

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIORY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bicknacre, Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115000

Headteacher: Mrs Lynne Rand

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Evans
20737

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 247525

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 5 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Bicknacre Road Bicknacre Chelmsford |
| Postcode: | CM3 4ES |
| Telephone number: | (01245) 225450 |
| Fax number: | (01245) 227873 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs Beryl Garrood |
| Date of previous inspection: | October 2000 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 20737 | Mr P Evans | Registered inspector | English Information and communication technology Geography History | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 14347 | Mrs J Lindsay | Lay inspector | Educational inclusion | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 20457 | Mr B Fletcher | Team inspector | Special educational needs Mathematics Music Physical education Religious Education | How well is the school led and managed? |
| 18624 | Mrs A Shaw | Team inspector | Foundation Stage curriculum Science Art and design Design and technology | How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Priory Primary School serves the village of Bicknacre on the outskirts of Chelmsford in Essex. The school is a small primary school when compared to the national average size. It provides education for 177 pupils, 88 boys and 89 girls, aged from five to eleven. The majority of pupils live in Bicknacre, although some do travel from other villages to attend Priory Primary School. The percentage of pupils identified as being eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is below the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Employment in the area is good and most pupils live in privately owned homes. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is in line with expectations for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of Priory Primary School is good. The quality of teaching within the school is good, overall. This, together with the very good attitudes among pupils, leads to the above average standards achieved by pupils as they leave the school. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, visitors to the school and outside visits, which contribute well to pupils' learning. The leadership and management of the school are good.

When considering its context, the standards that it achieves, the level of education that it offers to all its pupils and the money that it spends, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and the governing body ensure that there is a clear direction for the school and a very good capacity for further improvement.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are very good.
- The consistently good quality of teaching throughout the school ensures that all pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well.
- The school's very good provision for pupils' moral and social development is reflected in the pupils' very good attitudes to their work and the very good relationships between pupils and with adults.

What could be improved

- The assessment of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and physical education is less than satisfactory.
- The school does not formally identify gifted and talented pupils.
- The school does not have a health and safety policy in place.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Priory Primary School was last inspected in October 2000 when concerns were raised about the standards in foundation subjects and information technology. There was a need to continue to improve the quality of teaching and to develop the role of curriculum co-ordinators to include monitoring and evaluation of provision in their subject areas. Standards in information and communication technology across the school are now very good and the standards achieved in foundation subjects are at least satisfactory and, in some areas, are good. The quality of teaching has continued to improve and teaching across the school is now good. Curriculum co-ordinators are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of their subject areas. Curriculum planning has also been improved and there is now a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school. Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | Compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | All schools | | | Similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | B | C | B | A |
| Mathematics | B | D | B | A |
| Science | E | C | B | A |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

On entry to the school's Reception class children's levels of attainment are average, overall. They make good progress and, by the time they move into Year 1, the majority achieve the targets for children of their age in all six areas of learning, as set out in the national early learning goals.

In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds, the school's results were above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. Standards in science, according to teacher assessments, were average. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001, the school's results were above average in English, mathematics and science. This shows a marked improvement on the school's results for 2000 when standards were average in English and science and below average in mathematics. The 2001 results in English and mathematics returned to the above average standards achieved in 1999. However, standards in science have improved steadily from well below average in 1999 to average in 2000 and above average in 2001.

When compared to the results of schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, the results for eleven-year-olds are average in science and below average in English and mathematics. However, if the results for eleven-year-olds are compared against schools with similar prior attainment¹ the school's results are well above average in all three subjects, as shown in the table above. The school sets realistic, though challenging, targets and has good strategies for reaching them. All pupils make good progress through the school.

Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics are in line to be above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in English are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Standards in science are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in information and communication technology are well above expectations throughout the school. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and above expectations when pupils leave the school. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expectations at the end of Year 6. Standards in Religious Education are in line with the expectations for eleven-year olds, in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

¹ School's results for eleven year olds in 2001 are compared with schools that achieved similar average scores at the end of Year 2 in 1997

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and are very enthusiastic about the work they undertake. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. Pupils' behaviour both in and out of classrooms is good. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good, overall. There are very good relationships between pupils and pupils and their teachers. |
| Attendance | Very good. Attendance is well above the national average. |

Pupils' attitudes to school and the work that they undertake are very good. There are very good relationships between all pupils and staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | 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.

When inspection evidence provided by pupils' past work and the quality of teaching seen in lessons are considered together, the quality of teaching is good, overall. The marking of pupils' work is good throughout the school. All pupils' work is marked and all teachers regularly use comments to guide pupils on how to improve their work. Teachers' management of pupils is very good. In too much of pupils' past work, in art and design, design technology, history, geography, music, Religious Education and information and communication technology, the same tasks were given to all pupils, irrespective of their levels of attainment. This slows the pace at which pupils learn, in these subjects. Forty-four lessons or parts of lessons were seen during the inspection. In two lessons, the quality of teaching was excellent and it was very good in another ten. The quality of teaching was good in 21 lessons, satisfactory in eight and less than satisfactory in only one. Two lessons were observed for too short a time to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. The effectiveness of the strategies for teaching English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy is good. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' levels of learning closely matched the good quality of teaching.

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. For all pupils, throughout the school, the quality of learning is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, which is enhanced by the very good range of extra curricular activities provided. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. All pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and teachers assistants to enable them to make good progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural | Good. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils' spiritual development is good and provision for cultural development is satisfactory. |

| | |
|--|--|
| development | |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is less than satisfactory in some foundation subjects. |

The partnership between the school and parents is very good. Richness is added to the school's curriculum provision by the very good range of extra-curricular activities and the good range of visits and the visitors invited to the school. The care that the school offers to all its pupils is good, overall. The less than satisfactory use of assessment information in some foundation subjects slows the pace of pupils' learning in these subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher provides very good, clear educational direction for the school. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good. The governing body makes a good contribution in shaping the educational direction of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good. Priorities are well set and the strategies for achieving the school's targets are very good. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The school makes good use of strategic funding and ensures that this is appropriately spent. |

There is a very good partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. All teachers and teacher assistants work well as a team. The governors fulfil their part in the management of the school well. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. The quality of teaching is very well monitored. The number and range of experience of teaching and support staff are good. The range and quality of resources for teaching and learning are good and the school's accommodation is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact that their children like school. • They are comfortable to approach the school with any questions or concerns. • The leadership and management of the school. • The quality of teaching in the school. • The high expectations that the school has for their children. • The behaviour of the children in the school. • The good progress their children make at school. • The way the school helps their children to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra curricular activities offered by the school. • A very small minority of parents have concerns about mixed age classes. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| become mature and responsible. | |
|--------------------------------|--|

Inspection evidence supports the positive views of the great majority of parents. The range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school is very good. Inspection evidence does not support the views of a minority of parents in this matter. At the meeting for parents, concerns were raised about pupils being taught in mixed age classes. Assessment information is not used well enough to carefully match work to pupils' individual levels of ability in these classes, to fully extend older and more able pupils in some subjects of the curriculum. Inspection evidence supports the views of a very small minority of parents in this matter.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the time of the last inspection in November 2000, standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were judged to be average in English and mathematics. Standards in other subjects were judged to be largely in line with national expectations, but too dependent upon the strengths of individual teachers. Standards in information and communication technology were judged to be in line with expectations and improving. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English are now above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science are in line to be above average at the end of Year 6. In information and communication technology, standards are now well above expectations throughout the school and standards in both music and physical education are now above expectations at the end of the school. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good level of improvement since the last inspection. Evidence shows that standards in religious education are broadly in line with the expectations of pupils of seven and eleven-year-olds set out in the locally agreed syllabus.
2. Children's levels of attainment on entry to the school are average, overall, as shown by county tests and assessments. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority have achieved the targets set for children of their age in the national early learning goals in all six areas of learning.
3. The latest available national test results, from 2001, show that, at the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards which are average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, when compared to all schools. When compared to the results of schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, these results were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science showed that standards were in line with the national average. National test results for pupils at the end of Year 6, in 2001, showed that standards were above average in English, mathematics and science, when compared with schools nationally. When compared with schools with a similar level of attainment at the end of Year 2, these results were well above average in all three subjects.
4. The trend of improvement for pupils in Year 2 in the three years 1999 to 20001 shows a slight decline in standards of reading and writing. However, the average points score per pupil remains above the national average in both reading and writing. In mathematics, the trend has been steadily upward at the same rate as the rise in standards nationally.
5. The trend of improvement over the years 1999 – 2001 for pupils at the end of Year 6 has been steadily upward in English and mathematics, in line with the rise in standards nationally. In science, standards have improved significantly during the same period and have exceeded the average rate of improvement shown nationally.
6. Teacher assessments of the number of pupils who would reach average and above average levels at the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science were accurate. The school sets challenging, but realistic, targets and has developed very good strategies for attaining those targets. However, occasionally, the school is prevented from reaching its targets through no fault of its own. Such circumstances arose in 2002 when a number of pupils joined Year 6 not long before the national tests. These pupils constituted 20% of the class and all but one received special educational needs support. This had the effect of lowering the results in the 2002 national tests, the statistics for which are not yet confirmed.
7. Teachers know their pupils well and successfully identify those who need extra help. However, the school does not formally identify gifted and talented pupils and strategies for their identification and full extension to reach their potential are not in place. In spite of teachers planning work for more able pupils which is based on their knowledge of their pupils, the lack of

formal procedures to clearly identify such pupils has the effect of not enabling all of them to reach their full potential.

