

INSPECTION REPORT

BRINKLEY GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colchester, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 131219

Acting Headteacher: Ms Lorraine Burrell

Reporting inspector: Jo Cheadle
23233

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th March 2003

Inspection number: 248832

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rawlings Crescent
Colchester

Postcode: Essex
CO4 9GF

Telephone number: 01206 852266

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Appropriate authority: Essex

Name of chair of governors: Mrs K Beck

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23233	Jo Cheadle	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology; religious education; educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What does the school need to do to improve further?
9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23288	Marianne Harris	Team inspector	Science; provision for children in the Foundation Stage	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics; music; provision for pupils with special educational needs	
28069	David Mylroie	Team inspector	English; provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
32356	Penny Orme	Team inspector	History; geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32538	Robert Gibbard	Team inspector	Art; design and technology; physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Ltd, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0RE.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Since opening in 1997, numbers at Brinkley Grove Primary School have grown enormously. There are now 379 pupils on roll, with two classes in each year group. Four years ago, the school changed from Grant Maintained to Foundation status. Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, the deputy headteacher agreed to become acting head for a year. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2003. The school is situated in a fairly new housing development where there is a mix of privately owned and housing association houses. Some parents choose to bring their children to the school from homes well beyond the catchment area. In Years 3 to 6, the number of pupils who leave or join at various times is higher than average. The proportion of pupils who receive free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high, although only two pupils are at the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements to support their needs, is higher than the national average. The majority of pupils need help with numeracy and literacy, but some are also supported for their behavioural needs. While children have a range of skills and knowledge when they start in the Reception class, standards are generally lower than would be expected, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Brinkley Grove is a **good** and **effective** school. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have been better than the national average in reading and mathematics for the past two years. The school works successfully to enable the vast majority of pupils to make at least satisfactory progress, regardless of when they begin at the school or the attainment levels with which they start. Pupils develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem, and learn how to give of their best and respect others. Teaching is good overall. The school is well led and managed. Staff and governors work successfully together and there is a very good sense of teamwork. Parents are encouraged to be involved fully in their children's school life. They have very positive views about the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, have very positive attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- The school is a very caring and respectful community, where staff and pupils work together very well.
- The school works very closely with parents.
- The school is well led and managed.

What could be improved

- Standards in science are well below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 are unsatisfactory in this subject.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998, when the school had been open for only two terms and had a roll of 157 pupils. There has been a continual need for staff and governors

to adapt and develop to meet the demands of a rapidly growing school. The commitment and hard work of all members has ensured that the previous key issue relating to curriculum organisation has been dealt with thoroughly, national and local initiatives have been responded to appropriately and school improvement planning has suitably reflected the needs of the growing population. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Particular improvements are noted in the following areas:

- Leadership and management in English and mathematics and pupils' achievements in both subjects.
- The provision for information and communication technology and standards attained by pupils.
- Ways of checking and recording how well pupils are doing, so that progress over time can be carefully monitored.
- The development of pupils' personal and social skills and the building of confidence and self-esteem.

The school has maintained and built upon previously reported strengths such as in its caring ethos. There is clear determination and good capacity for further improvement and development.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	B	D	D	B	well above A average above B average average C below average D well below E average
mathematics	D	E	E	D	
science	D	E	E	E	

The school sets realistic targets for the results that pupils should gain in tests at the end of Year 6. However, by the time that tests are taken, many pupils in the testing group are not the same as those for whom the targets were set. Pupils joining the school have often experienced difficulties previously and need special support for learning and behavioural needs. The school responds very positively to this and works effectively to provide the right type of learning activities and adult support, to ensure that all pupils achieve at least satisfactorily on their starting points. Many of the pupils who remain at the school for a long time achieve well. Test results in English and mathematics do not follow a consistent upward trend and there has been a downward trend in science since the year 2000.

When they start school, children's language skills and their knowledge of numbers are lower than would be expected for their age. Their creative and physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and social and personal development are as would be expected. Children's achievements are satisfactory through the Reception classes and, by Year 1 many will have reached the levels expected for them in aspects of learning other than in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical understanding.

The school successfully encourages pupils to become confident learners, and this helps them to achieve well in tests at the end of Year 2. In the most recent tests, results were

above the national average in reading and mathematics, and well above average when compared with similar schools. Test results have steadily improved since 1998. However, many pupils still have difficulties with their written work, which affects standards overall and pupils' achievements in other subjects. Overall, standards of work are average in Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in information and communication technology are above average and pupils achieve well.

In Year 6, standards of work seen were below average in English and well below average in science. Pupils achieve satisfactorily on their starting points in English, but they are not doing well enough in science. In mathematics, and all other subjects, pupils generally attain the expected levels. Below average writing skills have an impact on how well pupils do in many areas of learning. While many pupils can talk very confidently and in detail about their work, work in books is only of an average standard. Pupils who started at the school in the Reception class, and have remained at the school through to Years 3 to 6, often achieve well. Pupils achieve well in many aspects of ICT, although their knowledge and understanding of control technology is not sufficiently developed by Year 6. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language attain the standards expected of them and their achievements are satisfactory.

Throughout the school, the attention given to pupils' social and personal development is very consistent. This not only helps pupils to develop very positive attitudes to learning and very good relationships, but also their speaking and listening skills, which are above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy their lessons. They show real enthusiasm for many activities and concentrate well in class. Their very positive attitudes provide a good basis for learning. They have a clear understanding of how much progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are lively and happy at play. They know how they are expected to behave in school, and show respect to all adults. Their very good behaviour helps support them in the progress they make in lessons. There has been only one recent fixed-period exclusion.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Staff and pupils form very good relationships that help create a positive climate for learning. Pupils work well together and carry out responsibilities sensibly and with pride.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. A small number of pupils have irregular attendance and some pupils do not always arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**.

Strengths:

- The majority of very good and excellent teaching was observed in English and mathematics lessons. Teachers make good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and skills are taught well throughout the school. Pupils receive good support in literacy and numeracy, so that even those who start at various stages in Years 3 to 6 make at least satisfactory progress. Most often their progress in learning basic skills in English and mathematics is good in lessons.
- Teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils needs, so that higher-attaining pupils are challenged sufficiently and all pupils feel successful. For this reason, rates of learning are often good in lessons.
- Teachers question pupils effectively to check how well they have understood, and then extend their knowledge further. Through question and answer sessions, pupils recognise for themselves the progress they have made.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support for all pupils, enabling them to make good progress in many lessons.
- All teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. There are clear expectations about how pupils should behave in lessons, and pupils respond well. Lessons are generally calm and organised, so that pupils can make progress in their learning.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers are good role models for respectful and caring attitudes and this helps pupils to grow in self-esteem and be confident in their learning.

Areas for development:

- Teaching and learning in science, particularly in Years 3 to 6 is not good enough. While teaching in the subject is satisfactory overall, teachers' subject knowledge in Years 3 to 6 is not sufficient to raise standards. This means that pupils do not learn basic scientific skills well enough and their achievements are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers in the Reception classes do not provide enough opportunities for children to work independently and make choices for themselves. This means that in some lessons children are unable to use their initiative and show their understanding by independently making an informed choice about materials or methods that they use.
- In a few lessons, pace is too slow and pupils become restless and do not concentrate as well as they should. On these occasions, pupils' learning is not good enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of pupils. There is a very flexible approach to adapting and amending work to ensure that activities help pupils to learn what is most important for them, at the right time. The curriculum appropriately prioritises the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Work with pupils who have special needs is well organised. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and they feel proud of their successes. This helps them to learn as well as all other pupils in lessons. Teaching assistants provide very good support for these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional	Good. Pupils who do not speak English make good progress in learning the language and are supported by specialist teaching when this is necessary. Pupils who speak English as an additional

language	language make equal progress to all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school is particularly strong at promoting pupils' moral awareness and they have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. The development of pupils' social and cultural awareness is good. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. At present, the daily act of collective worship does not contribute well enough to spiritual development and does not meet statutory requirements.
Aspect	Comment
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a very caring environment in which pupils can work and play. The school gives high priority to the arrangements for child protection and the health and safety of pupils. There are thorough ways of checking and recording how well pupils are doing in most subjects. Procedures are particularly good in English and mathematics, but in science, information about what pupils know and can do is not always used well to plan lessons.

Parents have very positive views of the school. The school has worked consistently to build relationships with parents. They are thoroughly involved in the work of the school and provided with a very good range of information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and leads by example. Roles and responsibilities are well delegated and all staff have a part to play in the development and improvement of the school. There is a very good sense of teamwork and relationships are very positive. The leadership and management of subjects are most often good. Leadership in science and music is unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are highly committed to the school and its pupils. They are well known to staff, pupils and parents and have a very 'hands-on' approach to their work, which is valued by the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are proud of the school and feel a great sense of ownership.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school monitors the success of its work regularly and carefully to ensure that there is a positive impact on how pupils learn. While some subject co-ordinators have had chances to evaluate their work in comparison with other schools, and Foundation Stage staff have visited a Beacon school, there have so far been insufficient opportunities for other managers and teachers to do so in order to develop their own practice.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Finances are well managed to support the school's planned actions. In all decision-making there is a clear focus on continuously raising the standards attained by pupils, but on occasions, value is not always gained from the money spent.

	Specific grants are wisely used and the school plans well for future spending. The principles of best value are applied well. Pupils and parents are regularly consulted.
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The school has an adequate number of teachers and support staff to help pupils, and the accommodation is satisfactory. The building is attractive and well presented but space is limited in some classrooms, the staffroom, the library and in the playground. Storage problems mean that pupils cannot independently have access to some resources. In the Reception area, one classroom is much larger than the other, which means that children in the smaller classroom do not have access to the same activities as children in the larger room, as there is not enough space for all the equipment. Resources to support learning are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are happy that their children enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. • Parents believe that teaching is good and that their children are encouraged to behave well and work hard. • Parents feel comfortable to approach the school with suggestions and concerns. • Parents believe that their children are making good progress at the school. 	<p>There were no significant concerns.</p>

Inspection findings support all the aspects that please parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of work are **average** overall and pupils achieve **satisfactorily**.

Strengths:

- In Year 2 tests, results in reading and mathematics have been better than the national average for the last two years.
- The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 in reading and mathematics tests at the end of Year 2 is higher than average.
- Standards in speaking and listening are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils achieve well in basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.

Areas for development:

- Standards in writing are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils do not achieve well enough in science, and by the end of Year 6, standards are well below average in this subject.

2. The Year 2 test results have been steadily improving since 1998 in reading and mathematics, and, until 2002, had improved each year in writing. In 2002, writing results were lower than the previous year and below the national average. Results in reading and mathematics were above the national average. In comparison with schools where there are a similar proportion of pupils who receive free school meals, results in writing were average and results in reading and mathematics were high. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level 3, was above the national average in reading, similar to the national average in writing and well above average in mathematics. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school in Reception to Year 2 is far lower than it is in Years 3 to 6. Therefore, planned developments for particular year groups are successfully implemented to their completion and pupils have a stable context for learning. As a result, they develop high levels of confidence and are well prepared to take tests at the end of Year 2.

