

## INSPECTION REPORT

**Bentley St. Paul's Church of England  
Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Pilgrim's Hatch, Brentwood, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115151

Headteacher: Mr D Ramsey

Reporting inspector: Kath Beck  
10090

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> March – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003

Inspection number: 247538

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: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ashwells Road  
Pilgrim's Hatch  
Brentwood  
Essex

Postcode: CM15 9SE

Telephone number: 01277 372295

Fax number: 01277375748

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Revd. R Rose  
Mrs C Tomsett

Date of previous inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10090	Kath Beck	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are the standards?</p> <p>How well are the pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
13481	Doug Binfield	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
6436	Alan Andrews	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Special educational needs</p>	
1359	Lyne Lavender	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>History</p> <p>Geography</p>	
7694	Martyn Richards	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Educational inclusion</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	

32605	Pav Saunders	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bentley St. Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School was founded in 1864 by three benefactors. It is situated about two miles north of Brentwood and is smaller than other primary schools. All parents choose the school, mostly for its religious character, but also for the broad range of education it provides. The school is popular and oversubscribed. There are 192 children on roll comprising of 90 boys and 102 girls aged four to eleven years. The biggest difference is in Year 3 where there are seven boys and 22 girls. In Year 5, there are 15 boys and seven girls. Children are organised into seven classes according to their age group from reception to Year 6. The children come from a range of ethnic groups, mixed Black African, Black Caribbean, Black British and Chinese backgrounds. There are also children from other White or Mixed backgrounds. The percentage of children whose mother tongue is not English is a bit higher than in most schools. None are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The main languages, other than English, spoken by the children are Afrikaans, Chinese and German. The percentage of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Also, the percentage of children identified as having special educational needs is below the national average. There are no children with a statement of special educational need. Children's attainments on entry to the school are varied. Some children are bright and some very able. Assessments made by teachers indicate that overall, it is mostly typical of that found among four year olds.

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

Bentley St. Paul's is a good school with many strengths. The headteacher and staff create a secure and happy atmosphere in which children learn and develop into mature young people. The leadership of the headteacher and governors provides a very clear educational direction for the school. By the age of eleven, children achieve very good standards in English, mathematics and science. Provision for children's social development and the partnership with parents are excellent. Teaching overall is satisfactory with very high quality teaching in specialist areas and at the end of the juniors. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- High standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of the juniors.
- The very clear educational direction of the school.
- Teaching in Year 6 and also the specialist teaching of children with special educational needs, mathematics and physical education.
- The attainment and progress of gifted and talented children.
- Excellent provision for children's social development.
- Enjoys an excellent partnership with parents, which includes very good communication with them.
- Children's very good attitudes and standards of behaviour.
- The high levels of pastoral care for the children.
- The excellent range of extra curricular activities.

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

- The unsatisfactory curriculum and accommodation for the Foundation Stage. \*
- Standards of attainment in mathematics and science at the end of the infants, especially in investigative work.
- The role of the subject coordinators, especially in the foundation subjects so that they can influence standards in their subjects more effectively. \*
- Teachers' lesson planning.
- Opportunities for children to use their initiative in lessons.

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

\* The school has already identified these in their school improvement plan.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1998. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science have risen at the end of the juniors. Children's attainments in reading and writing have also risen at the end of the infants. There have been improvements in the provision for children's social development, information and communication technology and instrumental

tuition. Children's attitudes, behaviour and relationships are much better. The partnership with parents has been strengthened.

The school has increased the number of children on roll so that they are organised in single age year groups. Improvements to the building and grounds have enhanced the quality of the environment considerably. However, children's attainments in mathematics in Year 2 have declined, from a high starting point, over the past four years. There has been little improvement in the provision in the Foundation Stage, as the curriculum is still not planned according to the areas of learning. Progress against the key issues in the previous report has been satisfactory. There is still work to do in improving children's punctuality at the beginning of the school day.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

similar schools means schools with similar numbers of children eligible for free school meals\* means very high standards.

In 2002, results at the end of Year 6 were good in English and mathematics and average in science. When compared to similar schools, results were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The school performed very well in the previous three years with exceptional results in 2001. That year, its performance placed it in the top five per cent nationally. In science, in 2002, 100% of children reached the expected Level 4. Over time, children have achieved at a rate that is well ahead of their peers. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in English, but the girls do much better than boys in mathematics and science. When analysing the results in detail, the number of children taking the tests is small and each child represents 4%. The school's performance in 2002 was very close to higher grades in comparison to all and similar schools than represented in the table above. The dip was due to the number of children with special educational needs and changes in staffing. The 2002 results at the end of Year 2 were very good in reading and writing and average in mathematics when compared to all schools. In comparison to similar schools, results were very good in writing, good in reading and below average in mathematics. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Results in reading and writing were better than they were in 1998. In mathematics, the results are not as good and have declined from their high starting point.

The school is expecting 100% of children to reach the expected Level 4 in 2003 in English, mathematics and science. These are really challenging targets and the school is on course to meet them. In 2002, four children took G.C.S.E mathematics and reached Level 8 and Level 9. In lesson observations, children's attainments in Year 6 are very good in English, mathematics and science. They are good in physical education and information and communication technology. In all other subjects they are similar to those found in most schools. In Year 2, children's attainments are good in English and science. They are similar to those found in all schools in mathematics and all other subjects.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the reception year, children's attainments are on course to meet the early learning goals in all the areas of experience, except knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development where attainment is unsatisfactory.<sup>2</sup> Children with special educational needs make very good progress when

<sup>1</sup> Subjects of the National Curriculum are English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. They are also called foundation subjects.

<sup>2</sup> Areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communications, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world. Early learning goals are the levels attainment expected for children at the end of the reception year.



taught by the specialist teacher, but progress is slower in some lessons when teachers do not always take into account the targets in children's individual education plans. Children with English as an additional language make good progress as they move through the school. Those who are gifted and talented in mathematics and gymnastics do really well.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are enthusiastic about school and show considerable interest and involvement in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in the majority of lessons, in the dining hall and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and a high level of respect for feelings, values and beliefs.
Attendance	Very good levels of attendance, but a significant number of children are still arriving late for school in the morning.

Children show considerable social aptitude, sensitivity and responsibility towards others in the school. Their attitudes, behaviour and personal development contribute significantly to the calm atmosphere.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.*

There is high quality teaching for children in Year 6. Specialist teaching in mathematics and physical education and for children with special educational needs is also high quality. These factors increase the rate of children's progress significantly at the end of the juniors. Basic skills in English and mathematics are mostly taught well. Support staff often work with groups of brighter children or those with special educational needs and make a good contribution to raising standards. Relationships between the teachers and children are very good so that there is a very positive climate for learning. In other year groups, many of the tasks children complete are narrow and are often prescribed by poor quality worksheets that limit children's initiative in lessons. Teachers' planning is inconsistent and usually brief so that it does not match programmes identifying what children are to learn over the long term. Planning in the Foundation Stage does not link closely enough to the areas of experience or the stepping stones<sup>3</sup> towards the early learning goals.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the juniors is rich and exciting. It is satisfactory in the infants and unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Specialist teaching is very good. In some classes, not enough is done to match work to children's particular needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is no specific provision for these children as they are fluent English speakers. Their progress and attainment is monitored carefully.
Provision for pupils'	Provision for children's social development is excellent. It is very good

<sup>3</sup> Teachers are expected to plan to different levels, the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. Children can move along the stepping stones, quickly or slowly depending on their ability. They help teachers to track children's progress.

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	for children's spiritual and moral development and satisfactory for their cultural development. There is a very good programme to promote children's responsibilities in the juniors.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its children very well. There are high levels of pastoral care. Procedures to check children's progress are very good.

The partnership with parents is excellent and contributes significantly to the standards achieved. Parents raise substantial sums of money each year that are used to improve resources and facilities for the children. They support homework very well and this enhances the rate of children's progress, especially in reading. The school's provision for children's personal growth and learning of social responsibility within the school community is very strong. Opportunities to build on this in lessons are restricted by the extensive use of worksheets that limit initiative. There are also weaknesses in the provision of investigative work in mathematics and science in the infants. In the juniors, the programme of out of school clubs, links with schools from other countries, opportunities to learn German and the good range of instrumental tuition is impressive. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is not planned well enough to extend children's skills in all the areas of experience fully. The school has very good procedures to track children's progress, but not all teachers adapt the programmes of work to suit children's needs, identified in tests and discussions.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher takes much of the responsibility for ensuring high standards are achieved by the time the children leave the school. There is a very clear educational direction for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Their range of expertise is used effectively to benefit the children.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school takes its responsibility to evaluate its own performance very seriously. It analyses data thoroughly to identify areas for development. It also seeks the views of parents and children to bring about improvements in all areas of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial resources are directed to priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

Staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. New classrooms have improved the environment for junior children. The accommodation, including the outside area, for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. Plans to improve this are at an early stage of development. The headteacher, staff and governors do their best to ensure high standards in test results in Year 6. Their aims are implemented in its day-to-day work. However, the delegation and contribution of staff with management responsibilities is not sufficient to raise standards across the other subjects. The culture of the *critical friend* among the staff has not been developed sufficiently to bring about improvements. The principles of best value are applied well.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are given every support and like school.</li> <li>Standards in behaviour are high.</li> <li>Good teaching enables children to progress well.</li> <li>The school is led and managed well.</li> <li>The very close cooperation between the parents and the school.</li> <li>The improvements made since the last inspection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No significant concerns</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence fully supports the parents' positive views, although teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. The headteacher's very clear educational direction for the school makes a significant contribution to the high standards. The partnership with parents is an outstanding feature.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children's attainments on entry to the reception class are broad. Many children are bright and some very able. Others have special educational needs. Teacher assessments, administered when the children first start school, indicate that attainment on entry is mostly typical for children aged four. Children make satisfactory progress and are on course to meet the early learning goals in communications, language and literacy, mathematical and physical development, personal, social and emotional development. They are not on course to meet the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development as too little time is set aside for these areas of learning. There are few opportunities for children to use their initiative in lessons, learn through structured play and express their ideas in artwork. Children adopt a very positive attitude to completing their tasks and this stays with them throughout their time in the school.

