tests were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, but the average points for that year show that standards were well below average in reading and writing and in the lowest five per cent nationally in mathematics. There has been an improvement in standards in all three subjects. No judgements were made about standards in any other subjects.
4. Inspection evidence shows that standards are below average in speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, science, art and design, history, geography and music. Standards are average in all other subjects. Pupils are achieving well from their well below average starting point on starting school. There are several reasons for the difference between inspection evidence and last year's statutory test results in writing. There is a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2 and a significant number have poor attendance levels. Five pupils have already joined Year 2 from other schools. All these factors impact negatively on the standards attained. Inspection evidence shows that in Year 1, where the proportion with special educational needs is much smaller, pupils are reaching similar standards to those expected for their age so standards are set to rise next year.
5. There are several reasons for the differences in standards between the subjects. Until recently the school focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, there was little emphasis or development of other subjects. The school sensibly prioritised this development. As a result, standards are broadly average in design and technology, information and communication technology, religious education and physical education, where development has already taken

place. In science, underassessment of higher-attaining pupils leads to lower standards than might be expected. Development of the subject has not yet reached the stage where higher-attaining pupils are offered different tasks according to their level of attainment, with teachers focusing on whole-class investigations. The school has already recognised this as an area for development. Where standards are below average, as in art and design, history, geography and music, recent initiatives are in their early stages and have not yet impacted positively on standards.

6. Other reasons for the steady improvement in English and mathematics are the good quality of the teaching, the emphasis placed on language development, the very good support provided by classroom assistants and the emphasis on personal development that gives pupils the confidence to persevere. Pupils do well in reading, despite the lack of parental support for this. This is because the Education Action Zone supports the school through the 'Early Reading Research' programme. Pupils work in small groups several times each day and learn to read and spell words in unison, tapping the syllables with their fingers. Mental arithmetic sessions also take place regularly each day. These short bursts of intensive teaching contribute very positively to the rising standards.
7. Standards in literacy and numeracy are below average by the end of Year 2. Opportunities to use literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum are underdeveloped because the school has not focused on other subjects until recently. However, examples were seen of pupils recording their investigations in science and researching the Internet in religious education and geography. Pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately in design and technology to measure axles for vehicles and to record data graphically in science. Information and communication technology skills are beginning to be developed in other subjects such as to research information in geography, but there is room for further development in these areas.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in relation to their prior attainment. They make good progress towards attaining the targets set for them when supported individually, or when taught in small groups by the special educational needs teacher and support staff. In class lessons, the quality of support staff is good and they provide the additional help that enables these pupils to do well. The needs of the small number of higher-attaining pupils are generally well met, although there is room for tasks to be more closely matched to their needs in science. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Attitudes to the school are good and this remains a strength since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they know that they are valued and that they will be offered exciting activities. Parents feel very confident that the school provides effective pastoral care. They acknowledge that their children are very happy in school. Pupils generally put a lot of effort into their lessons and activities. They display a lively awareness of what the staff try to do for them and frequently show their appreciation. This is very evident in the nursery, where pupils respond well to a challenging and diverse range of activities. For example, in one afternoon session, two small groups of children were learning about lighted candles, whilst others worked independently, requiring the minimum of supervision from classroom assistants. Children with special educational needs are attentive to the support given them and the efficient deployment of resources for them clearly builds up the level of trust that they show to adults. Pupils set themselves to work eagerly to complete tasks from previous lessons when necessary. The previous inspection reported that some older pupils found it hard to concentrate and work independently. Inspection evidence shows that this is no longer the case. For example, pupils in Year 2 worked hard to make an electrical circuit, trying out different methods until they were successful.
10. Behaviour is good. There is no evidence of aggressive behaviour as the school's expectations with regard to behaviour are clearly understood and appreciated. The school's policy on behaviour speaks of tolerance, respect and courtesy. The continued dedication of staff to engender, rather than enforce, these principles is frequently illustrated in the caring and sensitive manner in which pupils behave. Any poor behaviour is quickly dealt with by staff but always in an affirming way. The social and moral provision within the school has a clear and very positive impact on the good

standards of behaviour. Discipline at lunchtime is particularly good, where exemplary conduct and table manners are acknowledged for others to follow. Exclusions are rare. A scheme called 'First Bonus' was adopted by the school, with the help of the Education Action Zone, to help identify pupils who may be at risk of exclusion. The way in which the headteacher ensures that the staff have ownership of this scheme contributes to its success.

11. Throughout the school, relationships are very good and help to promote very good personal development. They are a strength of the school. All staff are visibly committed to the personal development of each pupil and provide very good role models. There is a sense in which the school takes pride in its efforts to cultivate a good family atmosphere, which is both sustained and natural. 'Circle time' is used effectively and teachers encourage pupils to explore and understand their feelings. All staff are strongly committed to the inclusion of all pupils. All pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for varied tasks and duties and they carry these out with a sense of purpose and calm. For example, the youngest children in the nursery are expected to tidy resources and to wash their own hands after painting. The way in which pupils take care not to spill paint and other materials on the carpeted floors is commendable. All adults put good emphasis on personal and social development and pupils learn to work independently and are sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils of all ages generally mix well together. They are sensible and enjoy their break time, but equipment and games could be provided in the playground to stimulate more group interaction.
12. Poor attendance is a major cause for concern with unauthorised absences being well above average. The school is doing everything it can to improve this with immediate follow up and a first day calling system, where parents are telephoned on the first day of a pupil's unexplained absence. New methods of tackling the problem are genuinely sought after and the neighbouring junior school is consulted to try and share good practice. Registers are accurately completed and staff work hard to build up a stronger sense of responsibility towards attendance by awarding certificates. There are weekly and half termly prizes as well as letters to parents. There are some problems with punctuality but with significant improvements since the beginning of the year. Various reward schemes are in place and popular with pupils. Some parents comment on the overall effect this has on ensuring that they get their children to school on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. Taking all aspects of teaching into account, the quality of teaching is good overall and leads to good learning. All teaching seen was at least satisfactory with four out of five lessons being good or better. Almost one in five lessons were very good or better. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection where two in ten lessons were good and the rest were satisfactory.
14. The quality of teaching for children in the nursery and the reception class was never less than good, with one very good lesson seen in the reception class. A particular strength is the way that all adults, including nursery nurses and classroom assistants, work together as a team for the benefit of all children. All share the same high expectations and, as a result, children show very good levels of independence and try very hard to succeed. Every opportunity is taken to enrich and extend language. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, and the very good ratio of adults to children ensures that all are well supported. Adults are skilled in offering exciting tasks using imaginative resources that motivate the children. Consequently, children make good gains in their learning.
15. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in any other subject. As a result of good teaching, pupils make good gains in their learning. This is because the school takes care to ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well met. However, there is room for higher-attaining pupils to be more fully challenged in science. Good teaching leads to pupils in Year 1 reaching standards close to those expected for their age and to pupils in Year 2, many of whom have special educational needs and poorly-developed language skills, reaching average standards in reading, design and technology, information and communication technology, religious education and physical education. Where

standards are below average in English overall, mathematics and science, it is due to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and poorly developed language in the current Year 2 rather than any weakness in the quality of teaching.