3. Results in tests at the end of Year 6 are more varied, and greatly affected by pupils joining and leaving the school at various times during Years 3 to 6. It has been a consistent feature that the vast majority of pupils joining the school have special learning or behavioural needs. This has been a feature of the school for some time and positive action has been taken to support these pupils. The result is that they achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting levels. In all instances, the school provides equal opportunities for all pupils to do as well as they can, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Many of the pupils who have been at the school for a long time achieve well. As a result of successful learning in reading, speaking and listening and the use of number, pupils achieve well in basic skills in English and mathematics. They also achieve well in information and communication technology. Realistic targets are set for results in tests. However, in each testing year, the Year 6 group that takes the tests is changed from the group for whom the targets were set. Test results in English and mathematics were better in 2002 than the previous year. However, results do not follow a consistent upward trend in either subject. There has been a downward trend in science results since the year 2000.

4. When children join the school, most have had some form of pre-school experiences through nursery and playgroups. Their levels of knowledge and understanding and creativity development are similar to the vast majority of children and as would be expected for their age. They socialise and play together the way that most children would, moving with

expected levels of agility. In all these areas of learning, children's attainments are average. However, their language and basic number skills are below average and therefore, overall attainment on entry to school is lower than would be expected. As in other year groups, basic skills are taught systematically and effectively in the Reception classes, and this means that progress in learning basic skills is often good in lessons. The best progress that children make is in learning to read and in counting. Currently, the impact of this is seen in pupils' achievements in reading and in their number calculations at the end of Year 2. In national tests, a higher proportion of pupils attain the expected level 2 or the higher level 3 than the national average in reading and mathematics. The school has identified that writing skills need to be developed further. Standards of writing in work in English are broadly average by the end of Year 2, which is attributed to the good teaching of basic skills in English lessons, where the right amount of support is given to develop and use writing skills accurately. Pupils often make good progress in lessons when learning basic skills. In independent work, and in work in other subjects, standards in writing are more variable and most often below average. In Year 6, while higher-attaining pupils write well, most pupils still struggle to be accurate in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Moreover, while many can talk about their very good ideas with great enthusiasm, the process of getting them down on paper is a real chore. While there are some good pieces of accurate, detailed and interesting written work that is of a good length, these examples are limited.

5. Standards in speaking and listening are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school places great emphasis on encouraging pupils' confidence, and a key aspect of this is the development of speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given regular opportunities to speak to each other and adults in lessons. There are clear expectations that new vocabulary will be used in answers and discussions, and pupils are successful in doing so. Pupils' responses are respected and listened to and, by example, pupils learn to listen carefully and respond appropriately. In lessons, most pupils of all abilities are equally good at listening to their classmates. Pupils achieve well in this aspect of work in English.

6. All pupils achieve well in ICT. The curriculum is well planned, teachers are very confident with the subject, resources for learning are good and pupils are highly interested and greatly motivated to learn. In this subject, below average writing skills do not hinder their achievements because learning opportunities are more based on the learning of practical skills for using the computer as a tool for learning in other subjects. Work in ICT reinforces the learning of literacy and numeracy skills and is used well for this purpose in lessons. Standards in ICT are above average at the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. The use of control technology is planned for development in order to raise standards further at the end of Year 6.

7. By the end of Year 6, standards attained by pupils who speak English as an additional language are in line with other pupils in the school, providing they have attended the school for several years. They make good progress in their acquisition of speaking skills, achieve well in some aspects of English and satisfactorily in all other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs attain the standards expected of them. The majority achieve satisfactorily, and some make good progress in lessons. In the most recent tests, some pupils with special educational needs attained levels higher than had been expected, achieving well on their starting levels.

8. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils' science results are similar to national averages and work in pupils' books is of average quality. By the end of Year 6, test results are well below average in comparison with the national and similar-school percentages. A lower proportion of pupils attained at the higher Level 5 than in English and mathematics, indicating that the school's highest-attaining pupils were not as successful in science as they were in other tests. Work in pupils' books confirms that standards are lower than they should be and that pupils are not making the same good progress in learning

scientific skills as they are in learning literacy and numeracy. The school has recognised that science is an area of concern and action is taking place to raise standards. However, the issues regarding science have not been dealt with in the same thorough way as in English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

9. Overall standards are **very good**.

Strengths:

- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, and enjoy very good relationships.
- Pupils like school, have very positive attitudes to learning and accept responsibilities sensibly.

Area for development:

- A few pupils have irregular attendance or arrive late at school.

10. Pupils like coming to school. They get on well with each other and with all staff and show real enjoyment in their lessons. In class they concentrate well, love to share their ideas and do so with confidence and imagination. They are able to work together very sensibly and show enthusiasm for what they are doing. For example in a Year 6 personal, social and health education (PSHE) class, pupils worked in small groups on acting out what they would do if friends tried to persuade them to smoke a cigarette. They performed their small plays well showing real interest, and the whole class then worked out the best ways to avoid the social pressures to do something they did not feel was right. Pupils are also able to work very well on individual tasks, especially when these tasks have caught their imagination. In an English lesson in Year 4, pupils worked on their own animal poems with deep concentration, taking care to have the right rhythm as well as good ideas. Very positive attitudes have continued to be a feature of the school since the last inspection. The very good attitudes provide a firm basis for learning and help pupils to make good progress.

11. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. In lessons, the vast majority of pupils listen attentively to the teacher and each other and follow instructions well. Two thirds of the lessons seen were characterised by very good or excellent behaviour. Pupils have a very good understanding of how they are expected to behave, and respond well to the guidance given by adults. The programme for PSHE is very well used to promote good behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to think about how their actions and comments affect others. At leisure, they are lively and friendly and enjoy good natured, energetic play. There are a few pupils whose behaviour can be challenging, but they are well managed by all staff, who show a very sensitive understanding of their needs. There has been only one fixed-period exclusion recently, and no bullying or aggressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. Parents are pleased with the very good behaviour in the school. Pupils' very good behaviour helps to create a positive and enjoyable environment for learning.

12. The personal development of pupils and relationships within the school at all levels are very good. All adults know pupils well and show care and respect for the children in their charge. Pupils are kind and polite to each other both in class and in the playground. The school council is very active and pupils have a clear understanding that their views and ideas are valued. In the recent appointment of a new headteacher, older pupils contributed their ideas to the selection procedure. There is a well-established buddy system that operates in the playground, through which older pupils befriend younger ones. Each year, a number of pupils arrive at the school to join already established classes and they are also helped and supported by class buddies who help them settle into their new school and make friends. Pupils show care and pride whenever they are asked to do jobs in class or around the school.

13. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average. There are a few pupils who have poor attendance patterns and the school is focusing strongly on this problem with the support of the Education Welfare Officer. Punctuality to school is overall good, but a few families quite often do not arrive at school on time. This not only affects the child arriving late, but at times also impacts on the start of lessons for other pupils in the class. The school works consistently to ensure that parents are aware of the need for regular and prompt attendance at school but, in a few cases, meet with only limited success.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The overall quality of teaching is **good**.

Strengths:

- Teachers make good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and basic skills in English and mathematics are taught well.
- Work is well planned and suitable for the range of attainment in each class.
- Teachers make good use of questioning, which helps improve pupils' understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are highly respectful and very positive.

Areas for development:

- Teaching and learning in science, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- The pace of a few lessons is too slow and pupils' learning is affected because they become restless.
- In some lessons in the Reception classes, teachers do not allow children to be as independent as they could be and make choices for themselves, while on other occasions, too little assistance is given to support the development of children's skills.

15. Strengths in teaching have been maintained well since the last inspection. In over half of the lessons observed, teaching and learning was at least good. In almost a quarter of lessons, teaching and learning were very good or excellent. In three lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching was characterised by a lack of pace in lessons that resulted in pupils losing concentration and not behaving well, and limited opportunities for pupils to think and learn independently. In one unsatisfactory lesson in Year 5 where there are two temporary teachers, subject knowledge in English was not as good as it needed to be. While teachers plan well together in all other year groups, on this occasion there had been limited support provided by the year group colleague for the teacher with less experience of the National Curriculum. Overall, the school has successfully supported temporary teachers, some of whom have little experience of the National Curriculum, with the result that teachers have developed skills and understanding and pupils' learning has not been adversely affected.

16. Good and flexible use is made of national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Teachers give appropriately high priority to the development of basic numeracy and literacy skills. In Years 3 to 6, when pupils join the school other than at the normal time, and when these pupils come with low levels in English and mathematics, it is recognised that the most important skills to learn as fast as possible are in reading and number calculation. Teachers are good at focussing on these aspects and, as a result, pupils learn basic skills well. In an excellent Year 4 lesson, where pupils read "Tiger, Tiger" by William Blake, pupils discussed the way that punctuation helps the poem to keep its rhythm. In this way, the teacher reinforced their knowledge of punctuation but held their interest, because the activity had a purpose. Pupils produced their own very good versions using similar rhythms. The impact of the good teaching of basic skills is that pupils who begin at the school and stay for several years generally achieve well in all subjects. Those who join late and may also need support for their special needs make good progress in most lessons and at least satisfactory

achievements during their time at the school. The highest proportion of very good and excellent teaching was observed in English and mathematics lessons. This is a strength of the school.

17. Teachers know pupils well. They are very aware of the starting levels and specific needs of individuals and plan work that is appropriate for the pupils. The result of this is that pupils of all levels of attainment make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, both in class and in small groups. Although they are withdrawn from some lessons, the school is effective in ensuring that pupils do not miss out on what the rest of the class is learning. Teaching assistants support these pupils very well as they work. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher very effectively deployed the teaching assistant to support the lower-attaining pupils in the top set. She directed their discussion but did not provide answers. She assessed how well they understood the task set, and guided their explanations of how they were using graphs to extract information and solve a problem. The pupils worked independently in finding answers but because adult help had been provided, they worked more efficiently in determining what it was they needed to find out. Their progress in this lesson was very good and equal to the highest-attaining pupils in the group. Teachers plan for pupils who speak English as an additional language as part of their planning for all pupils. They are grouped with pupils of similar general ability, who converse with them in language of an appropriate level. This provides them with good examples of language in English lessons, and in other subjects. A visiting specialist teacher appropriately supports pupils at the early stages of learning English. Teachers provide suitable challenge for the highest-attaining pupils in most subjects, and those with special gifts and talents are identified for even greater challenge. In lessons, there are extension activities for individuals and in Years 3 to 6, the highest-attaining pupils work in small groups for English, mathematics and science and thinking skills with an additional teacher. This ensures that they have every opportunity to attain the standards expected of them and are working well in English and mathematics. In science, work for the extension group is not challenging enough and their progress is often not as good as other pupils. For example, Year 6 higher-attaining pupils working on food chains with an additional teacher, spent most of a lesson practising their cutting skills to create a model of a food chain. Gains in their learning in comparison with other attainment groups were unsatisfactory. In general, the impact of teachers' good planning for the range of attainment is that all groups make equal rates of progress and progress in lessons is often good.

18. Speaking and listening skills are developed well and a key aspect of this is the way that teachers use questioning to encourage good thinking and appropriate responses. Teachers' questions allow pupils to give extended, not one-word, answers. Through these answers, teachers assess how well pupils have understood, and ask further questions so that pupils clarify for themselves what they are trying to explain. Teachers model subject-specific language in lessons and expect pupils to use new vocabulary in answers. In a very good Year 3 ICT lesson, the teacher guided pupils through the skill of attaching a picture to an e-mail message. Pupils demonstrated their good understanding through detailed explanations before attempting the procedure. Most importantly, explanations were given using very specific vocabulary, such as *icon*, *browse* and *insert*. Their very good learning was clearly demonstrated as they used the terms accurately to explain the procedure. During whole-class discussions, teachers are very good at directing specific questions at various attainment groups to challenge pupils at an appropriate level and to make them think carefully about their answers. In a Year 2 lesson where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, major factors were the teachers' frequent use of questions that were answered with a simple "yes" or "no" and the limited time for pupils to think about their answers before speaking, resulting in the teacher answering her own questions.