2. Lesson observations show that children's attainments in Year 2 are similar to those found in schools nationally in most subjects. They are good in English and science. This reflects the national tests results at the end of Year 2 in 2002. When compared to all schools, these were very good in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, results were very good in writing, good in reading and below average in mathematics. The children are achieving consistently at a level that is a year ahead of other children of the same age. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Results in reading and writing are better than they were in 1998, although they have fallen slightly and risen in recent years. In mathematics, the results are not as good. Other schools have improved their results at a much faster rate. This is due to:

- the overuse of worksheets that do little to take children's learning forward;
- limited opportunities for children to do practical work and investigate numbers;
- lessons that do not take into account children's differing needs and abilities;
- an emphasis on number work at the expense of other areas of the curriculum;
- insufficient planning that links to the National Numeracy Strategy.

3. In 2002, results at the end of Year 6 were good in English and mathematics and average in science. When compared to similar schools, results were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The school performed at a very high standard in the previous three years with results being exceptional in 2001. In that year, the school's results placed it in the top five per cent of schools nationally in all three subjects. In science, in 2002, 100% of children reached the expected Level 4. However, the number of children reaching the higher Level 5 was in line with the national average. Over time, children have achieved at a rate that is well ahead of their peers. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in English, but the girls do much better than boys in mathematics and science.

4. Over time, the results in the juniors have been variable, but they have remained better than those found in all schools. There was a lack of continuity in the teaching in Year 6 in 2002, as a different teacher taught the class each term. The year group also contained a number of children with special educational needs.

5. Lesson observations show that children's attainments are very good in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The school has set challenging targets for achievement.

In 2003, in English and mathematics, 100% of children are expected to reach the nationally expected Level 4 and the school is on course to meet these. Teachers' assessments indicate it is not on course to meet the targets for the number of children reaching the higher Level 5.

6. The rate of children's progress is mostly satisfactory in Years 1 to 5. It accelerates rapidly in Year 6 where the quality of teaching is high and children receive specialist teaching in mathematics. Children's progress is tracked carefully. Teachers set targets for individual children to achieve each term. This gives children a greater awareness of the progress they are making.

7. Children's speaking and listening skills are very good. They are articulate and enjoy talking to their friends and to adults. In the playground and at lunchtimes, they are happy to talk to children older or younger than themselves to exchange news or solve a problem. In lessons, children in the infants and juniors listen attentively and answer questions clearly. In Year 2, children express opinions and preferences sensibly and by Year 6 debate various points of view. Most children read fluently and have a clear understanding of characters and plot. This has much to do with parents listening to them read each night. Older children read a wide range of material and have well developed research skills to help them find information quickly.

8. The school has placed strong emphasis on raising children's attainments, especially those of boys, in writing. This has met with some success so that by Year 6, children write for a range of reasons in a lively and thoughtful way. Much of the punctuation is good and handwriting is fluent and joined. However, in the infants, progress is hindered by the use of poor quality worksheets. Tasks lack interest and limit the opportunities for children to use their initiative in their work.

9. In mathematics, children in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge of number bonds and use strategies such as doubling and halving to calculate numbers up to 100. Their knowledge of other areas of mathematics is not as good as they are not covered in sufficient depth. There are few opportunities for children to become involved in problem solving tasks. In Year 6, children are competent mathematicians and have a much broader knowledge of the subject. Bright children benefit from specialist teaching in small groups. Gifted and talented children are working at G.C.S.E level.

10. At the age of seven, children have good knowledge of life and living things and the properties of materials. The last inspection report stated that too little attention was paid to developing children's investigative skills. This is still the case as standards of attainment in science could be higher in Year 2 if children had the chance to take part in suggesting and planning simple investigations of their own. In Year 6, the teaching is excellent and this promotes very good standards across the science curriculum.

11. In design and technology, art and design, geography, history and music, children's attainments are similar to those found in most schools nationally at age seven and eleven. In information and communication technology and physical education, their attainments are in line with that expected at age seven and good at age eleven. This is because the quality of teaching is much better and good resources are used effectively to develop skills, knowledge and understanding. Children who are gifted and talented in gymnastics reach very high standards at the after school club and participate in competitions.

12. The percentage of children identified as having special educational needs is lower than in most other schools and there are no children with a statement of special need. The children receive a mixture of support that includes some specialist teaching as well as

programmes of work provided by class teachers. The achievement of the children is good and the work of the special needs coordinator, together with support staff, is highly valuable in helping them to make progress. Children from the ethnic minority groups and those with English as an additional language mostly make good progress.

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

13. Children in the Foundation Stage are enthusiastic about learning and maintain their interest and involvement in activities. Their behaviour is very good and contributes significantly to the happy atmosphere in the classroom. These attitudes are sustained even when tasks lack challenge and they have little opportunity to use their initiative. Children enjoy listening to stories and are eager to speak up, sometimes forgetting to wait for their friends to finish. Presentation of work is sometime hurried, as children are keen to finish quickly and choose their play activities.

14. Children's attitudes to learning in Years 1 to 6 are very good. Children are keen to learn, concentrate well and try hard to do their best. During lessons, they listen attentively and show a growing confidence in answering questions and contributing to discussions. An excellent example of this was seen during a Year 3 drama lesson when children were asked to consider a key incident from several well-known stories. They were able to put forward cogent reasons as to whether or not the principal character would be wise to undertake a potentially dangerous course of action. Written and practical tasks are undertaken in a conscientious manner. However, presentation of work could be improved, as children's skills in handwriting are not transferred sufficiently well to other areas of the curriculum. Overall, children's positive attitudes make a significant contribution to the standards achieved.

15. The behaviour of children in Years 1 to 6 is very good. This is a consistent feature during lessons that makes a very important contribution to learning. Children are polite, helpful to visitors and well mannered in the dining hall. High standards of behaviour were seen in the playground. The children taking up the option to use the school facilities from 8.15 am in the morning adopt a very responsible approach. They show a high degree of respect and help to keep the school environment in good order. Serious misbehaviour, including bullying, rarely arises and any such incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. There were no exclusions last year. Children from ethnic minority backgrounds or with English as an additional language play a full part in the life and work of the school. This contributes to the high level of racial harmony that prevails. Parents are right to praise the high standards of behaviour.

16. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Staff are approachable and friendly and this helps to set a good example. Children respond positively and many examples of kindness and support for others were seen in lessons and other activities. This contributes to the pleasant and happy atmosphere that is a significant strength of the school. During one lunchtime, a Year 2 child advised an older child to speak to a play pal or the headteacher to help solve a problem. The children show respect for each other's feelings and beliefs. They are very alert to unhappiness and respond well when help is needed. They share tasks and equipment very well and respond reliably to the responsibilities they undertake in the school. Most have a sound understanding of our traditions of music and art.

17. Provision for children's personal development is very good. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop social skills and to promote their self-esteem. The

impressive arrangements for personal, social and health education support children's personal development. In addition, participation in a well-planned programme of educational visits broadens children's experience of the wider world. This year children in Years 5 and 6 took part in a residential visit to Wales. The visit involved participation in many adventurous activities that required teamwork and support from their friends. It enabled children to try out new things, meet demanding challenges and make decisions.

18. Children's personal development is strongly influenced by the many close links with St. Paul's Church and the wide range of visitors who talk about their special interests at assemblies or in lessons. All children take part in the school musical and dramatic productions and many also participate in the activities organised by the Parents' Association. The cultural links with schools in five European countries through the Comenius Project enable children to learn much about life in, and people from, other countries. The many school clubs are very popular and enable children to develop special interests, for example in languages, music and sports. However, these very good opportunities in other areas of school life are not built on sufficiently in lessons in Years 1 to 5. There are too few opportunities provided for children to show initiative. This occurs when teaching is less strong or because a substantial number of worksheets are used in some classes. Children are encouraged to take on responsibilities, including acting as prefects, house captains, serving on the class and school councils, acting as playground play pals, running the tuck shop, raising funds for charities and undertaking class duties. The grounds have been developed well to enable children to have areas where they can enjoy peace and tranquillity during the day.

19. Attendance is very good and has improved since the last inspection. In each of the last two years, overall attendance was well above the national average for primary schools. Punctuality at the start of the school day was identified as an area requiring improvement in the previous inspection report. Whilst there has been some improvement since that time, further action is needed. On the second day of this inspection, over one in five pupils arrived after the whistle had blown at 9am, including sixteen children between 9.05 and 9.10 a.m. The overall attendance levels have a very positive impact on the standards of achievement.

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

20. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in the infants. It is good in the juniors. Overall, it is satisfactory. This is not as good as it was at the time of the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be good. The last inspection identified that teachers:

- had good relationships with the children;
- managed children well;
- used praise to encourage children to work hard;
- promoted a calm learning environment;
- worked as a team;
- involved teaching assistants in children's learning;
- promoted skills in learning literacy and numeracy;

and these strengths are still much in evidence.

However;

- as at the time of the last inspection, lessons are not always planned well enough to take into account the different needs of the children or to match the long term programmes of work;
- many worksheets limit opportunities for children to use their initiative or do little to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding. In addition, these hold back children's intellectual and creative efforts;
- children in some lessons spend too long listening to their teacher before getting on with tasks to extend their learning;
- some teachers do not use resources often enough to support children in their learning, especially in mathematics and science in the infants;
- also in the infants, in mathematics, there is insufficient coverage of the curriculum and limited links to the National Numeracy Strategy.

21. Teaching is high quality in Year 6. The specialist teaching of mathematics, physical education and children with special educational needs is also high quality. The characteristics of this very good and sometimes excellent teaching include:

- very secure subject knowledge shared in an inspirational way that motivates children to take on new learning quickly and do their very best;
- tasks that challenge children's thinking and lead to high standards of attainment as well as build on their previous learning;
- high expectations of what children can do and achieve in lessons;
- skilful use of questions to find out what children know and to reinforce learning;
- very clear explanations of new knowledge and skills that children feel confident in applying quickly;
- the promotion of children's self-esteem so that they are confident when completing work and are eager to learn more;
- activities that meet children's specific needs;
- teachers providing high levels of feedback about how well the children are doing;
- identifying errors and using these effectively to improve children's performance;
- the promotion of learning as being a fun and satisfying thing to do.

22. As a result of this high quality teaching, gifted and talented children do very well. Children become totally absorbed in the lessons and cover a lot of work in the time. Their physical and intellectual effort is challenged substantially so that they achieve as well as they can.

23. Teachers' particular strengths in drama, German, music and citizenship are also utilised effectively to broaden the curriculum and underpin the school's ethos in the juniors.



Children take part in each of these subjects over a week, although the programme is interrupted if a member of staff is absent.

