

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLLY TREES PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brentwood

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 132142

Headteacher: Mr David Garland

Reporting inspector: Mrs E M D Mackie  
23482

Dates of inspection: 3 - 6 February 2003

Inspection number: 248910

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crescent Road Brentwood Essex
Postcode:	CM14 5JR
Telephone number:	01277 212296
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Richard Millwood
Date of previous inspection:	N/a

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23482	Diana Mackie	Registered inspector	Art and design Information and communication technology Foundation stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13481	Douglas Binfield	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
32181	Maria Coles	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography Science Special education needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22990	Christopher Furniss	Team inspector	History Mathematics Religious education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	
2200	James Stirrup	Team inspector	English Music Physical education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holly Trees Primary School is situated in a residential area of Brentwood. It is of an average size and is on two sites, some 200 metres apart. The school was formed in September 2000 through the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools on the sites. A new school is being built nearby to house the whole school in September 2003. There are currently 260 pupils on roll. Of these, 38 are in the Reception year. The pupils come from the surrounding area, where there is both rented and privately owned housing. There is a wide range of attainment when children start school but overall, the attainment of the children on entry is below that expected for their age. Eleven per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages and one per cent are from refugee families. Eleven per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language; this is high, nationally. Twelve languages other than English are spoken, but there is no other principal home language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (11 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Sixteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs for learning, behavioural or physical difficulties; this is average, nationally. Just under two percent of pupils – about average, nationally have Statements of Special Education Needs.

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

This is a caring and improving school, which provides a good standard of education for its pupils, who achieve well by the end of Year 6. The pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and have very good attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of very good and excellent teaching. The headteacher provides very good leadership and educational direction and he is ably supported by a deputy headteacher, an assistant headteacher and other senior staff. The governing body manages the school well. The school gives good value for money.

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

- All pupils, including those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language, achieve well during their time at the school because of the good quality of the teaching.
- Standards are good in science by the end of Year 2 and good throughout the school in art and design.
- Provision for children in the Reception classes is very good.
- Pupils' personal and social development is very good because of the high quality of the school's provision.
- The headteacher provides very good educational direction and the governing body manages and supports the school well.
- Parents have very positive views of the school. They have supported the staff, governors and pupils loyally in creating a new school over the past two years.

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

- \*Standards in writing in Years 3 to 6.
- \*Assessment procedures and the use of information from assessments to guide teachers' planning and pupils' learning in the foundation subjects.
- The presentation of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6.
- The marking of pupils' work in Years 5 and 6.

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

*\*The school is already aware of these issues and plans are in hand to deal with them.*

### **RECENT IMPROVEMENTS**

This is the first inspection of the newly formed Holly Trees Primary School. Since the amalgamation in September 2000, the headteacher and his staff have worked together effectively to improve the quality of teaching in order to raise standards. Through professional training and regular monitoring, they have established a consistent approach to classroom teaching throughout the school, and teaching is now good overall, with examples of very good and excellent teaching. Pupils have achieved well since the

amalgamation and standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in mathematics by the end of Year 6. The governors have worked effectively through committees to manage the primary school and plan for the move to the new building in September 2003. The school has the good capacity to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/A	C	D	D
Mathematics	N/A	C	C	C
Science	N/A	C	E	E

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Pupils' overall achievement from the Reception year to the end of Year 6 is good. The above results in English and science are accounted for by the particular characteristics of the year group that took the tests. Although school targets set with the local education authority were not met in English and mathematics in 2002, national statistics show that pupils made good progress in English and very good progress in mathematics since they took the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 1998. This, despite the fact that many of them had experienced disrupted education because they had moved schools, and a high proportion of pupils who took the tests in 2002 had special educational needs. Pupils' progress in science, however, was below average in comparison with pupils from similar schools nationally. From current inspection, most pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain standards in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science by the end of the school year. Challenging targets have been set for 2003, and the school is well on course to achieve them. Pupils are now benefiting from the improved teaching in English and mathematics over the past few years, and better results are coming through in Years 3, 4 and 5 as pupils move through the school.

In the 2002 national tests and assessments for pupils in Year 2, the school's results in writing were better than those of the previous year. The trend over the past two years has been upward in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils in Year 2 are set to meet expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the school year, and to exceed them in science. The successful introduction of the daily Literacy Hour and mathematics lessons is having a significant impact on standards. The systematic teaching of letter sounds provides pupils with secure skills on which they build step-by-step.

Standards in religious education throughout the school are in line with the expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, standards are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6.

When children start school, their overall attainment is below average. In the Reception classes, children make good progress and most achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal and social development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Higher-attaining children already exceed the Early Learning Goals.





## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. This has a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Teachers are able to get on with teaching because pupils are ready to listen and get on with their work.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school's very good care and consideration for this aspect of pupils' development results in very good relationships throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory, and broadly in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of the teaching is good, and there were examples of very good teaching at all of the above three stages of education. Excellent teaching was seen in the Reception classes and Year 2. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. The overall quality of teachers' planning and preparation is good. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good and teachers promote the use of literacy and numeracy effectively in most other subjects. Teachers' secure subject knowledge helps them to set challenging tasks for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. As a result, pupils achieve well and acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. They respond well to the teachers' high expectations. Teachers make very effective use of time and relate very well to the pupils. They listen well to them and help them to sort out problems and make good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils with special education needs are well supported with carefully organised work based on their Individual Education Plans. Teachers work very well as a team with the learning support assistants, who play a significant role in the teaching programme as they work with groups of pupils and individuals.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. It is very good in the Reception classes. The school provides stimulating, relevant and interesting ways for pupils to learn. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are identified early and given good support through well-written Individual Education Plans and regular adult support in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There is good support from outside agencies and within the school so that pupils are soon integrated and are able to communicate effectively in lessons and break times.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school's procedures for child protection and care of the pupils are very good and all pupils are valued. In the foundation subjects, assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are variable and information from assessments could be used more effectively to guide teachers' planning and pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good educational direction. He has guided the school very well during the amalgamation process. He is well supported by key staff, who have worked as a team to ensure that systems and routines are well in place and there is consistency of approaches throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have taken a firm grip of the management of the new school. They give generously of their time and skills to serve the pupils. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are systematic procedures for identifying priorities and preparing plans for school development. The school's performance in national tests is analysed rigorously and effective action is taken to deal with areas that need improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Finances are used effectively to ensure good provision for the pupils. Governors apply the principles of 'best value' effectively, considering the benefit to the pupils of all spending decisions, whether on staffing, learning resources or accommodation.