8. In Year 4 and Year 5, classes are of two age ranges and, while the school implements strategies which ensure that good progress is maintained in English, mathematics and science, this is not so in art and design, design technology, history, geography, music and Religious Education.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the classroom and good progress in withdrawal groups for literacy, where they are taught by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The quality of the individual education plans is good. They are accessible and easy to read, which enables classroom teachers and teacher assistants to plan the support programme very well. Pupils' individual targets are carefully set to match need. They are realistic and measurable. The targets are revised every term. Pupils' progress towards their achievement is closely monitored. There are recorded gains in pupils' reading, writing and spelling and in numeracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Boys and girls of all ages now have very good attitudes to school and the great majority approach all aspects of school life with a great deal of enthusiasm. This is reflected in the fact that almost all of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children liked coming to school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection could think of nothing they would change at school to improve it and many said they "loved coming to school". Such very positive attitudes are evident in lessons, especially when the tasks are suitably challenging and interesting. For example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 2, pupils were creating repeating patterns, using blocks or beads or shapes. They all remained interested in what they were doing and were pleased to talk about and show their work. Similarly, older pupils showed a high level of interest in the life of Tudor explorers. They listened very well to a taped diary extract then settled quickly to answer questions based on what they had heard.
11. Pupils also show a very high level of interest in other aspects of school life, such as attending the extra-curricular clubs, for example the Information Technology club or the cricket club.
12. Behaviour in the school is good, overall, and there has been an improvement in the behaviour of the small minority who gave some cause for concern at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and support staff manage pupils very well and, as a result, lessons are very rarely disrupted. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils rise to the challenge well. Over 90% of parents who responded to the questionnaire before the inspection felt that behaviour in the school was good. Some parents are impressed by the standards of behaviour when they visit the school, for example for the Harvest Festival assembly. During the inspection, pupils behaved well in the playground during the morning and lunchtime breaks and, although there was some boisterous behaviour from boys, there was no evidence of intimidation or harassment. Pupils feel safe and happy at break time and the school has successfully reduced bullying to the minimum. Pupils spoken to state that, if there are any problems, they will be dealt with fairly and quickly.
13. The school has had no exclusions, either temporary or permanent, since the previous inspection.
14. Pupils begin to develop an understanding of different religious beliefs and to respect them. This is a good beginning to their learning to live in a multi-cultural society. The spiritual development of pupils is good. Pupils show an awareness of spirituality and know right from wrong. Assemblies during the inspection offered pupils appropriate moments of prayer or reflection to develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. They learn to recognise the qualities in other people and they nominate their classmates for praise because of the care that they have shown, for example in the playground. From the Reception class upward, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their work, for example, during the plenary element of lessons. During circle time and religious education pupils are given opportunities to reflect on caring for each other and the environment. Pupils are encouraged by their teachers to take responsibility for each other in the playground.

15. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and respond well to the school rules. Pupils are generally courteous, showing respect to one another and are polite to adults, including visitors. They are orderly when they move around the school and on entering and leaving assemblies. They behave well in the dining room and when in the playground. Pupils in all Year Groups regularly work in pairs or small groups to discuss elements of their work and some teachers make very good use of interactive teaching methods to take full advantage in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Most pupils generally show respect for each other, for example, when they listen carefully to each other's contributions during discussions, showing a clear understanding of good manners or rudeness when talking about the attitudes of characters in a video of "Good night Mr. Tom" in Year 6. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are very aware of the difference between right and wrong. They relate very well to each other and to adults and there is a very high level of mutual respect shown throughout the school. This is reflected in the way that adults talk to pupils, treating them in a mature, but caring, way. Pupils respond by being very polite to each other and particularly to visitors. They hold open doors and are generally very friendly and welcoming. This results from the school's concerted efforts to ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. "Being a good neighbour" was an assembly theme during the inspection and pupils showed a very high level of understanding about the impact their actions could have on others. Pupils also show a good level of respect for the feelings values and beliefs of others through consistent reminders in class and again through assembly themes such as for Key Stage 2 pupils who were told the story of Dr Martin Luther King's fight against segregation. As a result of all of this, pupils mix very well together, regardless of background, race or special need, and the very good relationships have a positive impact on learning.
16. The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of their own culture. All pupils mix well across gender, ethnic and ability groups and play well in an atmosphere of mutual trust and harmony. Whilst pupils recognise individual differences, their friendships cross racial barriers and racism is not an issue. However, an awareness of the multi-cultural nature of our society and their place within it is not well developed and the school recognises this as an area for further development.
17. The extent to which pupils show initiative and take on responsibility is good, overall. Pupils are keen to take on responsible roles when they are given to them such as Year 6 pupils helping with assemblies and pupils of all ages returning registers to the office. However, there is, as yet, no school council, although one is planned for the future and there are few formal roles for older pupils to play, such as regularly helping with younger pupils. Pupils do show initiative in class when given the opportunity and older pupils were seen to take responsibility for their own learning, for example by looking up the word "replenish" in a dictionary when they did not know the meaning. On occasion, however, the opportunity was missed in lessons to allow pupils to show initiative and reflect on their own learning. For example, in a Year 2 music lesson, pupils were not given the chance to say how they felt their short compositions could be improved.
18. Attendance levels at the school are very good, with no reported unauthorised absence, and levels, overall well above those seen nationally. There is however an increasing number of parents who remove their children for holidays during term time. In some classes, since the start of this term, the number of days lost to holidays far exceeds those missed for all other reasons. Registers are marked correctly in the morning and afternoon.
19. Punctuality to school is good, with very few pupils arriving late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. During the inspection, 42 lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed altogether. The quality of teaching and learning was excellent in two lessons and very good in a further ten. Teaching was good in 21 lessons and satisfactory in a further eight. The quality of teaching was less than

satisfactory in only one lesson. Two other lessons were observed for too short a time to make a judgement.

21. The school's very good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching have had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Because of the implementation of high quality, rigorous and regular monitoring, of the quality of teaching, teaching standards have improved well since the last inspection. This has a very positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement.
22. The overall good quality of teaching and learning and the ability of all teachers to manage pupils' behaviour well, combine to produce good, very good or excellent learning in the great majority of lessons. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when only two out of five lessons were judged to be good or better. The quality of teaching observed in English and mathematics lessons confirms that the skills of literacy and numeracy are being well taught. This is confirmed when looking at pupils' past work.
23. Teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs and carefully assess the progress of each pupil. Teachers have very positive attitudes and this markedly increases the self-esteem of the pupils, who are eager to learn and to show what they can do. Teachers assess progress very carefully and steadily help pupils to build up basic skills. In the classroom, pupils are well integrated. Teacher assistants make notes about named pupils' progress and regularly exchange these with the class teacher. The special educational need co-ordinator gives very good support to pupils with statements and maintains a continuous record of progress. Teacher assistants are appropriately trained. A Year 6 group is withdrawn for numeracy and is well taught by the headteacher.
24. Teaching in the Foundation class is good. The teacher has established clear routines, uses resources well and has high expectations for pupils' progress. She has clear plans to help pupils become more independent as the year progresses. The teacher plans the curriculum carefully, so that children are working towards the Early Learning Goals (The standards that children are expected to achieve before joining Year 1).
25. The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2 is good, overall, with some that is very good. The evidence gained from looking at pupils' past work in literacy shows that the quality of teaching and learning in handwriting is satisfactory, overall. However, while pupils achieve a good joined style of handwriting by the time that they leave the school, handwriting is not taught frequently enough to enable younger pupils to achieve this at the earliest possible opportunity. In pupils' past work in numeracy the balance between the teaching of all aspects of the subject is good. Pupils of all levels of ability learn well and achieve above average standards. Pupils use computers regularly to undertake work in mathematics and this promotes their learning well. All teachers also ensure that pupils use their mathematical knowledge and understanding well in other subjects. This also promotes pupils' mathematical learning well.
26. Teachers' subject knowledge is good throughout the school. It is good in English and mathematics. In all classes in Years 1 and 2 there is good knowledge of how to teach phonic and number skills, which helps pupils to make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding enable pupils in Years 3 to 6 to build successfully on their early achievement. Together with the school's good strategies for using literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, this has a significant effect on the learning of pupils in these subjects.
27. Overall, teachers' planning is good. Yearly and half-termly planning is good and teachers' weekly planning shows the clear progression of lessons and good promotion of pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, teachers' planning in mixed age classes does not always ensure that work in foundation subjects is carefully matched to the varying levels of ability of all pupils. This has the effect of slowing the progress of older and more able pupils in these classes. The knowledge and understanding of learning objectives and success criteria for lessons are not fully understood by some teachers and further professional development is required to improve this

area of teaching. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and individual targets are set for individuals' progress. This promotes pupils' learning well when learning objectives are properly identified.

28. At the time of the last inspection, the school was required to develop systems for the assessment of pupils' progress in lessons, over longer time and throughout the school. This has been accomplished well in literacy, numeracy and to a lesser extent in science. The recording of assessments of progress for individual pupils in lessons was seen being undertaken, by teachers and teachers assistants, during the inspection. However, similar systems for assessing pupils' progress are not in place in art and design, design technology, history, geography, music, Religious Education or information and communication technology. This means that the quality and use of ongoing assessment are less than satisfactory, overall. This means that pupils' learning is slowed in these subjects, particularly older and more able pupils throughout the school and particularly in mixed age classes.
29. Teachers enable support staff to share teaching plans and brief them in good time for what support is needed. Teachers often plan to include information and communication technology in lessons on other subjects. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson in Religious Education, the teacher directed pupils to the computers during the main task. The work they undertook was good cross curricular work in Religious Education, literacy, information and communication technology and personal development, using the computer to write their feelings as the boy David facing Goliath. This promoted pupils' learning in all these areas very well.
30. The quality of marking is good, overall. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and often add written comments, giving praise for the work completed. This raises pupils' levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. Teachers also use written comments well to help pupils to improve their work.
31. There are weaknesses in the standards of presentation which teachers expect. For example, although pupils are learning joined writing, there is too long between handwriting lessons. This means that the development of a good joined style is slower than it should be. Evidence from pupils' past work shows that teachers, particularly of younger pupils, do not always insist on good handwriting and good standards of presentation, except on some occasions for final drafts and for display work. This means that these pupils do not always take a pride in the appearance of their work.
32. During lessons, teachers develop and repeat key words, using good teaching strategies to ensure that pupils know and understand them.
33. The school has a good policy in place for the management of pupils' behaviour. It is consistently well managed by all staff. This promotes good behaviour and attitudes to work in all pupils and ensures that all pupils know exactly what is expected of them in all situations.
34. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are regularly set mathematics and literacy homework, including reading and the learning of number bonds. The range of homework set is good in Years 3 to 6 and often involves parents in their children's learning. This enhances pupils' learning.
35. Overall, equality of access and opportunity for all pupils in the school is good. However, some of the older or higher attaining pupils, particularly in the mixed age classes, are not always working at suitably challenging levels. This is especially so in some foundation subjects.
36. The school identifies individual needs at an early stage and those pupils' needs are well met. However, the needs of higher achieving pupils are not always identified. The school does not have a register of gifted and talented pupils and while teachers match some work to pupils' advanced abilities this does not enable all of them to make the progress that they should.