24. As at the time of the last inspection, teaching in the Foundation Stage is mostly satisfactory. The teacher, teaching assistants and parent volunteers have built up very good relationships and support children in a range of activities so that their progress is sound. Children are managed well, often with a lot of kindness. Expectations that children will behave well are very good so that they know the routines. Discussions with the children enable them to extend their vocabulary. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy give children a foundation on which to build when they enter Year 1. Literacy lessons are planned using techniques found as part of the National Literacy Strategy.

25. The main weakness relates to planning for the activities and this was the case in 1998. The teacher's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, introduced nationally in September 2001, is not sufficient to ensure that its principles have been implemented fully. The day-to-day timetable is too rigid and hinders the opportunities for children to spend time on different activities using their initiative. In addition, there is little to indicate what children are to achieve in each session. This limits opportunities for them to combine learning indoors and outdoors, challenge their intellect and develop their interests, concentration and independence. Information from assessment of children's progress is not used well enough to plan work that meets differing needs. There is still no system to track and record the free choice activities that children spend a lot of time on. These tasks also lack challenge and structure and contribute little to children's learning.

26. The specialist teaching of children with special educational needs is often very good and is a strength of the school. It takes place in class lessons and in withdrawal groups usually held in the newly appointed special needs room. The individual learning programmes are drawn up with considerable care and are of good quality. Targets for improvement are clear, precise and realistic. This helps children make progress in their learning. The part time special needs coordinator has very good relationships with the children. They enjoy the tasks presented to them and their self-esteem is maintained well. Support staff also show sensitivity and skill in helping children to make progress. The work of class teachers in supporting children with special needs is more varied. It is mostly carried out well, but there are occasions when opportunities are missed to link tasks with targets set out in the children's individual education plans.

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

27. The curriculum is very good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants. Since the last inspection, the school has continued in its aim to provide the children with a broad and balanced curriculum. The programme of work covers all the required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It includes very good opportunities for children to develop personally and socially. The teaching of German in the juniors, links with the community and an impressive range of extra curricular clubs enriches the curriculum.

28. All subjects, including religious education, have policies and schemes of work to promote breadth and balance. Many follow national guidance. Teachers' medium term plans help them to cover all subjects appropriately, but their short term planning is not consistent throughout the school and does not always provide the right level of challenge for all ability groups. In the infants, teachers do not give sufficient time and attention to investigative work in mathematics and science.

29. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced effectively in most classes and are helping to raise standards in these key areas. The school has

responded positively to the key issues in the last inspection. It now has a vigorous programme for information and communication technology and this is supported by very good provision of equipment. National guidance for a programme of work has been adopted for geography and this now helps to chart the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. The physical education curriculum is particularly strong and the school is rightly proud of its achievements, especially in sport and gymnastics.

30. Citizenship, drama, music and German are planned for and taught systematically throughout the juniors by specialist teachers. The teaching in citizenship includes very good provision for personal, social and health education that is contributing towards the school's efforts to earn the Essex Schools Award. The citizenship teacher is also the link teacher for the school council. The class council representatives often bring issues raised by the school council to the attention of their classes. A policy and comprehensive programme of study are in place for sex education. In the infants, sex education is taught through topics and links with other curriculum areas, such as science. In the juniors, sex education is linked to the health and science curriculum and there are also separate lessons for Year 5 and Year 6 that are led by the school nurse.

31. The school is developing good links with the community. The choir visits a home for the elderly. Members of the church visit the school and lead assemblies. Visitors to the school enliven lessons and day visits to local places of interest, such as a Hindu temple, extend the curriculum. There is an annual residential visit for the upper juniors that enriches their curriculum. The citizenship teacher is sharing her expertise by leading planning sessions with four other schools. There are very good links with schools abroad as part of the Comenius project and a new link with a Polish school has recently developed.

32. The provision of extra curricular activities is excellent. All staff run a club and visiting specialist staff offer instrumental music tuition for piano and violin. There is an extensive range of activities that cater for all pupils. These include football, netball, dance, French, art, filmmaking, gymnastics, chess, choir, magazine, sewing, recorders, music and Bible. The activities are very popular and some have waiting lists. Parents value the activities available and those with particular skills offer to help. The experiences and skills that the children gain from attending these sessions enhance standards in many areas of the curriculum.

33. At the time of the last inspection, provision for children in the Foundation Stage was sound, but is now unsatisfactory. The curriculum in 1998 was loosely based on the areas of learning. Since then, a new curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been introduced nationally, but has not been implemented fully by the school. Long term planning does not ensure that all six areas of learning receive equal emphasis. Nor does it show clearly what children are intended to learn over the year. In the short-term, plans do not take into account sufficiently the different interests and needs of the children. This means children miss opportunities to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves. There are few links between learning indoors and outdoors. Too often children are engaged in free play activities that occupy them rather than extend their learning.

34. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. The procedures for identifying such children are sound and comply with national requirements. They are overseen by an experienced and skilled coordinator who works closely with class teachers

and teaching assistants. The school liaises appropriately with outside agencies and the children benefit from this. Children's individual education plans are up to date and written well. Targets for development show careful diagnosis of children's learning difficulties and how they might be addressed.

35 Staff are rightly concerned to make sure the different groups of children on the school's roll draw full benefit from its provision. A good up-to-date policy guides work in this area and provision is good. The school has a culture where everyone is valued. It is aware of equal opportunities and has organised curriculum access to take this into account.

36. The progress made by girls and boys is checked regularly and with care. This checking recently indicated that boys progress more slowly in writing than girls and, as a result, the school has given priority in its development plan to raising boys' attainment in writing. In other respects, there are no significant differences between the progress made by boys and girls and children of both genders have full access to all curriculum and club activities.

37. The school has identified its bright children and has a good record of providing challenge for them. Careful checking of their progress ensures that they do not mark time. In English and mathematics they sometimes work within older year groups to ensure they are challenged sufficiently. This, together with extension work provided by the headteacher, results in high standards. While many lessons include some activities specially planned to extend brighter children, this is often not the case in the infants, where work makes too little demand of them. Teaching assistants provide good support to children selected to take part in the catch up programmes for literacy. A teaching assistant provides bright children with focussed support in the infants and Foundation Stage. The school offers a welcome to children with disabilities and is improving its provision for them.

38. There are a number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds in the school and some of these learn English as an additional language. This said, none of the children learning English as an additional language are at an early stage. Again, the progress ethnic minority children make is carefully checked to ensure their particular needs are met. They make very good headway in English and in other areas. Indeed, recent checks show that they generally do rather better than the other children in their year groups. They and their parents take a full part in all aspects of school life.

39. The school's written policy for racial equality is thorough and principled. It identifies areas of school life in which children might be vulnerable, establishes clearly the responsibilities of governors, headteacher and staff and sets out the procedures to be used to address any prejudiced incidents or language. The school is a tolerant and harmonious community with no evidence of racial tension.

40. The last inspection found the school offered a good range of opportunity for children to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, although too little was done to help them appreciate the cultural richness and diversity of our society. There have been many improvements since then and the provision now made is very good.

41. Many lessons encourage the children to reflect on issues of right and wrong. They are helped to appreciate the beliefs and values of others and to think more perceptively about their own. Several staff meetings have addressed ways of improving the school's provision for spiritual and moral development. As a result, both within lessons and in assemblies, the

spiritual component of the children's experience has improved since the last inspection. All classes have a *Place of Thought* display, a book, picture or artefact to prompt the children to quiet wonder, reflection or discussion. In Year 6, children reflected in a moment of silence, on the feelings of friends and relatives serving in the Gulf and on how they could support them. Other children made posters proclaiming the importance of respect for the earth and for everyone who lives on it. Assemblies are engaging community events, with children moved by the stories and music to think more deeply about their own beliefs and feelings and those of others.

42. Teachers make good use of opportunities that arise to explore issues of fairness and unfairness, justice and injustice, honesty and integrity. Issues such as these arise in lessons, prompted, for example, by texts studied in literacy lessons and also in day-to-day conversations and interactions. In one class, children thought about the importance of respect for others and the evil effects of jealousy. Their writing showed a depth of understanding and feeling:

... *"putting out the candle of your soul,  
the dark cloud in your mind  
the poison that infects your thoughts."*

43. The school's provision for the children's social development is especially strong. They are expected to work collaboratively in many lessons, helping and learning from each other. They carry out practical duties as class monitors, helping the teachers in a mature and independent way. The school has a *play pals* system whereby older children take particular care of younger ones at playtime and lunchtime, or give special attention to any child who is without friends or otherwise feeling left out. Children then move on to undertake a wider range of social duties. In their class councils and the school council, they learn about democratic processes, such as voting, accepting majority decisions and representing others. This is part of an excellent citizenship programme. Children's responsibilities, however, do not end with the school itself. Through a range of charitable activities, supporting causes both local and further afield, they are encouraged to show a concern for the needy, wherever they may be. The school's excellent links with other European schools, in Belgium, Germany, Poland and Cyprus, allow a real insight into how other societies operate. Older children have a very valuable opportunity to begin to learn about social living away from home through the annual residential visit to Wales.

44. Cultural development is promoted through the arts curriculum and in other ways. Visitors to the school have contributed to violin and piano assemblies and the school's small instrumental groups sometimes play for concerts for children and parents. Local elderly people are entertained by the choir and the school takes part in local music festivals. Work by famous artists is displayed in the school and children are encouraged to look closely at it and try out textures and colours in their own work. Cultural experience is broadened by visits to places of interest such as the African Village of Aklowa set up in Takeley, Essex and to Victorian and Tudor houses.

45. In response to a key issue raised at the last inspection, a teacher has taken particular responsibility for improving the school's multicultural provision. A policy has been produced to guide work in this area and many new opportunities have been made available to the children. Some classes have studied food from other cultures, such as Chinese and Indian. A Nigerian parent visited to explain important elements of Nigerian tradition. Music from other

cultures now has a greater part in the music curriculum. These opportunities represent a marked improvement since the last inspection. However, the multicultural programme, varied though it is, does not yet sufficiently emphasise the richness and variety of our own national cultural activity.

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

46. Provision for pupils' guidance and welfare is very good. There is a friendly and supportive atmosphere in the school that reflects the very high quality of pastoral support provided by all staff. Parents are most appreciative of this, as it enables children to feel happy and secure in school. Good improvements have been made in this area since the last inspection.