19. The school is an orderly and pleasant environment. There are clear expectations of how pupils should behave and pupils are well aware of these. Even pupils who find difficulty in behaving well at all times are very clear about how they should behave. Teachers are very respectful of pupils and are treated with respect in return. Sanctions are clear and pupils understand the consequences of unsuitable behaviour. Most importantly, teachers instil in pupils an understanding of how their behaviour and actions affect others in the class. This means that pupils try hard to work quietly and not distract others. For the most part they are successful and learning takes place in a calm and productive environment. Teachers' expectations promote good, serious attitudes to learning and help pupils to make satisfactory and often good progress. In an excellent Year 6 geography lesson, the teacher chose an extremely effective activity to begin the lesson that engaged pupils' interest immediately. Carrying buckets of water backwards and forwards, the pupils empathised with how children in other countries lived and how the need to have water determined their lifestyle. Pupils' behaviour was excellent, because they were expected to be sensible and careful so as not to lose water. They were clearly focussed on learning from the practical activity and did not consider being silly in any way. Their learning was very good.

20. Teachers plan well in the Reception classes, and provide a range of activities, some of which are teacher led and others where children work and play alone. There were examples of good teaching observed. In one lesson, the teacher set very high expectations for behaviour and children's social and personal skills were developed well, during a discussion when the rules of turn-taking and not interrupting were clearly emphasised. The teacher worked with a focus group looking at toys that had been made in a previous session. She used good questioning to encourage the children to explain why the toys did not move properly and how they could be improved. Children's answers were assessed and recorded. In other lessons, teachers did not allow children enough independence and restricted learning because they directed the choices that children made. During an activity where children used paint and another where play dough was used, the teacher directed them in what they should paint and make. When children had difficulty in handling the brush, choosing a colour, or moulding a piece of play dough, the teacher completed the task for them. While children's finished work was probably more accurate than it would have been had they done it alone, their learning was unsatisfactory, as they had not learned how to carry out the activity for themselves. This was not the case when children were working on the computer, practising numbers to 10. Here they showed high levels of independence and teachers allowed them to work alone. They learned from their own mistakes and progress was good as they found out the consequence of pressing the wrong key and having to start again. They demonstrated good levels of confidence in using the mouse and keyboard. In other instances, teachers allow children to carry out a task for too long without checking that they are working accurately. For example, in a language session, where children worked on forming the letter "n", there was too little intervention and most of the children repeatedly formed the letter incorrectly. At present, there is a lack of understanding in some lessons of when it is necessary to allow children to be independent, and when there must be intervention to ensure that a skill has been learned accurately.

21. While good attention has been given to providing the best learning opportunities for pupils in English and mathematics in particular, teaching and learning in science has not been developed as rigorously, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are not as confident in this subject and do not feel themselves to be particularly scientifically minded. The school has highlighted this as an issue and there have been some steps taken to develop their skills and knowledge, including training sessions to improve teachers' skills, particularly in investigative science. There have also been science days and a special science week, and curriculum events involving parents and teachers. However, the subject is not given such high priority as English and mathematics, and developments in teaching and learning are taking place, but slowly. In some lessons, the individual skills of teachers encourage pupils to make good progress. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge enabled

her to give clear explanations, which led to pupils fully understanding the difference between gravity and air resistance. As a result they discussed the reasons why some objects fall faster than others in a mature way, using their new learning to support ideas. In other lessons, where subject knowledge is less secure, teachers spend too long explaining instructions and activities to reinforce the planned learning for themselves as well as the pupils. This was the case in a Year 5 lesson, where the pupils gained satisfactorily on their previous understanding of what seeds need to germinate. However, the pace of the lesson was slow and laborious, as the teacher explained at great length, rather than allowing the pupils to find out for themselves. In a Year 6 lesson, the class teacher suitably revised previous work, but lack of subject knowledge led her to make comments such as “seeds turn into eggs”, which was inaccurate and misleading for pupils. During this session, the higher-attaining pupils worked in a separate group. Their learning was unsatisfactory. They worked on a different topic to the rest of the class, at a level that was too easy for them. The work they did on food chains was more a cutting activity as they created a food chain from printed pictures. The teacher did not provide appropriate challenge for the group in her planning or interaction with them during the lesson. During the inspection, teaching and learning in science was not unsatisfactory overall, but the quality did not compare with the provision for other subjects. Moreover, work in pupils’ science books is not of a good enough standard, indicating that teaching and learning are unsatisfactory over time.

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

22. Overall, the school has a **good** curriculum and makes **good** provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Strengths:

- Good use is made of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy.
- There is good provision for personal, social and health education.
- Extra-curricular activities are good.
- Pupils’ moral awareness is very well developed.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including gifted and talented pupils.

Areas for development:

- The contribution that the daily act of collective worship makes to pupils’ spiritual development.
- Curriculum links with partner institutions in the primary sector.
- Time allocation for learning in music.

23. The school’s curriculum meets statutory requirements and is broad and relevant. Teachers implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy well. The key issue from the previous inspection report has been successfully addressed and policies and schemes of work are now in place for all areas of the curriculum.

24. The timetable gives an adequate amount of time to all subjects except music. A specialist music teacher leads lessons for all pupils over two days. Most of these sessions are only 30 minutes long, which is less than the recommended teaching time for the subject and too short for pupils to learn effectively in all areas of the music curriculum. Apart from in the Reception classes, where specialist music teaching is followed up with many opportunities to sing and listen to music, pupils do not have regular opportunities to extend their musical skills. A singing assembly observed, provided some pupils with a short opportunity to practise skills and to play percussion instruments, but new instrumental skills were not taught. Generally, curriculum timings are changed in response to specific year-group needs. An example of this is Year 5 mathematics, where an analysis of standards

attained, indicated a need for more time to be spent on this subject. Improving standards in the year group are evidence of the school's wise and flexible use of the teaching time available. The school responds quickly to national initiatives that affect the curriculum and has appropriately revised the PSHE curriculum to include work on citizenship. Special curriculum days have had a strong impact on pupils' learning and given them opportunities to see the relevance of what they learn in a broader context. These days have included Countries Around the World Day, which contributed well to pupils' cultural development, Famous English People of the Past and the Chinese New Year celebration, which provided the stimulus for very colourful and informative displays in many classes. Year 6 pupils also make a residential visit to Wales, where they are involved in very physically challenging activities that develop their levels of confidence and ability to work as part of a team.

25. Learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are well organised and supported by suitable individual education plans and targeted help from teaching assistants. There is an established programme for enhancing the learning of gifted and talented pupils in English, mathematics and science, and work is currently underway to extend this to other subjects. The school is aware that timetables need to be closely scrutinised to ensure that pupils do not miss out on their full curriculum entitlement when attending extension groups. In general, the school provides effective and equal access to the curriculum by good methods of support for all groups of pupils within each class. Pupils with physical disabilities are well supported, and plans to include all pupils in next year's residential trip are well in hand. The school works with local businesses to provide financial support for residential trips where it is necessary. Accommodation shortfalls have an impact on the equality of opportunity for children in the reception classes, where rooms are of very different sizes. This means that not all the activities available to one group of children are available to the other. Additionally, standards in physical education are affected by the lack of outdoor space. Pupils do not have consistently good opportunities in art to make free choices about techniques and materials, because the lack of storage space in classrooms denies pupils immediate and independent access to resources and teachers need to fetch resources in advance which limits pupils free choice.

26. Teachers, support staff and parents give of their time generously and the school has developed a good range of 17 extra-curricular clubs that extends the curriculum provision. Recent additions, such as the choir and netball team, are helping the school to make more connections with other primary schools in the area. Links with other schools have been limited in the past and the school is working successfully to improve this situation. Participation in the Healthy Schools award is also providing the school with opportunities to work with other primary schools. There are good links with the local secondary school. Plans are now in place to involve Year 11 students in the programme for the talented and gifted pupils, after GCSE exams finish in the summer. In the past, the schools have worked together on geography fieldwork projects and a drama and citizenship programme. The school has also hosted a conference for other schools in the area on the use of *circle time* (for PSHE work) in lessons. All pupils are encouraged to take part in lunchtime and after school activities. The school council plans an evaluation of the clubs in the summer term. The results of this will be shared with pupils who will be asked for further ideas. A breakfast club takes place on one morning a week. The co-ordinator and acting headteacher have plans to extend this provision and increasingly target pupils who would benefit from a settled introduction to the school day. Similarly, school councillors are currently targeting Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to encourage more of them to take part.

27. The school makes good provision for teaching PHSE, including sex and relationship education, drug awareness and citizenship. The schemes of work for all aspects of PSHE are very comprehensive and there are good links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, in literacy lessons, some of the older pupils focus on memories, both good and bad, to write their thoughts on life experiences as being part of a journey. This aspect of the

school's work is given high priority and there is a determined approach to developing pupils' confidence and social and personal competencies so that they make the most of all opportunities afforded to them. Many parents are very happy with the levels of confidence their children display.

28. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound. Pupils are encouraged to explore and consider other people's beliefs and lives, and are given the opportunity to express themselves in lessons. In assembly, pupils are encouraged to think for a while about the topic of the assembly and to reflect quietly and focus their thoughts for the day. A local minister regularly leads assemblies and pupils speak enthusiastically about what they learn from him. However, not all assemblies contain an act of worship and therefore do not meet requirements. In a school where there is such a superb sense of team spirit and very positive attitudes, assemblies are not exploited effectively enough to extend a sense of togetherness, or allow opportunity for pupils to reflect on a theme that affects the whole population, which would promote pupils' spiritual development. In lessons, sound contributions are made to pupils' spiritual development. During the inspection, pupils showed real surprise and pleasure in exploring new and exciting things, for example in Year 1 when pupils were looking at Australian Aboriginal art and noting the different life forms depicted in decorative work.

29. Pupils' moral development is very good and underpinned by the school's caring approach. All staff provide good role models for pupils, treating them with respect and care. Pupils understand that good behaviour is praised and rewarded, that poor behaviour will be dealt with, and support will be provided for pupils who find it difficult to behave well. The school's consistent approach to behaviour management gives pupils a clear understanding of right and wrong and a desire to try to do what is right and helpful to others. In assemblies and the PSHE programme in each year group, this moral message and an emphasis on doing your best and showing respect for those around you are also clearly stressed.

30. The school gives high priority to promoting pupils' social development. During lessons, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to develop their social skills, for example through discussions in pairs and groups. Review sessions at the end of many lessons give pupils the opportunity to talk about their work and to appreciate and value the work of others. Older pupils are encouraged to contribute to the school community by taking on various responsibilities, for example making sure that others in the playground are not left alone or unhappy. The school council plays a prominent part in voicing pupils' views. School productions provide opportunities for the older pupils to collaborate and perform together. Links with the local community help to develop pupils' social skills. For example, the school choir and African drummers recently performed at 'The Young Musicians Prom' with other schools in the area.

31. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils listen to music from a number of different cultures and enjoy singing songs from different countries. Pupils' own ethnic backgrounds are used well. For example, for Geography Day pupils wore traditional national costumes, and parents were involved in talking about their different cultures and customs. Pupils are able to discuss different cultures because they have lived in other countries. Through their studies in history, they learn about societies and cultures such as the Ancient Egyptians. In Year 3, pupils' studies of the Romans were made more meaningful by their visit to Colchester Castle. A visit to London gives Year 6 pupils an insight into different aspects of their British culture and the history of famous places of interest, museums and theatre life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The overall provision is **good**.

Strengths:

- Child protection matters are very well managed.
- The school provides a very caring environment in which pupils personal development is well promoted.
- Procedures for promoting good behaviour and attendance are effective.
- Assessment information is used particularly well in English and mathematics to guide future teaching and learning.
- Very specific targets are set for individual pupils.
- Pupils know the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to improve.

Areas for development

- Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are not applied consistently in all subjects and, in science the information gathered is not used effectively.

33. The school is a very happy, caring and inclusive community, and pupils feel safe and confident when they are in school. All staff treat pupils kindly and with respect. During the inspection, a few pupils were seen reporting to the office with cuts and bumps, or feeling unwell. They were all treated with the same kindness and sympathy until they felt able to return to their class or playmates in the playground. Matters of child protection are very carefully managed and good attention is given to all aspects of health and safety.

34. Teachers know pupils very well and share information and any concerns they may have about pupils with the acting headteacher very quickly. Even though behaviour is very good overall, the school nevertheless monitors and records incidents of poor behaviour thoroughly, so that pupils understand the consequences of their actions. Good behaviour also is recognised and recorded well. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are good. Pupils are clear about the rewards and sanctions that apply to behaviour. Any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with individually so that the specific needs of the pupils concerned are recognised and suitable steps are taken to help them improve their behaviour.

35. The school has maintained a very good record of attendance over a number of years, but continues to monitor attendance closely, and follow up on any concerns that may arise. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. There is a very good relationship with the Education Welfare Office, who provides effective support for the school in following up on any concerns and visiting families who find regular and punctual attendance at school difficult. The school office has efficient procedures for following up on absences and late arrivals with telephone calls and letters, and the computerised registration system is used very effectively to highlight any problems that may develop for individual pupils.

36. Teachers record pupils' personal development and some other information in each pupil's profile, which is very useful in compiling an accurate picture of the progress they make in developing maturity and confidence. Pupils are also very well involved in assessing for themselves how well they are working, what else they need to do and how they can improve their work. The Record of Achievement that they compile supports this effectively. They talked about this very confidently with inspectors, showing a very clear understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. This is not only a feature of their very good attitudes to work and school, but is a great skill that the school is promoting to carry into their later lives.

37. The assessment of pupils' academic progress is good. As well as assessments in English, mathematics and science, most teachers complete assessments in other subject, which helps them to plan lessons effectively. For example, assessments in history give clear indications of how writing skills learned in English lessons are being applied in other subjects. The information gained from these assessments is used effectively to amend and

adapt future learning opportunities to ensure that skills and knowledge are consolidated and extended. Where teachers carry out less detailed assessments, the quality of their lesson planning was generally seen to be lower, and this sometimes contributed to teaching being judged unsatisfactory. For science in particular, the information gathered is not used effectively to identify weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching, which would enable improvements to be made as has happened in English and mathematics.

38. Assessments are used effectively to set realistic individual targets for English and mathematics, which are helpfully shared with the pupils. All the information is tracked on computer so that teachers and pupils know what has been achieved. This makes a significant contribution to the progress made by pupils who speak English an additional language as it enables all staff to focus on recently-learned vocabulary and concepts.

39. Teachers in the Reception classes quickly identify those children who need support for special educational needs. For those pupils who join the school subsequently, assessments are carried out as quickly as possible, so that the right type and amount of support can be given to individuals. Outside agencies are involved as necessary. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is assessed and tracked by the same methods used for all pupils. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, class teachers and teaching assistants review and adapt individual education plans regularly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Overall the school has a **very good** partnership with parents.

Strengths:

- The school provides a very good range of information for parents, especially relating to the curriculum, pupils' progress and general information.
- Parents give good support with extra-curricular activities and visits.
- There is a very supportive parents association.
- Parents have very positive views of the school.

Area for development:

- Parents' response to and participation in some school initiatives, including curriculum events.

41. Parents receive very good information about the progress their children are making and are well briefed about what is happening in school. Annual reports are useful and informative and give parents a clear understanding of the progress their children have made and how they can improve their work further. There is a useful home school agreement in place that makes school expectations clear to parents and the school make a practice of consulting parents on new initiatives. For example, the document "Bringing the Curriculum Home" has been sent to parents and sets out the curriculum for each year group. Following a survey of parents in the autumn term, the school redesigned this booklet for the spring term to reflect parents' comments and suggestions. There have been a number of curriculum-based events for parents such as use of the computer to support learning and help with mathematics homework. The school tries its best, but some of the special curriculum events are not well attended by parents. The school has tried hard to be flexible with the format, content and timings of events to try to please everyone. The prospectus, governors' annual report to parents and a regular flow of newsletters are informative and well produced, and parents are provided with a comprehensive range of information.

42. Parents of pupils with English as an additional language are welcomed in school to discuss their children's progress. They are encouraged to take an active part in their children's learning. There are currently no parents who do not speak English, but the school has clear procedures to support parents who might need language support. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed about how well their children are making progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Parents feel that the needs of their children are catered for well.

43. Parents are supportive of the work of the school. Good and effective links have continued since the school has grown in size. Staff are approachable and work consistently to maintain close links with parents. Through the termly parents meetings, staff and parents remain in close touch and are able to discuss the progress and development of the pupils. Staff are also very available to parents at the end of each school day, and during the inspection a number of helpful, informal discussions between teachers and parents were observed. Parents provide good support for their children and the school in a number of ways. Some parents help in school regularly and there is good help from parents on trips and outings. The parents association have given a priority to raising funds to help with the cost of outings and residential trips, recognising the importance of extending pupils' experience beyond the classroom. Most parents also provide good support at home and help their children with homework and projects. The school provide a helpful range of booklets and guidance for parents to make sure that the help pupils receive at home is of a good quality. The school does all that it can to ensure that parents are given every opportunity to play a full role in the life of the school and their children's education. Overall, this is a very positive feature of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The overall quality of leadership and management is **good**.

Strengths:

- An effective acting headteacher who leads a hardworking and dedicated team by example.
- The high quality of leadership and management in English and mathematics.
- The school has committed and knowledgeable governing body to support its work.
- There is a clear commitment to staff development.
- Teaching assistants are of high quality.
- New technology is used very well by the pupils and for the school's administration.

Areas for further development:

- Leadership and management in science.
- The value for money gained from the specialist provision in music.
- Subject co-ordinators evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning in some subjects.
- Best value gained from comparing the school's provision with other schools.
- The accommodation, to ensure that children in the Reception classes have equal access to all learning activities, and that pupils have the best opportunities for learning in all subjects.

45. The school is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable headteacher, who has taken on the position in an acting capacity since the retirement of the previous headteacher. She leads by example, both in her attitude to work and her teaching skills, and is committed to the continued development of the school. Senior and key members of staff ably assist her in this work. All staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the school and as a result, an effective and hard working team has been built up. Relationships are very positive and there is an overwhelming sense of team spirit. This is also having a positive impact on standards, particularly in English and mathematics. The school has attained the Investors In People award in recognition of their work.

46. The delegation of responsibilities is appropriate, and subject co-ordinators are given good guidance on how to carry out their duties effectively, in order to ensure that there is a clear educational direction in their subject. Many examples of effective subject co-ordination were seen during the inspection, and subject co-ordinators are strongly committed to raising standards and ensuring that teaching is of the highest quality to support pupils' learning. Improvements in English, mathematics and information and communication technology are particularly notable. Actions taken to develop writing skills are being fully implemented. Most subject co-ordinators have been given time to observe lessons and to look at pupils' work in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their subject and plan improvements. In science, while priorities have been established for the subject and time has been made available, the school has not fully ensured that the same good practice from English and mathematics has been applied with sufficient rigour. The co-ordinator has not been successful in leading teachers to a better understanding of the subject, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In light of the facts that test results have declined in science, governors have identified science as a school weakness, the teaching staff do not consider themselves to be very scientifically minded and standards of work are not as good as in other subjects, science has not been dealt with urgently enough. In relation to the provision for science, the governors and managers of the school have not afforded the same rigour and standards are not improving as quickly as they might.

47. The school's clear aims are well met, with the result that this is a stable, caring and ordered community, in which the best is brought out in all its members. Staff are given clear guidance about work procedures and have a shared understanding of what is expected of them. New members of staff are well supported through a system of meetings prior to their appointment and during their first term, and there is a clear and comprehensive staff handbook. Teachers new to the profession take part in an external programme of induction, which includes visits to other schools. They have a school mentor and are given the appropriate release time to learn about their role. The high proportion of good-quality teaching observed during the inspection is clear evidence of the overall impact of effective support for the development of teaching and learning. The acting headteacher has a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and there has been continued support for teachers who need to improve, or whose teaching style does not reflect the general school ethos. There is also a determination to raise standards further, which is fully shared by the governing body. The acting headteacher and governors have shown no complacency in making difficult decisions to ensure that pupils are offered the best quality of teaching available. During the inspection, many teachers commented on how valuable they would find observations in other schools and discussions with other teachers in order to improve their own practice. Current links with other schools do not support development at Brinkley Grove sufficiently.

48. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is efficiently managed. The co-ordinator understands her role well, and ensures that pupils receive appropriate support and that teaching is matched to their needs. Regular meetings between the co-ordinator and all staff involved ensure that pupils are suitably supported. She frequently attends conferences and courses and uses the information gained to train staff. She supports and monitors teaching and learning by working alongside teachers in lessons. Teaching assistants are well qualified and have attended a wide range of courses covering all aspects of their work. A specialist Arabic teacher has supported pupils in their home language to ensure that they have full access during lessons. Relevant resources are purchased to support pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The special needs room is well equipped and provides a stimulating learning environment.

49. The governing body is committed to the school and is an integral part of its community. Many governors have served the school since the first planning stages and, as such, feel a great sense of ownership. They are very proud of the school and its staff. Through its appropriate committee structure, the governing body ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements, with the exception of that for the daily act of collective worship. Governors visit the school regularly, work alongside teachers and assistants and discuss their work with them. The staff find this very helpful and supportive. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They contribute to the preparation of the school improvement plan each year, and effectively monitor its implementation. Issues relating to standards in science have been thoroughly discussed and a plan of action drawn up. Governors have evaluated the implementation of actions they have planned, but as yet, there are no clear indications that standards are improving as result of the chosen course of action.

50. The school has introduced a good system of performance management based on the nationally recommended framework. This includes setting teachers targets that are linked to appropriate in-service training and are based on lesson observation and priorities outlined in the school improvement plan. Some teachers keep their own personal-development file that provides a good record of their achievements. The school is effective in providing very appropriate and equal opportunities for staff to develop their skills and knowledge and this is having a positive impact on standards.