There is a satisfactory number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. Lunchtime, caretaking and administrative staff contribute well to the work and ethos of the school. Current accommodation and outdoor provision is unsatisfactory for the teaching of physical education, but the school compensates for this by using facilities at other schools for sports and games. Most learning resources are satisfactory and they are well organised and stored. Resources are obtained at the most competitive prices and the school uses them in the best possible way to achieve its aims.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents find it easy to approach the school with any query.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Pupils like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Pupils work hard and make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information to parents, especially regarding pupils' progress.</li> <li>• Homework arrangements.</li> <li>• More activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully agree with parents' positive views. Inspection evidence indicates that predominantly good quality information is provided to parents about pupils' progress and school activities. Although there are no planned evening consultation meetings with class teachers in the younger classes, the school has an 'open door' policy and parents can make appointments for consultations at any time during the school year. Some difficulties occur with homework because teachers find a significant number of pupils do not complete it, and this makes any follow-up in school very difficult. Those pupils who complete homework benefit from the opportunity to share work with their parents. Many activities take place outside lessons, including school clubs, sports fixtures and a week's residential visit for Year 6 pupils. The school has worked hard to involve parents from both schools in the amalgamation process.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 Current pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet national expectations in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement for these pupils because so many of them joined the school later than the Reception class.
- 2 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Evidence from the inspection indicates that there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, nor is there any difference in the achievement of pupils from ethnic minority heritages represented in the school.
- 3 In the Reception classes, children's good progress, which is due to the high quality of the teaching, enables them to achieve the prescribed goals for early learning, and a significant number of children exceed these goals. The very well organised programme of learning and informed level of support for children, particularly during focused activities in literacy and numeracy, ensures their good progress.
- 4 In Year 6, most pupils are on course to achieve appropriate standards in speaking and listening by the end of the school year. Pupils formulate questions and explain their answers during discussion periods. Standards in reading are average, and most pupils are confident in using books to find things out. Regular teaching of spelling and regular practice in basic grammar are sufficiently rigorous to help pupils develop effective writing skills, but there were few examples of extended pieces of writing. Pupils' presentation of their writing is an area for improvement in Years 3 to 6. In mathematics, pupils practise their tables regularly and are adept in the use of the four rules of number - addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In science, pupils gain knowledge and understanding at a good rate because of the school's increasingly practical approach.
- 5 In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils are on course to achieve standards expected for their age in ICT. In the classrooms, although teachers are gradually increasing the opportunities for pupils to use and enhance their skills in ICT, more needs to be done.
- 6 In religious education, pupils achieve standards in line with expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils gain appropriate knowledge of a range of faiths practised in modern Britain.
- 7 Standards in art and design are good throughout the school because the subject is well led by the knowledgeable co-ordinator and teachers are enthusiastic. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are broadly in line with national expectations. In physical education, the teachers do well to maintain standards in line with national expectations, bearing in mind the current lack of outdoor space for games at the school.

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

- 8 In the Reception classes, children soon settle into routines, make friends and relate very well to adults. They enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners, keen to join in activities and find out about new things. Pupils' attitudes to learning in Years 1 to 6 are very good. They enjoy school, are keen to learn and work hard. During lessons pupils listen carefully and respond well when answering questions or contributing to discussions. They co-operate well when working together in small groups. Written and practical tasks are often carried out with care and enthusiasm. A very good example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 5. Pupils showed good understanding during a discussion about the characteristics of three-dimensional shapes and

exercised care when forming cubes from a cardboard sheet with a pre-drawn pattern on it. The responsible and co-operative approach shown by all pupils is contributing well to their learning.

- 9 Behaviour is good. There is a calm and orderly approach in the school. Pupils understand the rules of behaviour and co-operate well with staff in the daily routines. During the inspection many examples of very good or good behaviour were seen in lessons, and behaviour was always at least satisfactory. Those pupils with behavioural difficulties are dealt with in a competent and understanding manner by teachers and support staff. Pupils are well mannered as they move around the school, in assemblies and when eating their lunch. There is a low incidence of misbehaviour, including bullying. The majority of such cases relate to pupils in Years 3 to 6 and often occur during lunchtime. Any such incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. There have been no exclusions since the primary school was formed over two years ago. A particularly impressive feature is the harmonious way that pupils from all backgrounds, including those from ethnic minority groups, support one another, work well together and play happily with one another. Parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour.
- 10 Pupils gain self-confidence and develop very good social skills because of the school's carefully planned and implemented provision for their personal development. This is a strong feature of the school. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 6, pupils contribute to the life of the school by expressing views in the class and School Councils. Older children befriend younger ones thoughtfully, especially through the scheme for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to meet regularly with 'buddies' in Years 5 and 6. In the regular weekly class discussions on personal development, pupils show a mature attitude to health and social issues. Pupils' knowledge and experience of wider community issues develop very effectively through the school's full programme of educational visits, daily assemblies and a wide range of visiting speakers and groups. These events help to inform pupils of the roles played by adults in everyday life and raise their awareness of citizenship.
- 11 A significant number of pupils participate in a good range of school clubs. These include activities in sport, music, French and Christian fellowship. About one fifth of parents responding to the parents' questionnaire feel that insufficient activities are provided outside lessons. However, inspectors do not agree with this view having regard to the popularity of the school clubs, the residential visit for pupils in Year 6 and other opportunities, such as sports fixtures. Relationships throughout the school are consistently very good and these contribute significantly to the happy and purposeful atmosphere.
- 12 Attendance is broadly satisfactory. Last year, overall attendance was close to the national average and there was no unauthorised absence. Nearly all pupils arrive punctually. Lessons and other activities start and finish in line with the approved timetables.

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

- 13 The overall quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, there were several examples of excellent teaching for children in the Reception classes and Year 2. Very good teaching was seen in a significant number of lessons throughout the school. There is thorough teaching of the basic skills. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall.
- 14 The high quality of the teaching in the Reception classes is characterised by the consistent attention to detail. Staff have a secure understanding of the required curriculum for the age group, and the learning support assistants provide support of high quality. In literacy and numeracy lessons, there is keen attention to the teaching and learning of letter sounds and the number system. The staff leave no stone unturned to bring excitement, relevance and sharply focused teaching points to lessons. For example, the children in both classes practised the dance movements that would help them to perform the Chinese lion dance, and then got inside the large costume to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Because the activity had been introduced very well, the resources were interesting and the skills were taught so well that the children's performance was of a high quality. All activities are beautifully planned and prepared and there is a sense of

awe and wonder at the beginning of each lesson. The children know that the teachers are going to tell them something interesting and that the activities are going to be fun. Because of this, children learn quickly and achieve very well.