47. A welcoming and understanding approach enables children joining the school to settle in quickly. The very good personal, social and health education programme includes advice on personal hygiene, healthy living and, for older children, sex education and awareness of the use and misuse of drugs. Personal development is also helped by special themes in assemblies and talks by visiting speakers, including the school nurse. Children are encouraged to show understanding and respect for the needs of others, for example, when working in small groups and by taking part in fund raising for charities. Helpful advice is given to Year 6 pupils in preparation for their successful transfer to secondary education.

48. There is a strong emphasis on health and safety matters including an annual review by the governing body. Arrangements are helped by the clear procedures set out in the policy documents, including risk assessments, safety checks and regular inspections of buildings and equipment. A governor has special responsibility for safety aspects and works very closely with the headteacher on such matters. Accidents and illness are handled efficiently and many staff undertook a first aid course last year. Appropriate records are maintained and there is also cooperation with parents about issues relating to health or accidents. There are appropriate arrangements for dealing with child protection matters.

49. Very good systems promote high standards of behaviour. The school's expectations are clearly explained to parents. Children have the opportunity to contribute to high standards by setting targets for their behaviour and by taking part in the playground *play pals* scheme. Teachers and other staff adopt a consistent approach.. This places a strong emphasis on praise for good behaviour, including rewards through the popular house points system. Arrangements for promoting racial harmony and the sanctions for misbehaviour, including bullying, are well respected. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are dealt with effectively and include liaison with parents to prevent its reoccurrence.

50. Arrangements for promoting regular attendance are good overall. Parents co-operate with the school's desire to achieve the highest possible level of attendance. They are normally quick to advise the school of absences through illness. Attendance records are maintained well and the overall position is closely monitored. Office staff follow up unexplained absences immediately. Since the last inspection, several initiatives have helped to secure improvements in punctuality at the start of the school day. These include opening

the school premises at 8.15am each morning and providing a clearly marked 'drop off' zone adjacent to the highway and close to the entrance to the playground. The school follows up concerns about punctuality by letter or by discussion with parents. Despite such measures, punctuality is still not as good as it should be. More rigorous procedures are needed so that all parents cooperate fully to ensure that a prompt start is made to the school day.

51. Very good arrangements are made for monitoring children's personal development. The class teachers, together with learning assistants, know the children well and encourage them to pursue their personal interests. Key aspects of children's developments are recorded on their individual record sheets. This information is used well for feedback to parents at the consultation meetings and in the annual written reports.

52. Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop and improve its assessment systems. Very good procedures are now in place from Year 1 to Year 6. These enable the school to track children's progress through the school. Assessment records are not as good in the Foundation Stage and do not give enough information to allow the teacher to plan work effectively for the different ability groups in the reception class. As at the time of the last inspection, records are not kept of children's free play activities to ensure they receive a balanced curriculum.

53. National test results in Years 2 and 6 are meticulously analysed, as are end of year tests in other year groups. Predictions of future attainment are made from these and school and individual targets are set, the latter after much consultation with parents. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor the assessment levels achieved by all children. Difficulties in learning are identified and discussions held with class teachers who are expected to adapt their lesson plans to take account of these. However, not all teachers make sufficient provision for differing abilities within their lessons.

54. Teachers assess children's progress in all subjects of the curriculum. This is very good practice and means that a comprehensive profile on what children know and can do is built up as they move through the school. Strengths and weaknesses are identified quickly. Teachers provide evidence, once a term, of each child's strengths and weaknesses that are collated into a personal profile. This evidence is added to annually so that by Year 6 there is a comprehensive record of achievement.

55. A significant feature of the monitoring process is the children's self-assessment of their work and behaviour. Three improvement targets are identified once a term, one each in literacy and numeracy and personal development. Teachers discuss and review these and check whether they have been achieved before new targets are written. Children's involvement in setting and achieving these targets has done much to improve their self-esteem and progress in lessons.

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

56. Parents are very pleased indeed with all aspects of the school's work. They say that children like school and receive every support. They feel that behaviour standards are high and that good teaching enables the children to progress well. In addition parents state that the school is led and managed well. There is very close cooperation between parents and

the school. Parents commend the many improvements made since the last inspection. They have no significant concerns about the school.

57. Inspection evidence supports many of the parents' positive views. The headteacher's very clear educational direction for the school makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved. Whilst there are many positive aspects to teaching, there is a need to improve teachers' planning. The partnership with parents is an outstanding feature of the school. This represents an improvement on the already commendable position at the time of the last inspection.

58. The school provides very good information for parents. Helpful newsletters are issued each week about school activities and forthcoming events. Parents' views about the school are sought and welcomed by way of individual written responses to the newsletters and through questionnaires issued annually. All communications are carefully evaluated and positive action taken following parents' suggestions and concerns. Many day-to-day queries are dealt with in a friendly manner through informal discussions with the teacher or other staff. Parents have the opportunity to meet with the class teacher on a designated afternoon each month to discuss their child's progress. High quality information about this is also provided at the parent/teacher consultation meetings held each term. The annual written reports give details about achievement and personal development as well as identifying key areas for improvement.

59. The school prospectus provides very important information, especially about the school's ethos and the way children are looked after and educated. There are effective arrangements for advising parents about induction into the school and for the transfer of children to secondary schools. The governors' annual report gives an impressive description of the governors' work and of the school's achievements for the year. However, in order to meet legal requirements, there is a need for the report to include details relating to:

- the school's targets for assessment tests at age eleven;
- information relating to pupils with disabilities, namely admission arrangements; fair treatment; the school's existing access facilities and the accessibility plan detailing the school's future policies;
- information about school security;
- statements on the progress in implementing the action plan drawn up following the last inspection;
- the financial statement should include income for the year and the level of fund balances at the start and close of the financial year.

60. Excellent links with parents have a very positive impact on children's learning. Several parents provide valuable help in classes by hearing children read and by supporting other activities during lessons. Others assist with educational visits, swimming, gardening and other work, such as the construction of the music room. Parents are influential in helping to maintain the very high attendance levels but some still do not give sufficient priority to ensuring that children arrive punctually at the start of each day. Extensive parental support is given to the work that children undertake at home. The homework diary system is used

well by parents to ensure that work is carried out in a timely manner. It also enables parents to raise queries with the class teacher. Meetings for parents, school concerts, special church services and the many fund-raising events organised by the Parents' Association are always supported very well. The Association donated over £10,000 last year and this was utilised to improve the children's learning environment and play facilities.

61. The excellent rapport between parents and the school is a significant strength that aids attainment. This is an improvement on the already commendable position at the last inspection.

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

62. As at the time of the last inspection, the leadership of the headteacher ensures a very clear educational direction for the school, especially in raising standards by the end of Year 6. Day-to-day management of the school is very good and enables everyone to get on with their tasks. Visitors are made to feel really welcome. Staff and governors are rightly proud of the learning environment in which the children work. The school's aims to value children as special individuals and to provide a warm, friendly, secure and safe environment are reflected very well in all areas of its daily work. Provision for children's spiritual development is very good so they have a sense of their own value. Older children particularly, have a very good understanding of their contribution to the school community. The strong Christian ethos underpins the work of the school.

63. The role of the governors has been strengthened in recent years. They now have a very good long-term strategic plan for the development of the school. Governors take full responsibility for the admissions policy, its administration and implementation. They are particularly knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and have become increasingly influential in helping to raise standards. The governing body has appropriate committees that meet regularly. Their relationship with the staff is good and has a positive impact on the school. There is a good, shared commitment to bring about further improvements. Governors use their expertise to benefit the school in many ways. They lead assemblies, help in classes and have provided a considerable amount of advice and support with recent building projects.

64. The headteacher rightly places strong emphasis on the importance of monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning. In addition to scrutiny of children's work, a programme of lesson observations has been put in place that includes feedback to teachers and points for action. This is part of the ongoing drive to raise standards. However, the evaluation has not reduced the extensive use of poor quality worksheets that many children complete, but do little to take their learning forward. The lack of clear planning for children's different abilities in lessons has been identified and features in the school's performance management objectives. Some staff have acted immediately, but this is not consistent throughout the school.

65. As at the time of the last inspection, the headteacher takes responsibility for most of the monitoring, although coordinators in English and mathematics have also observed lessons undertaken by colleagues. The role of the coordinator, especially in the foundation subjects, is not developed fully. The culture of the *critical friend* has not been developed sufficiently to bring about improvements in aspects of the teaching and raise standards in all subjects. The school is aware of this and has made arrangements for staff to be released from class to develop their role from September 2003.



66. National test results are analysed carefully to identify areas of strength and weakness to bring about improvements in future years. Children's progress is evaluated regularly to check that they are on course to meet their targets.

67. The headteacher and governors place strong emphasis on school self-evaluation, checking all aspects of its work regularly against the local authority quality framework. This enables staff to maintain its many strengths and identify priorities for development. It also provides the momentum to bring about improvements and gives staff the opportunity to reflect on how it may improve further.

68. The school's approach to the teaching and management of children with special educational needs is good. The children are supported with skill and sensitivity. The special educational needs coordinator is skilled in teaching children with learning difficulties. Similarly, the school's approach for children with English as an additional language enables them to make good progress.

69. The school has an appropriate number of teachers, some of whom are long serving. Many of the staff have expertise in mathematics, physical education, drama and music that helps to broaden the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, the number of teaching assistants has been increased. They are deployed where they are needed most, including leading small groups to assist children with special educational needs or challenge the brighter children in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Their contribution to the general life of the school, as well as to children's attainment and progress, is substantial. A system of performance management is in place and it includes support staff.

70. At the time of the last inspection, the number of children on roll was increasing. It enabled governors to provide sufficient teachers for children to be taught in single age groups. The success of the school and the increasing number of children on roll, brought pressure on the buildings. Classrooms were crowded and did not provide sufficient space for practical tasks. Temporary classrooms and furniture were in need of replacement. New classrooms have now been built so that there is an effective learning environment for most children. Additional areas have been provided for children to work in small groups. A small recording studio means children can record their own CDs and operate the lighting for school productions. There is a small, attractive music room in the school grounds. The computer suite contributes to the good standards in this subject. Temporary buildings have been replaced and the area developed very well. New furniture has been purchased.

71. The school is situated on a large site where there is a playing field, wild area and garden to grow vegetables and watch a wide variety of birds. The area is being developed very well to enhance learning in environmental studies. Following discussions with the children, a beautiful quiet area and garden with water feature and benches has been completed recently. This is an ideal location for children who wish to experience tranquillity during the school day. The playground has also been improved and there are seats and benches for children to rest or relax.

72. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory and does not meet the needs of the curriculum. As at the time of the last inspection, opportunities to use and display resources and provide a stimulating environment are not always taken. There are few areas where children can engage in activities, such as browse through books, write freely for different purposes, or explore the world around them. This limits the potential for them to take part in activities initiated by adults or themselves and become engrossed in them. An essential requirement of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is planned and purposeful activity that provides opportunities for teaching and learning, both indoors and outdoors. Heavy doors and lack of immediate access make it difficult for children to move

freely between the indoors and outdoors and enjoy a range of learning activities. Toilet facilities are not suitable for children of this age. There are no facilities for the preparation of drinks and snacks. The outside tarmac play area is bleak and its use is limited depending on the weather. The school is fully aware of these issues and plans to build a new classroom and play area for this age group are at an early stage. Resources have improved as children now have a range of wheeled toys they can use to enhance their physical development.

73. Overall, resources in the school are good. The book stock has been improved significantly and provision for music and information and communication technology is very good.

74. Since the last inspection, the school has made considerable improvements in the processes that determine how its funds will be spent. The overall quality of financial planning is good.

75. Standards of achievement in different subjects and among different groups of children are assessed thoroughly and the evidence used to target spending. For instance, resources have been allocated to improving boys' writing because the school's own monitoring procedures showed this to be an area needing improvement. The school development plan, that draws together spending priorities each year, is thorough and realistically costed. The governors have a clear appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of how it compares with similar schools. They, and the staff, share a determination to continue to raise standards and try to ensure the children receive the best value possible from the money spent on goods and services. There are very good arrangements in place for parents to be consulted about the priorities proposed each year and the children too have a voice through their class and school councils.

76. A particular strength of the school's financial planning is its long-term strategic plan setting out how the school is likely to need to change over the next few years. This plan allows the governors to take decisions that are in the long-term interest of the school, as well as meeting more immediate needs.

77. The annual budget is managed well. It is in credit and an appropriate sum is held back to meet unexpected financial demands, or to carry forward to future years. Recently the school has allocated considerable additional sums to ensure that children have satisfactory access to computer hardware and software and that those with special educational needs receive as much support as possible from teaching assistants. Money specifically allocated to the school budget to support the learning of children with special educational needs is correctly applied. There has been no full financial audit since the 1994 audit reported in the last inspection.

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

78. To raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should build on current strengths to:

- (1) improve the quality of the curriculum and accommodation in order to raise attainment at the end of the reception year; \*

Paragraphs: ; 25, 33, 52, 69, 79 – 89;

(2) raise standards of attainment in mathematics and science at the end of the infants, especially in investigative work;

Paragraphs: 1 – 12, 28, 100 – 118;

(3) enhance the role of the subject coordinators, especially in the foundation subjects, so that they can influence standards more effectively. across the school;\*

Paragraphs: 65;

(4) improve teachers' planning so that tasks match the needs of the different abilities of the children in lessons;

Paragraphs: 20 – 26, 34;

(5) reduce the number of poor quality worksheets used by teachers and increase the opportunities for children to use their initiative in lessons;

Paragraphs: 1 – 12, 20 – 26, 100 – 118, 126 – 136.

Minor issues:

In addition, governors should consider:

- a) implementing more rigorous procedures for checking children's punctuality at the start of the school day;
- b) ensuring that their annual report to parents contains all the required information.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	4	15	15	3	0	0
Percentage	8%	10%	38%	38%	8%	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	11

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	7	22	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (96)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	10	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	14
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	21	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (96)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	12
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	24	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (96)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	141	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	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	3	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	27	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.4:1
Average class size	25.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	448,818
Total expenditure	422,299
Expenditure per pupil	2,386
Balance brought forward from previous year	£20,114
Balance carried forward to next year	26,519



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	191
Number of questionnaires returned	84

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	38	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	50	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	56	7	0	6
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	46	4	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	21	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	40	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	62	35	2	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	37	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	73	24	0	0	3

## **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**

79. Children start school full-time at the beginning of the autumn term of the academic year in which they become five. The children born before April 1<sup>st</sup> start full-time in the autumn term and the youngest summer born children attend part-time. The majority of children have had some pre-school experiences in a playgroup or nursery. They bring with them a broad range of skills and attainment, some children being very bright and others having special educational needs. Assessments made by the teacher when children first start school indicate their attainments on entry are generally typical for their age. Children settle quickly into school routines as there are very good relationships between the teacher, parents and children. At the end of the reception year, children's attainments are on course to meet the early learning goals in all the areas of experience except knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Some bright children exceed the early learning goals in communications, language and literacy.

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

80. Children's attainment and progress is on course to meet the early learning goals as this aspect is taught satisfactorily. Staff place strong emphasis on enabling children to settle quickly into school. Relationships between the teacher, staff and children are very good so that children are secure, confident and happy to be at school. Children start their reception year with positive social skills and these are developed satisfactorily through setting targets such as, *we will play together happily, or play in the sand properly*. The children are polite and respond appropriately to their teacher's questions and instructions. They enjoy playing and often finish other tasks quickly so that they can choose their activities and play with their friends. They share resources and take turns fairly. In class discussions, they maintain their attention, concentrate and listen to their friends talking. They really enjoy listening to stories and taking part in familiar ones such as, *The Three Little Pigs*.

81. Opportunities to develop children's personal, social and emotional development are not planned carefully enough. Teacher's planning does not indicate what is to be learned in this area of learning. Often this aspect is taught incidentally. There are not enough planned opportunities for children to make important decisions about their work and use their initiative. Children are encouraged to tidy up at the end of each activity and take care of the classroom.

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

82. Teaching and progress is satisfactory. Bright children are identified quickly and extend their skills so that, with the support of teaching assistants and parent volunteers, they are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning. Bright children can write simple sentences and have begun to read short stories. They know the sounds letters make and their letter formation is good. Other children are on course to meet the early learning goals with regard to their knowledge of the sounds letters make. However, they do not apply these skills independently as they often copy sentences dictated by an adult or copy those written for them previously. Often children complete poor quality worksheets that make few demands on their learning.

83. Children have the confidence to speak up clearly and audibly in class discussions. They like to share their news and answer their teacher's questions eagerly. They hold sensible conversations with other adults and communicate effectively with each other. Bright children are articulate and convey what they want to say in an interesting manner. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged through role-play activities, such as *the shop* or *Chinese Restaurant*. Many children, with the help of their parents, make a good start with their reading. As at the time of the last inspection, there is little provision for children to browse through books and encourage them to extend their reading skills.

84. Teaching of this area of learning is based on the National Literacy Strategy. This helps the children to know about the features of books, stories and characters. Planning is taken from a commercial scheme and is not always adapted appropriately to meet children's individual needs.

### **Mathematical development**

85. Scrutiny of children's previous work shows that children are on course to meet the early learning goals. Teaching is satisfactory. Children count reliably everyday objects and recognise numerals up to 10. Bright children can count numbers up to 50 and beyond. In some play activities, children thread cotton reels and count them or compare who has made the longest chain. This promotes mathematical language such as, *longer than, shorter than, taller than, and shorter than*. Stories and rhymes also promote children's mathematical development. Children recognise different coins up to 20p by drawing them or colouring in worksheets that contain pictures of them. Opportunities to develop this further and link it to children's experiences are not explored fully enough in either *the shop* or *Chinese Restaurant*.

86. Teacher's planning over time shows that children have spent time on learning about money. However, mathematical development is not usually planned for in a range of activities to enhance the rate of children's progress. This area of learning does not receive as much attention as communications, language and literacy.

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

87. Few children are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area of the curriculum as it lacks breadth and balance and too little time is provided for it. Children's progress and teaching are unsatisfactory. Teacher's planning is brief and does not set out what children are to achieve. In recent weeks, children have learned about the signs of spring, compared old toys with new toys and found out about the flags of some European countries. There have been few opportunities for them to investigate objects and materials by using their senses or to find out how things work. The children choose many activities, mostly to build and construct with a range of objects, when they have finished their written work. There are few opportunities for them to construct items with a purpose in mind or select from tools or techniques to shape, assemble and join the materials they are using. There is one computer and children take turns to use the mouse to give it instructions. For example, one child enjoyed selecting a picture and clicking the mouse so that the picture was repeated all over the screen. Few links are made to tasks that include learning in and out of the classroom.

## Physical development

88. Teaching and progress are satisfactory so that children are on course to meet the early learning goals. In a lesson observed in the outside area, children rode tricycles with confidence. They steered them carefully around a course marked out for them without bumping into anyone. Children playing with sponge balls kicked and threw them with control so that they all enjoyed the game. Others balanced well on narrow beams. In another lesson, children moved with control and coordination. However, resources to enable children to travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment are limited by the accommodation and resources. It was not possible to judge the way children handle tools, objects and malleable materials, as this was not observed. Paper finger puppets of *Little Red Riding Hood* that children painted had been cut out for them previously by an adult.

## Creative development

89. Teaching and children's progress are unsatisfactory. Children are not on course to meet the early learning goals. This is because this area of learning is not planned for in enough depth. Provision is hindered by the accommodation and the lack of activities that allow children to develop their creativity and originality. Most artwork shows considerable direction by an adult, limiting chances for children to explore colour, texture, shape and space in two or three dimensions. However, there are some examples of quality artwork where children painted daffodils with care and attention. The role-play area and *the shop* are small and in a cramped area with limited resources, giving children little chance to really use their imagination.

## ENGLISH

90. The previous inspection found standards to be typical of those found nationally at the end of both the infant and junior stages. The school monitors its performance carefully and sets priorities for development and challenging targets in the light of its findings. Its reading and writing results in national tests for children aged seven have been mostly high in recent years. Its results in national English tests for children aged eleven have also been high, although they dipped slightly in 2002. This was because three different teachers taught the year group and it contained a higher number of children with special educational needs.

91. Scrutiny of work and lesson observations during the inspection show that all children, including those who come from ethnic minority groups or with English as an additional language, or special educational needs, make good progress overall. However, the rate of progress accelerates in Year 6 because of some high quality teaching. Currently, children's attainment is above average at age seven and well above average at age eleven. This represents significant improvement since the previous inspection.