51. The school has a clear and useful plan for improvement. It contains appropriate priorities for development that focus on raising standards, both academic and personal. The priorities are specifically linked to costs and there are clear criteria for judging success. Time limits are defined precisely and these are usually met. All staff and governors are aware of their part in the improvement process. It is clear from the plan that the school is setting its own agenda for improvement, while at the same time responding fully to national and local initiatives. The school also has an effective monthly curriculum development plan to supplement the general improvement plan. Plans appropriately highlight writing and science as two of the priority areas. In other subjects, while there is a clear commitment to evaluating teaching and learning throughout the school, in history, geography, art, DT, PE and RE co-ordinators feel that they do not have enough opportunities to see their colleagues teaching and assess the impact on pupils' learning.

52. The arrangements for the financial management of the school are good. The school has effective financial routines that are understood and followed by the staff involved. The governing body has delegated appropriate responsibility to the acting headteacher with regard to the day-to-day running of the school, and in particular its financial management, allowing her the freedom and flexibility to make necessary decisions quickly. All grants made to the school are effectively used to provide the right support for learning where it is needed. The acting headteacher, together with the governing body's finance committee oversee the management of the school's finances efficiently. Spending decisions are carefully matched to the main objectives of the school improvement plan. The school has an effective and well-run office manned by committed and high-quality staff.

53. Overall, the school's procedures for ensuring value for money are good. The school has clearly set out strategies for ensuring that the best value for money is obtained for items of expenditure. However, these are not as effectively applied in some areas of expenditure as others. For example, the decision to purchase the specialist support of a music teacher, who is also the co-ordinator for music, has ensured that pupils have regular music lessons and very good extra-curricular music activities. However, the allocated time for teaching and learning in the subject is lower than recommended. In lessons, despite the music teacher's strong subject knowledge and skills, not all pupils have enough time to learn all aspects of the music National Curriculum. Pupils who attend extra-curricular musical activities have much better opportunities to learn instrumental skills, for example, and the music co-ordinator gives of her time on a voluntary basis to facilitate pupils' performance in concerts and recitals. Teachers do not attend music lessons and some pupils who have difficulties in behaving well take some time to settle in their absence and this affects learning. Music lessons are not built upon in class, because teachers do not play an active role in the original lesson. Therefore, they are not being led to improve teaching skills in music by observing specialist practice. Moreover, most teachers spoke with inspectors about the desire to observe teaching and learning in other classes in order to improve standards in their subjects, but the release time they gain from not attending the music sessions has so far not been used for this purpose.

54. The school is particularly good at consulting parents and pupils. They are asked for their contributions to the school improvement plan. The school council is an integral part of the decision-making processes in the school. Pupils made a small but effective contribution to the process of appointing a new headteacher. The school also challenges itself well to ensure that best value is being provided with regard to the quality of education being offered, and comparisons with test results in similar schools have been looked at closely. For historic reasons, it is only just beginning to work with other local schools and has not yet drawn on such resources as Beacon schools or leading teachers.

55. The school's use of new technology to increase its efficiency is very good. The school's accounts, pupil and staff records and attendance records are kept on recognised

systems used by other schools. The school is also beginning to keep details of pupils' attainments using another program so that they will be able to track their performance more effectively. Pupils are also encouraged to use the new technology. During the inspection, a group gave a computerised demonstration about the school that they had prepared for the headteacher interviews. The computer suite is also well used.

56. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers to teach the curriculum. There is a substantial investment in teaching assistants, which enables the school to provide a high level of support to children with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language. Levels of resources are good overall and the school has adequate, attractive accommodation. It benefits from modern purpose-built premises, which are mainly well suited to their functions. On the whole, classrooms are of sufficient size, with the exception of one Reception class that is cramped for space and awkward in shape. The new computer suite is well resourced, but the ventilation system is very noisy and distracting during lessons. The new library is too small for a school with this many pupils. Lack of storage space is a problem with resources for physical education, art and design and design technology all being limited by lack of room and poor accessibility. The school has pleasant grounds, which offer a variety of different areas for the children's use, but both the playground and playing field are too small, and teachers have to adapt markings for games areas and make use of facilities at the local secondary school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to raise standards, the acting headteacher, governors and staff will need to ensure that pupils throughout the school make at least satisfactory achievements in science by:

- a. developing the role of the subject co-ordinator;
- b. improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- c. planning work that is suitably challenging for all attainment groups;
- d. monitoring teaching and learning with the same rigour as in English and mathematics.

Paragraphs: 1, 8, 14, 21, 46, 49, 51, 87-91.

58. In addition, the school might wish to include in its improvement plan appropriate action to address some of the less important issues identified in the report.

- (1) The daily act of collective worship does not meet statutory requirements, nor contribute sufficiently to pupils' spiritual development. Paragraphs: 22,28,49,129
- (2) The school's accommodation does not offer all pupils equal opportunities to learn in an appropriate environment, nor enable all subjects to be taught effectively. *Paragraphs: 56, 63, 69, 97, 101, 125.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

71

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	12	28	24	3	0	0
Percentage	6	17	39	34	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

379

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

91

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

7

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

61

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

34

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

34

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

37

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	31	23	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	28
	Girls	24	21	22
	Total	46	42	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (95)	78 (90)	93 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	29	29
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	45	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (92)	94 (97)	94 (85)
	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	27	19	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	20	19
	Girls	15	9	12
	Total	33	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (70)	63 (50)	67 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	21	20
	Girls	15	11	15
	Total	33	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (80)	70 (72)	78 (87)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
322	6	1
1	0	0
7	0	0
7	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
8	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)	16.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	361

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	779, 571
Total expenditure	803, 769
Expenditure per pupil	2, 584
Balance brought forward from previous year	82, 482
Balance carried forward to next year	58, 284

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	381
Number of questionnaires returned	170

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	19	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	31	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	6	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	51	8	1	0
The teaching is good.	66	31	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	45	8	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	18	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	39	5	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	34	4	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	35	4	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	38	7	2	5

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

59. The overall provision for pupils in the Reception classes is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Planning is good and all areas of learning are covered effectively.
- Assessments are good and the information gathered is used to plan appropriate activities.
- Children have access to a very good outside area and this promotes physical development well and contributes to the children's social development.
- There are good procedures for settling children into school.

Areas for development:

- Children's independence is not promoted sufficiently.
- One room is much smaller than the other, and teachers do not work together so that children have equal access to all learning activities.

60. The school has two admission times into the Reception classes and the children come into school before their fifth birthday. Many children have been to a pre-school or nursery and are beginning to play together well. Some children have good knowledge and skills with language and number, but an even greater proportion have below average language skills, are not confident when speaking aloud and have limited understanding of numbers. In physical and creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and social and personal development, children's skills and knowledge are average and as would be expected for their age. However, their below-average language and numeracy skills mean that overall, children's attainment when they start school is lower than would be expected for their age. As a result of the well-planned curriculum, the focus on developing confidence and self-esteem and sound teaching, during their time in the Reception classes the children make satisfactory achievements overall. Many children, and especially those who started with better levels of attainment, will achieve expected levels in creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their personal and social development before they enter Year 1. As a result of the lower levels with which many children started in language and mathematical understanding, general attainment in these areas will remain below expectations. In their physical development, children achieve well and many exceed the levels that are expected of them. Children achieve well in learning to read and count.

61. There are good procedures for settling children into school and this means that most are happy to leave their parents and quickly get used to the school routines. The staff provide a useful welcome booklet that encourages parents to share what they know about their children before they start school. This helps the settling-in process and means that staff quickly get to know the children. Reception classes reflect the same respectful and caring environment created in the rest of the school. Children feel secure and comfortable with their teachers.

62. Teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory overall. A strength of teaching is good planning. Teachers' plans are comprehensive, cover all aspects of learning and are drawn up using the informative assessment data about how well children are doing. Assessments include observations of the children at play and when they are working closely with an adult. There is a good balance of activities that are led by an adult and those that are

chosen by the children themselves. However, adult-led activities are sometimes too prescriptive, so that children do not have sufficient opportunities to use their initiative. These activities tend to have a model for the children to follow, and do not allow the children to make independent choices, such as what colour to use, or what materials may be suitable for the task. Children have access to a large outside play area that is used very effectively to promote the children's physical development. Teaching assistants also work very productively with children in this area to consolidate learning in other aspects of the curriculum, such as mathematical and creative development and children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers have very caring and positive relationships with children. Such relationships bolster children's confidence and self-esteem and give them an enthusiasm to learn. Children want to please their teachers. They strive to be well-behaved and try hard to listen carefully. Sometimes, expectations of how long they can listen for are too high, and the length of time that children spend sitting on the carpeted area is too long. On these occasions, the pace of lessons slows and children make unsatisfactory progress in their learning.

63. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator meets often with Reception teachers, she does not teach in the Reception classes, and has limited time to look at and evaluate what is happening there. She has attended meetings beyond school and has been instrumental in developing the good Foundation Stage curriculum alongside Reception colleagues. She visits lessons as often as possible, but does not have the overview that comes from daily personal experience. It is therefore more difficult for her to plan for ongoing developments with a clear understanding of priority. The accommodation for children in the Reception classes is relatively small, and one classroom is much smaller than the other. In the smaller classroom, there is not enough space for larger apparatus such as the sand and water equipment and so the children have fewer opportunities than those in the bigger room.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Provision in this area of learning is satisfactory and children make steady progress towards the expected goals. The children are well behaved and staff set high expectations for children to work together and co-operate with each other. Class rules are displayed well and are set out so that they can be referred to easily. The staff expect the children to tidy away their activities and to be kind to one another. The children learn about feelings and can talk about being happy or sad. However, there are times when the children sit on the carpet for too long, and they then become fidgety. Children enjoy choosing their own activities, but the adults sometimes give them so much guidance that it inhibits the learning of how to make independent decisions.

Communication, language and literacy

65. The provision for developing children's language skills is satisfactory. Pupils are beginning to write their own name, forming some of the letters correctly. However, when they are practising handwriting, teachers do not always check that letters are being accurately formed, so that some children continue to make mistakes in their work. The physical skill of forming the letter accurately is not promoted rigorously enough. Reading skills are developed well. Teachers use the school's reading scheme to introduce the children to the characters and stories. This means that the children become confident in using books and begin to read very simple words. In short sessions with the whole class, the children learn the sounds that letters make and practise spelling simple words. There are many opportunities for the children to make up their own stories. The teachers provide role-play areas so that children can act out going on a bus journey or can play house. Children's speaking and listening skills are emphasised well. There are sessions during the day when the children have the opportunity to talk in small groups and listen to each other. This is particularly valuable as many children are not confident when speaking aloud.

Mathematical development

66. Provision for children's mathematical development is satisfactory. Most of the children count to 10, correctly matching one to one. Many children, particularly higher attaining children, write the numbers correctly, and are beginning to add two numbers together. In creative activities, the children are encouraged to make patterns using a series of repeating shapes, and many talk about the sequence of the pattern. Higher attaining children have a clear understanding of basic shapes and all children have made pictures using simple plane shapes. These are displayed well outside the classrooms. The children use mathematical language to describe objects as being long or short, but are not always guided to discuss wider-ranging mathematical vocabulary in activities, for example when using the sand or water.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. The programme to develop the children's understanding of their growing world is satisfactory. The teachers plan for the children to learn aspects of science, although activities are based on work that the children will experience in Years 1 and 2 and are sometimes too challenging. However, for the higher attaining pupils, such work prepares them well for future scientific experiences. Both classes have access to computers, and the children become very confident when using the mouse and relevant programs. The children learn mapping skills by discussing the route that Little Red Riding Hood took to Grandma's house and drawing the things she may have seen. Design and technology skills are encouraged through well-planned activities. The children have access to a wide range of building toys and also practise their skills using other materials. The children have made kites as part of their work on the seaside and have enjoyed trying to fly them. However, this activity was too adult-directed and the children were not able to use their own imaginations and try things out for themselves. Recently, the classes have looked at Chinese New Year and many of the children talk enthusiastically about the large dragons that they made.