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

37. The curriculum has been reviewed and now offers broad and balanced learning experiences for all pupils. It is fully inclusive. The review has had a significant impact upon standards that have been rising over the past few years, especially in English, maths and science. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Learning opportunities for pupils in the Reception year are good and the good planning ensures that all stages of the Early Learning Goals are met.
38. The school meets the National Curriculum requirements for Years 1 to 6, with the addition of French that is taught in the junior after school club and in the reception class. This provides pupils with insight into the culture and language of another country. Requirements for religious education are met. The school has extended the provision for information and communication technology with a new information and communication technology suite and has put computers in place in all classes. The school has focussed upon the training needs of pupils and adults. As a result the provision for all pupils in this subject is very good and it develops all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all school activities including extra-curricular school activities and visits to local places of interest.
39. Individual education plans for pupils with special needs are good and as a result they make good progress. Plans are clearly written and targets are set to extend the learning of these pupils. The appropriate support required is identified and is met either by the class teacher working in harmony with the teaching assistant or through the local support services. The school does not formally identify gifted and more talented pupils nor does it have a register for them.
40. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all core and foundation subjects with the appropriate time allocation being given to each subject. The school plans appropriate links between subjects so enhancing and extending the learning for pupils. Sex education and drug awareness are taught as part of the science curriculum. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. Strategies for teaching Numeracy and English Literacy in a consistent manner are well established through the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The school places a high priority on planning the curriculum collaboratively. Lesson objectives are set but in some cases they are not always clear. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The lack of individual pupil assessment in many subjects apart from English, mathematics and science, means that older and more able pupils, particularly in mixed age classes do not make the continuous progress that they should. Assessment procedures are in place for English, mathematics and science, but not for most other subjects. The school recognises this as an area for improvement. The head-teacher monitors and evaluates the planning and the quality of teaching. Formal written and informal feedback to teachers is provided and this has helped to raise attainment in English and mathematics. In service training has been provided for the teachers to develop their subject knowledge.
41. The extensive after school activities run by all the staff and the local community, are open to all pupils of all ages. Pupils have opportunities to participate in team games such as cricket, football, and netball and in karate. There are clubs in both key stages for art and design, design and technology and information technology. The 11+ club for year 6 volunteers is organised and run before school to enhance academic learning in English and mathematics. The provision of all these clubs enhances the learning experiences of pupils of all abilities. All the clubs are well attended. Pupils have equal opportunities for participation in all the school's activities.
42. Homework is provided in the form of regular reading practice at home in Years 1 and 2 and in other subject areas in Years 3 to 6. The school promotes personal and social education very well with a resulting rise in the standards of behaviour that are now very good. This is an improvement upon the last inspection. Good provision is made for pupil's spiritual development. Pupils cultural development is satisfactorily developed. However, the school does not promote a good enough understanding, in its pupils, of the multi-cultural nature of society and their place within it.

43. School and class rules are agreed and clearly displayed in each classroom. The daily assemblies provide valuable opportunities for learning about Christianity and other religions. Pupils are taught to care for one another, to distinguish between right and wrong and to help the younger pupils in and out of school.
44. The school has good links with the local community the pre-school and the local secondary schools sharing good practice and ideas. The pupils celebrate Harvest, Christmas and other festivals with the members of the village and immediate locality. Visitors are welcomed into the school and provide opportunities to develop the art and music throughout the school. The pupils learning is extended into the local environment by visits to museums and other places of interest, such as Hyde Hall, Colchester Castle Museum and Danbury Country Park.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. Overall, the school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are good and provide a secure foundation for raising standards and enhancing the progress of individual pupils.
46. Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are exemplary and are based upon a local education authority scheme that records National Curriculum levels attained year by year and predicts future performance. It is possible to see at a glance whether any one pupil's performance is in line with the prediction. Subject co-ordinators scrutinise samples of pupils' work to ensure that there is appropriate progression. Assessment information is used to guide subject planning for groups of pupils or for individual pupils.
47. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in science and in physical education, where a photographic record is maintained of progress in dance and gymnastics. In all other subjects, assessment is informal and rarely recorded. Consequently, assessment is less well used to inform planning than it is in English and mathematics. All books are marked, but there is no set pattern for recording comments or marks. Teachers' written comments are helpful and encouraging and some indicate how work could be improved. Informally, teachers are aware of what pupils know, understand and can do, but the written record is limited and inconsistent across the school.
48. A good range of tests and assessments is in place for the assessment of English and mathematics. Pupils are tested in all years except Year 1. Pupils' reading skills are tested and recorded twice a year and progress is carefully charted. All results are carefully recorded and analysed. They provide good quality information that can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses and so point the way to improvements in the quality of teaching and curriculum content. The individual education plans for pupils with special needs are well written. Pupils' targets are carefully set to match individual need. Pupils' progress towards their achievement is closely monitored.
49. The school makes careful use of good quality information provided by the local education authority and regularly compares its performance in mathematics, science and English with that of similar schools. The headteacher and the assessment co-ordinator have worked together to devise sensible assessment procedures that are manageable by staff and that yield important information about the pupils. The school's current priority is to extend the procedures to embrace all subjects and to raise standards, particularly in the foundation subjects, by raising the quality of assessment.
50. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory, overall. The headteacher is the designated co-ordinator for child protection and she has been formally trained in this aspect. However, other essential staff, particularly support staff, such as midday supervisors, have not yet been trained. The school's child protection policy gives good guidance

to staff, but the governing body has not yet formally adopted the policy. The school does not have a clear policy for the physical restraint of pupils.

51. Health and safety procedures in the school are satisfactory, with all the necessary checks on electrical and fire equipment taking place. There are appropriate systems to record any accidents and illnesses. However, there is currently only one member of staff who is trained in first aid, which is not adequate for the size of the school. There are plans to rectify this with a training session booked for all staff for early in 2003.
52. The school does not have an adequate health and safety policy. Governors have not formally adopted local authority guidelines and there is no clear guidance for staff in relation to health and safety issues, risk assessment or roles within the school.
53. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. The school has very good levels of attendance, but an increasing number of parents are removing their children for holidays during term time. The school has now started to mark absence over the 10 days permitted as unauthorised and parents are required to have written permission. However, the school's attendance policy does not give clear enough guidance in relation to this and does not emphasise enough that holidays should not be taken during term time, as a matter of course. The school has a system of telephoning parents on the pupil's first day of absence to find out the reason, if parents have not made contact. Attendance is monitored through regular half-termly visits by the educational welfare officer, who checks registers and follows up any concerns that the school may have.
54. The attendance policy has not yet been formally adopted by governors, despite having been written in November 2001.
55. There are very good procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour. Class teachers are particularly effective in promoting good behaviour through positive strategies such as emphasising when a pupil has done something well and treating pupils with respect. Sanctions rarely need to be used, but, if pupils have particular behaviour difficulties, then support is put in place and the school works with parents to improve behaviour, perhaps by having daily reports on a particular pupil.
56. Midday supervisors are involved in recording any incidents that give cause for concern and these are then reported to the class teacher or, in more serious cases, to the headteacher. As a result of a consistent approach by all adults to discipline within the school, oppressive behaviour has been reduced to a minimum and pupils feel safe and secure in school.
57. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are good. Nearly all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school was helping their children to become mature and responsible. The only formal record kept is in the pupil's annual progress report where there is a section entitled Attitude and Personal Development. This can be used by staff and parents to track the pupils' development as they progress through the school. The school is relatively small in size and, therefore, all adults know all the children well, not only the ones they may be personally responsible for. As a result of this and the very caring attitude of staff, pupils receive a high level of personal support and guidance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is very good and parents make a very positive contribution to children's learning at home and at school. For example, parents regularly hear their children read at home and support other homework tasks. Some parents volunteer to help in school, particularly with younger pupils, or with clubs such as football. A good number of parents attend meetings and workshops related to aspects of life in school, such as how to help with reading or for parents of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Many parents volunteer to help on school visits and all parents have signed the home school agreement.

59. The Parent Teacher Association has recently changed its format from being more of a whole village concern and currently has a small, but active, committee. In the past, substantial sums of money have been raised to enhance learning such as by funding the information communication suite and to improve the surroundings, for example by setting up play equipment on the school field.
60. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is satisfactory, overall. Parents receive newsletters every Friday and curriculum information at the start of every term. There are formal consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms and an open evening in the summer term for parents to view their children's work. However, throughout the year, teachers and the headteacher are very accessible to parents should they have any concerns.
61. The school prospectus is a clear and informative document. However, the governors' annual report to parents has some statutory items missing such as a statement on school security and various details about the school's ability to admit pupils with disabilities and how it will ensure that they are treated equally.
62. The annual written progress report that parents receive, whilst satisfactory, overall, has some shortcomings. There are no individual specific targets included for pupils, to indicate to parents how their children could improve further. Furthermore, the comments made, particularly for foundation subjects, are neither individual to the pupil nor tell parents what their children can or cannot do. For example, the only comment made about religious education for a pupil in the junior school stated, "He makes constructive comments when discussing religious education stories and beliefs". Since last year the school has sent parents of pupils in Years 3 to 6 a separate sheet, with their report, showing National Curriculum levels as a means to assist parents to track progress. The reports do contain a section relating to attitudes and personal development and a section for pupils to self evaluate. These are good aspects.
63. Overall, parents have very positive views of the school. There was a very favourable response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and positive comments made at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection. A small number of parents had some concerns about the mixed age classes and how pupils of a wide range of abilities are catered for. Inspection evidence shows that there are occasions, particularly in foundation subjects, where some pupils are not receiving appropriately challenging work.
64. A small number of parents also felt that the school did not provide a good enough range of activities outside lessons. However, the inspection team found that the provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, with a wide range of clubs and activities for all ages apart from the very youngest children. The work of the teaching staff to provide these clubs is also supplemented by outside providers to give an even wider range of opportunities for pupils to learn such skills as French, karate and cricket. In addition to clubs, the school enhances the curriculum through educational visits that include a residential educational stay for the oldest pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. Since the previous inspection, the school has been very well led and managed and, as a result, was taken out of special measures by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in November 2000. All the key issues noted at that time have been successfully addressed under the very good leadership of the Headteacher. Standards have been raised substantially in information and communication technology, the quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good throughout the school. The role of the subject co-ordinator has been developed to include the monitoring and evaluation of provision in most subject areas. Standards have been raised in most foundation subjects, but the school acknowledges that further work is needed to ensure a firm place in the curriculum for Religious Education and an enhanced role for multi-cultural education.