- 15 In Years 1 to 6, the teachers' planning is good, and they organise interesting activities to reinforce the main teaching points in lessons. Teachers call on a range of approaches to make learning interesting for the pupils. The teachers' enthusiasm promotes pupils' interest so that pupils are keen to learn and want to know more; for example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, the teacher created a sense of mystery as she read a poem about Tutankhamen in his tomb. The pupils went on to study the rituals associated with Egyptian burials; they worked hard and made good progress in the lesson.
- 16 Because teachers check pupils' progress regularly in lessons, appropriate work is prepared for different groups of pupils and lower-attaining pupils are well supported with adult help. Most lessons follow a three-part plan. They begin with strong direct teaching, followed by well-chosen activities in which pupils practise and reinforce new ideas, and then finish with a review of the main teaching points. During the activity period, teachers engage intently with pupils, intervening to elicit their understanding and extend their learning. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the teaching of groups of pupils and individuals. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs follow their Individual Education Plans, making step-by-step progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and challenge pupils well in lessons. They use specific subject language well so that pupils build up an appropriate vocabulary that helps them to express their ideas succinctly. For example, the teacher in Year 1 talked about the 'pipette' as pupils sprinkled water to test the water-proofing quality of materials, and pupils in Year 3 spoke about the 'vibration' of air. The emphasis on the development of speaking and listening brings particular benefits to pupils who speak English as an additional language, and these pupils soon integrate into school life and achieve well because of it.
- 17 Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils very well. There are some challenging pupils who need constant adult vigilance to maintain their interest and keep them on task; the staff deal with this very well so that there is the minimum interruption of teaching and the maximum amount of work done by the pupils. As a result, learning takes place at a good rate in a purposeful working atmosphere. There is particularly brisk and bright teaching in Year 2, for example when pupils made very good progress in a literacy lesson in which they planned and wrote well-structured stories. Occasionally, the first part of lessons, when teachers are explaining new ideas, is too long, and the pupils become restless because they want to get on with activities.
- 18 Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, ICT and religious education. It is at least sound in all other subjects, although no overall judgement is made for design and technology because so little teaching was seen. In physical education, teachers are innovative in the way they organise games in the limited outdoor space. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. From scrutiny of pupils' earlier work, teaching of the National Curriculum has been thorough, but there has not been sufficient attention to the presentation of pupils' work or to the regular marking of work in classes for the older pupils. As a result, pupils are not able to look back on their work and learn from it by seeing the teachers' remarks or their own corrections. However, teachers discuss work with pupils and give them valuable feedback in this way. Homework is set satisfactorily, and those pupils who do it regularly benefit from the opportunity to reinforce and extend what has been learnt in school. It is difficult for teachers to follow up homework tasks when so many pupils do not complete them.

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

- 19 The quality and range of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good. It fully meets national recommendations and prepares children well for the beginning of the National Curriculum in Year 1. The quality and range of the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is good. The curriculum has been interpreted in many stimulating ways and the school offers pupils a wealth of additional opportunities to enrich their learning.
- 20 Helpful policies and schemes of work, based on national guidelines, are in place for all subjects of the National Curriculum and there is appropriate provision for sex education. The curriculum for



religious education follows guidance in the locally agreed syllabus. Detailed, long-term plans set out work that becomes more demanding as the pupils get older. Units of work for each subject have an appropriate amount of time allocated to them. The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

- 21 This is a very inclusive school. Ensuring that pupils have equal access to the curriculum and are fully involved and integrated into school life is a priority of the headteacher and all staff. There are policies in place to support inclusion, and pupils are supported through the 'buddy system' and through the very good personal relationships that staff work hard to develop and maintain. There is good provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Effective procedures are in place for identifying and assessing the needs of pupils who join the school with difficulties in speaking English. All teachers are given training to help them provide for these pupils. One learning support assistant has received specialist training in organising activities for pupils to learn as they play carefully structured games in lessons. Owing to the support they receive, these pupils are integrated well into the school and progress at the same rate as other pupils. There are a number of books in languages other than English, some of which were part of a display in the hall.
- 22 The schools' provision for special educational needs is good. Children who may have learning difficulties are identified, monitored and set appropriate learning targets as soon as possible on entering school. The special educational needs register is up-to-date and Individual Education Plans are reviewed regularly. Statements of special educational need are effective, reviewed regularly and kept up-to-date. The school's specialist co-ordinator for special educational needs monitors pupils' progress closely and has introduced an effective assessment system, with targets written in language that helps the pupils to understand what they have to do to improve. New targets are written as soon as the old ones are achieved and all targets are reviewed carefully each term. Pupils are supported well in lessons and when they are withdrawn from lessons for special help. An indicator of effective provision is that 10 pupils in Years 1 and 2 have met their targets in the last few months. The work of the special needs co-ordinator and her team has a significant impact on the progress that pupils with special educational needs make. Pupils are supported well by outside agencies such as the educational psychologist; speech and language therapist, social and health services and the child and family service. Parental consultation is good and parents have a chance to discuss their children's progress at the parents' evenings.
- 23 There is good provision made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has an appropriately planned programme for all year groups. 'Circle time', when pupils sit in a circle to discuss social and personal issues, provides very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feelings and views. The school fulfils fully its statutory requirements to provide for sex and drug education. There are other very good initiatives designed to encourage pupils to take on more responsibility; for example, the 'buddies' system, in which older pupils support and encourage younger ones, and the school council, which is valued by the pupils as a way of bringing up issues they wish to resolve.
- 24 The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good. It includes clubs for football, karate, and basketball (run by a major London club), and a school choir. There are numerous visits and visitors into school, which do much to enhance pupils' learning. Examples include artists in residence, architectural workshops with a design and technology focus, visits to Colchester castle and a visit to the Colne Valley railway, where pupils have a chance to act like Victorians for the day. Pupils in Year 6 go on a geographical residential trip to Swanage.
- 25 The school has developed good links with the community. These include links with the local church, and the vicar takes assemblies in school every half term. The school also holds celebrations, such as the Family Celebration, at the church; this is a family event that promotes the school's aims and ethos. The local Baptist church is also linked with the school and provides much needed hall space for the school's nativity play and other Christmas productions. A Christian group works with the school to support the curriculum for religious education and to take assemblies each term. Students from the local high school have worked with Year 6 pupils on a

science challenge day, and pupils from Holly Trees attend musical concerts at the girls' convent in the town. The use of local facilities helps pupils to benefit from performing to a larger audience; for example, when pupils in Year 6 performed 'A Midsummer Nights' Dream' in a theatre in Brentwood in the summer of 2002. Recognising the need for pupils to have positive male role models, the school has made valuable links with the local branch of a national organisation that now provides a team of male helpers who regularly come into the school to listen to boys read. Governors, too, provide useful community links; for example, a parent governor gives recorder lessons to all pupils in Year 2, and another parent governor, who is a fireman, gives fire safety talks.