Physical development

68. The children make good progress in their physical development, as staff encourage them to use the very good outside area as often as possible. This means that they use wheeled toys with increasing skill and control, and can climb and balance confidently. The children also understand that it is important to keep healthy through exercise. All staff encourage children to be fully involved in play activities, and their enthusiasm excites children to move with greater agility and skill over apparatus and with toys. Children use a range of tools, such as scissors, paintbrushes and pencils, to develop their small muscle control skills. When making kites with a teaching assistant, good attention was given to ensuring that lower-attaining pupils made the same progress as others in using scissors accurately and safely. The children respond to these activities positively and enjoy practising. In one session, the teaching assistant worked with children using plasticine. She allowed them to make their own shapes and then children talked about which rolled and moved the best. They kneaded, moulded, pulled and shaped so that shapes moved freely. Manipulative skills were well developed in this session.

Creative development

69. The provision for children's creative development is satisfactory and they make suitable progress in this area. The staff provide a range of painting and drawing activities, and, although some of them can be too adult-directed, the children enjoy painting and printing. Wall displays are used well to show work completed by the children, who enjoy talking about what they have done. The role-play areas in each class are used well to encourage the children to play together and develop their speaking skills. The classrooms are not designed for sand and water as they are fully carpeted, but nonetheless, these

activities are both provided in the biggest classroom and children are taught to be as careful as possible. The small group area is used well so that the children can experience working with clay and other modelling materials in a space that is easier to keep clean.

ENGLISH

70. The overall provision is **good**.

Strengths:

- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed and standards are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and teaching assistants provide good-quality support for learning.
- The curriculum is very well planned and effectively covers all elements of the National Literacy Strategy.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons.
- Pupils have good awareness of the progress they are making.
- Excellent leadership and management in the subject.

Areas for Development:

- Standards at the end of Year 6, particularly in writing.
- Marking is not as evaluative in some classes, because reference is not made to the lesson objectives and targets are not always set.

71. In 2002, results in tests at the end of Year 2 were above the national average for reading and below average for writing. When compared to similar schools, reading results were well above average and writing was in line with the average. At the end of Year 6, results for English were below the national average when compared with all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in Year 2 was above average for reading and average for writing. In Year 6, the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was similar to the national average. Since 1998 results at the end of Year 2 have risen in reading. At the end of Year 6, results have varied from year to year, and there has not been a consistently upward trend over time.

72. In the work seen, attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average in speaking and listening, and average in reading and writing. However, many pupils struggle with independent written tasks and writing is not always as accurate in other subjects as it is in English lessons, where specific support is given to learn skills. By the end of Year 6, attainment in speaking and listening remains above average. Attainment is broadly average in reading, but below average in writing. The standard of writing is affected by the large number of pupils who join the school during Years 3 to 6, a high proportion of whom have special educational needs. Inspection findings are that pupils who have been at the school for a longer period are attaining standards that are at least in line with national expectations in writing and often higher. Most importantly, in relation to their attainment when they enter the school, the majority of pupils achieve well in learning basic literacy skills, regardless of when they join. As a result of the support offered by skilled teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, also achieve well. Pupils have good and often very good attitudes to their work and on the whole behave very well.

73. The school offers pupils a very good curriculum in English, making effective use of the national strategy for literacy, which has been adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils and is helping to raise standards. Pupils are consistently encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills at every opportunity, in the belief that developing confidence in speaking is the way to develop other English skills. This approach is having a positive impact and is helping to raise standards. In all lessons, pupils discuss their ideas clearly with their teachers, other adults and each other. Pupils in all classes are encouraged to listen carefully and to discuss their ideas. In Year 5, pupils were seen discussing the use of different connectives and the impact they made on the text being studied. In Year 6, they

were preparing for a debate on whether girls should be allowed to play football at school. Despite the vastly differing views, the pupils discussed the matter sensibly.

74. Standards in reading are broadly average in all classes. Pupils read fluently from fiction and non-fiction books. They build up unfamiliar words using phonic skills and answer questions about what they have read. They identify the main features and characters in books they are reading and predict what might happen. They relate their answers to the text, and older pupils are able to “read between the lines”. They can identify key characters in a story and understand and explain the use of sub-plots. They read a variety of books and talk about which books and authors they like to read and why. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged appropriately. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were considering two science fiction texts. They were skilfully directed by the teacher in identifying the main features in preparation for writing their own stories for a school magazine. Parents give useful help in hearing their children read at home and taking time to make comments in their child's reading record.

75. Standards of writing are improving in the school, because skills are carefully and systematically taught. Whenever a new concept is learned, it is immediately applied to a piece of independent writing. A variety of planning grids are used to support pupils of all levels of attainment in structuring their writing. They give higher-attaining pupils the challenge they need and help lower-attaining pupils feel that they are achieving exactly the same as the rest of the class. Activities in all year groups provide suitable challenge to pupils, and the good support provided by all adults enables them to succeed. The overall quality of handwriting seen in pupils' books was satisfactory. Skills pupils learn during practice sessions are generally used in their English work and when writing in other subjects. They have regular spelling tests of words learned at home. Overall, the quality of spelling seen in English books was satisfactory, but many Year 6 pupils still struggle with spelling patterns.

76. The school places a great importance on the teaching of English and, as a result, opportunities are frequently taken to teach skills through other subjects. Many examples of this were seen during the inspection. During a good Year 1 history lesson about domestic appliances in Victorian Britain, pupils mimed the actions of washing while reciting a poem. This helped them to learn the historical vocabulary such as *dolly*, whilst showing what the word meant and speaking to an audience. Following a visit to Colchester Castle, Year 3 pupils designed a guidebook. In a Year 1 PHSE lesson, pupils talked confidently about how to help mum to show they cared. Good examples were also seen of how the computer can be used as a tool for supporting learning. In many classes pupils used word-processing skills to present their work. They were able to explain that this would help them to produce a more professional-looking final product.

77. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good overall, though it ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. The highest proportion of good or better teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6. The best teaching occurred in lessons where pupils knew exactly what was required of them. Good questioning skills were used in order to draw out pupils' understanding of the text and teachers had good knowledge of the subject and supported pupils' learning effectively. The work was well matched to their attainment levels, which helped them to make good progress. The higher attaining pupils were given suitably challenging activities. In such lessons, pupils had a clear understanding of how well they were learning and what they needed to do to improve further. The majority of pupils had targets for improvement and readily talked about them. One pupil said, “I must start checking through my work because my spelling is letting me down.” Examples of these very effective teaching strategies were seen in Year 4, where pupils were writing very good poems based on the style of one they had been reading together. The teacher's good use of questions led to a very good understanding of the poem and the impact of its rhythm that helped pupils in

their independent work. In Year 6, where pupils were considering a balanced argument and preparing for a debate, appropriate time was given for pupils to think, listen, discuss and practise before opinions were presented. The teacher intervened with suitable questions to extend ideas, speed up the lesson and ensure that final opinions were well formulated.

78. Where teaching and learning was unsatisfactory, as in a Year 2 lesson, the pace of the lesson was not as brisk and pupils became bored and lost interest. The teacher supplied answers, rather than expecting the pupils to express ideas in their own words. There was no obvious link between the different parts of the lesson and the management of pupil behaviour was unsatisfactory, which resulted in pupils making limited progress. The quality of teachers' marking in English is generally good. Teachers make positive comments at the end of pieces of work, tell the pupils where they have made mistakes and, in the best examples, give suggestions about how to improve their work in the future. This is not consistent, however, in all classes.

79. The subject co-ordinator's excellent practice is encouraging good improvement in the subject. She manages work in English extremely well and is highly effective in leading and motivating others. She has encouraged an open, questioning approach to teaching styles, effective monitoring of teaching and learning is taking place and standards are beginning to improve. The subject co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and is extremely enthusiastic about her work. She has very accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She gives very good support to colleagues and is committed to raising standards further. Overall, good improvement has been made in this subject since the last inspection, particularly in how well basic literacy skills are taught and learnt. The school library is adequately stocked, but too small to use with a whole class. Many pupils said that they made little use of it, evidently because each class has a well-stocked reading area where pupils are encouraged to enjoy books. The school has a good range of good-quality resources for teaching English.

MATHEMATICS

80. Overall provision is **good**.

Strengths:

- Pupils attain above-average results in national tests at the end of Year 2.
- Teacher is very good teaching in Year 6, which results in pupils making at least good progress in lessons.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work.
- Very good management is supporting the continuing development of the subject.

Areas for development:

- Overall standards at the end of Year 6 remain below average and results in national tests are well below average.

81. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved since the last inspection and have risen steadily at a faster rate than the national average. In 2002, they were above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. This was because a high percentage of pupils attained the higher Level 3. Standards of work seen in work samples and lessons were average. Some pupils are confidently working at Level 3, while a similar number of lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are working towards Level 2. Most pupils have secure knowledge of addition and subtraction, odd and even numbers and understand multiplication and division by grouping. Higher-attaining pupils are confident with numbers over 100 and

use what they have learned to solve problems relating to everyday life. They understand how to collect data by tallying, record it on a bar graph and use their knowledge of mental addition and subtraction to interpret the information and answer relevant questions.

82. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated over the years since the last inspection and have been affected by the number of pupils entering and leaving the school at various times in Years 3 to 6. In 2002, results were well below both the national and similar-school averages because only a small proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 5. Records show that the pupils in Year 6 who were in the school at the end of Year 2 made at least satisfactory progress. However, more than half the pupils have joined the school subsequently, including some at the beginning of Year 6.

83. In the present Year 6, where there are a high number of pupils with special educational needs, overall standards are below average. In lessons seen, pupils made good progress because the work was well matched to their abilities. This was particularly effective in Year 6, where pupils were grouped according to their prior attainment. Good use of teaching assistants meant that the class teacher was able to focus on those pupils who needed the most help. Sessions for higher-attaining pupils provided challenging work. They applied different strategies and methods they had learnt to solve a variety of problems. Pupils understand how to use a calculator appropriately and were confident when explaining their answers. The lessons observed and the work completed so far this year indicate that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are working at expected levels and that standards by the end of Year 6 should improve over time. The suitable emphasis on learning multiplication tables and mental calculations ensures that pupils achieve well in basic mathematical skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons, because they receive well-directed support.

84. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. In half the lessons observed it was very good, and it was excellent in one lesson. Pupils are well motivated through good mental and oral starters to mathematics lessons. Teachers' planning takes into account pupils' different prior knowledge and capabilities and suitable work is set for different groups. This is most effective where teachers in the same year groups plan and work together. Teachers give clear explanations and emphasise mathematical language. Clear, crisp introductions motivate pupils well, and the brisk pace of lessons maintains pupil's interest and enthusiasm for their work. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who concentrate well and show confidence when asking or answering questions.