66. The headteacher is a very effective leader who has given the school a new sense of purpose and educational direction. She is very well supported by enthusiastic and able colleagues and by a knowledgeable and hardworking Governing Body. All are involved in making decisions and in setting targets for all aspects of the school's work. This approach has greatly increased staff morale. Consequently, Priory School thrives and serves all its pupils equally well. It is a happy school where pupils feel safe and secure and where they are encouraged to develop all their talents to the full.
67. The school's overall aim is to continue to raise standards by improving the good quality of teaching even further and by providing all pupils with a rich curriculum for their academic, personal and social development. The headteacher and the staff make very good contact with the parents who offer the school strong support. The school's good reputation in the local area has been fully restored.
68. The senior management team works well together and sets coherent strategies for future development. All who hold delegated responsibility carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. Those who are new to their posts are provided with good quality training, guidance and support. The role of the subject co-ordinator has developed well since the last inspection. The established practices for the monitoring of English and mathematics provide a good model for other subjects. Monitoring is very well documented and provides good opportunities to share good practice. A notable feature of the monitoring programme is a pupil attitude survey, completed by pupils in Year 6. The response from pupils was very positive and pupils were unanimous in saying that the purpose of coming to school is 'to learn and prepare for the future'. Pupil responses will be used in planning the way forward.
69. The Governing Body gives the school good support. The headteacher and the Chair of Governors are in regular contact. Each Governor has oversight of one aspect of the curriculum and visits the school as a 'critical friend' each year. Consequently, Governors are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and take a key role in shaping its future. They share the commitment of the staff to one of the central aims of the school, namely, 'to create a challenging learning environment where children have high expectations of their own success'. To this end, the headteacher, staff and governors systematically evaluate the school's performance and take effective action. The analysis of the results of the national tests and the use to which it is put, provides a good model for the evaluation of learning in all subjects. Although the governors' annual report to parents omits some statutory information, it is otherwise a useful publication and good for parent and public relations.
70. The Governors and the headteacher are steadily establishing good procedures for financial planning and management. The school's delegated budget shows an unusually large credit balance, although the maintenance of a full complement of teaching staff to serve the present arrangement of classes and the maintenance and extension of computer provision will significantly reduce the amount of unallocated funds. Current spending is prudent. Good quality information is provided to the governors so that they may determine future spending on the basis of fact. Good use is made of computer technology in compiling and maintaining the budget. The school's finance officer keeps meticulous records of daily expenditure. The school's general account has not been fully audited in the past three years so an audit report was not available.
71. The school development plan is the product of wide consultation and is linked to the local education authority's quality framework policy. The plan provides a clear set of aims for the current year under the headings of curriculum and assessment, pupil welfare, staff development, premises and community links. The plan is costed and those responsible for its implementation are clearly identified. The progress of the plan is monitored regularly. Specific grants, such as the standards fund, are used effectively to support the raising of standards in such areas as numeracy and literacy. The school makes satisfactory use of the principles of best value to ensure appropriate use of all income, although it is expected that the next development plan will take full account of the present budget surplus. A précis of the plan is sent to all parents, which ensures that they are kept well informed about improvements that are being made in order to raise achievement and to fully meet the stated aims of the school.

72. Good quality financial administration and careful monitoring of spending contribute well to the efficient running of the school. Taking into account the pupils' attainment on entry, the progress they make and the overall quality of education, the school provides good value for money.
73. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The provision is well matched to new national practice. The list of special needs is carefully maintained. Parents are consulted at the time of the annual review. Individual education plans are well written and contain small-step targets that are realistic and achievable. Progress towards them is carefully monitored. The knowledge, commitment and organisational skills of the special educational needs co-ordinator are the foundation for good provision for all pupils with special needs.
74. The development plan for special educational needs takes full account of the need for closer contact to be made between class teachers, teacher assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator. There is a shared commitment to raise standards.
75. The school tries hard to involve parents at every stage of the process. Many parents attend the annual review. The quality of information for parents is good.
76. At the time of secondary transfer, contact is made with SEN departments in order to pass on information and establish continuity of care.
77. There has been a high turnover of staff during the last few years with the headteacher, who has been in post for three years, now the longest serving member of staff. There is now, however, a settled and stable complement of teachers who have rapidly formed themselves into a cohesive and effective team. In addition, the support staff are valued and very much considered part of the whole school staff. As a result, there is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and all subject areas have a co-ordinator. Job descriptions are also in place for all staff, including support staff who are also included in the school's performance management cycle. The policy for performance management is well established and contributes significantly to the improved quality of teaching. Newly qualified teachers are given good support and in-service training throughout the first year.
78. The accommodation in the school is adequate for the curriculum to be taught effectively. The building of the information and communication technology suite has enhanced the accommodation considerably, although at a cost to the Year 6 classroom, which is now more cramped. Other classrooms are adequate in size, although some are awkward shapes and still partly open plan. Recent renovations to the roof as well as internal re-decoration have improved the surroundings and the building is further enhanced by many colourful displays of pupils' work. The hall is well used for assemblies, physical education, and music lessons and as a dining hall. The outside area is attractive, with a large playing field, although the hard surface for pupils to play on is rather cramped, especially for the pupils in Key Stage 2. There is also a small fenced-off nature area.
79. The school is well resourced, overall, with very good equipment for the teaching of information and communication technology in particular. Resources are good in English, mathematics, physical education, music and in history where there are some very good artefacts to enhance the curriculum. All other subject areas have satisfactory resources. Overall, resources are well used. The school also makes use of resources in the wider context through educational visits to places such as Colchester Castle and Danbury Park. In addition, Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit to the Isle of Wight.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to raise standards even further the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Raise the standards that pupils achieve in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music, Religious Education and information and communication technology by:
 - a) Developing and implementing strategies for assessing pupils progress in these subjects;
(Paragraphs 56, 146, 153, 160, 164 and 181)
 - b) Extending and improving teachers' planning in mixed age classes to ensure that pupils of all ages and abilities make the progress that they should in foundation subjects;
(Paragraphs 8, 27, 28, 35, 72, 126, 140, 192)
 - c) Ensuring through staff training that all teachers fully understand the identification and setting of learning objectives in lessons.
(Paragraphs 27, 30)
- (2) Develop and implement strategies for the identification of gifted and talented pupils and raising their levels of achievement to reach their true potential;
(Paragraphs 7, 36, 42)
- (3) Improve the quality of provision for the health and safety of pupils by:
 - a) Developing and implementing a whole school Health and Safety policy that reflects current good practice and ensuring its consistent implementation.
(Paragraph 61)

The governing body may also wish to include the following minor issues in its action plan:

- a) There is a small number of omissions from the Governors' Annual Report to Parents;
- b) Pupils do not have a good enough understanding of the multi-cultural nature of our society and their place within it;
- c) Handwriting is not taught often enough to develop a clear joined style at the earliest opportunity.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 42 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 25 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 10 | 21 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 5 | 24 | 50 | 19 | 2 | 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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 177 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 12 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 13 |

| 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 | 16 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 8 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 4.3 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 0.5 |
|---------------------------|-----|

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 14 | 16 | 30 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 15 |
| | Total | 27 | 27 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (94) | 90 (94) | 97 (100) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| | Girls | 13 | 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 26 | 29 | 28 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 87 (94) | 97 (100) | 93 (89) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 14 | 19 | 33 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 12 | 11 | 14 |
| | Girls | 17 | 15 | 18 |
| | Total | 20 | 26 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 88 (73) | 79 (67) | 97 (87) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|-------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 11 | 11 | 13 |
| | Girls | 14 | 12 | 13 |
| | Total | 25 | 23 | 26 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 76 (67) | 70 (67) | 79 (73) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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 | 171 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Parent/pupil preferred not to say | 3 | 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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 8 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22 |
| Average class size | 26 |

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001/2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

| |
|---|
| £ |
|---|

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 4 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 89 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 460965 |
| Total expenditure | 424251 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2293 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 65031 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 101745 |

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 | 7 |
| | |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 179 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 103 |

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 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 56 | 39 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 56 | 36 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 39 | 55 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 61 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 41 | 49 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 62 | 31 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 59 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 47 | 46 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 62 | 33 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 51 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 48 | 37 | 11 | 2 | 0 |

Please note that not all columns total 100 due to rounding and the fact that not every parent responds to all questions.

Inspection evidence supports the positive views of the great majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. In this matter, evidence does not support the views of some parents. A small number of parents expressed concern about pupils being taught in mixed age classes. This report shows that inspection evidence supports their concerns with regards to older and more able pupils in those classes.