- 26 The school has very good links with partner institutions. It provides training placements for nursery nursing students from the local college and provides work experience for students from five high schools in the area. Brentwood Borough Road Safety Team provide useful safety talks and take pupils on walks to help them to be more aware of dangers on the roads.
- 27 The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is good. All staff seek to develop pupils' self-esteem and self-worth and this is central to the school's ethos and is evident in the teaching. All pupils are included and each individual is valued. Pupils' self-esteem is raised through performing in music and drama and in planning and taking part in assemblies. In a religious education lesson about the siege of Masada, pupils in Year 6 gained a deeper understanding of the depth of some people's faith. Assemblies generally have a strong element of reflection. One particularly good example was in an assembly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, when one pupil changed the shape of a piece of dough and another cut an apple in half. Both pupils were then asked to 'put it back how it was'. All pupils gained greater awareness of the simple but powerful message that decisions should be made very carefully, as some things cannot be returned to how they were. The example also linked well with work in science, when pupils study changes in materials.
- 28 Provision for pupils' moral and social education is very good and is a strength of the school. Staff are very good role-models in their care and concern for pupils and in the relationships that are developed throughout the school. The personal, social and health education programme helps pupils consider some current social and moral issues. Pupils are taught how to treat property, and each other, with care and consideration. Pupils are encouraged to help each other through a 'buddy' system. Year 5 and Year 6 classes are linked with Year 1 and 2 classes and spend time with them. The older pupils have made books and read them with the younger ones. Pupils regularly collect money for charities, make up parcels of toys and share in harvest festivals with local elderly people. The school council encourages pupils to make responsible decisions. Extra-curricular activities, including visitors to the school, and visits out of school to places of interest, make a good contribution to pupils' social development. Teachers often take opportunities in lessons to develop in pupils a sense of moral and social responsibility. For example, pupils in a drama lesson in Year 4 explored moral and social responsibilities in relation to the environment. In a religious education lesson in Year 3, the parable of the lost sheep was linked to pupils' own experiences; for example, to being 'left out' in the playground. Assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to think about the meaning of words such as 'conflict' and 'pollen of peace' and consider how they might apply these words in their school work.
- 29 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum that helps pupils develop their understanding of art, music and literature. This provision is reinforced through regular assemblies and visits to museums and other places of interest. In physical education, pupils have opportunities of exploring dances from other cultures; for example, when pupils in Year 3 danced to the rhythm of African drums. Opportunities are provided in geography for pupils to learn about ways of life in other countries. Art and design lessons are used to extend pupils' cultural awareness; for example, when pupils study Aboriginal art. Music from Chile was played in the assemblies for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and for older pupils the mood was set by the music of Glenn Miller. Pupils are encouraged to think about a variety of cultures by looking at festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Divali.

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

- 30 Very good provision is made for pupils' welfare and guidance. This includes helpful arrangements for induction and ready advice on any personal concerns. All staff are caring and supportive and this creates a friendly atmosphere and secure environment for learning. The

school's full range of measures to promote personal development is invaluable in helping pupils to gain a growing maturity as they move up through the school. This is a strong feature of the school that is much appreciated by parents.

- 31 There is a helpful and effective induction programme for children starting school. The staff work closely with children and their parents to ensure that children are confident in coming to school and spending the day away from home. Many children have been to pre-school settings, and staff liaise with professional colleagues to acquire records of how children have adapted to learning as part of a group and how well they have done. Pupils with special educational needs, those from ethnic minority backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language, are supported well, with sensitive handling of their needs.
- 32 Governors and staff ensure that effective arrangements are in place for health and safety. Regular inspections and risk assessments of buildings and equipment are undertaken and appropriate records are maintained. There are good arrangements for dealing with accidents and illness. Office staff contact parents about any accident or illness should the need arise. Several members of staff have undertaken training in first aid. Health education, including aspects relating to personal hygiene, are dealt with as part of the curriculum programme. Specific advice is provided on sex education and drugs awareness to pupils in Years 5 and 6. This follows a consultation meeting with parents and involves talks by the school nurse and visiting specialists. There are appropriate arrangements, including training for all staff, for dealing with child protection issues. A designated governor has specific responsibility for monitoring the school's work in this area.
- 33 Good procedures are in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality. The school's expectations are made clear to parents who understand the arrangements about notifying reasons for absence. Registration and administrative procedures are undertaken diligently and any unexplained absences are followed up the same day. Certificates are issued to pupils with the best attendance records.
- 34 The school, in collaboration with the education welfare officer, has introduced more stringent arrangements for reviewing absences this year with the hope of securing a reduction in the level of authorised absence.
- 35 Arrangements for promoting high standards of behaviour are good. The school's approach is clearly explained to parents. Pupils are familiar with the school's expectations, especially through advice from teachers and from the clearly displayed rules for behaviour. There is a strong emphasis on promoting high standards of behaviour. The rewards system of praise, stickers, certificates and presentations in assemblies, is popular and effective. Sanctions for misbehaviour are clearly defined and are applied in a consistent manner. When a serious issue arises, the school works closely with parents to resolve the problem. Arising from the impending move to the new school, the midday supervisory assistants are shortly to undertake a training course on behaviour management.
- 36 Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Class teachers know the children well and provide advice, guidance and encouragement. They work closely on this with other staff, including the special educational needs co-ordinator. Teachers' records enable helpful information to be given to parents at consultation meetings and in the annual written reports. Any specific issues that arise are normally dealt with at an informal meeting with parents.
- 37 There are good assessment procedures in the Reception classes, helping staff to gain useful information about the children. This enables teachers to plan for children to make good, step-by-step progress. Early assessments of children's attainment are discussed with parents within a

term of the children being admitted to the school. Assessment information is used effectively for the identification of children with special needs and of higher-attaining children.