16. The best teaching was seen for pupils in Year 2. One in four lessons seen were judged to be very good and one excellent lesson was seen. Only one lesson was judged to be satisfactory. Strengths in the quality of teaching include the way in which teachers explain what pupils are going to learn at the beginning of lessons, very good management strategies to ensure no time is wasted correcting inappropriate behaviour, very good use of classroom assistants and resources, well-matched tasks and a very brisk pace that keeps the pupils motivated. For example, in a very good science lesson for pupils in Year 2, the teacher used wind chimes to gain the pupils' attention before introducing a good range of resources to encourage the pupils to experiment in making an electrical switch. Very effective use of adults ensured that all pupils were well supported and were able to succeed. This was identified as a strength in the previous inspection. In a good literacy lesson for pupils in Year 2, most of whom had special educational needs, skilled questioning by the teacher and classroom assistant enabled pupils to learn that a story has a sequence and to identify the main events in the story of 'Dogger'. In another good literacy lesson to develop language, the teacher encouraged pupils to look through a telescope and pretend what they could see. This motivated them to complete their writing about 'Mr Grinling looked through the telescope and saw...' In an excellent mathematics lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm and very brisk pace enabled pupils to recall number facts to 20, before moving on to doubling numbers. The teacher's skill in identifying pupils who needed extra support and providing it to maintain their self-esteem was a very positive feature of this lesson.
17. There are also strengths in the quality of teaching in Year 1, although there was a higher proportion of satisfactory rather than good teaching. Three in ten lessons were satisfactory and the rest were good or very good. Similar strengths were seen to those in Year 2. For example, in a good science lesson, very clear explanation and very good management strategies, where the teacher allocated specific tasks to individual pupils, ensured that they tested materials in groups without arguing over who should pour the water, showing good levels of independence. Resources, such as real hats, motivated the pupils and encouraged them to persevere with the task. Another positive feature of this lesson was the way in which the teacher assessed each pupils' understanding at the end of the lesson by asking them to point to the hat that they thought was waterproof, recording their answers. In a good literacy lesson, the well-prepared classroom assistant supported pupils well, enabling them to develop descriptive language such as 'fluffy', 'sparkly' and 'wobbly'. The way in which the task was organised to allow pupils to be taught in small groups ensured that all pupils made good gains in learning and stayed on task.
18. What makes the difference between lessons that are satisfactory and those that are better is sometimes weaker class management skills where pupils are allowed to make too much noise. This results in some disturbance as pupils move from one activity to another; for example, in a literacy lesson too much time was taken to settle the class to their group activities. This was also identified as a weakness in the previous inspection. In some lessons, for example in a physical education lesson, too much talking by the teacher reduced the time available for physical activity, resulting in some misbehaviour by a minority of pupils.
19. Other features of good teaching include the way in which all adults take every opportunity to compensate for the high proportion of time lost by some pupils through absence. Numerous examples were seen where teachers or classroom assistants took pupils aside to explain what they had missed, so enabling them to take part in the lesson. All adults also take every opportunity to develop and extend language. For example, in an art and design lesson, pupils learned the word 'technique' because the teacher stressed that it is the correct term to use. In science, 'talking partners' give pupils good opportunities for discussion and sensitive intervention by adults extends their vocabulary. Good teaching was seen in the sessions designated to the 'Early Reading Research' programme. Here, very brisk pace where pupils read and spell words in unison, tapping the syllables with their fingers, and the enthusiasm of the teachers encouraged all pupils to join in, and this contributes to the average standards in reading. Good, focused teaching

to small groups in 'targeted' literacy and numeracy lessons, where teachers show good subject knowledge and how to teach the necessary skills contributes to rising standards.

20. Teachers use information and communication technology appropriately to support their teaching. For example, pupils use the computers in most lessons to support literacy and numeracy skills. They research information in geography and religious education. They record information in science and use programs to aid their designs in design and technology. Classroom displays show that teachers use information and communication technology to stimulate the pupils.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to play a full part in class lessons. They make good progress in English and mathematics as a result of effective teaching in sets within the class and through 'booster' groups. In addition, pupils are successfully taught in small groups by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Work is consistently well matched to the differing needs of these pupils. Classroom assistants play an important role in the progress pupils with special educational needs make. They have a good knowledge of the pupils and provide skilled support, often taking charge of small groups. The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good.

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

22. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant. There have been good improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection and the school recognises the need for further review. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, although some are outdated. All statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, religious education and collective worship are met.
23. The school was advised to concentrate on raising standards in literacy and numeracy as a result of it being judged to be in need of Special Measures and it allocated appropriate time to successfully raise standards in these core areas of the curriculum. As a consequence, other subjects had been somewhat neglected and the school needed to prioritise the development of them. In subjects where development is already established, such as design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education, standards have risen and are now broadly average. In other subjects such as art and design, history, geography, music and science, improvements are at an early stage of development and have not yet impacted positively on standards. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively, although more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to use literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects across the curriculum.
24. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception class is good. It is a strength of the school. It provides a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities that are well matched to their needs. Very strong emphasis is placed on the development of independence skills across all the areas of learning and this prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is well planned with effective links made between different areas of the curriculum.
25. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. At present, personal and social education is generally taught through areas of the curriculum and pupils take part in regular 'circle time' to discuss moral and social issues and relationships. The governors have adopted an appropriate policy for sex and drugs education, which is linked to the science and personal, social and health education programmes of study. Although the school does not have a relevant, updated policy for personal, social and health education, there are satisfactory plans to develop this in the near future.
26. Pupils have good equality of opportunity. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and supported and all pupils are valued regardless of race, background or level of attainment. Teachers pay special attention to ensuring that pupils who have been absent are not disadvantaged too much by explaining what they have missed before moving on.

27. A significant number of parents indicated that they felt that the school did not provide sufficient activities outside school. The provision for extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum, including visits and visitors, is satisfactory. Throughout the year the school receives many visitors, including representatives of the police and fire services, the Basildon Christian Council, members of staff from Macdonalds who work with pupils from Year 2, the World Yo-Yo champion, and senior citizens who speak to the pupils about their historical experiences. Pupils visited the local church during the inspection week and produced many interesting pieces of work following the visit. During the year, there have been visits to the Mountfitchet Toy Museum, local parks, the Thorndon Country Park, Southend Pier and Chalkwell Beach. All these opportunities contribute positively to pupils' personal, social and cultural development.
28. There are good links with the community, which support pupils' personal development and learning. The Education Action Zone makes a valuable contribution to the raising of standards across the curriculum. During the summer holidays a large number of pupils participated in the EAZ's Children's University. Pupils have also participated regularly in local events such as the Basildon School Music Festival. All these activities enrich the curriculum.
29. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are currently no pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The planning of work for these pupils is well considered and enables them to make good progress. Pupils are occasionally taken out of class for additional support, but this is carefully planned and pupils do not 'miss' lessons. There is no disruption to their learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs very effectively teaches additional physical education lessons known as 'gym trail' for pupils with minor physical difficulties to help foster their co-ordination and balance.
30. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Provision for spiritual and social development is very good. Provision for moral and cultural development is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection where provision was judged to be satisfactory. The ethos of the school is caring and sympathetic to all its pupils. The staff show a commitment to the personal development of each pupil. Pupils know that they are highly valued. Pupils are led to a gradual but significant appreciation of the world around them and the contribution that they make.
31. The spirituality of assemblies and other moments are used well by staff to invite pupils to reflect. In one assembly, pupils were seated in a semi-circular pattern, which aided a sense of community and prayerful element of the content. Pupils answered thoughtfully to questions about the forthcoming celebration of Christmas. Visual aids and poetry were used well to stimulate thinking about the theme, concluding with a simple hymn of thanksgiving for the wonder of creation. Spiritual development is a real strength in the learning of the pupils with some innovative ideas employed in religious education, such as role-play and visits to places of worship. For example, during the inspection, the youngest children were exploring the traditions and customs of Hindu and Christian weddings through role-play.
32. The code of conduct in the behaviour policy is clearly evident in the moral development of the pupils. Good manners and consideration for others are the hallmark of every activity in the school. Self-esteem among pupils appears to be strong as they are encouraged to behave responsibly and with respect to all visitors. Plenty of rewards are given to pupils to affirm them in their moral choices, especially when they reflect on the school as a community. There is also a schedule of sanctions in place for undesirable conduct, though these are employed infrequently. Each class begins the autumn term by compiling a set of 'Golden Rules' so that they understand how their behaviour affects others for good or bad. All staff, both teaching and support staff are exemplary role models and pupils show great affection for them.
33. Social development is very good. Pupils display a high level of competence for their age and carry out different tasks with a sense of pride and responsibility. Teachers maintain a good balance between being in firm control of groups and allowing space for pupils to find out for themselves. This is especially evident when individuals have access to computers to further their knowledge. Pupils also show respect for the views of their peers when teachers lead and encourage everyone

to contribute to class discussions. No pupil's opinion or answer is undervalued and this cultivates a natural atmosphere of acceptance. For example, in one religious education lesson, pupils were asked to share observations following a visit to the local parish church. They were invited to explore their feelings in the light of their observations, which led to each member of the class listening carefully to the other. Pupils also work effectively in pairs and groups. Classroom assistants and pupils work well together.