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

81. Children enter the reception class at the start of the academic year in which they become five years of age. Those children who will be five during the first term attend full time and those children who will be five after Christmas attend in the morning for the first term and then full time thereafter. At the time of the inspection, there were twenty pupils and three-quarters of them were still under five.
82. The reception class has a staff of one full time teacher and a part time teaching assistant. Most children have attended a local playgroup and there are links with the nursery co-ordinator. Parents and children are invited to meet the reception class teacher for two sessions before the start of the term in order to familiarise themselves with the curriculum, organisation and routines of school. As a result of the induction process, children settle eagerly and happily into the school.
83. The county baseline tests have been discontinued and the teacher has introduced an ongoing assessment booklet that covers all the Early Learning Goals. Many children on entry have average and some slightly above average abilities. The good teaching and learning opportunities offered to them result in the good progress made in many areas of the curriculum. Continual daily assessment takes place as the teacher and the teaching assistant record the children's attainment against the stepping stones and early learning goals criteria. The information builds up a comprehensive picture of each child's academic and social development throughout the Foundation Stage.
84. Parents are invited to meet the staff during the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss the progress and future learning needs of their children. A full report is sent to parents at the end of the academic year.
85. Children in the reception class make good progress. The class-teacher expects that, by the end of the academic year, the majority of children will attain and some will exceed the expected levels in all areas of the Early Learning Goals.
86. The quality of teaching is good. The class teacher has recently written and implemented a comprehensive scheme of work covering the Early Learning Goals that enables her to plan and deliver progressive learning opportunities in the six areas of learning. The Early Reading Research programme introduced recently into the school is having beneficial results. It focuses upon the acquisition of the five key reading skills. The children in the reception class enjoy the three short daily sessions and make good progress with letter sounds and blends and with word recognition. Children of all abilities enjoy school and quickly develop very positive attitudes. They learn to listen, share and respect their peers and the adults with whom they come into contact. Those children with any difficulties are identified early and the appropriate support is given to them. Work is then differentiated to suit the needs of all the children. Resources are satisfactory. The teacher has plans to develop the outdoor area further in order to provide good opportunities for the children to extend their gross motor skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world.
87. Many improvements have been made in the work with young children since the last inspection. These are reflected in the good quality of teaching and learning, improved assessment procedures, the appropriate 'Early Years' curriculum and the setting up of the designated Foundation Stage. Hence, standards have risen and the children make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

88. The teacher and the teaching assistant are very caring, listening with respect to the children, teaching them to become independent, to behave well, to show concern for others and to share. The quality of teaching is good, overall. This was exemplified in an excellent lesson observed as the children shared the popcorn that had been cooked earlier. They are encouraged to behave well in the classroom and as they move around the school, for instance when they go to the computer suite.
89. The adults understand the personality and abilities of each child, guiding and supporting them so that they learn to persevere with a task until they succeed. The children gain in confidence and self-esteem, developing their independence as they learn to tidy up or change for physical education. The high expectations of both adults promote good attitudes to school that enable the children in the foundation stage to make good progress in their personal and social development and to achieve or even exceed the standard expected nationally.

Communication, language and literacy

90. The children's vocabulary is enriched as a result of the many conversations and the learning experiences they share with the adults they meet in school. For instance, the school cook came into the classroom to cook corn. The teacher showed the kernels of corn to the class and carefully explained that the corn would change with the heat of the cooking. The excitement of the children as they listened to the popping of the corn was a joy to behold.
91. The Early Reading Research programme enables the children to acquire the initial letter sounds and blends quickly. The short sessions develop good listening skills and an enjoyment and understanding of the printed word. They use this knowledge to read items on a menu. All children are encouraged to participate and they make good progress.
92. The children use their phonic knowledge to read their names and many are looking at books with enjoyment and understanding. The quality of teaching is good. The adults praise the efforts of the children as they attempt to write independently. In one very good lesson observed, the youngest children thoroughly enjoyed learning to write letters correctly. Most can hold a pencil or pen correctly and, by the end of the reception year the teacher expects that most of the class will have achieved and some will exceed the average standard in this area of the Early Learning Goals.

Mathematical development

93. Because of the good quality of teaching, the children are beginning to count confidently and reliably to ten and beyond. They sing many number rhymes enthusiastically, for example 'Pattercake, pattercake baker's man'. They learn 'one more and one less' as they add to and take cakes from the baker's shop. In one lesson observed, good use was made of the 'mystery bag' to enhance the learning of shape and to build upon mathematical vocabulary and understanding. The children learn to work co-operatively in pairs and groups, consolidating their numerical skills. They make good progress in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. The great majority of children are in line to achieve the expected standard in mathematics and some will exceed it by the end of the Foundation Year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

94. Already this term, the children in the reception class have experienced many opportunities that develop their understanding of the world. The computers in the information and communication technology suite and in the classroom are used confidently. They begin to use the mouse competently to draw simple shapes and coloured patterns developing their manual dexterity. The children enjoy learning to speak simple French phrases with their teacher as was observed in one excellent session. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social skills are enhanced by the many

teaching and learning opportunities offered in the reception class. By the end of the reception year, due to this good quality of teaching, all the children will attain and some will exceed the standards expected nationally in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

95. The outside play area provides stimulating and imaginative learning opportunities. Children enjoy playing Hopscotch with the teaching assistant as they practise jumping and counting. They use the tunnel, tricycles and playhouses, making good progress in their gross motor skills. In the classroom, the children develop and practise fine motor skills by using scissors, pencils, and glue. They make salt dough cakes and buns for the baker's shop painting them with skill and attention to detail.
96. The children make good progress in their fine and gross motor skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage, because of the good quality of teaching, most children make good progress and will reach the expected standard in this area of the Early Learning Goals.

Creative development

97. The quality of teaching in creative development is good and the children make satisfactory progress in their creative development as they explore colour and pattern with the computer program 'Colour Magic.' The children use the percussion instruments enthusiastically, naming them and holding them accurately as they sing and march to the music of 'The grand old Duke of York'. They develop their speaking, listening and dramatic skills very well as they use the baker's shop for imaginative play activities, buying and selling the cakes and buns they have made. They learn to concentrate and to communicate and talk about their feelings for instance when building a house or playing together. At the end of the Foundation Year the majority of children will attain those standards expected for this age group in their creative development.

ENGLISH

98. The standards achieved by pupils in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were average in reading and in writing when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to the results of schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, these results were well below average in reading and below average in writing. During the period 1998 to 2001, the school's results at the end of Year 2 have improved steadily and have exceeded the national trend of improvement.
99. The standards achieved by pupils in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were above average, when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to schools with similar results at the end of Year 2 in 1998, the school's results were well above average. During the period 1998 to 2001, the school's results at the end of Year 6 have improved at a rate, which is better than the national average. Inspection findings show that standards in Years 1 and 2 are now satisfactory and in Years 3 to 6 they are good. In Years 5 and 6, standards in speaking and listening and in reading are good and they are good in writing. Handwriting is taught regularly throughout the school. However, it is taught only weekly and this does not give younger pupils the opportunity to develop a good joined style at the earliest opportunity. The school recognises that this would further raise younger pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence and this would have a positive impact on their learning and is planning to change its practice. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the school's average results for 1999 to 2001 show that the achievements of boys and girls in both reading and writing are not significantly different from the national trend. The school's results over those three years are above the national averages for boys and girls in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and above the national average for boys and girls in English at the end of Year 6.

100. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, in November 2000. In that report, standards in most areas of English were judged to be average throughout the school. Standards in speaking and listening were judged to be mainly good.
101. These improved standards are due to the good quality of teaching, the improvement brought about through the good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes. Inspection evidence shows that the attitudes of pupils to their work and their behaviour in lessons are always good or very good. This is having a significant effect on pupils' learning in English and literacy, throughout the school. Inspection evidence indicates that the school will meet its targets for Year 6 in 2003.
102. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils in both key stages to develop their speaking and listening skills. They set up the introductory part of lessons, so that pupils have time to share what they know and have learnt and they acquire and use the language associated with a topic. An example of this was in a very good literacy lesson in Year 4 when the teacher enabled all pupils to learn from each other when they offered "more expressive words" to improve a poem. Pupils quickly learned to use qualitative words such as "joyful, ecstatic and merry" as alternatives to "happy". Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on teaching correct terminology. Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils when working in pairs or small groups to discuss their work with each other. During these discussions, pupils consider each other's views carefully. Thus, pupils expand the vocabulary associated with the different topics and subjects across the curriculum. Throughout the school, whole class sessions in personal and social education provide good opportunities for pupils to share their feelings confidently.
103. Pupils' reading skills on entry to the school are broadly average, as shown in county tests and assessments and they make satisfactory progress to attain average standards by the end of Year 2. The rate of progress is improving for younger pupils because of the very good Early Reading Research programme now in place. They build steadily upon their knowledge of letter sounds learnt in Years 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy their reading. Average and below-average pupils, including those with special educational needs quickly develop their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds, due to the good quality of the structured teaching that they experience. This helps them to tackle new and unfamiliar words. Above-average pupils demonstrate enjoyment and interest in reading, when in Year 2 they predict future happenings in their favourite stories. In Years 3 to 6, good progress is made and standards are above average by the time that pupils leave the school. Pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy and 11 year olds can speak with first hand knowledge of a range of different authors, including Dick King-Smith, Roald Dahl, Enid Blyton and J.K. Rowling. School reading record books are used well throughout the school. They are used effectively, showing good progress and regular monitoring by class teachers. These are also a good form of communication with parents. Pupils throughout the school know how the library is arranged and know what indices and contents are and how to use them. All enjoy reading and writing fiction, factual reports and poetry. The use of writing in other subjects is well developed and gives all pupils many opportunities to develop their writing. The reading skills of the majority of Year 6 pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts.
104. The standards of writing seen during the inspection are in line with expectations in Years 1 and 2 and are above expectations in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' skills in writing are well used in other subjects such as history, geography and science. The very good assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in English, means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs have full access to the English and literacy programmes provided by the school. All pupils make good progress according to their levels of ability.
105. Throughout the school, pupils have good presentation skills. Handwriting is taught regularly and pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop a good, neat, joined style. However, it is not taught frequently enough to develop a good joined style at the earliest possible opportunity. Standards of spelling and grammar, including punctuation, are well developed as pupils progress through the school. Pupils know how to sustain stories with satisfactory attention to characterisation and plot. Some use different forms of writing appropriately, for instance, when writing a diary entry from Lady

Macbeth just before she dies. For pupils in Years 3 to 6 there are regular opportunities to write for a variety of reasons in all subjects. This has a positive effect on the standards of writing achieved. In the writing of pupils of all abilities, there are many examples of the imaginative aspect of language. Writing standards, overall, throughout Years 1 and 2 are average, but clearly improving in Years 3 to 6, due to very good teaching. It is presently a whole school focus and pupils are making good progress.