- 38 In Years 1 to 6, ongoing assessment of pupils' work in lessons is good, as teachers interact with pupils and help them to tease out their thoughts and organise their ideas. The school uses information from statutory tests effectively in English and mathematics in Years 2 and 6, and from other tests done regularly throughout the school, to organise pupils in groups by ability and to provide targets for individual improvement. In English, teachers regularly assess pupils' reading to ensure that pupils are acquiring the necessary skills of knowing letter sounds and recognising patterns of letters and rhyming words. This information helps them to set achievable targets that are shared with pupils. In the drive to improve standards of writing, teachers have carefully monitored the level of pupils' written work. A piece of writing from each pupil is assessed each term in Years 1 to 6, helping teachers to gain a clearer picture of how pupils are progressing. Skills in mathematics are tested at the end of each unit of work, but in science, formal assessments are made only at the end of the year. This is because the system of more regular assessments was not found to be helpful, and the school is exploring ways of establishing a more useful and sensible method of assessing and recording pupils' progress. Analysis of pupils' performance in national tests has been used effectively to inform planning in science.
- 39 The school uses an effective system to follow pupils' progress in English and mathematics from the Reception class to Year 6. The information is analysed so that pupils' annual achievement is predicted and targets to achieve the predictions are set out. The system has been in place for a comparatively short time and is only just starting to show its usefulness in helping teachers to see exactly where pupils need support and where more challenge is needed.
- 40 Teachers' marking of work in English, mathematics and science varies considerably throughout the school. Whilst some teachers regularly mark and correct pupils' work and suggest targets for improvement, other teachers, particularly in the older classes, go a considerable time without marking or correcting pupils' work. However, there are opportunities for pupils to engage in one-to-one discussions with their teachers about work, and all teachers set targets with pupils for step-by-step improvement. Subject co-ordinators are putting together portfolios of examples of levelled work to support teachers in their assessment of pupils' attainment. These are in the early stages of development.
- 41 Assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics and science are variable and focus on whether pupils have achieved the required learning objectives at the end of each unit of work. The information is not used sufficiently to guide teachers' planning or pupils' learning. The school is exploring ways of using assessments to ensure that aspects of learning, such as pupils' acquisition of historical or geographical skills, are carried on continuously from year to year.
- 42 Good procedures are in place to assess and support pupils with special educational needs. Assessments help teachers to provide pupils with equal entitlement to the curriculum, and Individual Education Plans clearly identify areas for development and give detailed targets for improvement. These are regularly checked by the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs. All parents receive annual reports on their children's progress. Reports for pupils in the Reception year and Years 1 and 2 are cumulative, with previous years' reports included, so that they help parents to see how their children have progressed and improved over time.

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

- 43 Parents have worked effectively with the staff and governors during the amalgamation of the two old schools, and there is a high level of parental satisfaction with the new school. Parents find it easy to approach the school with any query. They state that the school is well led and managed and that the teaching is good. Parents indicate that their children like school. They say that pupils work hard, behave well and make good progress. A small minority of parents would like to

see an improvement in the information provided to parents, in the homework arrangements and in the activities outside lessons.

- 44 Inspectors fully agree with parents' positive views. Inspection evidence indicates that good quality information is provided to parents about pupils' progress and school activities. However, parents of pupils in the Reception classes, Year 1 and 2 are not given the opportunity to attend evening consultation meetings with class teachers. Many activities take place outside lessons including school clubs, sports fixtures and a week's residential visit for pupils in Year 6.
- 45 Homework makes a useful contribution to learning. However, it is not consistently set throughout the school, although pupils take reading books home regularly and the school plans for the amount of homework to increase as pupils move from class to class. Teachers encounter difficulties with getting some pupils to do homework. Whilst the majority of parents give their children good support, there is a concern about the significant proportion of pupils who do not complete their homework. The school is currently undertaking a review of homework arrangements.
- 46 Parents have a good impact on the work of the school. A number of parents and grandparents regularly help in classes with reading and craftwork, as well as assisting with educational visits. Parental support is particularly evident by the interest shown at school meetings, school productions and other events. Governors value parents' views; for example, ideas arising from the consultations about the plans for the new school building. Parents give good support to the many fund raising activities organised by the Friends of Holly Trees. Last year this resulted in over £4,000 being raised. This was used to provide play equipment, to help pupils' learning by subsidising each school trip and to make a contribution towards the cost of visiting artists, specialist groups and curriculum workshops.
- 47 Communications with parents are good. The prospectus and governors' annual reports are well written and provide much helpful information about the school. Parents are also advised about forthcoming events and school activities in newsletters. Special written advice is sent to parents, and meetings are held for parents to discuss ways in which they can support their children through the revision process for the Year 6 statutory assessments. Parents are welcome in school and are encouraged to visit the school to discuss any individual query that may arise. Children new to the school in the Reception classes are well informed and made welcome through a range of meetings and visits. Children who join the school after the Reception class are integrated sensitively and teachers welcome them into the classes. In Years 3 to 6, parents are invited to evening consultation meetings with the class teacher in the autumn and spring terms to discuss their children's overall progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited appropriately to review meetings to see how their children are getting on and consider new targets for further improvement. The annual written reports sent to the parents of all pupils in the summer term are of good quality.

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

- 48 The headteacher provides very good educational direction for the school. He leads by example and has guided the governors and staff very effectively in amalgamating two old, established schools. Over the past two years, he has secured commitment from the school community to a clear vision and has managed change well so that there have been significant improvements in the teaching and curricular provision for the pupils. This has not been easy because the school is on two sites, and communication, monitoring and curricular provision have required sensitive handling. For example, younger pupils have to walk to the former junior school site to use the computer suite, and all co-ordinators have had to monitor their subjects in two settings. Combining the practice in both schools so that there is continuity in the modes of teaching has also been a significant task for the headteacher and key staff. Performance management arrangements are well in place for teachers, and professional training and management support are of good quality so that staff are well prepared for their work.

- 49 The most important keys to success of the school are the way the headteacher values the pupils, cherishes the staff and works with colleagues to promote a strong teaching team. Together with all staff, he has ensured that the school is inclusive, welcoming children regardless of attainment, race or religion, and nurturing them. The staff and governors are committed to doing what is right for the pupils, and the school's aims are central to its work. Staff involvement in decision-making has increased as their ideas are listened to and considered by the headteacher and the governors. The governors support the school wholeheartedly. They are well informed, constructively critical and always thoughtful for the pupils' needs rather than expediency. Negotiating the challenging task associated with building, equipping and staffing a new school and organising the move there in September 2003 is challenging for the

headteacher and governors, but they are working together very effectively on strategic management to ensure a smooth transfer to the new site. Staff are combining their current day-to-day commitments well with inevitable extra work linked to planning for September.