34. Genuine efforts are made to show the pupils that they should celebrate cultural diversity. A multicultural week is due to take place later this year. The meaning of different religious festivals is a regular feature within the school year and some imaginative ideas are used to enhance this aspect. During the inspection, there were some eye-catching displays telling pupils of the Hindu festival of Divali. Photographs of reception children doing role-play for Hindu and Christian marriage ceremonies had a high profile and were clearly a source of enjoyment of valuing other traditions. Pupils are appropriately prepared for life in multicultural Britain. The library contains various books with African, Asian and European characters in the stories as well as corridor displays raising pupils' awareness of local history. There is a lack of visual material introducing pupils to the wider geographical world, which might be addressed in a more effective use of the Internet. However, pupils and staff take soft toys such as 'Scott' the teddy on holiday to other places, bringing back diaries of their holidays to help pupils understand that there are other places in the world. The nursery has a colourful poster announcing 'welcome' in different languages. Through art and design and music pupils also develop an appreciation of other artistic and musical traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school ensures that all matters relating to the health and safety of the pupils are in good order. No reference was made to this aspect of provision in the previous inspection. A recent health and safety audit by the local education authority has been carried out and issues of concern were addressed. This included a new pathway being laid to allow pedestrian access between both the school and the adjoining junior school to lessen the risk of accident in the car park. The school is a secure and caring environment providing sanctuary for pupils where they feel safe and happy. There have been visits from the police to instruct pupils in road safety and safety at home. Frequent changes in education welfare officers have made the task of monitoring unauthorised absences difficult.
36. Child protection procedures and policy are well set up with the headteacher as the delegated staff member responsible for their implementation. The headteacher has regular contact with social services and staff are briefed on good practice through the 'Notes of Guidance for School-Based Support Staff,' produced in July 2002.
37. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance. The governors' annual report clearly stipulates these procedures in addition to the schemes to promote improved attendance. The school has introduced a wide range of initiatives to encourage good attendance. For example, certificates, stickers and prizes are awarded both for classes and the whole school. A recent initiative gives the ten most improved attendees a day out at Arsenal Football Club. Volunteers are currently being sought to run a 'Walking bus' scheme to bring pupils to school. Three letters of concern go to parents and each class receives a letter detailing the attendance rate comparing both school and local education authority targets. Some planned initiatives have not taken place due to the changes in education welfare officers and this is legitimately felt to be beyond the school's control. Registers are well kept and there were no negative observations from the education welfare officer. Follow-up of all unauthorised absences is swift but with varying degrees of co-operation from parents. Persistent offenders and lack of support from home means the school has an ongoing struggle but is to be commended for being consistent in its efforts to redress the balance in overall attendance figures.
38. The monitoring and promoting of good behaviour is good. The behaviour policy is well written and precise. Pupils are well aware of what is expected of them and they rarely infringe the rules and standards. Plenty of affirmation is given for good conduct and the social atmosphere around school is calm and orderly. Numerous rewards are allotted to pupils for good behaviour. In the nursery,

some pupils were seen wearing 'Star for a Day' badges valuing their contribution to the class, indicating that all children have a turn to be helpers. There is no evidence of either bullying or racist incidents. Some unruly behaviour was noted in the queue for the dinners at lunchtime but this was dealt with efficiently and discreetly. The separate rules for the dining room alert pupils to the fact that they must pay special attention to the needs of others during meal times. Pupils respond well to this with the support of lunchtime staff.

39. The monitoring of the personal development of pupils is good. Pupils' self-esteem is high. All teachers pay great attention to the personal development of their pupils in end-of-year reports. Parents are provided with accurate detail on exactly where their child has made specific social gains and the level of competence they have attained in acquiring skills of self-expression. Teachers strive hard to be always positive in the tone of the reports and comment on the general development of all pupils.
40. The school provides a caring and safe environment where pupils with special educational needs are valued. The very good relationships that teachers and support staff have with these pupils contribute to the good level of care. The school's good assessment arrangements ensure that pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school career. Initial assessment is followed by the agreement of individual educational plans for pupils, in order to tailor learning and provision to their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator meets regularly with class teachers and learning support assistants and all these staff keep detailed records of the progress these pupils are making. This knowledge is well used in the setting of future tasks in group work and in class lessons. There are good links with outside professionals who are involved in contributing to the pupils' learning and annual reviews.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The school has developed good systems for assessing and recording pupils' academic progress. This includes a baseline assessment on entry to the nursery and these assessment procedures are repeated at the beginning and end of the reception year. This system has been introduced since the last inspection. The assessment calendar sets out the range of formal and informal testing which is to be carried out each year in each class. The school has introduced a spreadsheet computer program for tracking pupil progress. This is used effectively to record test results and teacher assessments from baseline through to Year 2 statutory assessments and to highlight and track rates of progress each year. The information is used to set pupils' individual targets in English and mathematics. In English and mathematics termly pieces of work are scrutinised and levels of attainment are agreed. In science, assessments are undertaken each half term at the end of a unit of work. Assessment information is used to complete weekly planning sheets for all pupils. However, it was observed that a small number of pupils in Year 2 were not in the correct English and mathematics targeted groups to meet their needs. Teachers lack confidence in assessing at the higher Level 3 in the statutory assessments for science at the end of Year 2. Last year fewer pupils were assessed at the higher level than might be expected. As a result, the overall results were depressed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The views of the parents from all communities towards the school are positive. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire prior to inspection responded positively to most aspects of the school's work. On scrutiny of pupils' progress reports, a significant number of parents who made written comments about the teaching and learning expressed a high level of satisfaction.
43. The school makes every effort to actively include parents. There is little commitment to the home/school agreement. However there are some good strategies in place to build upon the relationships. This is evident in the regular parents' meetings, the moderate response to the parents' workshops provided as part of the 'Boosting the Baseline' initiative, supported by the Education Action Zone, and an open door policy. The school holds regular consultation afternoons. There are structured induction sessions for parents with children new to school and effective procedures for the transition from nursery to reception to ensure that children settle well. Home

visits are made when particular concerns need to be addressed. There are parenting workshops, which enable parents to improve their children's skills in numeracy, reading and writing. The school, in conjunction with Basildon Adult Community College, has also run family learning courses in mathematics, information and communication technology and science and other parenting courses to keep parents informed.

44. The impact of parental involvement is a weakness, although there are some good ideas underway with the adjacent junior school to try and improve the situation, which both schools share. For example, a joint fun day for the summer term is planned which hopefully will encourage a greater number of parents to help with the organisation and generally promote a better culture of collaboration.
45. The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents is less than adequate in spite of continuous efforts to involve them more. There is no parent / teacher association due to lack of parental support and teachers struggle to engage parents in assisting in school to support children's learning, especially listening to reading. A substantial minority of parents were dissatisfied with provision for extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence shows that the school's provision for this is similar to that found in most infant schools and is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors.
46. The information provided by the school is regular and of good quality. There are regular newsletters and coffee mornings. There are ample opportunities for parents to discuss pupils' progress, both formally and informally. Teachers are very approachable- especially before morning registration and many parents seem to take advantage of this. Notices for parents were posted at every classroom entrance and a rack containing informative brochures is available in the main reception area to keep parents informed. Parents are alerted to the fact that they are free to make appointments at any time. Invitations are sent announcing curriculum weeks where parents can come into school to work alongside children and share activities. Written reports are very detailed and informative, outlining a clear developmental pattern to progress and suggestions as to how parents might contribute to specific learning needs.
47. The school places a high priority on developing the partnership between parents and staff in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Parents are encouraged to play a full part and are often given ideas for helping their children at home. However, most parents do not avail themselves of this. The special needs co-ordinator keeps parents fully informed of targets and work set and of the progress pupils are making. Parents are regularly invited to school to discuss matters and contribute to the reviews of progress and setting of future work but many do not attend.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The overall leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff are very good. The headteacher provides very strong and caring leadership and the commitment that she shows to the inclusion of all pupils, regardless of background, contributes very strongly to the very good ethos of the school. In her second term in post, she has already built on existing good practice and successfully introduced several initiatives to raise standards. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinator for special educational needs.
49. The school is meeting all the requirements of the code of practice for pupils with special educational needs. An appropriate register is kept which identifies pupils' levels of need and the arrangements made to cater for them. The individual education plans for pupils have precise targets and detailed measures for meeting them. The special needs co-ordinator is highly qualified. She manages the school's provision very well and has very good knowledge of all pupils on the register. She sets good standards and is a good role model for other staff to follow. She maintains a good and productive relationship with teachers.
50. All staff share a commitment to raising standards and work closely as a team. This was a positive feature of the previous inspection. Difficulty in teacher recruitment has resulted in the employment

of two unqualified teachers this year. However, the very good support they receive contributes to the good teaching seen by them during the inspection. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are well established and they work hard to monitor standards in their subjects. The co-ordinators for the subjects that have been neglected while the school was subject to Special Measures show an enthusiasm and commitment to their subjects. They have a very good understanding of the areas for development and standards have already risen in subjects where development has already begun. The school is working very hard to raise standards but it is inhibited by the low attendance levels by many pupils, the turbulence, where pupils arrive and leave the school at short notice, and the lack of parental support for many pupils. However, the school has a very good capacity for further improvement because of the commitment shown by all staff to overcome these factors.