106. The quality of teaching in literacy is good, overall and the quality of teaching and learning are thoroughly monitored which ensures that good practice is shared. The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is good or very good. Ten lessons were seen during the inspection. In four of those lessons the quality of teaching was very good, in four lessons it was good and in the other two lessons it was satisfactory. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher, by the use of good open and closed questioning, encouraged pupils to investigate the spelling of "polysyllabic words with unstressed vowels". Pupils correctly identified such words and successfully developed a mnemonic for the spelling of "miniature".
107. The quality of marking is very good, overall. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and they frequently write comments which help pupils to improve their work. Praise is frequently given in marking when teachers congratulate pupils on their hard work or their success in a particular task. Teaching assistants frequently give pupils opportunities to succeed, for example, when helping six pupils of lower ability to identify a quote in the book "Goodnight Mr Tom" by Michelle Magorian to show Mr. Tom's impatience.
108. The co-ordination of English and literacy are very good. As with all subjects there is a nominated teacher responsible for the development of the subject. However, a great strength of the school is that all teachers work very well as a team in all areas. Areas for development are identified, at present writing, and all contribute to a consensus view of the best way forward. This approach to the development of literacy is a major contributory factor in the good improvement since the last inspection. The assessment of pupils' progress, the use of that assessment information to track pupils' progress throughout the school and the setting of individual and whole school targets also contribute strongly to the progress that pupils make. There are examples of information and communication technology being used in literacy lessons and word processing of pupils' finished work is a regular practice.

MATHEMATICS

109. Since the time of the previous report, attainment in mathematics has improved significantly for pupils in all year groups. This is the direct result of careful analysis of previous results, good day-to-day management that includes thorough assessment of pupils' work and consistently good teaching.
110. In the national tests of 2001, all but one pupil in Year 2 attained the national standard and a large proportion of pupils attained the higher levels. Overall, the results were above the national average, but below the results of schools with a similar intake. The trend is upward. On average, boys perform better than girls in the tests, which reflects the national pattern, but this was not apparent during the inspection week.
111. In the national tests of 2001, four-fifths of the pupils in Year 6 attained the national standard. More than a quarter of the pupils attained the higher levels, surpassing the national result. The results, overall, are above the national average, but below the results of schools with similar intakes, based upon the proportion of pupils with an entitlement to free school meals. The school's results are well above those of similar schools based upon prior attainment at the end of Year 2. The trend is upward and broadly in line with the national trend. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

112. The inspection found that pupils in Year 2 continue to attain standards that are above the national averages. This judgement is based upon lesson observations, looking at previous work and talking to pupils about what they know and can do. All pupils are achieving well and making good progress in all aspects of mathematics. The opportunities to use number in practical activities have increased since the previous inspection.
113. The picture of attainment and progress is equally bright in Year 6. Pupils continue to achieve well and make good progress, building securely on previous learning. Attainment is above the national average. Pupils have good access to the mathematics curriculum, but insufficient emphasis is placed upon independent and investigative learning. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs are given good support by teachers and by teacher assistants as they work towards the achievement of carefully set personal targets.
114. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in counting, ordering, adding and subtracting numbers. They know how to halve and double numbers up to 40. Pupils recognise patterns in number, such as odds and evens and confidently find the next number in a sequence. Most pupils know the multiplication tables for 2, 5 and 10 and apply this knowledge to counting out sums of money and telling the time. Pupils identify and name a wide range of 2D and 3D shapes and accurately count corners, edges and sides. Pupils play a game where they identify unseen shapes from the teacher's description and draw them on whiteboards. This approach fires their enthusiasm for shape and for number. Pupils collect information about the colour of cars and illustrate the results on the computer with a bar chart or pictogram.
115. Pupils in Years 3-6 continue to make good progress in developing number skills and applying them to problem solving. By the time most pupils reach the end of Year 6, they have a good grasp of the essentials of mathematics and are well prepared for the secondary school. Most pupils are confident in their use of number, shape and measure and data collection. For example, they draw the reflection of complex shapes in a mirror. They understand the difference between regular and irregular shapes. Pupils draw the nets of 3D shapes, such as a cube and a square based pyramid. Pupils know about probability and games of chance and are well on their way to determining the odds of winning the national lottery. They know about averages and how to compare and use them, for example, when collecting information about annual temperature and rainfall. Pupils in the special needs group work hard to learn the multiplication tables and apply them to simple fractions. Other pupils discover, by the use of the calculator, that it is easier to arrange fractions in ascending order if they are first converted to decimals.
116. Most pupils competently use number skills in other subjects. In history, pupils use a timeline to date the Roman invasion and, in geography, they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to read maps. In science, pupils use number skills to prepare and conduct experiments and illustrate the results on a bar chart. In Art, pupils use reflective symmetry to paint attractive, multi-coloured, abstract pictures and draw brightly coloured concentric rings in the style of *Kandinsky*. Pupils use a bar chart to illustrate the quantity of wheat grown in different countries and bring a multi-cultural dimension to their mathematics work.
117. The quality of mathematics teaching is good throughout the school and is more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching was very good in half the lessons seen and it was good in the remainder. Pupils are firmly, but sympathetically managed and relationships are very good. This provides a very good environment for learning in which pupils feel safe and secure and eager to learn. Teachers make mathematics interesting and, because of this, pupils want to learn and many are excited by their discoveries in number and shape. In the best lessons, teaching is bright, precise and sequential. The lesson objectives are shared with the class and good questioning ascertains pupils' levels of understanding. Teachers take careful note of what pupils say and value the contributions they make. Teachers plan well and the work set is, usually, carefully matched to the needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants give valuable support to pupils with special needs who work hard to attain their targets. In the mixed-aged classes in Years 4/5, higher attaining pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged and spend time repeating work in which they are already competent. Mental work is used well to stimulate interest and pupils try to be first with the correct answer. Teachers ensure that all pupils are

involved and that all are praised for their efforts. Teachers are developing the use of information technology well to promote and confirm learning, although opportunities of using IT in the classroom as part of everyday mathematics are sometimes missed. Teachers make good use of assessment and plan lessons on the basis of what pupils already know. Pupils' work is well marked. Encouraging comments spur pupils on to further effort.

118. Mathematics is well managed and good standards have been maintained and enhanced since the previous inspection. Pupils' test results are carefully analysed. Strengths and weakness are identified and used to inform planning. There are clear and ambitious targets for future development that are shared by all teachers. The quality of teaching and learning is thoroughly monitored and there are well-defined systems for ensuring that good practice is shared.

SCIENCE

119. In 2001 teachers judged standards at the end of Year 2 to be above the national average. For pupils achieving the higher level 3, teacher assessment indicated that attainment was well above the national average. Against the results of schools serving pupils from a similar context, standards were well above average, as was the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
120. At the end of Year 6, standards of attainment in the 2001 tests show that pupils' standards were above the national average. Standards were close to the national average at the higher level 3. Against similar schools, the results show that standards were well above average.
121. Teacher assessment in 2002 indicates that attainment at the end of Year 2 is again well above the national average and above the national average at the higher level 3.
122. The unconfirmed results of the 2002 tests at the end of Year 6 show that attainment fell, but was still above the national average for 2001 and close to expectations for pupils achieving the higher level 5. There was an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 and this was a factor in the smaller number of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment at the end of the year. Standards over the past three years indicate a rise in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5 at the end of Year 6. There is little variation in the results of girls and boys.
123. The school's assessment is that the number of pupils in the present Year 6 who will achieve the higher level 5 in 2003 will exceed the 2002 level.
124. The attainment of pupils, seen during the week of the inspection, is satisfactory in Year 2 and Year 6. Much of the work recorded in exercise books reflects the overall satisfactory standard in Years 2 and 6. During the Spring term of 2003, the accelerated science programme in Year 6 will ensure that the satisfactory standards seen will be raised to good, with more pupils achieving at the higher level. Pupils with special needs make good progress in both key stages.
125. Pupils in Year 1 learn about forces and make satisfactory progress with design and technology skills as they make models for a fairground. Pupils with special needs are well supported in their learning and make good progress in the completion of a duck hunting game, using magnetic rods.
126. In Year 2, pupils consolidate their knowledge of forces and in one satisfactory lesson pupils understand the need of a fair test as they investigate the speed of a car travelling down a ramp placed at three different heights. Pupils with special needs make good progress as they discuss the reasons why the results differ. Pupils of all abilities learn to predict, sharing their thoughts

and increasing their scientific knowledge and vocabulary. They make satisfactory progress in skills and knowledge.

127. Year 3 pupils investigate light and sound. They observe the shadow created by a light source, recording their results accurately and appropriate to their abilities. The pupils work in ability groups co-operatively. They predict and measure the length of the shadow created as they move the torch in different positions. All pupils make satisfactory progress. Those pupils with special needs are well supported by the class teacher and make good progress.
128. Year 4 pupils investigate vibration and sound. Three quarters of the pupils make good progress in their learning as they identify that the length of a vibrating tube has a direct bearing upon the pitch of the sound produced. All the pupils enjoy playing the instruments they make and most can explain how the sound is produced. This practical activity consolidated their understanding of sound and vibration. They make good progress in their scientific knowledge and in their listening and speaking skills. Those pupils with special needs make good progress.
129. Pupils in Year 6 extend their knowledge of forces and motion by investigating air resistance on moving objects. They make good progress in their investigative skills as they test whether the shape, weight and length of a paper arrow have an effect upon the speed at which it falls. The pupils work collaboratively in their ability groups and test their theories and predictions with enthusiasm. Pupils with special needs are very well supported and make good progress in their ability to analyse and solve problems.
130. The quality of teaching seen during the week of the inspection throughout the school was good. The quality of planning is good and teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. The work is differentiated to suit the abilities of the pupils. The quality of marking, overall, is satisfactory, but opportunities for constructive advice and encouragement are not always apparent in every year group. The management of pupils is good and pupils are encouraged to take time to think through hypotheses to provide answers. Teachers make very good use of resources and they work very well with the teaching assistants to provide a good learning environment. They link science in an imaginative way to other subjects of the curriculum. For example in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 design technology was a key feature of the lessons as pupils designed, planned, made and evaluated their models to test scientific theories.
131. Assessment follows the completion of each unit of work, but individual tracking of pupils' progress is not in place. This is an unsatisfactory area of the teaching of science. Individual pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not formally recorded and future individual learning needs are not identified. The lack of assessment procedures for individual pupils highlights the need for a tighter focus on key skills, especially in the mixed Year 4/5 classes.
132. The quality of learning is good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy science and, because of the searching questioning of teachers, pupils work hard to develop their skills, understanding and knowledge. They are eager to speak and explain their findings in class, so contributing to their learning of listening and speaking skills. Pupils concentrate and have good attitudes to the subject. All pupils are fully included.
133. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. There is a policy and scheme of work in place and resources for the subject are satisfactory, especially the book provision. This is an improvement upon the last inspection. Teachers' confidence in the teaching of all aspects of the subject has risen, especially in Years 3 to 6. This reflects the good results at the end of Year 6. Non-contact time to monitor teaching has been provided in Years 1 and 2 and similar opportunities are planned in Years 3 to 6. The co-ordinator monitors planning and provides staff with appropriate resources. There are plans to develop the resources to further improve standards across the school. The teachers plan strong cross-curricular links and use information technology well in the delivery of science.