- 50 As part of the essential team-building process to provide a secure framework for the success of the new school, the headteacher keenly promotes the development of teachers' management skills. The strong senior management team leads and supports developments very well. Subject co-ordinators contribute effectively to the establishment of whole-school practices. Through systematic monitoring of lessons, the co-ordinators for English and mathematics have shared their subject knowledge and promoted a good range of techniques that have raised the quality of teaching. Staff have been alerted to areas of classroom practice that need modification. Standards in writing are an area for development and the school's improvement plan recognises the steps that need to be taken to raise pupils' attainment. There is a rolling programme for classroom monitoring in other subjects, together with a good range of measures for the development of teaching and curricular provision. Teachers new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, are well supported.
- 51 Co-ordinators have frequent informal discussions with colleagues, plan with them in the long, medium and short-term, check teachers' plans and look at pupils' work. They also share new information, advise colleagues on approaches to teaching particular topics and suggest resources that could enhance pupils' learning. Co-ordinators are coming to grips with standards throughout the school and are gradually building up a picture that is intended to help them to generate approaches to drive up the levels of pupils' attainment. The school has wisely concentrated on the use of assessments to improve standards in English, mathematics and science, and is aware that assessments in other subjects are not so well embedded or used to inform teachers' planning and pupils' learning.
- 52 The governors expect the headteacher and all staff to be accountable for their work, and school self-evaluation is good. Through frank, objective and evaluative assessments, governors identify weaknesses and plan to deal with them. Judgements have focused appropriately on literacy and numeracy. Governors look at more than just national test results; they build up an objective picture of current reality in terms of how much the pupils have achieved since they joined the school. As they probe the attainment of different groups of pupils, governors look to what they can do to help them to improve. There is evidence of a wide range of self-evaluation and monitoring processes to address potential causes of underachievement. The staff and governors look at what has happened in the past and plan to intervene and provide more effectively for the pupils. For example, early assessments when children join the school show that a significant proportion of them have weak language skills. Appropriate funding, staffing, support and curricular provision of high quality have been well targeted so that children achieve standards at least in line with national expectations by the end of the Reception class in language skills. To ensure that there is consistent provision for lower-attaining pupils throughout the school, better training and performance management arrangements are in place to enhance the skills of learning support assistants. As a result, pupils who need help benefit more effectively from the good teaching. The school's process of self-evaluation feeds into longer-term planning and helps the governors and staff to make sound strategic decisions, to act with conviction and to choose methods and equipment that help pupils to learn and achieve more effectively.

- 53 The school's improvement plan is a helpful working document. All staff and governors are involved in its formulation. Co-ordinators contribute action plans for their subjects that have been well thought-through. Parents' views are taken into account, and pupils' ideas, put forward by the School Council, are considered seriously. For example, pupils' ideas for improving provision for play at lunchtime have been followed up. Governors plan and look for 'best value' in terms of academic or pastoral improvements. These are achieved as a result of school spending that is well linked to the improvement plan. Governors monitor the plan and note the difference that changes in practice and provision, professional training and classroom monitoring, are making to results. They question how much better the school is as a result of their decisions and make informed proposals about what to do next. Because of this, the school has the good capacity for continuing improvement.
- 54 Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. Members of the governing body show tremendous commitment to the school and give of their talents generously in the service of the pupils. There is a helpful committee system so that work is shared and expertise is maximised. School policies have been carefully drawn up to include requirements for the amalgamated primary school. Governors ensure that the pupils are properly taught and cared for in the current accommodation while preparing for appropriate provision in the new building. They visit the school and go into classes and can therefore contribute first hand experiences to governors' meetings. Governors with specific responsibilities, such as special educational needs, literacy and numeracy, fulfil them well.
- 55 Financial management is good. The complex arrangements for the transfer to the new school are being handled effectively. The very large carry-forward figure in the last end-of-year accounts included funding for three extra teachers to give overlap in the transfer period, and it will be spent by the end of the current financial year. The school spends its budget wisely, including specific funding for pupils with special education needs. Educational priorities are supported effectively. This is because the headteacher and governors have ensured that funding is clearly linked to the school's improvement plan. The headteacher provides the finance committee with up-to-date information that helps them to make sound decisions. Day-to-day administration of the school office is very good, and teachers are not disturbed with minor interruptions because the administrative staff solve everyday pastoral problems. They know the school routines well and have very good relationships with the pupils, staff and parents.
- 56 Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory and they are used well so that the school gets the best value from them. For example, the computer suite is timetabled throughout the day and subject co-ordinators manage teaching resources sensibly so that items like scientific equipment can be used by more than one class.
- 57 The accommodation is unsatisfactory and this limits opportunities for teaching and learning. The classes are located in two buildings built in 1875 and 1904 respectively and are some 200 metres apart. The computer suite is in the junior building, and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have to walk there for ICT lessons. The majority of classrooms are small and three are in temporary locatable buildings. The small halls are used for a variety of purposes including assemblies, lunches, music and physical education. The hard-surfaced play areas are small for the number of pupils involved so that only limited play equipment can be provided. There is a small informal grass area on one site, but no field for formal games and recreation.
- 58 The buildings are kept clean and bright by the school caretaking staff. Maintenance standards are reasonable given the age of the buildings and taking into account the imminent move to new premises. Staff cope well in delivering the National Curriculum but inevitably constraints arise, especially with some aspects of physical education.

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

- 59 The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) \*Raise standards of pupils' writing in Years 3 to 6 by:
  - broadening the range of writing activities in English lessons
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to do longer pieces of writing  
(Paragraphs 4, 50, 72, 97)
- (2) \*Improve assessment procedures and their use in the foundation subjects  
(Paragraphs 41, 51, 86, 94, 98, 103, 108)
- (3) Improve pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work in Years 3 to 6 by:
  - ensuring that school policies for these aspects are followed consistently  
(Paragraphs 4, 18, 72, 78, 80, 102)
- (4) Ensure that pupils' work is marked in all classes so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve  
(Paragraphs 18, 40, 74, 81, 84, 86)

In addition, the governors should consider the following for inclusion in the action plan:

- \*A review of homework arrangements so that it is set consistently throughout the school, more parents support the process and more pupils complete the work set  
(Paragraphs 43, 45)

\*The school is already aware of these issues and plans are in hand to deal with them.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	19	23	14	0	0	0
Percentage	7	32	38	23	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	260
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Education Needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	29

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	13	16
	Girls	10	13	14
	Total	21	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (64)	87 (71)	100 (86)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	27	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (71)	100 (83)	100 (98)
	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	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (77)	74 (77)	72 (87)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (81)	n/a (81)	n/a (84)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	211	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	7	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	6	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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)	12.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.3
Average class size	26

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	189

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	651,219
Total expenditure	628,940
Expenditure per pupil	2,599
Balance brought forward from previous year	160,100
Balance carried forward to next year	182,379

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	239
Number of questionnaires returned	61

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	38	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	40	10	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	55	7	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	62	7	4	0
The teaching is good.	56	34	4	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	45	10	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	32	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	36	8	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	5	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	37	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	48	7	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	37	16	3	10

## **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**

- 60 Children enter the school with a wide range of attainment but overall, levels of attainment are below average. Attainment in language is particularly weak. Children make good progress and, by the end of the Reception class, achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Higher attaining children exceed the goals and are already working on the early levels of the National Curriculum. Children who have special educational needs are identified early and are well supported so that they make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are soon integrated into the life of the school because they receive good support for their specific needs and are valued and appreciated. Teachers use the information gained from regular assessment of children's attainment to plan activities that help all children to make good progress and achieve well. The learning support assistants play a significant role in the teaching process and is involved in the planning of activities and the ongoing assessments of children's achievement. All staff have a secure understanding of the needs of young children.