51. There are several reasons why the school is effective. The good quality of the teaching is a strong feature. The headteacher and senior staff monitor teaching well, both formally and informally, and this contributes to the consistently good quality of teaching seen in most classes during the inspection. The good provision for children in the nursery and reception class ensures that children begin their statutory education with the necessary independence skills to enable them to make good progress. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that tasks are well matched to their needs and ample individual support helps them to do as well as they can.
52. The school monitors and evaluates its performance well. The results of statutory tests are analysed to identify areas for improvement. For example, it has already implemented several successful initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. Of particular note is the 'Early Reading Research' programme, funded by the Education Action Zone. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have two or three short, focused sessions each day, in groups according to their prior attainment. Here, strong emphasis on phonic skills and regular reinforcement leads to standards in reading that are average by the end of Year 2. Special 'targeted' group sessions for literacy and numeracy give pupils in Year 2 the opportunity to be taught in small groups according to their prior attainment. A structured approach to the teaching of mental and oral mathematical skills at designated times during the day leads to improvement in numeracy. Pupils also have their own individual targets that are reviewed regularly. The school has already identified from its own monitoring that teachers may be under assessing in science in the statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 and that higher attainers are not being identified or challenged. Weaknesses in some of the foundation subjects have been identified and a sensibly prioritised plan for improvement is in place.
53. One of the reasons why the headteacher and senior staff manage so many initiatives themselves is because of the turbulence amongst the governing body, with governors being appointed and then leaving. The way in which the governing body fulfils its responsibilities is unsatisfactory. This was identified as an area of weakness in the previous inspection and also in the inspection where the school was judged to be in need of Special Measures. There has been little progress in this area. The good improvement in many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection is directly attributable to the school staff. There are several vacancies on the governing body, although the headteacher and deputy headteacher recently recruited some prospective governors by giving up a weekend to attend a recruitment fair at a local shopping centre. There is no firm steer to the governing body and although statutory committees are in place, the curriculum, finance and personnel committees have been disbanded due to poor attendance. As a result, there is no clear overview of these areas and governors do not have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses unless they are on the school staff. Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined or understood. Consequently, it is left to the headteacher to ensure that statutory requirements are met. Although the headteacher is introducing regular opportunities for governors to visit the school to monitor its work, some governors do not take up these opportunities.
54. The school makes good use of funds and resources made available to it. The school development plan has been well constructed to raise standards. Spending decisions focus on raising standards in mathematics, music, art and design and information and communication technology. Professional development is appropriately linked to the priorities on the school development plan. The school's strategy for performance management and appraisal is good. All staff, including classroom assistants and administrative staff, have been appraised. Additional funds are used well

to support pupils with special educational needs. The school manages its budget carefully to provide a full-time classroom assistant in each class. There is also a classroom assistant with particular responsibility for information and communication technology. This generous provision is very successful and impacts very positively on the standards attained. The funds carried forward to next year are appropriately allocated to develop the grounds and improve the security of the site. The administrative staff manage day-to-day accounts and office procedures well. The monitoring of pupils' attendance is a major task for the staff and until recently it has also been difficult to receive regular financial printouts promptly. Consequently it has been difficult to monitor spending effectively. All grants and funding are used effectively for their intended purposes and for the benefit of the pupils.

55. The contribution made by the Education Action Zone has helped the school to improve. The 'Early Reading Research' programme and additional resources for information and communication technology contribute positively to standards in the subjects. The 'Boosting the Baseline' and 'First Bonus' schemes have helped to improve skills on entry to the school and to support those with behavioural difficulties. The 'Children's University' provided activities for pupils during the summer holidays. All these initiatives have a positive impact on standards.
56. The school uses management information systems well. It uses the 'Target Tracker' programme to monitor progress and set targets for individuals. The school's policy for promoting racial equality is apt. A comprehensive policy has been drawn up and is understood by all staff. The school applies the principles of best value well in its use of resources. The governors compare standards and they know that they are doing well in comparison with similar schools. They have compared all options before making spending decisions about the reception class play area. They seek the views of parents on a wide range of issues but the response is poor. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and all adults share the whole school ethos of valuing each individual and the inclusion of all pupils regardless of their background, race or special educational needs.
57. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Recent alterations have resulted in a small room for the co-ordinator for special educational needs. A designated play area for the reception classes is due to be built shortly to improve provision for these children. Resources are good overall and are well used, although there is room for improvement in resources for geography and music.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue the good work of the school and to raise standards further, the headteacher and governing body should now address the following in their action plan:

- a. Raise standards in science by*:
 - improving teachers' confidence in making accurate assessments in statutory assessments at the end of Year 2, particularly for higher-attaining pupils;
 - ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are identified and that tasks are planned to meet their needs.
 - implementing the planned opportunities for investigative work.(See paragraphs 2, 5, 8, 15, 41, 52, 84-90)

- b. Raise standards in art and design, history, geography and music by*:
 - improving the policies and schemes of work to ensure pupils develop their skills systematically as they move through the school;
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects;
 - improving resources for geography and music.(See paragraphs 4, 5, 23, 91, 92, 99-103, 104, 108, 113, 116)

- c. Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by*:
 - ensuring that they make every effort to recruit and retain governors;
 - re-establishing the committees for finance, the curriculum and personnel and developing a regular programme for meetings;
 - ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of all governors are clearly defined and understood;
 - providing training to enable the governors to play a full part in strategic planning;
 - setting clear expectations with regard to their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.(See paragraph 53)

- d. Raise standards in English and mathematics further by developing opportunities to use these subjects across the curriculum.*
(See paragraphs 7, 73, 82)

- e. Maintain the strenuous efforts currently being made to improve attendance and encourage parental involvement.*
(See paragraphs 12, 19, 42-47)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Develop and implement a policy for personal, social and health education.
(See paragraph 25)
- Improve the use of assessment to ensure that all pupils are placed in appropriate groups for the specific 'targeted' group sessions.
(See paragraphs 41 and 74)

* the school has already identified these areas as in need of improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	30	5	0	0	0
Percentage	2	16	70	12	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	154
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	32

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	43	38	81

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	40	40
	Girls	33	38	34
	Total	68	78	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (77)	96 (83)	91 (78)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	36	31
	Girls	33	34	30
	Total	65	70	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (69)	86 (74)	75 (74)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	150	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.8
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	200

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	633175
Total expenditure	634501
Expenditure per pupil	2807
Balance brought forward from previous year	68829
Balance carried forward to next year	67503

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.8
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	184
Number of questionnaires returned	25

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	44	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	52	0	4	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	48	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	60	40	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	48	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	28	0	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	33	4	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	32	52	12	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	32	60	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	24	20	8	28

Other issues raised by parents

Parents praised the way that teachers explained their child's report to them. They also praised the initiatives to encourage good attendance.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. The school offers a nursery that provides 78 part-time places. Children are admitted to the nursery in the term after their third birthday and most children transfer to a reception class at the beginning of the term before their fifth birthday. Some children enter the reception class having experienced no pre-school provision. Close proximity and a sensitive approach to transfer ensure that the children make a smooth transition to the reception classes. At the time of the inspection, there was only one reception class. Inspection evidence shows that attainment on entry is well below average. A significant number of children have poorly developed speaking and listening skills. Attendance levels are poor and this also impacts negatively on the standards attained.
59. Children make a very positive start to both the nursery and the reception class. They make good progress, firmly developing and consolidating their skills. They achieve well. The good curriculum provides a wide range of challenging, stimulating activities that are well matched to their needs. By the end of the reception year, the children are on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. This is because the school places very strong emphasis on the development of these skills. Few children are on course to attain the early learning goals in any of the other areas of learning because they start school with such poorly developed speaking and listening skills. There are few higher-attaining children. There was no reference to children in the Foundation Stage in the previous inspection.
60. The quality of teaching is good overall. It was never less than good in all the areas of learning in both the nursery and the reception class, and one very good lesson was seen in the reception class. The good teaching is characterised by a good understanding of the needs of young children and very well-organised and exciting activities that motivate them. All adults manage children very well and the very good ratio of adults to children ensures that the needs of all are well met. A particular strength is the way in which adults offer exciting resources. For example, in the very good lesson, children developed their handwriting skills by making shapes and patterns in an exciting range of media such as shaving foam, tealeaves and hair gel.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Children make very good progress in this area of learning. This is because they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions at an early age. They are secure in routines. The environment provided and the ethos of the school ensures that children quickly learn the correct way to behave. Numerous examples were seen during the inspection where children worked unsupervised for extended periods, behaving sensibly and sharing resources. For example, children in the nursery made patterns with their fingers in paint, washing their hands with the minimum of mess. Children in the reception class used tealeaves for a similar purpose, successfully managing not to spill them on the carpet. Nursery children walk sensibly to the hall for physical activities, each group holding hands in a line. These children try hard to change their shoes and put them tidily. They take turns to be 'Stars of the Day', taking responsibility for helping to take the register to the office and helping in the classroom. A good example was seen during a physical activities session, where the children were bouncing balls on a parachute. The 'Stars of the Day' happily took responsibility for fetching any dropped balls. The way in which the other children responded to the expectation that only the 'Stars' should do this was very good.
62. All adults encourage the development of social skills in a variety of ways. For example, reception children are encouraged to take turns when acting out Hindu weddings in the role-play area and when using the computers. Nursery children learn how to behave at a birthday tea party, sharing the cake and allowing the 'birthday' child to blow out the candles. Reception children take responsibility for placing their paintings on the drying rack and preparing the space for the next