ART AND DESIGN

134. During the inspection, there were no opportunities for any art lessons to be observed. However, from the evidence of displays and discussions with the co-ordinator and with pupils, standards in art at the end of Years 2 and 6 can be judged to be in line with expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
135. Throughout the school, pupils use their observational skills to draw self portraits, making satisfactory progress. Pupils in the junior Art club display some examples of good observational drawings of shells. All pupils have opportunities to use a variety of media. They have equal access to the curriculum and they make satisfactory progress in their art and design skills. Pupils with special needs make good progress with the support of the teachers and teaching assistants.
136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all classes. The expectations of teachers and the quality of displays are higher since the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to observe, discuss and experiment with a variety of techniques and media. Lessons are clearly planned and well structured, reinforcing pupils' skills and techniques. Pupils are exposed to the work of famous artists such as Kandinsky, Matisse, Cezanne, and Paul Klee.
137. There is no formal assessment of pupils' work.
138. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides advice and ideas to staff where needed. Curriculum planning allows the co-ordinator to monitor the art being taught and to order appropriate resources. There is an improvement in the amount and the quality of resources since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

139. During the course of the inspection, only one lesson could be observed. Samples of pupils' work and displays around the school from Year 1 to Year 6 were scrutinised. Following discussions with teachers and pupils and the evidence seen, a judgement can be made upon the standards achieved by the pupils.
140. The standards that pupils reach at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations for their ages. This is an improvement upon the findings of the last inspection.
141. Much of the work in Years 1 and 2 is taught as part of a theme, but, in Years 3 to 6, design and technology is taught as a discrete subject. However, there are many links with other subjects, such as history, science, English, information technology and art and design.
142. Boys and girls, including those of high ability and pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the key skills of the subject.
143. In Years 3 to 6, pupils consolidate their design and technology skills. In one satisfactory lesson seen in Year 3, pupils planned and designed their own coin after a visit to a museum to study the Romans. The designs were carefully drawn and illustrated and their evaluations were constructive and honest. Pupils made satisfactory progress as they learnt how to make a mould and then decorated their finished coin. Those children with special needs received good support from the teacher and, as a consequence, pupils of all abilities made satisfactory progress.
144. The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and they plan and use resources effectively. The management of pupils is very good and provides a calm and structured learning environment. Assessment takes place after each unit of work, but individual assessments of pupils' skills and knowledge are not recorded. There are planned opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example 'The Indian Day'.

145. Pupils' attitudes to design technology are good. They enjoy planning and making their own designs and they work co-operatively together in pairs and groups, as was evidenced in the after school club where pupils made playground equipment. Digital photographs of the Tudor houses built by pupils in Years 4 and 5 show the degree of accuracy involved in their measuring and construction skills.
146. The scheme of work addresses cross-curricular links, health and safety practices and is fully inclusive. Satisfactory resources are labelled and stored safely. The co-ordinator monitors long and medium planning of the subject, but monitoring of teaching is not fully in place. Photographic evidence provides some assessment opportunities, but assessment of each pupil's developing knowledge and skill is not recorded.

GEOGRAPHY

147. Standards in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in geography are in line with the levels expected nationally for their ages. Standards have been improved since the last inspection and the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are now more consistent throughout the school. A significant improvement during this period is the whole school plan that allocates topics for study to each age group. These are based on the national guidelines for geography adopted by the school to support teachers in their planning. This ensures that pupils cover a balanced geography curriculum and develop specific subject skills in a structured and systematic manner, as they move through the school. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in educational visits to support their historical studies.
148. From the earliest stages, teachers begin to promote a sense of place through the study of the school site and grounds. This is broadened to provide opportunities for pupils to begin to make judgements about their neighbourhood. By the time they are seven, pupils are familiar with the 4 points of the compass and they use simple co-ordinates to locate places on simple maps. Teachers encourage the accurate use of geographical vocabulary to describe features of the landscape such as sea, sand, rock-pools and lighthouse and pupils write postcards from an imaginary holiday destination, using the correct vocabulary.
149. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about the major climate zones of the world. They use the appropriate vocabulary, including polar, desert, tropical and temperate to identify these locations on a world map. Later, they learn about a village in India as a contrasting locality in a less economically developed country. In a very high quality exercise in information and communication technology and geography, a group of pupils have set up close links with a school in Minnesota, USA and another school in Paavolainen in Finland. Information and data sent by e-mail between the three schools has greatly enhanced pupils' learning about the lives of children in these countries. In Year 6, pupils develop their own questionnaires to gather data from their classmates on their "Best ever holiday". These questionnaires show a good knowledge and understanding of environmental issues in questions such as "Was the beach in a good condition?" Pupils' literacy skills are also extended in preparing such questionnaires. Pupils achieved well in this study, because the teaching encouraged them to pose their own questions and to make decisions after considering a range of options.
150. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about their work with good recall of the topics studied. They have a satisfactory awareness of distant localities and demonstrate sound map work and research skills, using an atlas and a globe. They use their scientific knowledge well to explain how the processes of evaporation and condensation contribute to the water cycle.
151. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject. As a result they set interesting and challenging tasks designed to develop pupils' geographical study skills and promote independent learning. However, there is no system for formally assessing pupils' progress and this slows their rate of learning.

152. The management of geography is good. The co-ordinator is released to teach other classes and she monitors the quality of planning and the level of resources for the subject, which are satisfactory, overall. A policy and a scheme of work are in place and the co-ordinator monitors these to ensure that they reflect any curriculum changes.

HISTORY

153. In history, the standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been successfully maintained. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their ages. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. They make sound progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of history. They are introduced to a good range of sources of information, including a very good selection of artefacts, books and pictures and the Internet and CD-ROMs to encourage them to ask and answer questions about the past. However, there is no system for formally assessing pupils' progress and this slows their rate of learning.
154. Teachers successfully encourage pupils' interest in the past, initially by focusing their attention on changes in their own lives and in the lives of familiar adults. They go on to acquire knowledge about people and events in the more distant past by the end of Year 2 and, by listening to stories, they begin to appreciate the difference between fact and fiction. The school combines history with other subjects well, which was evident in a pupil study of "Rice" which was on display during the week of the inspection. Pupils had studied how rice came to be grown, painted Chinese letters and prepared a block graph of countries around the world and the percentage of the world rice crop that each grows. This was a very good combination of history, geography, mathematics, information and communication technology and literacy which certainly had a good impact on pupils' learning in all these areas.
155. Their knowledge and understanding of the passing of time are effectively promoted through the regular use of timelines and the sequencing of episodes in the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale. Their learning is successfully extended when they consider the impact that she has had on people's lives.
156. Teachers make good use of questions such as "Why did the Romans invade other countries?" to focus pupils' thinking on the reasons why the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings might have come to Britain. They begin to understand that the past may be divided into periods and begin to think about the impact of the Roman invasion on the lives of the Celts. Again, in another display of their work on "Bread", pupils investigated linked topics and found out facts such as "450BC, the first water mill was invented in Greece" and " 500BC invading Danes bring dark rye bread to Britain", through their research. In this study, history was well linked to geography, mathematics and, because of the extended writing that pupils did, also to literacy.
157. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have developed very mature attitudes to their work. They re-present historical information in a variety of ways and have learned the important skill of identifying key facts when investigating a particular topic. They show considerable pride in their written and recorded work. Their books are well organised and the work is neatly presented.
158. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, although evidence of good teaching was seen in both the lessons observed. Most teachers' knowledge of history is good. This was evident in a good lesson in Year 3 where the teacher had prepared a variety of resources to stimulate pupils' investigation of Drake's journey in *The Pelican*. She used well directed questions such as "Why did Drake lie to the sailors?" to promote thoughtful answers from pupils after they had listened to a tape recording of extracts from the diary of one of the sailors on the ship. They plan their lessons well and most think carefully about a variety of tasks to motivate pupils. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners who are eager to ask and answer historical questions. In lessons, the very good teamwork between the teacher and the teaching assistant

resulted in an all-inclusive approach that ensured very good learning by all groups of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs.