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

- 61 The quality of teaching is very good. Children enjoy coming to school and soon settle into the daily routines and keep the simple but firm and fair rules. The classrooms are organised to create stimulating and positive surroundings in which the children are happy to learn. The welcoming atmosphere raises children's self-esteem and encourages them to succeed. Children from ethnic minority heritages benefit from the staff's inclusive approach and the celebration of the rich range of cultures represented in the school. Staff value the children and have very good relationships with them; they listen to them and engage with them sensitively. Children become increasingly confident as they move about the classroom, the outdoor play area and the infant hall. Their confidence is promoted very effectively by the staff, who explain activities clearly and then encourage children to make choices. In literacy and numeracy lessons, children become increasingly responsive to the teachers' questions. As they learn and play together, children develop the ability to share, co-operate and relate happily to one another. Children show increasing levels of concentration, but lower-attaining children need sustained adult support to complete tasks. Older Reception children apply themselves well and show increasing commitment to finishing their work. Children gain experience of being part of a larger group when they join Years 1 and 2 for assemblies in the school hall. Children ask confidently for adult help and relate very well to the staff. Because staff have high expectations of them, children develop appropriate levels of independence as they help to clear up at the end of activities and deal with dressing for physical education.

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

- 62 Language development and communication skills receive a high priority in the very good teaching and planning. The focus is to develop competence in talking and listening and becoming readers and writers, and the very good teaching ensures that the children extend and enrich their vocabulary, learn to speak clearly, listen attentively and use English confidently. In discussions, the staff encourage the children to talk about their own experiences, and children contribute with increasing confidence and listen to one another considerately. They take part regularly in conversations and communicate with others in imaginative play, for example, when they pretend to sell or buy tickets for the train. Children's reading develops very well as teachers gradually introduce the literacy hour imaginatively. Children follow the text of stories and poems and become familiar with some simple writing conventions such as capital letters and full stops. Higher attaining pupils read well for their age and are well set to exceed the expectations for the age group. They read simple texts confidently and begin to use letter sounds and shapes to help them to sound out words for themselves. Lower-attaining pupils receive very good support as staff

help them to handle and look at books and begin to recognise separate words within sentences. Most pupils recognise and write letters and symbols and their own names.

Throughout the day, they express their ideas, share their thoughts and become increasingly interested in how to do this through writing. The staff encourage them to write letters and stories and record their experiences.

### **Mathematical development**

- 63 The staff ensure that children's mathematical development forms a major part of the programme of teaching and learning. The very good teaching enables children to sort, match and count objects and develop mathematical language. Children learn about the number system through singing and reciting number songs and rhymes. They count and use numbers to ten, and higher attaining children add and take away numbers up to twenty. Children begin to record their work and show increasing understanding of how to communicate mathematical ideas. The children handle money and show early awareness of the idea of paying and getting change. As they play table-top games and join in circle games, children develop ideas of sequence, pattern and order. The staff reinforce children's learning very effectively through repetition and by combining new learning with what children already know. Activities are well structured to ensure that children's knowledge and understanding of mathematics are reinforced and extended in interesting ways. Early elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are introduced carefully so that children are well prepared for Year 1. Resources are prepared very well to stimulate children's interest and extend their understanding. As they are involved in early historical activities, children begin to understand the passage of time in relation to sequences of personal events.

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

- 64 Teaching is very good. In scientific and technological areas of learning the teachers organise activities that encourage the children to look closely at the similarities and differences in things from both the natural and man-made worlds. Children ask questions and suggest explanations and gain increasing understanding of cause and effect through trying things out. They use the senses of taste, smell, touch or hearing to identify whether things are hard, soft, wet, dry, bumpy, squashy, bendy, loud or quiet. Children choose materials and use tools appropriately to make things. They make sensible use of new technology and talk about their experiences. Very good teaching ensures that there is an exciting programme of exploratory activities that include provision for designing and making models and construction; for example, when children use construction kits to make programmable toys that help them to develop an understanding of IT and its applications.
- 65 In the human and social areas of learning, teachers set the context for children to develop historical and geographical skills and understanding, as well as social and personal skills. Often activities are connected to a theme or topic, such as 'ourselves' and 'people who help us' in order to help children to identify with the area of study. Children learn about their locality and how they and their family and the people they meet relate to each other and the local community. The programme of activities includes walks and visits that encourage children to notice and record features in the school and the local environment. Talks from older people and those who work in the community help children to understand the roles people play and the changes that have occurred over time. The stories children are told and their discussions with adults and their imaginative play encourage them to explore the meaning and practice the language of time and place, their understanding of the wider world and their relationships to it.

### **Physical development**

- 66 Children gain confidence and increasing control of their bodies as they enjoy physical activities in both classes. They use tools more effectively and move with increasing confidence and grace as they busily write and make models in the classrooms, play outside and use the large apparatus or dance in the school hall. Teaching is very good because the teachers ensure that provision



permeates the planned programme of teaching and learning. The teaching focuses on improving fine manipulative and co-ordination skills through the handling of equipment, materials and tools. As children make marks, leading to early writing, the staff watch them closely and help them to hold pencils correctly. In art, craft and design, children develop increasing control of brushes, scissors and other simple tools. The staff organise relevant activities that motivate children to want to succeed; for example, when they made little birthday cakes and small candles from dough. The modelling required careful control and concentration. There are ample opportunities for children to practise and improve the skills of running, jumping, climbing, balancing and using large and small apparatus with confidence and control. In the playground, children confidently ride tricycles and push and pull wheeled toys. As part of the Chinese New Year celebrations, children took turns to follow one another with care in a winding line, bending and stretching to imitate the movements of a giant lion. In the school hall, children gain increasing control of their bodies as they crawl and balance on the apparatus.