child. Children with special educational needs are well integrated and receive good support. The very good provision for the development of these skills and the emphasis placed on them by all adults enables children to meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Few children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. This is because most start school with such poorly developed language skills. All adults take every opportunity to develop these skills but many children have developed insufficient language to express themselves clearly by the end of the reception year. Many children in the nursery who are shortly to transfer to the reception class cannot identify a 'balloon' or identify common farm animals. Adults in the nursery keep detailed records of the language development of children with particularly poor skills. This ensures that the children with most need get the necessary support. Children in both the nursery and the reception class develop their speaking and listening skills well through role-play; for example, in the Hindu wedding temple, the party area and the seaside café. They are given many opportunities to share their ideas and news. For example, children in the reception class were encouraged to talk about similarities and differences between a Christian and Hindu wedding.
64. All children have good opportunities to develop their writing skills. For example, they use a range of tools to make marks in the writing areas. Good emphasis is placed on early writing skills and good hand control is encouraged through finger-painting and pattern-making. They are encouraged to try to write their name from an early age and some children in the reception class can do this, while others try to copy it. In the reception class, good emphasis is placed on being ready to write, with the children exercising their fingers while singing rhymes such as 'Shake them to the ceiling, shake them to the floor...' before beginning. The development of reading skills has high priority. Most lessons based on the development of these skills included the reinforcement of initial sounds and the reading of simple words. In the nursery, children learned new vocabulary such as 'crown' when following the text of 'The Toys' Party'. Children with special educational needs received good support in this session as they shared the same text in a small group with a nursery nurse. This ensured that they could see the text more easily and take a full part in the session. In the reception class, the singing of rhymes such as 'Tigers on tiptoes t-t-t, monkeys are munching m-m-m' contribute positively to the development of these skills. The 'Postman Pat' game, where children read words such as 'is', 'it' and 'was', delivered to them by the postman, reinforce early reading skills and motivate the children to try. All children are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents and, in the reception class, the teacher writes useful comments to help parents support their children. However, many parents do not return her comments or support their children with reading at home. Few children spoken to were familiar with the routine of a bedtime story. This lack of support has a negative impact on the standards attained.

Mathematical development

65. Adults take every opportunity to develop these skills and particularly the development of mathematical language. For example, in the nursery, children learn 'one more' when putting candles on a birthday cake. They learn to recognise shapes when their teacher asks 'Can you see the shape on the end of the screwdriver?' when they are playing with construction kits. They learn the difference between 'up' and 'down' when playing with a parachute. They count candles on cakes and sandwiches on plates. Some children can identify simple shapes and the primary colours from items on display but are unsure of 'purple'. In the reception class, children count to seven as the 'bride and groom' circle the cushions in their role-play of a Hindu wedding. They explore repeating patterns using a wide range of resources such as dough bead necklaces using three colours. They match colours and numbers through a range of games and develop their skills further by singing a range of number songs. They are introduced to early money through their play in the shop. The way in which adults question and reinforce learning makes a positive contribution to the development of these skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Children in the nursery learn about their senses when they are asked if they can identify their snack from the smell of cooking. Reception children talk about the taste of the naan bread that they had for their snack. They learn that tealeaves smell sour and hair gel smells sweet while finger painting. Nursery children learn the properties of candles and gasped in amazement at a candle snuffer. Children in the reception class are developing an understanding of Hindu and Christian weddings and other Hindu customs. They are developing an understanding of the differences between toys played with as a baby and those played with now. All children experiment with sand and water and learn the difference between 'full' and 'empty'. They use computers regularly and use the 'mouse' confidently to make patterns and pictures. They can move items around the screen to play games to support early literacy and numeracy. The emphasis placed on using the computers from the nursery onwards gives children a good foundation on which to develop their information and communication technology skills as they move through the school.

Physical development

67. Children in the nursery have regular opportunities to develop their skills in their secure outdoor play area as well as in the hall. They learn how to climb, balance, run and jump, using a wide range of equipment. During the inspection, they worked together to wave a parachute, moving on to keeping several balls bouncing on top of it. Most children showed good co-ordination skills and awareness of space. Children in the reception class use the hall for physical activities, although no lessons were seen during the inspection. A designated outdoor area for their use is due to be built shortly. All children develop their manipulative skills by handling dough, scissors and small toys. Children in the nursery use scissors and glue to make spiders and cauldrons and children in the reception class use bricks to build Hindu temples.

Creative development

68. Creative development is encouraged from an early age. Children in the nursery experiment with paint and balloons to make prints. They make cakes from dough and spiders from paper. They make firework patterns and make rockets from scrap materials. They sing a range of songs such as 'Row, row, row your boat' and other nursery rhymes. Older children in the reception class show developing hand control in their paintings of ambulances and in their observational drawings of Divali candles. They learn how to join materials when making felt glove puppets and collages of letter shapes. They make glasses from pipe cleaners and cellophane. They develop their musical skills through regular opportunities to sing songs and clap or stamp to the rhythm.

ENGLISH

69. Although the previous inspection report identified standards as broadly average by the end of Year 2, inspection evidence shows that standards in English are below average. The first reason for this is the significant number of pupils in Year 2 who have special educational needs. In addition, many pupils start school with poorly developed speaking and listening skills. Pupils' attendance is also very poor and a number of pupils have joined the school recently. Standards in speaking and writing are below average and reading is broadly average. The school is doing well to attain these standards. Standards for pupils in Year 1 are generally what is expected for their age, so standards look set to rise next year.
70. There are several reasons why pupils are achieving well. Fundamental to this is the good quality of the teaching. Other reasons include the good assessment procedures that ensure early identification of the pupils with special educational needs and the support given to these pupils. The very effective use made of talented classroom assistants and the way in which teachers explain what pupils are going to learn in each lesson are other factors. Also valuable are the daily input sessions from reception to Year 2 of the 'Early Reading Research' programme, which teaches phonic skills by listening and speaking.

71. The school places good emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. On entry to the school these skills are very poor. Most pupils listen attentively to their classmates and teachers, and observe the conventions of discussion. Year 2 teachers encourage discussion with a 'talking partner' and pupils exchange their ideas sensibly and reach decisions agreeably. When pupils learn new words they are given the opportunity and are encouraged to use the words to ensure that they really understand them properly. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils shared their story with a partner and some read their stories to the class, demonstrating the good use of their newly-learned vocabulary. Most pupils talk confidently about the books that they are reading and explain their work clearly. Assemblies also give pupils good opportunities to develop their listening skills.
72. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is close to the national average. Pupils make good progress in acquiring the skills that they need. This includes pupils with special educational needs. Pupils use a range of strategies to help them in their work. The 'Early Reading Research' initiative is successful in building up a solid knowledge of letter sounds, and pupils use this well to read unfamiliar words. This contributes positively to the standards attained. Pupils are given regular opportunities, both individually and in small groups to read to adults. Higher-attaining and average-attaining pupils in Year 2 read with understanding and expression. There is a good selection of graded reading schemes in school. The books that pupils read are appropriate for their stage of reading and this impacts positively on the progress that they make. Pupils have regular library sessions but not all are clear about the terms 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. Early research skills are being developed appropriately. The use of a computer program is successfully helping to develop some pupils' comprehension skills. Pupils are expected to read regularly at home but only a few parents contribute to this.
73. Pupils' standards in writing are below average by the end of Year 2 but their achievement is good. Low attendance levels contribute to the below average standards. Over time, pupils have experience of a reasonable range of writing opportunities, which include book reviews, letters and instructions. The opportunities for extended and imaginative writing in literacy lessons are good. In other areas of the curriculum they are underdeveloped. This is partly because the school has only recently begun to focus on the other subjects of the curriculum. When writing in Year 2, pupils receive appropriate guidance to help them use and develop their skills well. For example, Year 2 teachers played and discussed sounds of the sea to help pupils write more descriptively about what the lighthouse keeper saw through his telescope. A few higher-attaining pupils write at length, with accurate sentence punctuation, use speech marks securely and show an awareness of the reader in their vocabulary. They have developed a joined handwriting style. Average and below average-attaining pupils have less well-formed letters. They hold pencils properly but take less care with the shape and size of letters.
74. Pupils understand that when writing stories they need a beginning, middle and an end and that the story has to be interesting with descriptive vocabulary. The daily phonic work is helping to raise standards in both reading and spelling. Pupils are encouraged to reread and improve their own writing. Pupils in Year 2 have 'targeted' writing group sessions but not all pupils are allocated to the most suitable group to meet their needs.
75. The quality of teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils make good gains in their learning. This shows an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with their class. Teachers are very confident with the subject and with the content of the National Literacy Strategy, which has been implemented well. They employ effective strategies to interest and involve the pupils and many have mounted useful word lists and helpful reminders in their rooms. Very good teaching is characterised by an enthusiastic style that motivates and challenges pupils of all levels of attainment. For example, in a Year 2 class pupils were challenged by skilled questioning to write imaginatively about the sea view through a telescope. The lively approach and appropriate activities for groups of pupils of differing levels of attainment enabled all to make very good progress with their writing. Lower-attaining pupils were very well supported by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Most of the teachers explain carefully at the beginning of lessons what pupils are going to learn and check that these objectives have been

met. For example, Year 1 pupils looked at the main events in the story about 'Dogger' and successfully made a 'writing map' correctly sequencing the main events that took place in the story. Skilled questioning by the teacher enabled this success to be achieved. Classroom assistants provide very good support for groups of pupils. They are often used to assess pupils' response to the teacher's questions. Some good quality marking is evident, which refers to the purpose of the piece of work and points are given for improvement, but this is not done consistently in all classes.