159. The subject is well co-ordinated. Improvements since the last inspection include the adoption of national guidelines to support teachers' planning and to ensure the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. A particular strength of the history curriculum is the variety of links that teachers establish with other subjects, including literacy, information and communication technology and geography. This helps to motivate pupils and make learning more purposeful. Visits to places of historical interest are also undertaken to support pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

160. The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above what is expected nationally. This is very good improvement since the last inspection, when opportunities to use information and communication technology in other subjects were still developing. The use of the very good information and communication technology suite in other subjects is now very good and the very high quality subject co-ordinator has plans to improve this still further.
161. All pupils are fully included in the school's information and communication technology work. Pupils of all ages and abilities regularly use computers to draw pictures, to write stories, poems and factual text. Computers are regularly used in other subjects. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils used computers to record each other's heights, using a formula in an Excel spreadsheet. At the end of the lesson, most pupils showed in the review session that they had succeeded in finding the sum and the average of heights in the class. This lesson combined learning in information and communication technology and mathematics and is a good example of pupils' work being undertaken within several subjects, including information and communication technology in one lesson. Another very good example was seen in pupils' writing about their study of "Macbeth", written by William Shakespeare. This combined different types of writing in literacy with information and communication technology and, again, used computers to extend pupils' learning. A good number of very good pieces of extended writing were seen in a display. These had been word processed on computers with very good use of different fonts and combined graphics with the text. These evaluated the class choreographed dance based on their study of "Macbeth" described in the physical education section of this report. This combined the use of literacy and physical education with information and communication technology in a very good experience, which raised pupils' standards in all three subjects.
162. Pupils have satisfactory keyboard and good mouse skills. Pupils build on these skills as they progress through the school. They learn to initiate computers, use the mouse to navigate through icon driven menus, load programmes and manipulate text and graphics on screen. Modelling and control technology are taught very well and there are sufficient experiences for pupils to model the interior of a classroom or to control a programmable robot or sequence traffic lights, for them to make very good progress. The school has made very good progress with its improvement plan for information and communication technology and the computer suite has been extended to provide a very good area for teaching and learning. Teachers use the computer-controlled projector to demonstrate new techniques very well and new computer skills are learned in lessons in other subjects. This is a very good use of time and very efficient use of the very good computer suite. All teachers have undertaken training and the suite is now used regularly by every class.
163. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers and all have equal opportunities to do so. They show very good co-operation when asked to work in pairs and good skills when working alone. Their behaviour is always very good in these situations.
164. Four lessons in information and communication technology were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching in one of these was very good and it was good in the other three, one of which was with Foundation Stage children. This early access to good and very good teaching in

information and communication technology is the solid base on which pupils' progress is based. Combining this with evidence in displays around the school, from watching pupils using computers and from talking to pupils, the quality of teaching in information and communication technology is very good, overall.

165. The school has improved its use of the resources available since the last inspection. There are computers in all classrooms and all are linked to the computer suite. There is very good provision of equipment in the suite. This is Internet linked and pupils use it for e-mail and Internet research, within appropriate procedures for safe use. Teachers regularly plan to use computers, although the use of computers within classrooms was not regularly seen during the inspection.
166. The school has a very high quality computer club that was observed during the inspection. Last year the club had 20 members and was called the "Web Group". This group led by the subject co-ordinator designed and built the school's very good and easily accessible web site. In the club session observed, 17 pupils from Years 3 to 6 were undertaking very high quality work, developing "Power-point" presentations, including the development of animation and sound. When completed, these presentations are linked to the school's web site, sometimes involving pupils in adding new pages and icon access to them.
167. The co-ordinator is very highly skilled with computers and manages much of the day to day system support work herself. However, the school has now joined a computer management provision, so that the co-ordinator's time is more readily available to staff and pupils. This is an example of best value in practice. While the co-ordinator monitors the use of computers in other subjects, she is still not completely satisfied with the level at which this is presently undertaken and plans further improvements.

MUSIC

168. By the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in music is in line with that expected nationally. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all elements of the music curriculum and pupils' achievement, related to age, is always satisfactory and often good in performance and composition. Pupils with special needs are well supported and take a full part in all lessons.
169. In all year groups, performance is the strongest element in the music curriculum, although from Year 1 pupils are taught that music can be written down and played back. In this way, simple ideas about musical composition are formed and developed. Pupils sing well, in tune and with expression, in the classroom and in assembly. They have the opportunity to learn to play instruments, including the flute, clarinet and keyboards and are well taught by visiting teachers.
170. Pupils in Year 1 use body sounds such as whistling, tongue clicking and foot tapping to build a group composition. All respond well to the challenge and begin to understand the elements of composition and ways of working together to produce music. In Year 2, pupils lie on the floor with their eyes closed listening to different kinds of music. They are asked to say how it makes them feel and in doing so they become aware that music creates a mood and an atmosphere.
171. In Year 3, pupils read from a simple graphic score and begin to appreciate the difference between loud and soft and the subtlety that this distinction can bring to performance. Pupils play to each other and evaluate performance. In Years 4 and 5, pupils learn the importance of listening skills by playing a round of *Simon Says*. Then they listen to five different kinds of music and hear the changes in tempo, rhythm and pitch. Pupils spontaneously sing to the recorded accompaniment and, by the end of the lesson, have learnt a new song. Pupils in Year 6 produce a more sophisticated graphic score for a small percussion group and face the ultimate test of playing from the score to their peers. Pupils then comment upon the positive features of what they have

heard and are challenged by their teacher to play from other pupils' score in a subsequent lesson. In this way, pupils begin to understand that composition is the language of music.

172. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers are developing confidence through the use of a commercial scheme that provides for the progressive teaching of music skills. Relationships are good, open and friendly and the balance between creativity and control is just right. The result is a learning environment where pupils feel free to enjoy and create music. All pupils are included and the contributions they make are valued. Resources are readily available and well used. Teachers competently bridge the gap between music and movement, so that the aesthetic curriculum is enhanced. This was self-evident in a dance lesson in Year 6. Teachers are aware of what pupils know, understand and can do, but there is no system of formal assessment and this weakens the quality of lesson planning.
173. Music is well co-ordinated throughout the school and is valued by pupils and teachers as a performance art. Pupils are given the opportunity to perform in public in regular school concerts. The choir recently sang as part of a school's festival at the Albert Hall and will perform in Chelmsford Cathedral at Christmas. Good resources include the recent purchase of instruments from around the world. In these ways, music contributes significantly to the spiritual, social and cultural development of the pupils. Music in the school is well regarded by the parents.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

174. Physical education has a firm place in the curriculum and is supported by a good range of after-school activities in football, netball and cricket. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve appropriately for their age and make satisfactory progress in most aspects of physical education.
175. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above national expectation because of the good standards achieved in dance and by the unusually good provision for the development of ball skills, particularly in cricket. The lesson time that would be lost in travelling, effectively prohibits the inclusion of swimming in the PE curriculum, but 'crash' courses are regularly provided in nearby towns during the school holidays and almost all pupils reach the standard expected nationally by the time that they leave the school.
176. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 warm up thoroughly before practising the skills of body shape in curling and stretching. Pupils are agile and fit and already appreciate the effects of physical exercise. Pupils are also competent in setting up the apparatus for challenging group work with the minimum help from the teacher. Pupils are ambitious on the apparatus and fully test their skills of balancing, jumping and rolling. They are adept at finding solutions to the various challenges that they encounter on the mini-assault course and perform with increasing variety and control.
177. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, make good progress in learning to judge their own performance and that of others. They use this information to improve the quality of their own performance. Pupils are immaculately attired for the various activities available and sustain energetic activity for quite long periods. Pupils demonstrate good judgement and physical agility in asymmetric balancing and continuously set new targets for themselves. Pupils learn very good ball skills in cricket, taught by a professional coach, astutely hired by the school. They learn to keep their eyes on the ball and to throw and catch with accuracy. They learn how to hold the bat and begin to practise a square cut to leg, with varying degrees of success, but with complete enjoyment. Pupils in Year 6 show rare imagination in executing supple and elegant dance movements, as they convey the sinister nature of the three witches in *Macbeth*.
178. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Teachers have set high standards of work and behaviour and are rarely disappointed. Teachers plan well. Pupils are enthusiastic and responsive. They want to do well and they are pleased with the progress they make. Teachers manage the pupils well and, within safe boundaries, encourage pupils to experiment and innovate. This provides appropriate challenge and independence for all pupils, including those

with special needs. Teachers assess pupils against national learning objectives and note the progress that they make. There is good photographic evidence of progress in gymnastics and dance.

179. Physical education is enterprisingly managed and pupils are offered a wide range of stimulating activities that are well taught. Resources are good and well used. Although the Hall is a multi-purpose area, used for dining and assembly, it is always scrupulously clean and ready for the use of energetic children. The outside area is expansive and provides a very good environment for games play.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

180. Only two lessons of religious education were observed during the inspection, so judgements about the standards attained are supplemented by an assessment of pupils' past work and by a scrutiny of teachers' plans. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in Religious Education broadly meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, which provides for a comparative study of world religions. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, with the exception of Year 6, where progress is good, because of a clear focus on the subject. Most pupils could achieve more if the programme of study was better planned and consistently taught.
181. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the differences between right and wrong and apply this to everyday life at the school, including behaviour in the playground and in the classroom. Pupils are taught to respect each other and to be tolerant and understanding of differences. Pupils learn that each one of them is unique and discuss those aspects of life that make them happy, sad, excited or frightened. Pupils contribute orally, but have too little opportunity to write things down. The distinction between personal and social education and RE is not sufficiently clear.
182. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn the stories of the Bible, including the story of David and Goliath and the parable of the Good Samaritan. They learn about modern parallels and hear about Chad Varah, the founder of the contemporary Samaritan movement. Pupils visit the local Church to learn about the Christian ceremonies of Baptism and Marriage, for example, and the local clergy visit the school to talk in assembly. Pupils also learn about the kind of suffering that people experience all over the world and learn about ways of alleviating it.
183. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. In the lessons observed, pupils are managed well and have an opportunity to put their point of view. Teachers listen carefully to what pupils have to say and make good use of their comments. In one very good lesson, the teacher asked the class to close their eyes while she retold the story of David and Goliath in contemporary language that evoked the scene of the battle and stimulates the imagination of the pupils. They responded by a strong oral expression of their feelings as they considered the engagement of a young man with a powerful giant. They wrote an account of the outcome as a paragraph for a modern-day newspaper. Teachers do not formally assess progress and, overall, there is too little written work to confirm learning.
184. The school acknowledges that the teaching and learning of religious education is a key area for development and that teaching does not yet provide consistently for progression and continuity in learning. Resources are satisfactory, but are used too little to provide for a wider range of teaching methods than are presently used. The school also acknowledges that Religious Education does not, at present, help the school sufficiently to underpin the understanding of the nature of the multi-cultural society to which the pupils belong.