85. Teaching assistants use teachers' planning and are fully involved in supporting pupils who need their help at all stages of the lessons. They explain work carefully to the lower-attaining pupils and make sure they remain focused on their work. Resources are used well and, particularly where activities are presented as a game, pupils enjoy learning. Homework is used very well to consolidate the work done in class or over a period of time. The most effective example of this was where the teacher explained to parents what was expected and the parents commented on the methods the child had used and their attitude to the work. Overall, marking is good and pupils are given guidance on how they can improve their work. Mistakes are corrected and praise used appropriately, although the marking of work sheets is not as helpful. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in mathematics. For example, in Year 6, pupils input data to create a line graph. Higher attaining pupils solved problems using comparative information on a line graph. Where numeracy is used in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology, it makes a good contribution to learning.

86. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator monitors the subject by observing teaching and learning, looking at teachers' planning, evaluating samples of pupils' work and homework and interviewing pupils. Consequently, she has a very good

overview of the subject and its strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are supported well through training days led by both the co-ordinator and a numeracy consultant. The school makes effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to provide a consistent framework for teaching. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in working with their children, and there have been meetings to explain the numeracy strategy and methods for recording calculations. Assessment is thorough, and pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Pupils who need extra help are identified and suitable programmes are put in place to raise standards. The co-ordinator has clear plans and suitable priorities to develop the subject further.

SCIENCE

87. Overall provision is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths:

- The best examples of marking give a clear context for learning and some indication of what pupils should do to improve.
- There is a programme of revision in place for pupils in Year 6, which in most cases, is being effectively used to help them attain better results in national tests.

Areas for development:

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are well below average and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is weak in some aspects.
- The leadership of science is unsatisfactory and does not support the development of teaching and learning to improve standards of pupils' work.

88. Teacher assessments in 2002, placed pupils results in science in line with the national average at the end of Year 2. In Year 6 tests, pupils' results were well below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining at level 5 was very low in comparison to national averages. Although pupils attain standards that are average by the end of Year 2, their skills and knowledge are not sufficiently developed through Years 3 to 6, so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are well below average. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

89. By the end of Year 2, pupils know about different forces and carry out investigations as to how far cars will travel on different surfaces. They begin to understand about fair tests and predict what will happen. The pupils record their findings on charts using the knowledge they have gained in mathematics lessons. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils have not made enough progress. They have continued to carry out investigations, but their skills in accurately predicting and then drawing conclusions from their findings are not good enough. Results are usually recorded in the same format and there is little expectation that the pupils will devise their own methods of recording. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 have extra support, but it is unsatisfactory, as the work is mainly photocopied sheets and is not related to the work that the rest of the class is doing. Although there is a sound programme of revision for all pupils in Year 6, some pupils are not encouraged to consolidate or revise knowledge before they move onto work of a higher level.

90. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory. In previously completed work, it is clear that pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not learning at an appropriate level and their progress is not good in all lessons. Their achievements over time are unsatisfactory and therefore the impact of teaching over time is also unsatisfactory. In the most effective lessons observed, teachers explained clearly what the pupils would learn, lessons moved at a brisk pace and pupils got a lot done. They were interested in the lessons and worked well together. Teachers recapped what the pupils had learnt in previous lessons and good assessments were made at the end of each unit of work. In the lessons that were less effective, teachers had weak subject knowledge and this meant that pupils did not make as much progress in the lesson as they could have done. Some lessons were too slow and the activities expanded to fit the available time, rather than being used to promote as much learning as possible. This was especially noticeable in a lesson where too much time was spent reviewing what the pupils already knew and too little time was spent on new learning. Teachers' marking is too variable. In the best examples, work is annotated so that pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. In some books work is just ticked or encouraging remarks made, and this does not help pupils to improve their work.

91. The leadership and management of science are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is very experienced, but has not taken a sufficient lead in the subject to ensure that standards are improved. In the past, she has monitored work and supported her colleagues through in-service training, but this has not recently been the case, despite the fact that science has been recognised as an area in need of development. There have however, been whole school training days and information events to raise teachers' and parents scientific knowledge and awareness. The co-ordinator has carried out little monitoring in order to identify and rectify weaknesses in pupils' knowledge. Where useful assessments are made of pupils' knowledge and understanding, the school is not dealing with these findings with enough urgency to improve the provision. There are good resources to support learning in science and these are generally used well. However, overall, there has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

92. The overall provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Displays are of good quality.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- Art contributes well to the development of pupils' cultural understanding.

Areas for development:

- Storage space is limited.
- There are limited opportunities to monitor teaching and learning.

93. Overall attainment is in line with expectations by the end of both Year 2 and 6. The last inspection found standards to be above national expectations. However, it should be remembered that the school has grown considerably in the meantime and there are clear strengths in the current provision that were not noted at the last inspection.

94. A great deal of artwork is displayed around the school. This clearly shows that pupils' skills and knowledge are at least satisfactory in both key stages. In Year 5, pupils have produced some interesting pieces in the style of Australian Aboriginal art, while pupils in Year 2 have made Chinese lanterns and pictures as part of their celebration of the Chinese New Year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn how to mix colours and use paint in a variety of ways. For example, Year 2 pupils had been asked to mix paint to make colours to represent hot and cold. They also study the areas of drawing, printing, textiles and modelling. Early links between art and ICT are also made. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 cover the same areas of study but at a higher level. For example, pupils in one class in Year 6 were working with a variety of different media on their own Surrealist pictures, which were based on their learning about the artist Salvador Dali. One group in the class was working on computers to carry out research and to create their work electronically.

95. There is a good range of three-dimensional work in the school. This includes several different types of work with clay, displays of Egyptian masks, made as homework during the school holidays, and an almost life-size model of a boy, who is standing in the entrance hall. There are also a small number of prints of old masters and other pictures displayed around the school that add to the variety of stimuli which is available to the pupils.

96. Teaching of art is at least satisfactory, with some good aspects. From the lessons seen, it is clear that teachers have confidence in their ability to teach the subject and in their subject knowledge and skills. There is evidence of art vocabulary being taught and of pupils being encouraged to discuss and evaluate their own work and each other's. This ensures that progress is systematic across the school. In the lessons seen, teachers made good links with other subjects through the use of ICT; they consistently reinforced the learning objective so that pupils were sure of what and why they were learning and good use of made of teaching assistants to support individuals.

97. The level of resources is currently good, although the school feels that poor storage facilities limit their ability to expand the range of the curriculum as far as they would wish. However, there is a good range of materials available for both two and three-dimensional work, as well as suitable software for ICT. Classrooms are generally well organised for the teaching of art, although during the inspection, few teachers used the designated wet areas. These are situated in the corridors and cannot easily be supervised from the classrooms. Over the last two years, there have been staff training sessions on painting and drawing skills, another on the use of clay and specific training on the scheme of work. Further, there has been a whole-school Art Day. Pupils have enjoyed an art club for the last two years, but that is not running at the moment. The acting headteacher is aware of the need to create more opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. The overall provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- There are good links with other subjects.

Areas for development:

- Resources and their storage.

99. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards in design technology meet expectations. They have been maintained at the same level as they were judged to be at the last inspection in spite of the major changes that have taken place in the school since then. Design and technology is taught systematically across the entire age range of the school and follows a detailed scheme of work, which has been introduced since the last inspection. This ensures that every year group undertakes termly topics based on three themes of food, mechanics and textiles at an appropriate level. For example, while exploring techniques to make strong joints, pupils in Year 1 had designed and made their own puppet theatres, scenery and characters, which they used to tell stories that they had written themselves. Pupils in Year 3 had designed and made pop-up books, while pupils in Year 5 were testing the best way to fit wheels on to axles in order to allow a vehicle to run smoothly. The scheme also includes cross-curricular links and assessment opportunities. At the last inspection, the design aspect was less well developed than the rest of the subject but it is now a fully planned and delivered aspect of the provision.

100. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, so it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning in these year groups. However, the teaching seen in Years 3 to 6 was at least satisfactory and in some cases good. Where teaching was satisfactory, lessons had clear plans and objectives. Pupils were encouraged to work independently on simple tasks with some guidance from the teacher. Where teaching was good, children were able to take control of their own learning and develop the tasks themselves. They were able to understand fair testing and to evaluate their own learning and that of other children. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils were involved in a series of tests on carrier bags, which then informed a design process for them to create and produce their own bags. Children in Year 3, who had made pop-up books, were encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others. In all lessons where it was needed, clear guidance on safe working was given. From samples of work seen it is clear that there is good coverage of the DT curriculum in all year groups.

101. In most classes, the sets of tools are incomplete and these are scheduled for replacement in the near future. Storage of other resources is restricted by lack of space. Recording of work is inconsistent across the school and this can mean that levels of pupils' progress are not always clear. The subject co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in the subject and sees this as key to raising standards further.

GEOGRAPHY

102. Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Pupils' have good knowledge of places and lifestyles in different countries.
- Pupils' carry out geographical enquiry competently and apply their questioning skills and analytical techniques well.
- Good management continues to develop the subject.

Areas for development:

- There is no consistent way of checking how well pupils are doing.

103. As at the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment for pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. Teaching is satisfactory with some very good features. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to empathise with people living in very different environments. An excellent example of this was pupils undertaking a practical activity of carrying buckets of water outside in the playground and then experiencing a teacher-led visualisation of a journey on foot to collect water in Africa. The activities contributed to the pupils developing a very good understanding of the difficulties some people face in obtaining the basic essentials for life. Teachers make good use of the environment around the school to evaluate and plan change.

104. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to describe physical and human features of places and show an awareness of places beyond their own locality. The work with Barnaby Bear successfully introduces pupils to a range of places across the world, from Nepal to Australia to Cornwall. In Years 3 to 6, the majority of pupils are able to recognise and compare the physical and human features of different localities. They are able to show how people seek to improve and sustain environments, and some pupils have begun to understand how these changes affect the lives and activities of people living there.

105. Pupils are enthusiastic about work in geography and they enjoy learning, because lessons are concerned with issues that of interest to them. The leadership and management of the subject are good and, as the school population has grown, the co-ordinator's planning has been effective in maintaining the standards attained by pupils since the last inspection. She has supported the co-ordination of a good curriculum. She has formulated a clear development plan for the subject and is well aware of strengths and weaknesses. She has monitored pupils' work thoroughly, but has had limited opportunities to observe teaching and learning. The geography day, organised by the co-ordinator in the autumn term, was a very good stimulus for all the pupils and staff. Parents and governors gave good support during the day and pupils' evaluations show that the experience widened their understanding of different aspects of geography work. The co-ordinator's action plan gives details of how to improve assessment, so that there will be a clear picture of how well pupils are acquiring geographical skills and knowledge. At present, many teachers keep records, but this is not sufficiently consistent to enable the school to track pupils' progress over time. The action plan also includes the need to improve the use of ICT within geography teaching. Work with the neighbouring secondary provided examples of good links between ICT and geographical maps and data, and has given the school the stimulus to develop this area.

HISTORY

106. Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Pupils acquire good knowledge and understanding of people, periods, episodes and events in history.
- Good management continues to develop the subject.

Areas for development:

- Inconsistent records are kept of how well pupils are doing.

107. Evidence gathered from displays about the Great Fire of London and from pupils' work on Florence Nightingale and the Victorians, show that standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Standards are also in line with expectations by the end of Year 6, with the majority of pupils developing a reasonable sense of chronology and acquiring good knowledge and understanding of people, periods, episodes and events in history. Similar standards were observed at the last inspection.