92. Teachers show a sound understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and this is helping to raise standards, although more could be done to reinforce literacy skills in other subjects. Class texts are usually chosen well and appeal to children's interests. Specialist teaching of drama at the junior stage is enjoyed by the children. It helps build their confidence and extends their learning experiences effectively. Homework is used well to reinforce the work in literacy lessons.

93. Children's speaking and listening skills are very good. They are pleased to talk to visitors about their work and matters that interest them. They are polite, respectful and show pride in their achievements. Almost all children speak confidently and communicate meaning clearly in a variety of situations, in groups in class and in assemblies. They listen attentively, understand the need to take turns in speaking and answer questions sensibly, often using their own experiences to help illustrate a particular point. By the age of seven, many children are beginning to offer opinions and to express preferences. Examples of this were seen in a Year 2 lesson based on a text about the characteristics of different animals. The children enthusiastically contributed to the discussion giving additional details of their own. Junior children often express ideas fluently. Their answers to questions show they have listened carefully to what is being asked. By the age of eleven, their use and understanding of vocabulary is mostly very good. During discussions, they are able to see that there are different points of view, but can put forward reasoned arguments as to their preference. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson during which children considered the idea of closing an activity centre in order to build houses. They could see the need for the houses, but most felt the activity centre was more beneficial and were able to say why.

94. Most children are enthusiastic readers and enjoy listening to stories. Appropriate time is given to the development of reading skills and children use letter sounds effectively to help them tackle unfamiliar words. This approach is used particularly well for children with special educational needs. Individual reading books are chosen carefully and this shows good teacher direction. Almost all children take reading books home regularly and many parents actively support this area of work. This encourages children to read on a daily basis and to see it as a really worthwhile activity. By the age of seven, children's reading skills are mainly good. Many read with growing confidence and fluency. They understand what they are reading and can recall details of characters and story lines, although few are able to name favourite authors. By the age of eleven, children's reading skills have improved further and are generally very good. They read fluently and often with good expression. Brighter children read and understand complex material. For example, one child was able to talk knowledgeably about plays by William Shakespeare. Many have favourite authors and are able to explain what appeals to them. One child said that she likes a particular author because "she writes about things that happen in real life." Children use dictionaries well and have very good research skills to find information.

95. The school has worked successfully to develop children's writing skills, particularly that of the boys and attainment is above average at the end of both the infant and junior stages. However, the school is not complacent and the improvement of writing skills remains a focus. Opportunities are provided for children to write for a range of purposes, including stories, reports, poems, letters and playlets, but the heavy use of worksheets sometimes hinders children's progress, particularly at the infant stage. This is because the tasks are often uninteresting and do not challenge the children sufficiently well. Individual targets are set for each child and these are valuable tools to help raise standards. Infant children show a good understanding of the need to sequence events in the right order, for example when writing about breakfast time. Appropriate attention is given to the planning of their stories, but the outcomes often lack imagination. By the age of seven, children's sentence structure is generally good with capital letters and full stops mostly used correctly. Brighter children are beginning to use question marks and speech marks in an appropriate way. Spelling and the presentation of work are usually good, although handwriting skills are not always transferred to other subjects successfully. Junior children build systematically on their writing skills.

96. By the age of eleven they often show good imagination and the ability to extend ideas well. Their writing is usually lively and thoughtful with good use of vocabulary. For example, a child set the scene for a story with the words, *“It was a dazzling, beaming, bright day.”* Most children’s understanding of punctuation and grammar is good. Dictionaries are used effectively to check spellings, although there are still simple errors. Handwriting is mostly joined and uniform, but general presentation is sometimes untidy.

97. The structure of the literacy hour has given teachers clear guidelines about the organisation of lessons and this is proving beneficial. Teaching overall is good with some high quality teaching of Year 6 children. Resources are prepared well and easily available to the children. Lesson plans are sometimes brief, but teachers know what children are to learn and how. This is usually explained to them at the beginning of the lesson so that they know what they are going to do and why. Relationships are very good and help to establish a positive climate for learning. Children have very good attitudes towards the subject and behave really well. The good teaching stems from:

- high expectations of what the children can achieve in the time available;
- secure subject knowledge, shared effectively with the children;
- challenging tasks that make the children think and work hard;
- skilful use of questions that assess what children know and understand;
- ongoing feedback to children so that they know what to do next and how to improve;
- good use of praise and encouragement that motivates children to do their best;
- group work that is matched effectively to children’s needs;
- the ongoing reinforcement of basic skills, such as the use of letter sounds, to read unfamiliar words.

98. In the very best teaching, tasks are imaginatively presented and conducted at a brisk pace. There is a real sense of purpose and direction that enthuses and excites the children. Resources, overall, are satisfactory. The coordinator is in her first year at the school, but has substantial previous experience of teaching and organising the subject. She carries out some lesson observations and assists the headteacher in monitoring teachers’ planning. She also analyses test results and gives feedback to colleagues.

99. Children’s literacy experiences are broadened and enriched through drama lessons, a drama club, annual productions and Book Fayres.

## MATHEMATICS

100. Children's attainments in mathematics at the age of seven are typical of those found in schools nationally, as they were at the time of the last inspection. At age eleven, standards have improved markedly since 1998 and are now very good and much better than those found in schools nationally. A significant number of eleven year olds are expected to reach the higher Level 5 in forthcoming tests, whilst three gifted and talented children are already working at G.C.S.E intermediate standard. This is as a result of high quality teaching in Year 6. Children with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well for their ability. Children from ethnic minority groups and with English as an additional language, also make good progress.

101. Results in national tests for children aged seven in 2002 were similar to those found in all schools but were not as good when compared to similar schools. Many children only just reached the lower Level 2c<sup>4</sup>. There was little difference in the attainments of girls and boys. Since 1998, the results have dipped, from a high starting point, whilst results in other schools nationally have improved at a faster rate. National test results for children aged eleven, in the same year, were good in mathematics in comparison to all schools and those in similar contexts. Four children reached G.C.S.E Levels 8 and 9 as a result of high quality teaching and their enthusiasm for the subject. This is a very high standard of attainment. In 2001, the school achieved exceptional results, surpassing those of the previous four years. In the tests at age eleven, girls do much better than boys.

102. During the inspection, the scrutiny of work showed that in Year 2, children have a satisfactory knowledge of number bonds and facts. They use partitioning, doubling and halving in calculations, such as addition and subtraction up to 100. There was little evidence of practical and investigative tasks or work on shape or measurement. This means that the curriculum provision for mathematics in the infants lacks balance. A Year 1 lesson was observed that contained some practical work. Children cooperated well in pairs using dice to add two and three digits. Two children excelled at this and moved on to addition in hundreds up to 900. In one exercise, in the sample of previous work for this class, children applied their knowledge of addition facts to make answers come to 10 every time. This was effectively recorded in a *spider diagram*. In another lesson on fractions, children recognised and calculated half of a given number, but experienced difficulty when dealing with quarters.

103. In Year 6, many children are competent mathematicians and use and apply their skills and knowledge well. Higher attainers benefit from being taught in a smaller group twice a week. They are currently working on simple algebra and three children are capably completing G.C.S.E. intermediate level papers. When asked by the teacher, one of the children gave Einstein's theory of relativity as an example of an equation. All children calculate and operate large numbers with confidence. Work in exercise books is of a consistently high standard and shows a good coverage of all areas of the National Curriculum for mathematics. There is ample evidence of children using and applying good reasoning skills in their work. Most can calculate fractions and percentages accurately and use formulae confidently to work out areas and perimeters of two-dimensional shapes using square centimetres. They draw, measure and name different types of angles accurately using a protractor.

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<sup>4</sup> Level 2 is the nationally expected level for children in Year 2. It is split into Level 2C, Level 2B, Level 2A, with A being the highest level. Bright children usually attain a higher level of attainment, Level 3.

104. In a Year 6 lesson on data handling, most were able to transfer statistical information to a computer program to generate pie charts. In discussion, they showed very good understanding of averages stating clearly the differences between mean, mode and median. All show a strong commitment to the subject and present their work neatly. This reflects their high self-esteem and considerable enjoyment of mathematics. Children with special educational needs are given good support to achieve as well as they can.

105. Teaching is mostly good. Exemplary teaching was seen in Year 6 and unsatisfactory teaching in Year 2. Where teachers have very good subject knowledge, they also have high expectations of what can be achieved. They challenge children to learn a lot, whatever level they are working at. This gives children substantial confidence in their abilities. Planning is detailed and builds on what children have learned before. Routines are well established so that the pace of lessons is brisk and no time wasted. Mathematical vocabulary is promoted in lessons and displays of work. Children use it correctly, fully aware of its meaning. Lessons are effectively managed and children catch the enthusiasm of their teachers.

106. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, lesson plans are too brief, expectations are low and work is not pitched at the correct level. Instructions are not clear enough, for example, on how to use apparatus correctly. Children lose interest and find it hard to concentrate or complete sufficient work.

107. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Lesson observations are undertaken and teachers receive feedback on their teaching. However, the culture of *the critical friend* is not fully established among some of the staff so that improvements are slower in aspects of the teaching. The curriculum is based on a commercial scheme of work rather than the National Numeracy Strategy. This involves the use of many worksheets, not all of which are sufficiently challenging to extend children's learning. In some cases, the way these worksheets are used is ineffective and does not enable individual progress to be checked easily. However, in other respects assessments carried out each term are used effectively to check progress and to set future targets. Homework tasks are mainly linked to lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

108. The school has made very good headway in science since its last inspection. At that time, standards were in line with those found in most schools nationally at the ages of seven and eleven. From this sound base, standards have been driven up consistently, year by year and are now very good at age eleven. Standards at age seven, while above average, are not as good as in the juniors where the teaching is better. Bright children do well in science, as do those from ethnic minority groups and those for whom English is not their first language. Children with special educational needs receive the support they need to take a full part in lessons and they too make good progress.

109. National tests and assessments give further evidence of the extent of the school's achievements in this subject. They show that children's attainments at age eleven in 1999, 2000 and 2001 were very high in relation to other schools. There was a dip in 2002 when fewer children than usual reached the higher Level 5, although all met the national expectation, Level 4. These results were marginally below average when compared with schools with a similar number of free school meals. The school predicted this slippage in attainment because the class in question included more children than usual with special educational needs. In addition, three different teachers taught the class in the course of the year.



110. The school's targets for the current Year 6 are very high indeed, with all the children expected to reach the nationally expected Level 4 and over three quarters of them expected to surpass it. The evidence of the inspection is that while all the children are likely to reach the expected level, the school may fall slightly short of its very ambitious target for the higher level of attainment, Level 5.