76. The school has prepared detailed planning documents for speaking and listening, reading and writing. Weekly planning is detailed and shows awareness of pupils of varying levels of attainment. Evaluation of lessons helps inform future planning. Many new resources have been acquired, including a number of big books and good quality books for the library. Good assessment and recording procedures are in place for all aspects of English. A spreadsheet computer program enables the school to track individual pupils' progress and identify targets for each. There is a need for narrower and more specific targets focused on each pupil's writing skills. The analysis of test data is leading to focused priorities for improvement, which are beginning to have an impact.
77. The subject is well managed by an industrious, knowledgeable co-ordinator. The Education Action Zone has provided a great deal of valuable support with the teaching of the 'Early Reading Research'. Very good action plans have been prepared, with challenging targets, to raise standards further.

MATHEMATICS

78. Although the previous report indicated that standards were broadly average by the end of Year 2, inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics are below average in this Year 2. There are several reasons for this: the current Year 2 includes a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs; several of these pupils have poor attendance records; and several pupils have joined the school recently. However, standards in the current Year 1 are on course to be average, and this confirms the improving trend in the school's test results since 2000.
79. At present, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their starting point on entry to the school. This good achievement is due to a variety of reasons, all of which have had a positive impact on standards. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been successful and it is being used well to meet the pupils' needs. The training for teachers in the use of the strategy has been effective and the quality of teaching has improved markedly. Teaching and learning are monitored much more closely than before, and the careful scrutiny of pupils' work and the good analysis of their test results enable teachers to focus their work on areas of weakness. Assessment procedures are developing well and enabling teachers to provide additional support for targeted groups of pupils. The provision of short daily mental mathematics sessions provides reinforcement and maintains pupils' attention. The use of computers and mathematics software has assisted the consolidation of number work through activities designed to practise number bonds, ordering, counting and matching. The final major impact on the rising standards is the positive attitudes of the pupils towards the subject. From observing their work and responses in lessons it is clear that the vast majority of the pupils enjoy the lessons, as a result of the wide range of appropriate mathematical games and fun activities which teachers use to familiarise pupils with numbers, patterns and shapes. Pupils are well behaved and attentive and demonstrate genuine pride in their work when they show it to an adult.
80. In Year 1 pupils are beginning to sequence numbers confidently and they find the missing numbers in given sequences. They recognise two-dimensional shapes like squares, rectangles, triangles and circles. They also learn to measure using a range of non-standard measures. They count appropriately and do simple adding and subtraction problems, although they sometimes become confused between adding and taking away. Because of the good levels of support, lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs progress well in their mathematics lessons. In Year 2, pupils' work also demonstrates good achievement. Most pupils have developed a sound understanding of place value. They recognise the value of coins, but they do not have sufficient opportunities to solve number problems involving money. There are a number of pupils

who are unable to demonstrate swift mental recall of the multiplication tables. Pupils have a secure understanding of common two-and three-dimensional shapes. They describe the properties of triangles, rectangles and squares with reasonable accuracy. Mathematical vocabulary is introduced in lessons, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use this in discussions of their work in order to develop greater confidence in their understanding and use of mathematics.

81. Teaching and learning in the subject are good overall. There are examples of very good and outstanding teaching throughout the school. In one outstanding lesson there was very precise planning, a brisk mental mathematics session at the start which promoted pupils' thinking very well, a range of stimulating activities, very effective classroom management and an excellent working relationship with the classroom assistant. Teachers know their pupils well because of the assessment information they gather. The information is used well to target particular pupils so that those pupils can improve their attainment. Teachers plan their lessons well and this ensures that pupils build upon their knowledge in a consistent and systematic way. The teachers' management of pupils is good. This means that pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good and this creates a pleasant and purposeful working ambience in which pupils feel comfortable about learning. Classroom assistants provide good support to lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. This support enables pupils to make good progress in lessons.
82. The use of numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory. However, there is room for improvement in the way in which numeracy is applied in other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities are sometimes missed to reinforce mathematical vocabulary and numeracy skills in other subjects.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject and a well-defined responsibility for monitoring standards. The results of the national tests are thoroughly analysed. The school is strongly committed to helping each and every pupil to achieve the best they can. For example, the teacher in the outstanding lesson observed consistently said to the pupils, 'We want to make mathematics easy for ourselves, and we need to be challenged'. Pupils' work is assessed regularly to ensure that they are making good enough progress, and the school retains good records to show what pupils have learned so that future work can build upon it. The management of resources is good. They are sufficient, easily accessible and helpful in supporting learning in lessons.

SCIENCE

84. Inspection evidence shows that standards are below average by the end of Year 2, but pupils' achievement is good from their well below average starting point on entry to the school. The subject has had a low profile until recently because the school was advised to focus on raising standards in English and mathematics while the school was subject to Special Measures. Consequently, pupils in the current Year 2 have had fewer scientific experiences further down the school than they might have done and this affects the standards attained. However, pupils are doing well because the current Year 2 includes a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, language skills are underdeveloped and absenteeism is high. There is also considerable mobility amongst the pupils. Standards in the current Year 1, where fewer pupils have special educational needs, are similar to those found for pupils of this age nationally and these pupils are achieving very well. The consistently good teaching contributes positively to the rising standards.
85. The previous inspection report identified that opportunities for investigative work were infrequent and the school is working hard to improve this. No judgements were made about standards. Teacher assessments in recent years have suggested that standards have remained well below average, but inspection evidence shows that standards are slowly rising because of the increased emphasis on the subject and the attention now being paid to investigative work. There are, however, some weaknesses that affect the standards attained. Teachers lack confidence in assessing at the higher levels in the statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 and last year fewer pupils than might be expected were assessed at the higher Level 3. The development of the subject is still at an early stage and although pupils are offered a wide range of challenging tasks,

higher-attaining pupils are offered the same tasks as average-attaining pupils, rather than different activities to extend their learning. The school has already identified this as in need of improvement.

86. By the end of Year 2, pupils sort food into groups such as fats, fibre, protein and carbohydrates. They learn the importance of a healthy diet and know that creatures live in different habitats. They know that baby animals grow into large ones and that they have different names. Some pupils are still unsure of the correct names for adult animals. They recognise fruits and vegetables, although pupils with special educational needs sometimes make mistakes; for example, identifying a tangerine as a tomato. In all lessons observed, skills of scientific enquiry were well taught and pupils developed an understanding of fair testing. In two lessons, they carried out an investigation to test whether a variety of materials were waterproof. They measured the amount of water dropped onto the materials with spoons, understanding the need for the same number of spoonfuls to make the test fair. However, some pupils with special educational needs had not understood that the spoonfuls needed to be level. They learn to add switches to their electrical circuits and use simple vocabulary to label their diagrams. In Year 1, pupils' work indicates that they can sort materials into magnetic and non-magnetic. They understand the properties of materials and compare metal, plastic, wood and fabric. They know the difference between living and non-living things.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is a significant factor leading to rising standards. Teachers are well organised and resources are always well prepared to ensure no time is wasted. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, one for pupils in Year 1 and two for pupils in Year 2. In the good lesson for pupils in Year 1, the teacher gave very clear instructions, allocating roles to pupils in the mixed ability groups, to ensure that they could test the suitability of materials for a rain hat. This very good organisation ensured that the activity ran smoothly and precluded any argument about who would undertake each task. At the end of the lesson, the teacher competently assessed the understanding of each pupil by asking them to point to the hat they would choose to keep dry and recording the outcomes. Despite the practical opportunities and adult support, several pupils with special educational needs had still not understood. In another good lesson for pupils in Year 2, where most have special educational needs, the teacher encouraged pupils to talk to their 'talking partner' about the properties of an umbrella, taking every opportunity to develop their language skills. She patiently explained the use of a 'dropper' to ensure a fair test when they tested their materials. The pupils worked hard to complete the task because the teacher had provided an interesting range of fabrics to test. This task met the needs of these pupils, who were working at a level similar to pupils in Year 1. A very good lesson for pupils in Year 2 was characterised by challenging open-ended tasks that met the needs of all pupils. Challenging questions encouraged pupils to experiment with materials to find out which ones would conduct electricity. Very high expectations and excellent class management strategies, including the use of a wind chime to gain the pupils' attention, allowed pupils to find out for themselves how to make a switch. A few higher-attaining pupils solved this problem for themselves and most were successful after a skilful demonstration by the teacher. The very clear explanations and encouraging style resulted in all pupils showing a determination to succeed and pride in their achievement. In all these lessons, classroom assistants made a valuable contribution to the standards attained.
88. The curriculum is planned according to national guidelines and a cycle of topics ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are adequately covered. This ensures that pupils develop their skills steadily and systematically as they move through the school. Assessments of the units of work are undertaken each half term and teachers are supported by guidance that gives useful questions to ask for each unit and which levels to award. There is room for improvement in teachers' confidence in assessing at the higher Level 3 to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils.
89. Science is satisfactorily linked to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils develop their numeracy skills when making graphs to show how much of each food group is eaten each week. They count drops of water when testing materials. They sort materials into sets according to whether they are waterproof or not. Literacy skills are developed by recording the results of investigations and through the emphasis placed on language development. Pupils use information and

communication technology satisfactorily to record information in bar charts and to type poems about the sea and its properties.

90. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the way forward for the subject and has already identified the need to improve teachers' confidence in assessing at the higher level and to improve the provision for higher-attaining pupils. She is successfully implementing improved opportunities for investigative skills and raising the profile of the subject. Resources are of good quality and are well used in lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Judgements are based on the one lesson seen during the inspection, scrutiny of planning, work on display and discussion with the co-ordinator. This indicates that standards are below average by the end of Year 2. However, pupils are achieving well from their below average starting point. Again, there has been little emphasis on the subject in recent years and the headteacher, who is the co-ordinator, has made a promising start by introducing a wide range of good quality resources to motivate both staff and pupils. No reference was made to the subject in the previous inspection.
92. Examination of work on display shows that pupils develop an appropriate range of skills. Pupils in Year 1 show the development of observational skills in their self-portraits, using charcoal and paint. They develop their pencil skills in their representations of historical artefacts. They explore the use of different materials when they scrunch, twist, plait and tear to make collages. By Year 2, pupils use thin, thick and smudged lines in their charcoal self-portraits, some including detail such as eyelashes. A wide range of paintings by well-known artists is used as a stimulus for sea paintings. Pupils explore a variety of media to show warmth, showing a developing understanding of tone, colour and shade. Although some patterns based on colour mixing show good hand control, much of the work on display lacked detail and was of a standard usually seen by younger pupils. There are several reasons for this. The policy and scheme of work is due for review and some teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
93. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. However, in the lesson seen during the inspection, for pupils in Year 2, the quality of teaching was very good. Here, very high expectations and a well-organised classroom where very good quality resources were readily available, enabled pupils to produce pictures of good quality. Calm music was playing as pupils used prints by Van Gogh as a stimulus for their work. The teacher and classroom assistant circulated, encouraging and praising pupils' efforts. As a result, the pupils showed sustained levels of concentration and were willing to persevere. The opportunity to explore the use of gouache, a variety of tools and the pointillism technique motivated the pupils who showed justified pride in their work.
94. The school uses information and communication technology to support learning in art and design through programs on drawing and painting. The standards of artwork mean that presentation in other subjects is not as high as it might be. The headteacher has a clear view for improvement in the subject and it is a current priority on the school development plan.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Judgements are based on one short lesson where pupils were completing an activity from the previous day, examination of work on display, photographs of previous work, planning documents and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator. This indicates that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils are achieving well. The previous inspection made no reference to the subject.
96. This subject has also had a low profile as the school worked to raise standards in literacy and numeracy and the school has done well to raise standards so successfully. The co-ordinator has an enthusiasm for the subject and has ensured that the policy has been improved to include more emphasis on the discussion and evaluation of ideas. Resources have been improved to include

good quality materials and construction sets. The school is now following national guidance and the co-ordinator monitors closely to ensure that all teachers are following this scheme of work. The school identified that pupils at the beginning of Year 1 lacked many of the necessary skills, such as scissor control, folding and cutting card and experience of using construction kits. A clear list has been drawn up and activities for children in the reception class and nursery now place emphasis on the development of these skills. As a result, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have a firm foundation for the development in design and technology skills and all these good initiatives are impacting positively on standards.

97. Pupils in Year 1 investigate making hinges, using glue and staples to ensure that the doors on their houses open and close. They design peg dolls before using a wide range of materials to clothe them. They know how to make levers and slides, making card teddies with moving limbs and eyes. They follow instructions to make dolls decorated with ribbon and wool. By Year 2, they select appropriate materials and techniques to make vehicles, showing an understanding of how wheels are attached to axles. They combine different materials to make realistic Guy Fawkes models. They develop their information and communication technology skills by using a program to design a bedroom. They use construction kits to make models for different purposes. They know that it is important to design a product before making it and suggest ways of improving their work.
98. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching, but in the one lesson seen the quality of teaching was good. Very good support from both the teacher and classroom assistant ensured that pupils used scissors, tape and glue effectively to make moving pictures. Good questioning skills encouraged pupils to evaluate their work and develop their vocabulary.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 but pupils are achieving well. No reference was made to the subject in the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because of good planning which is based on an updated scheme of work, enthusiastic teaching, appropriate procedures for assessment and the good arrangements for inclusion that are in place. The low levels of general knowledge of a high proportion of pupils and their limited experience of life outside their locality adversely affect the awareness that many pupils have of geographical ideas and the levels of skills needed to find geographical information. During the last two years the school has had to prioritise the need to boost standards in English and mathematics and this has also had an effect on overall standards in geography. The quality and quantity of written work in pupils' books are largely unsatisfactory due to limitations in pupils' literacy skills and this has also affected standards in the subject.
100. In Years 1 and 2, the limited written evidence of the study of geography indicates that pupils have studied the local environment around the school and carried out a traffic survey culminating in a graph compiled by the pupils. Very few pupils in their written work display a detailed knowledge of geographical features of their own locality. A scrutiny of work revealed that the teaching often fails to focus sufficiently on the development of geographical vocabulary and skills, with the result that pupils do not do as well as they might in the subject. Some pupils show an appropriate awareness and understanding of other places as part of their work on the Isle of Struay. There is evidence from displays to show that pupils' knowledge of places around the globe is gradually improving as they bring postcards and family-holiday pictures from abroad. The travels of 'Scott' the teddy and the diaries produced of his holidays give pupils an understanding of other places.
101. The behaviour of pupils in the one lesson observed was good. They had positive attitudes to their work and established good relationships with their peers and the adults in their classroom. In class and group activities the majority of pupils were willing to share resources and to help others. Their interest in the subject has been maintained through the use of computers to study coastlines and islands, but opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance geographical knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped.

102. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching overall. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff suggest that teaching is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 were told at the start of the lesson what they were learning and the activities were established well on their previous learning. The teaching methods were effective and the pupils were managed well in mixed-ability groups. There were appropriate links with other subjects such as science and art and design and the classroom assistants were used well to support all pupils in their group activities.
103. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The revision of the policy is in line with national guidance and the scheme of work is helping to promote improving standards throughout the school. The satisfactory assessment procedures provide teachers with more information about pupils' prior attainment, but the assessment information gathered does not always assist in individual lesson planning. A priority for improvement is currently the availability and overall quality of resources. Weaker links to the use of information and communication technology are also limiting the opportunities that pupils have for independent research.