108. Few history lessons were observed and so no overall judgement can be made on the quality of the teaching of the subject. Teachers make good links between literacy and history, as was seen in the lessons where pupils were asked to create their own guide to Colchester Castle. Pupils are given the opportunity to use the Internet to gain access to suitable sites for further information.

109. Pupils in the lessons seen were enthusiastic about history, and were learning to give their own opinions about the reasons why people acted as they did and to contribute to the discussions about main events and changes in the past. This was especially noticeable in discussions about the past and present in a lesson about the Victorian washday and in the work on Colchester Castle, contrasting the Roman and Norman periods.

110. Pupils respond well to their history lessons, especially to the links made between art and history, and there were some good displays of their work on ancient Egypt and Greece. Photographic evidence in pupils' books showed that Year 6 pupils made very good models of ancient Greek temples. Year 3 pupils' models of Roman shields and other objects seen at Colchester Castle made an effective display in two of the classrooms. All these models were made as part of the pupils' homework.

111. The recent collection of good-quality artefacts and other resources in the topic boxes prepared by the subject co-ordinator bring the lessons alive. Tasks during lessons are made accessible to all pupils by the amount of support offered to the different groups so that all make satisfactory progress regardless of ability. Special events such as Famous People in History cultural day involved pupils, parents, governors and staff working together to raise pupils' awareness of historical characters. This was very much enjoyed and very successful. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator's help and advice has supported teaching and learning and been effective in improving and extending the overall provision since the last inspection. Ways of recording how well pupils are doing in the subject are unsatisfactory, and, while many teachers keep their own records, there is not a consistent way of doing this that will be useful to track progress over time and pupils' progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. The overall provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths:

- Standards are higher than expectations by the end of Year 2 and pupils are achieving well throughout the school.
- ICT skills and knowledge are effectively used to aid learning in other subjects.
- Teachers are confident and knowledgeable with the subject.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Resources are good.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for development:

- Further use of control technology, particularly to assist learning in science and design and technology for older pupils.

113. At the time of the last inspection, the provision for ICT was seen to be positive. Standards have been improved upon and pupils now achieve well in the subject. At the end Year 2, levels of attainment exceed expected levels. By the end of Year 6, attainment is in line with expectations overall, but pupils have good word-processing skills and use spreadsheet and presentation skills very effectively. Control technology is not developed well enough and is a key priority in the subject development plan.

114. Teaching and learning in ICT was never less than good in the lessons seen. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning, and teachers motivate them through their own enthusiasm, good subject knowledge and confidence. When pupils work in the computer suite, they are very independent and not afraid to try something out if things are not working properly. One Year 3 pupil explained to the inspector the procedures she had already attempted when a program would not open correctly. Eventually, she decided independently to shut the computer down and start again. At no time did she or her partner ask for adult assistance, but they displayed high levels of determination and good thinking skills to solve the problem independently.

115. Pupils recognise that the skills they learn on the computer are tools for learning in other subjects. They use word processing skills to present work in English. They access spell checkers with a clear understanding that the computer can only check for the accuracy of a word in its memory and will not check that the text makes sense. In geography work, computerised presentations are used to present ideas relating to redesigning of the playground. Year 6 pupils prepared a presentation that was used at the appointment of the new headteacher, detailing pertinent features of the school. This was presented confidently to inspectors using the office computer and the pupils noted and accommodated for the differences between this machine and the one they normally used. In a mathematics lesson, the lower-attaining pupils in the top set made use of the computers to draw line graphs from given data. They made the same progress as all others in using data to answer questions and draw conclusions, but they recognised for themselves how the computer helped them to be quicker in their work and finish as much as other groups.

116. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and confident. She has provided good support to colleagues in developing teaching skills to ensuring good learning. She has observed teaching and learning in other year groups and has a clear understanding of where further improvements need to be made. One priority she has planned is the further development of control technology and its use in science and design work. At present, the pupils have had little opportunity to use the computer to control the movement or appearance of something. This would particularly extend their work on electricity in science. Resources for the subject are good, although the school does not yet have an interactive white board that would ease demonstrations in the ICT suite. One is soon to be purchased. Noise from ventilation is very loud in this room and can be distracting for pupils and teachers. Teachers commented on this during their discussions with inspectors.

MUSIC

117. Overall provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The specialist teacher has raised the profile of music in the school.
- Pupils are involved in exciting extra-curricular activities and performances.

- Many pupils take advantage of the opportunity to pay for private instrumental lessons during school time.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and participate enthusiastically.

Areas for development

- Music lessons are shorter than recommended and not long enough for pupils to learn as much as they should do in music.
- Class teachers' do not attend music lessons and therefore do not learn from the experience of the music specialist and cannot extend pupils' learning in later lessons.
- More effective use could be made of the assessments of pupils' progress to develop detailed curriculum planning that would support additional teaching and learning.

118. The school makes appropriate provision for the teaching of music by employing a music specialist for two days each week. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. No lessons were observed where evidence of pupils' skills in composition and appraising their own and each others' work could be evaluated. However, during lessons, pupils attained standards in other aspects of music that were broadly in line with the expectations for their ages. They sang tunefully, particularly when accompanied by the piano or guitar. Pupils used untuned percussion instruments confidently. The pupils in the drum club have learnt different techniques to create effects and play the African drums skilfully.

119. The specialist teacher is responsible for all music teaching in the school and for leading and managing the subject. The class teachers are not involved in lessons other than to indicate what topics they are covering so that pupils can learn appropriate songs. The music teacher has good subject knowledge and the pupils are taught how to hold and play the various musical instruments appropriately. However, there is not enough time in lessons to ensure that all areas of the National Curriculum are covered sufficiently, and records of pupils' progress in developing a range of skills in singing, composing and performing were not available. It is not always made clear to pupils what they are expected to learn, which is common practice in the school, and at the start of some lessons, pupils' behaviour is unsettled and the pace of learning slows. In some lessons pupils are not sufficiently challenged. For example, in several lessons, too much time was spent on giving out instruments and talking about them, leaving pupils very little time to experiment and make progress in playing the instruments. Pupils enjoy music, concentrate well and participate whole-heartedly. These positive attitudes enhance learning.

120. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has little time to carry out her leadership responsibilities, as her time is spent in lessons or on extra-curricular activities. As the school has decided that class teachers need not attend lessons, there is no expectation of them or example given to them, of how to follow on from what has been taught in the music lessons. Opportunities to gain from the good subject knowledge of an experienced specialist teacher are missed. The majority of pupils have one half-hour lesson a week and a music assembly. This is lower than the nationally recommended time for music. Information and communication technology is not used to support the music curriculum, although good use is made of CDs and taped music. The subject is managed satisfactorily and suitable links are made between music and pupils other studies so that there is relevance to their learning. Extra-curricular activities offered to pupils are good. The choir and African drummers recently performed very successfully at The Young Musicians Prom with other local schools. The co-ordinator works very effectively to ensure that many pupils and staff have opportunities to perform in school performances, shows and concerts. The curriculum provides a suitable range of songs and music from different periods and styles to make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development. A number of pupils learn to play the guitar, keyboard, piano, recorder or violin with visiting teachers. Resources are good, and the wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments are used appropriately in lessons to support teaching. They are well stored and easily available in the spacious music room.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. The overall provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Teachers encourage pupils to think about their work and to practice well before performance.
- Teachers give useful feedback to pupils and this helps them to improve their work.
- Resources are good.

Areas for development:

- There are insufficient opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning.
- The playground space is too small for the number of pupils and there are problems with storing PE equipment.

122. Standards in gymnastics, games and dance are in line with expectations at the end of both Year 2 and 6. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils swim an appropriate distance. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection. It was not possible to judge standards in athletics or outdoor and adventurous activities, as these activities were not being taught during the inspection. However, photographic evidence did provide evidence of good physical activities on school residential visits. Over time, pupils make suitable achievements on their starting levels.

123. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory overall, and in some lessons it is good. There are a number of strengths in the teaching of PE. In all lessons, pupils are encouraged to think about their movements before performing them. In Years 3 to 6, higher and average-attaining pupils commented on their own performances and those of others and suggested ways in which they might improve. Teachers in all year groups taught skills directly and effectively and commented on pupils' performances as they carried them out. Teachers in all lessons asked a few pupils to demonstrate their movements to the class, so that others could learn from this and improve their own work. The structure of lessons was good. All lessons started with an appropriate warm up. In all lessons, pupils made at least satisfactory progress. Over time they achieve satisfactorily on the levels with which they began.

124. The school now has a policy statement and a clear set of curriculum guidelines, which set out the school's aims and objectives and also makes good links between PE and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The guidelines are used effectively to guide teaching. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs for dance, netball and tennis that extend and promote physical skills and knowledge. The three clubs seen were all well run and complemented the school's teaching of PE very well. The school also takes part in a range of PE/health-related activities, such as 'walk to school week', the local festival of dance, the district sports and a rounders competition.

125. Resources for PE are good, although improvements in the subject are restricted by limited storage space and accessibility of equipment. The school hall cannot be used for extra-curricular activities during the midday break, as it is the only area where lunch can be served. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and competent, but has so far had limited opportunities to observe teaching and learning in lessons in order to determine how the subject can be improved in the future.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. The overall provision for religious education is **good**.

Strengths:

- The subject contributes well to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- There are good links with literacy and the development of writing skills.
- The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management.

Area for development:

- The co-ordinator has had limited opportunities to observe teaching and learning and feels that this would benefit her leadership and management of the subject.

127. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus and pupils achieve satisfactory on their starting levels. Religious education contributes well to pupils' social, moral spiritual and cultural development. The subject contributes equally as well to their personal development and how they feel and think about others and the world.

128. Only two RE lesson were observed. Teaching and learning in one lesson was good and in the other satisfactory. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge was key in helping the pupils to clearly understand why Hindus celebrate Holi. The lesson was carefully planned to build skilfully on pupils' previous knowledge and so pupils had a good point of reference from which to start their thoughts and ideas. Pupils learnt the lesson to be learned from the story told by the teacher and applied this to their own experiences and lives. Good gains were made in learning as pupils acquired new knowledge of a different faith, but also saw the relevance of their work for themselves; how God can be called on to help. They clearly enjoyed the lesson. RE work in books is of an average standard overall. Lessons reveal how well pupils think and discuss their ideas. Work samples show how difficulties in writing hinder their recording. In the satisfactory lesson seen during the inspection, although pupils talked about Buddha with great enthusiasm as they looked at artefacts and pictures. Their enthusiasm was less obvious when asked to write about why he was important to Buddhists. The same task was given to all pupils and some found concentration difficult. It was difficult to assess the outcome of teaching, as the acquisition of the learning objective, to recognise that Buddha is special, was difficult to measure from pupils' recorded work.

129. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. The curriculum has been well formulated to make the best use of the agreed syllabus and QCA guidance. Resources are well organised and of good quality. She uses pupils' records of achievement to look at RE samples, but has not yet observed teaching and learning in all year groups throughout the school. This is part of her action plan for future developments. RE work is used well to create attractive school displays and this has been a very useful way of monitoring standards. The co-ordinator has had an input to creating themes for assemblies, but not all collective worship sessions met statutory requirements during the inspection.