111. By the age of seven, nearly all the children have a good understanding of the main structures of the human body. They can label some of these and appreciate their purpose. For instance, they have made working hinge joints from cardboard and can use these to show how muscles in the arms and legs enable a joint to move. Some realise that these muscles work in pairs and can contract and extend, but not push. In working on forces, they have learned what equipment is needed to make a bulb light and can put together a simple circuit. Some explain confidently how a switch can be placed in the circuit and what materials it could be made from. They observe and measure teacher-designed experiments but have very few opportunities to show initiative by suggesting and planning simple investigations of their own.

112. By the age of eleven, these early achievements have been consolidated and extended very well. The great majority of the children know how to use a key to identify a plant or animal specimen and can list the important distinguishing features of different species. They have learned about how plants and animals adapt to fit their environments and the range of nutrients they require to thrive. In studying electricity, the children set up good experiments to determine whether the length, thickness or colour of wires affect the operation of a simple circuit. Through their investigative work, the children have learned about the care they must take to control variables that might distort their results. They make plausible predictions before experimenting and most can draw correct conclusions from their data.

113. When the school was last inspected, teaching standards were found to be good. Lessons in the infants, however, were not always challenging enough and too little attention was paid to developing children's investigative skills. Lessons planned for both the infants and the juniors lacked appropriate extension work for the more able. The quality of teaching in the juniors has improved considerably since then and is now very good. Teaching in the infants remains good, but is not as strong as in the juniors.

114. One Year 6 lesson provided an example of excellent teaching. The children were studying light and shadow, looking especially at the factors affecting the size of a shadow. The teacher questioned the children to find out what they already knew about light sources. She cleverly linked this with previous work on the earth in space. With an overhead projector, she illustrated how a light beam, when blocked, creates a shadow, using a cutout coloured image of a child. The class was challenged to decide why the projected image was colourless.

115. Finally, children worked in groups to identify, through experiments, the times of day at which a series of shadow images might have been made. To solve the problem they needed to take into account the direction of the rising and setting sun, the sun's height at different times of the day and the effect of the seasons on the sun's position. This was very difficult work, which tested the children's thinking considerably. However, they rose to the challenge and emerged from the lesson with a secure grasp of how light travels, how shadows are made and factors influencing the shape and size of shadows. The lesson included new ideas that extended higher ability children, but was also accessible to the less able. It was excellently organised, much enjoyed by the children and drew on the teacher's very thorough subject knowledge. However, there is room for improvement in the teaching overall. In particular, lessons in the infants are still insufficiently challenging. An overuse of poor quality worksheets hampers children's learning, especially in respect of investigative skills. In some instances teachers' own knowledge of the subject holds back learning.

116. Children still have the good, positive attitudes to science mentioned in the previous report. They are confident in setting about new tasks, enjoy predicting the outcomes of experiments and keen to present their own points of view in discussion. They work very well together on practical tasks, sharing equipment sensibly and learning well from each other. The previous report comments that children's presentation of their work was not careful enough and this remains the case in the juniors.

117. The science coordinator has produced a sound development plan to show how science standards will be maintained and raised in the coming year. Rightly, the plan gives priority to improving the teaching of investigative skills. The coordinator checks teachers' termly planning and visits lessons to evaluate teaching and learning. Her own science teaching is of a high standard and sets a really good example. Science benefits from this good leadership.

118. Overall, the school has built on the strengths noted in its previous inspection and has remedied many, but not all, of the shortcomings.

## ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. Only two lessons were seen during the period of the inspection, one each at the junior and infant stages. Judgements were informed by an examination of previous work, teachers' planning and interviews with the coordinators as well as with groups of children. There are examples of good work, but, overall, children's attainments are in line with those expected nationally at age seven and eleven. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection.

120. Children's learning over time in art and design is satisfactory, including those with special educational needs. However, in design and technology, the pace of learning over time is not consistent. The skills of designing, making and evaluating products are developed only slowly in most years, but are quickened in Year 2 and accelerated sharply in Year 6.

121. At both the infant and junior stages, children use materials and equipment sensibly and show an awareness of safety factors, for example in the use of scissors. In the interviews, infant children explained how they have made stick puppets and Chinese lanterns. Junior children talked about making bookmarks. However, opportunities to generate their own ideas and use their initiative to plan and make products are limited. Expectations of what children can achieve are not always high enough. More chances are needed for them to experiment and to adapt and refine what they make in order to bring about improvements. Many of the children are capable of doing this well. In Year 6, for example, children have used construction kits to make fairground models with moving parts incorporating batteries, motors and bulbs. The results are pleasing and the children are rightly proud of their efforts. They have also designed and made slippers for characters in the Harry Potter stories giving appropriate consideration to cost, comfort and size. They have evaluated the finished products and again are pleased with the results.

122. Children show satisfactory skills in drawing, painting and colouring. This often helps them illustrate work in other subjects, for example in their history studies of Ancient Egypt. As they move up through the school, their creative development is satisfactory and they show growing confidence in the ability to represent what they see through pictures. They sometimes use sketchbooks to help them do this. Children mix and apply paints with increasing skill and make sound progress in their understanding of line, shape, pattern and texture. Their work includes collage, weaving and printing. Year 1 children were observed working with an adult helper and using clay to make a face of their friend. The results were pleasing and they showed an awareness of the size and shape of facial features. Appropriate emphasis is given to observational skills. In this regard, children in Year 2 have produced some good quality pictures of flowers using pastels and paint colour wash. Satisfactory attention is given to the work of well-known artists, for example collage work linked to pictures of *Sunflowers* by Vincent Van Gogh. These studies help children to be more aware of the ways in which different artists represent what they see and feel.

123. It is not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching. Of the two lessons seen one was satisfactory and the other was not. In the satisfactory lesson, the

children were making hand puppets by joining pieces of fabric. The resources were prepared well and the task was explained clearly to the children. During the practical work, ongoing support was given to those who needed it most. Occasionally, the class was stopped to share achievements and to confirm what needed to be done next. All children made satisfactory progress in the construction of their puppets. In the unsatisfactory lesson, children were evaluating sculptures they had made earlier. They completed evaluation sheets on each other's work and this strategy was commendable. However, the pace of the lesson was slow so that not enough was achieved in the time available, particularly by the brighter children.

124. Resources are satisfactory, but need to be better organised. Both the coordinators have been in post for some years. They produce action plans for their subject, but the one for design and technology is very brief. They do not see teachers' planning and opportunities for monitoring work in classrooms, other than their own, are limited.

125. Displays of work around the school are often of a good standard. They help build children's visual awareness and creative development. A popular art club is run for junior children and some of their work is displayed attractively in the hall.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

126. Children's attainments at age seven and eleven are similar to those found in all schools nationally, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Evidence is taken from lesson observations, scrutiny of past work, topic plans and discussions with Year 6 children and the geography coordinator.

127. The scrutiny of previous work in Year 2 included studies of China and the Chinese New Year. This was supported by a display of costumes, hats and fans. Children painted their names in Mandarin. The work also showed that children had drawn plans of the school. These were very untidy and involved too much colouring rather than making use of diagrams to plot routes from one part of the building to another. A study of the Isle of Struay helped children to understand the island's various physical and human features. Their work contained sketches of its post office, muddy lock, holiday homes and the seaside. Children compared these appropriately to similar features from the local environment.

128. The focus of the lesson observed in Year 1 was transport and travel from one place to another. Children named the English Channel and the countries of the United Kingdom and Europe when the class teacher pointed them out on a large map. These included France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Greece and the islands of Majorca and Minorca. They could recall some capital cities, such as Athens, Brussels, Paris, Madrid and Lisbon. In follow-up work, the children wrote about their journey to a place of interest and cut out pictures to show the method of transport they used to get there. With support, they were able to enter data from a traffic survey undertaken outside the school into a computer and produce different kinds of pictogram graphs. Teaching in this lesson was good and children were very excited about what they were given to do. Resources were used effectively to stimulate the class and the work was matched well to their abilities. Other adults were used well to support children working on the computer and those involved in cutting and gluing. As a result, children made good progress and their work was of a good standard.

129. Discussions with children in Year 6 showed satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Children remembered past work on Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands and how it linked to other subjects. For example, in art, groups made

paper collage pictures to illustrate the features of different holiday islands. They recalled studying the seasons and weather in different countries and the effect on the environment. A rain gauge was used to check rainfall in the school grounds. The group remembered the occasion when one child dressed in Kenyan native costume, with jewellery and a headdress that *"was really beautiful"*. Children set their own targets in geography. One child stated that his target was *"to know the capital cities and the average temperatures around the world"*.

130. A satisfactory lesson in Year 4 enabled children to understand how children live in the village of Chembakoli. The lesson focussed on children's life at school in Brentwood and Chembakoli. Similarities and differences were explored in an interesting discussion where children explained their ideas in an articulate way. One of the strengths in the teaching was the use of an interactive whiteboard and CDROM to show children video footage to make the learning real and relevant. However, follow up work consisted of worksheets that prescribed the task and limited opportunities for children build on the discussion and to use their initiative.

131. The geography curriculum has improved since the last inspection when it was a key issue for action. National guidance is being followed. However, modifications are needed to the school's overall curriculum map to ensure that topics are evenly spread. The recent development of the school grounds will help to improve studies in the environmental aspects of geography as well as making the subject relevant and practical. The coordinator has recently taken responsibility for the subject and has already identified what needs to be done in order to improve standards.

## **HISTORY**

132. Only one lesson was seen during the period of the inspection but scrutiny of previous work shows attainment to be similar to those found in most schools nationally at age seven and eleven. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection.

133. Scrutiny of previous work showed that children in Year 2 know facts about the *Great Fire of London*. They wrote brief accounts of how and where it started, accompanied by sketches to represent their understanding of it. Children with special educational needs cut out captions and placed them in a sequence showing the order of events. Some wrote about the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral by Sir Christopher Wren, accompanied by a picture downloaded from the Internet. In another topic the class wrote and drew pictures of ways they could find out about the life of Florence Nightingale such as, looking at books and photographs. Some knew how to write a simple biography. Coloured sketches of Florence's family were included. Children completed a simple questionnaire on how they thought soldiers felt before she came to the Crimea.