HISTORY

104. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 but achievement is good because of the pupils' poor skills on entry to the school. The previous inspection made no reference to the subject. The subject has been under-emphasised while the school was focusing on raising standards in literacy and numeracy and the good planning, which is now in place, has yet to impact fully on standards. All pupils, however, make good progress in Years 1 and 2. This is due, in the main, to the determination and willingness of the staff to work effectively as a team to ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are catered for in a consistent and commendable manner. Arrangements for the inclusion of all pupils are good and this ensures that boys and girls work happily together in the groups observed. Judgements are based on lesson observation, discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of the limited amount of work available from this year and planning documents.
105. In Year 1 pupils learn about toys old and new. A visit to a local toy museum has enhanced understanding of this area of the curriculum. They also study different homes and make appropriate links with other areas of the curriculum such as geography and design and technology. In Year 2, pupils develop their knowledge of famous people from the past, such as Guy Fawkes, and study the Great Fire of London. Representatives of the local fire services visit the school to talk to pupils about this aspect of their learning. Pupils have also been involved in setting up a decorative museum in one of the school corridors, and there are good displays of Victorian and Edwardian kitchen utensils and artefacts.
106. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. However, in the lesson observed, the quality of teaching was good. The teacher had planned the lesson well and used a variety of strategies to stimulate the pupils' learning. There were good opportunities for pupils to gain a sense of the past through handling real toys, old and new. Pupils had also benefited from the recent visit of a local resident who had shared her chronological experiences with the class.
107. Pupils' behaviour is good and most show positive attitudes to their work. Most pupils are inquisitive about the past and want to find things out for themselves, but opportunities for independent research are limited. This is because resources are unsatisfactory in this subject and the opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology are underdeveloped.
108. The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The newly appointed coordinator is working hard to develop the subject throughout the school. She is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed to improving standards in history. The scheme of work is now based on national guidance given to schools, but the full impact of this on pupils' learning has yet to be felt. Although there are satisfactory assessment procedures in place, they need to be used purposefully so as to

influence future planning to a more significant degree. Because of the recent understandable emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the school, the co-ordinator has not yet had time to evaluate monitoring procedures in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards by the end of Year 2 are average and achievement is good. These judgements are based on the observation of lessons aimed at teaching information and communication technology skills and of pupils working on computers in lessons. In addition, pupils' work on display and in other subjects was scrutinised and pupils in Year 2 were interviewed. The school is now in a good position to raise standards further because of the good level of resources provided, the training of all members of staff, the high levels of enthusiasm that staff demonstrate for using information and communication technology and the effective support of the designated classroom assistant. This was identified as a strength in the previous inspection. Given the low starting point of most pupils when they enter the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
110. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build effectively on the good introduction to computers they receive in the nursery and reception classes. They learn to enter and to correct text, and in some classes they reinforce their work in literacy, for example by inserting full stops and reinforcing spellings. Higher-attaining pupils develop good independence in completing and printing work, while lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, complete work well in response to particularly effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. As well as teaching skills in information and communication technology through regular computer lessons, teachers also identify opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they have been taught through other subjects. For example, pupils have used computers to research for information on coastlines and islands in geography, and they have made good use of the Internet to find information on church architecture as a result of a visit to their local church.
111. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are confident with the subject and make good use of classroom assistants to oversee groups of pupils working with computers during lessons. They make effective use of computers at times to support literacy and numeracy lessons. The school has invested in staffing aimed at supporting learning in the subject and a classroom assistant with considerable skills makes effective contributions, whether supporting teachers or working with individual pupils. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about using computers and confidently explain how to print their work and how to use the 'mouse' to click on the relevant icons.
112. There is good leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject's development and has identified appropriate targets for improvement in the comprehensive action plan. A suitable scheme of work has been introduced based on national guidelines, which helps to ensure that pupils develop their skills steadily and systematically as they move through the school and that all elements of the subject will be covered. Resources are generally good, with some funding supplied through the Education Action Zone, although some of the computers are now looking dated. The co-ordinator has already identified the need to replace these with more up-to-date equipment. The school also needs to make greater use of an interactive white-board and projector to aid teacher demonstrations. Assessment procedures are good and there are detailed records of pupils' attainments in the teaching groups. However, these do not always include sufficient details about what pupils know, understand and can do.

MUSIC

113. Judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work and planning, discussions with pupils and teachers, observations of one lesson and assemblies. Standards are below average but achievement is good. Pupils enter Year 1 with very low standards, but as a result of satisfactory planning and monitoring and a shared commitment among teachers to succeed, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning throughout

the school. The previous inspection made no reference to the subject and it has not had a high priority.

114. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experienced few planned regular opportunities to sing. There is no regular hymn or song practice for classes and this means that pupils are not able to extend their singing skills. Younger pupils learn to tap and clap a rhythm and they are beginning to learn about the difference between rhythm and beat. However, a significant number of pupils find it difficult to copy a rhythmic pattern correctly, or to clap a beat consistently. Evidence suggests that there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their skills through more challenging tasks in lessons. The standard of singing is below average despite the fact that pupils enjoy the activity and join in with enthusiasm. There is often a lack of dynamics, phrasing and pitch, and many pupils do not sing in tune. Although pupils listen to different types of music in lessons and during assemblies, they cannot recall the names of the pieces heard, and their ability to appraise the music using appropriate terminology is limited.
115. Too few lessons were observed during the inspection to make a judgement about teaching. However, inspection evidence shows that some teachers lack the confidence in teaching various aspects of the music curriculum. Although many pupils enjoy their music lessons and attitudes to the subject are generally good, pupils have too few opportunities for composing and performing.
116. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. An appropriate policy and scheme of work have been produced and the co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. Although there are no support teachers at present, the coordinator is actively seeking a peripatetic teacher who will be able to promote learning in various aspects of the music curriculum. She recognises that many of the resources need to be replaced or renewed. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is largely underdeveloped. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but the information gathered is not used consistently to promote music standards throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. By the end of Year 2 most pupils attain average standards. The previous report made no judgement on standards. Judgements are based on teachers' planning, and lesson observations. In these lessons, pupils were achieving well, including those with special educational needs. The pupils demonstrated good body control and good awareness of space. Well-planned lessons and good teaching ensure a good quality of learning and contribute to the standards attained. The lessons organised as 'Gym trail' for the pupils with special educational needs ensures a high quality of learning for these pupils with poor co-ordination skills. This is because of the very good teaching of specific co-ordination skills.
118. All pupils learn about the importance of warm-up and cool-down activities. They do these well. Pupils confidently develop dance movements in response to music. In Year 1 pupils demonstrated well the different movements of a puppet, imaginatively using different parts of their bodies. They were able to move around the hall at different speeds without interfering with others' work. In Year 2, pupils showed good controlled movements when they worked on the theme of the sea. They effectively used the top half of their bodies to represent the curling, flowing, turning sea. They demonstrated well the story of Krishna and the serpent keeping good time to the music. Both boys and girls made a good effort to improve their dance and enjoyed the lessons. They undress and dress very quickly for lessons so that time is used to the best advantage. Dress is appropriate and earrings are taped to ensure safety.
119. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching overall. Lessons have a well-planned structure with appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities and a good pace. Work builds on previous lessons and pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their learning and improve their performance. The good teaching in a Year 2 lesson gave pupils the opportunity to listen to music carefully to get a feeling of the different moods of the sea. Very good links were made to the story they were reading in their literacy lesson about 'The lighthouse keeper' so reinforcing the meaning and use of the vocabulary in the text. In another good lesson the

classroom assistant was effectively assessing the pupils' ability to follow instructions. All members of staff change appropriately for lessons and in the good lessons join in and demonstrate for pupils.

120. Good use is made of a nationally recognised scheme of work that guides teachers and enables them to plan their lessons well. The headteacher, who has a clear understanding of the future educational direction for the subject, is currently managing physical education. Planning and lesson observations are monitored. Training in 'Top Dance' will shortly take place along with a review of resources, which are adequate to deliver the curriculum. Good liaison has been set up with the junior school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with the requirements of the Essex Locally Agreed Syllabus. They are achieving well. The previous report made no judgement on standards. Evidence is drawn from lesson observations, assemblies, displays around the school and from scrutiny of work. The morality of the Christian faith forms the basis of the 'Golden Rules' of the school. The wider aspects of promoting independence, self-esteem and care for others form the basis of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. They are promoted across the curriculum, through religious education and assemblies. Assemblies encourage spiritual development in an ethos in which all pupils can grow, flourish and respect others and be respected. Time for reflection is carefully introduced and silently observed by all pupils. Pupils are developing good attitudes to different faiths and are attaining satisfactorily in their knowledge and understandings of them. They are becoming aware of similar and different values within cultures and religions.
122. Pupils have an understanding of the concept of God, of Christianity, and of customs and festivals associated with different faiths. In the Christian faith, Year 1 pupils have recently looked at the ceremony of baptism. This work forms part of a topic on themselves. They understand the importance of their own family and friends. Year 2 pupils have recently visited a local church and seen the purpose and use of symbolic artefacts and church furniture, for example the font and the lectern. They are able to explain that God takes care of different people from all over the world. Before and after the visit, these pupils used the Internet to make comparisons between the modern church they have visited and old churches. They recognised the differences in the stained glass windows and the shape of the churches.
123. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching overall. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives, shared with the pupils, and build on earlier work so that pupils know what they are to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They have a sensitive approach which gives pupils confidence to share views and ideas. A strength of the teaching observed was the teacher's questioning which encouraged pupils to reflect on their feelings after their visit to the church. Classroom assistants made a very positive contribution to pupils' learning in assisting these pupils to record their answers.
124. Management of religious education is good. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about developing her role and has a clear view of how to raise attainment in the subject. She has produced a new scheme of work that meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus; an assembly programme is effectively linked to the scheme. The assessment procedures are developing well. Good links have been made with the junior school co-ordinator for religious education. Resources are good and well organised to support teaching of the different topics and assemblies. Literacy skills in reading and writing are in the early stages of development. Good use is made of the Internet and videos to support learning.