134. Children in Year 6 were eager to discuss their knowledge of the Tudors. An interesting variety of teaching approaches captured the children's interest and imagination. For example, children wrote an account of their feelings when looking at a portrait of Henry VIII. One child wrote, *"I noticed the jewels on him, the pendant showing his name, he is*

*boasting about himself*". The group was particularly proud of their collage pictures of the king, who fascinated them. Having studied the character of Mary Tudor, the class was asked to write a school report on her. Under mathematics, one wrote, "*Mary works as hard as she can, she struggles a little, but when she struggles, she keeps on going.*" They also researched and wrote biographies of Mary Queen of Scots. These were written well and showed a clear understanding of the events in her life.

135. In the one junior lesson seen, children made good observational drawings of objects from Ancient Greece, including coins, horses, an oil lamp and theatre masks. They researched information carefully and wrote accurate descriptions and imaginative stories about them. The report on the masks described one as having "*a happy face, fruits on their cheeks for some reason, carrots or horns, pointy ears, big cheeks, thought it was clay, but feels very light so could be papier-mâché*". Progress was good as a result of the good teaching and wide subject knowledge. The class was keen to handle the artefacts. They did this with care and learning became more meaningful.

136. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory, as the coordinator does not know enough about history to have a positive influence on raising standards. Her main role is ordering stock and improving resources and she has also organised such events as a Victorian Day when everyone dresses in period costume. The work in history is supported well by a number of visits, for example to the Harlow Toy Museum, Valence House in Dagenham and the British Museum. National guidelines are followed and topics are taught in half-termly blocks, at the end of which, children are assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the period. Their progress is checked regularly and targets set for improvement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

137. Children's attainments are similar to those found in schools nationally at age seven and are good at age eleven. At the time of the last inspection, the school was still developing its information and communication technology programme and children's attainment was broadly in line with the national expectations. There was no detailed scheme of work to support and guide teachers' planning. Teachers' knowledge and expertise was limited and information and communication technology was not included in their plans. The equipment was outdated and there was very little direct teaching of skills. Information and communication technology became a key issue in that inspection.

138. Improvements in provision since then have been very good. Fourteen computers with Internet access have been installed in a suite and most classes have three computers. This means that whole classes of children, working in pairs, can be taught skills altogether in the computer suite. The nests of computers in the classes are used to practise and apply the skills learnt. The school now follows a nationally recommended programme of work and this is enabling the children to build up their skills in a systematic way. Areas to be covered by each year group are clearly displayed in the computer suite. Good software has been purchased and extensive training has raised teacher skills and confidence. The school is equipped with a scanner, a digital camera, a digital microscope and a recently built recording studio. A part time technician deals ably with technical problems and this enables the staff to have constant access to working computers.

139. As a result of the improved provision, children's achievements are rising rapidly. By the time they reach the end of the infant stage, most children are confident in using the keyboard and mouse. They understand and use the basic vocabulary such as, *backspace, capitals, bold, font* and *delete*. However, teachers do not make enough use of computers to enrich work in other subjects.

140. By the age of eleven, children have built strongly on their computer skills. They can change font sizes and colours, use repeating patterns to design wallpaper, write programs to draw shapes, build and use spreadsheets and draw graphs and charts from spreadsheet data. Children know how computers can be used to control external devices. They use the Internet to search for information such as, Greek vases and use email to communicate with pupils in schools abroad. Most, confidently load, open and run CD ROM programmes. The older juniors have used Excel and PowerPoint effectively in other subjects, such as science, to record, interpret and present data. Children enjoy using the recording studio to record their music and plays. This means they listen to and evaluate them carefully and make improvements. This does much to raise their self-esteem and use their initiative outside of lessons.

141. All children are making good progress over time and enjoy the work very much. They show confidence in the use of the equipment, collaborate well in group work and are proud of their results. Children from ethnic minority groups and those with special educational needs all receive the support they need to be successful.

142. Part of one lesson was observed. The children worked in pairs and were confident in using the data base program. They created questions and were able to print a graph to display the answers. They cooperated well and from the enthusiasm they showed it was clear that they were enjoying the lesson. The teacher displayed good knowledge and developed their confidence by asking probing questions that made them think. The special educational needs children received very good support from the special educational needs teacher.

143. The headteacher coordinates this subject very well and has had the opportunity to observe teaching and ensure the implementation of the scheme of work. He collects samples of work that demonstrate the levels of work children are achieving from the classes each term and talks to the children. Teachers assess the children regularly and keep records of their attainment. However, the assessment is not yet rigorous enough to show the pupils, understanding and experience of all areas in the information and communication technology curriculum. There is a good awareness of the cross-curricular use of information communication technology in the juniors, but much less so in the infants.

## **MUSIC**

144. At age seven and eleven, children's attainments are in line with most schools nationally. A similar picture was found in the previous inspection. Children's music experience is enriched by a variety of extra curricular activities and many benefit from this.

145. Infant children sing melodically and repeat short rhythmical patterns. In a Year 1 lesson, children listened carefully to the teacher and then tried hard to repeat the rhythm she had clapped but found this difficult. They would have made greater progress with more guidance on how to develop a sense of rhythm and timing. They have opportunities to explore the sounds that can be made by different percussion instruments and they do this with enthusiasm. They know the difference between *loud* and *soft* and have experimented with simple notation.

146. Junior children go to the music coordinator, who is a music specialist, for their weekly lesson and link music to other subjects when in their own class. A lesson for Year 4 children was observed. They sang in tune and read music from song sheets. Their knowledge of musical vocabulary and notation was good. For example, they were able to state the five notes on a pentatonic scale. Children have opportunities to listen to and appraise a variety of

composers. Each half term, the children use the small recording studio to record their singing and music making. They take part in this with great enthusiasm. Recently, Year 6 children sang along with some taped music and recorded their efforts. They then evaluated the quality of their recordings and made changes to improve them by adding further backing, such as clapping.

147. In assemblies, the children sing well and in unison and have a sense of tone and pitch. They listen attentively to music by classical and modern composers and at times enjoy singing along with it.

148. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to good. In the good teaching children were on task and the pace was brisk. There was a range of activities and the questioning by the teacher made the children think hard. They were motivated well and displayed very good attitudes.

149. The school's extra curricular activities include lessons in piano and violin, two recorder clubs and a school choir. Piano and violin lessons are taught by visiting instrumental teachers. Twenty four children have piano lessons. All activities are very popular with the children and there are waiting lists for some. The school choir performs for the residents in a home for the elderly and takes part in the Harvest Festival. All children are encouraged to take part in the school's musical evenings and share their musical abilities such as singing solo and playing their musical instruments. These experiences enable the children to widen their musical experiences and develop a good standard in music. Parents are very supportive of all these activities and take real pleasure watching the children perform. They state that performing in front of an audience gives children the motivation to practise and enhances their confidence and self esteem.

150. There is a very good music room with substantial resources to support the music curriculum. The coordinator carries out a termly audit of resources to ensure they are in good condition and to see if any need replacing. There is an adequate selection of multicultural instruments. Photographs on display encourage the children to understand where the instruments come from. A published scheme of work is in place and is used by the staff to support their teaching. However, short term planning is not always clear. The coordinator has introduced assessment procedures and supports colleagues but her role is not sufficiently well developed. Also, music is taught as part of a cycle of activities first thing in the morning from Monday to Friday. If a member of staff is absent, these lessons do not always take place.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

151. When the school was last inspected, the children's attainments in physical education were in line with those found in schools nationally at the age of seven and good at the age of eleven. This is still the case and physical education is a strength in the juniors.

152. The school's programme of work is very good and addresses all six National Curriculum areas. Girls and boys have full access to all the activities and children with special needs and ethnic minority children participate fully. All infant children go swimming and by the age of seven most can swim at least 25 metres.

153. Only three lessons were seen during this inspection, a dance lesson and two games lessons. By the end of Year 2, most children show good control and coordination in their dance movements. In the lesson observed, they used the space well and were aware of safety throughout the lesson. They demonstrated a range of movements such as, *stomping*,



*stretching* and *swirling* and linked them successfully into a sequence, while listening to a beat.

154. Year 6 children are fully aware of the reasons for warm up activities. They evaluate each other's efforts and offer good suggestions for improvement in a constructive and friendly way. They are developing very good basketball skills and most dribble the ball for a fair distance without losing control. They apply the skills they have learnt well in a small game and cooperate effectively with others members of their team.

155. The lessons taught by the specialist teacher were high quality. His very good subject knowledge means children are challenged and coached skilfully. Tasks are explained clearly. Children are invited to demonstrate and share their skills with others. The children reflect on their own work and sensibly refine it through practice. The importance of safety factors is stressed and children are guided in their understanding of the health implications of good exercise. In a Year 2 lesson, teaching was satisfactory. The task was appropriate for the age group but did not capture the interest of some children who did not contribute as much as they should. The pace of the lesson slowed as time was taken up controlling the behaviour of some children.

156. Children enjoy physical education and take part with great enthusiasm. They behave very sensibly and work very well in pairs, groups and teams. Relationships in lessons are very good and a sense of sportsmanship is evident.

157. A very good range of extra curricular activities develops and extends the skills learnt in lessons. Children participate in football, rugby, tennis, netball, dance and gymnastic clubs. The school teams participate in regional competitions and show outstanding standards. For example, the football team were recently recognised as the district champions. A number of individual children have registered with local football clubs and have entered national trampolining and judo competitions. The gymnastics team compete in local competitions. This extends the skills of gifted and talented children. The dance and gymnastic teams have performed at church fetes and musical evenings. Parents are very supportive and they help to run the gymnastics, football and rugby clubs. They also help with transport and fun days.

158. Staff are trained well. They have qualifications in football, netball and gymnastics and have had training in dance and cricket. The resources have been improved and now there is a good range available. The school has recently achieved the Active Mark Gold Standard in recognition of its provision for physical education. The headteacher coordinates this area very well and so is able to observe lessons and provide very good support for the development of quality teaching and learning.

[Alternative standards table where KS1 results are needed, typically in infant and first schools]

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	[Year-2]	[Year-1]	[Year]	[Year]
reading	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
writing	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
mathematics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

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

[Text: particular strengths and weaknesses in the school's results and other performance data;  
 where the comparative grade is A\* or E\*, reference to the school's performance being in the highest or lowest 5% nationally;  
 standards at the end of key stages not included in the table;  
 trends in results over time;  
 the school's targets;  
 particular strengths and weaknesses in the standards of work seen;  
 how well pupils achieve.]