### **Creative development**

- 67 The quality of teaching is very good. It focuses on helping children to develop their imagination and represent ideas by drawing, painting, using malleable materials, dancing, singing and music making. Children are taught knowledge, skills and techniques to give them greater control over the materials with which they are working. Each day, a variety of activities is provided for children to explore materials and use their artistic skills so that they extend their skills in all the required areas of learning. The rooms are decorated with interesting, bright and bold work by the children, and this raises their self-esteem. Pupils from ethnic minorities enjoy the school's inclusive approach, in which all pupils and their cultures are valued. The staff encourage pupils to take part in drama, and they do so with relish. Children take on the roles of adults as they pretend to work in or visit the railway ticket office. The children express their ideas and feelings in creative ways. As the Chinese lion, as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations, wound its way into the playground, the children made loud bangs and clashes with percussion instruments to chase away any bad luck. They did this with great conviction, and took the bringing in of the New Year very seriously.

### **ENGLISH**

- 68 Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to attain standards in line with national expectations by the end of the school year. As children's attainment is below average when they start school, this represents good achievement. In 2002, the school's results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 were adversely affected by the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, these pupils achieved well based on their prior attainment. In addition, there is high mobility among pupils, with a significant number not remaining at the school for the whole of their primary education. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve in line with their peers.
- 69 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening are set to be above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are good listeners. Teachers and learning support assistants use good questioning to promote oral skills at the beginning and end of lessons, when pupils are encouraged to speak about what they have learned and achieved. Regular chances are given for pupils to engage in simple role-play exercises in the home corner. Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6. Teachers encourage pupils to speak in more detail and at length, with direct questions to some of the quieter members of the class ensuring inclusion for all. Pupils enjoy talking about their work within both paired and group activities. Regular chances are given for pupils to take part in debating and drama activities. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' oral skills and their personal confidence.
- 70 In reading, pupils make good progress and are on course to meet national expectations by the end of Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the good teaching of phonic skills and the use of the structured reading scheme adopted by the school. Pupils with specific problems with reading receive good additional support. Pupils continue to make good progress in their reading

as they move from Year 3 to Year 6. They read and explore a good range of literature, including stories, poetry and plays, and are introduced to the works of Shakespeare. There are too few opportunities, however, for pupils to read and interpret non-fiction. Teachers recognise that although the majority of pupils have good technical skills in reading, a significant number of them do not always understand what they are reading. In the literacy hour, teachers work hard, during shared and guided reading activities, to focus pupils' attention on comprehension skills. There are also regular, planned times for pupils to read silently. As a result of this good provision, most pupils are on course to achieve in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6.

- 71 Good teaching and curricular provision enable pupils to make good progress in writing, and most pupils in Year 2 are on course to achieve in line with national expectations by the end of the school year. Higher-attaining pupils write well-structured essays with few or no mistakes. Lower-attaining pupils have difficulty with spelling and punctuation, but there is a sense of narrative in their work. This reflects the good teaching of reading, where pupils explore texts and learn about the sequence of events. Pupils write in different styles and for different purposes. They write about events in their daily lives and retell the stories read to them in class. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 write very well, and they base their writing on well-structured plans. The study of texts in the literacy hour helps them to develop an understanding of rhyming words and to produce their own imaginative poetry. They also write simple letters, and organise their writing in a logical way to write instructions.
- 72 Pupils continue to make good progress in their written work as they move from Years 3 to 6, even though the range of writing activities in English lessons is not as broad as it could be. Most pupils are set to achieve in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. In the main, writing activities focus on the development of grammar and punctuation. However, pupils produce some interesting creative and imaginative writing and some sensitive and imaginative poetry. Pupils regularly plan their written work, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to improve the quality of their work through the use of re-drafting skills. There is little evidence of any extended written work. A significant number of pupils produce poorly presented work, and there is no consistency in the use of pens by older pupils. Handwriting and presentation are of a variable quality. This does little to promote pupils' pride in their efforts and achievement.
- 73 The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school, with some very good and excellent teaching being observed during the period of the inspection. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils, with work being matched to the needs of groups of pupils. Timed targets ensure that lessons move along at a brisk pace and that pupils stay on task. This makes a positive contribution to learning. Good use is made of the final part of lessons to share and celebrate what pupils have achieved. Good working relationships between teachers and pupils contributes to good learning. Where teaching is very good or excellent, pupils are given the opportunity to explore a wide range of the elements of the English curriculum within a single lesson, with each activity supporting and extending pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This creates a seamless literacy hour and provides a rigorous working environment where pupils work willingly and conscientiously to achieve the lesson objectives.
- 74 Leadership and management in the subject are good. The school has responded well to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, with teachers interpreting the literacy hour effectively. There are a useful policy and helpful scheme of work to support staff in their teaching. The use of ICT for word-processing, the learning of spelling patterns and the development of research skills are satisfactory, but more structure is needed to ensure that computers are used more regularly to support and extend pupils' learning. Teachers use a satisfactory range of assessments to measure pupils' attainment and progress, but there are inconsistencies in the correcting and marking of pupils' work, resulting in lost opportunities for pupils to consolidate their basic English skills by correcting their own mistakes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 75 Most pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain the nationally expected level by the end of the school year, and several pupils are already working above this level. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well, based on their prior attainment. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve in line with their peers. The inspection did not find any significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- 76 Pupils in Year 2 are set to achieve standards in line with national expectations for the age group by the end of school year. They are making good progress, with more pupils than last year on course to achieve at the higher level by the end of the school year. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. They soon learn to use unfamiliar mathematical words.

- 77 Pupils in Year 2 add and subtract numbers to 10 mentally; the more able can do this to 20 or more. They arrange numbers to 100, using a hundred square – a large square subdivided into 10 x 10 smaller squares - to count in tens and fives. Several pupils count in threes confidently. They use their number skills confidently to solve simple money problems. Lower-attaining pupils are unsure about numbers to 20, and about identifying numbers, one more or one less, than a given number. In their books, some reverse the digits in numbers containing tens and units. Most pupils in Year 2 correctly identify a range of two-dimensional shapes, including triangles, rectangles, pentagons, hexagons and octagons, by the number of sides. Attractive classroom displays show that pupils have engaged in investigations into feet and hand sizes, hair colour and how tall they are. They have used their data to draw pictograms and then made simple analyses of their findings. These activities have strengthened pupils understanding of how mathematics can be used to investigate problems in everyday life. Higher-attaining pupils benefit significantly from this approach and make good progress in solving problems and organising facts.
- 78 In Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of place value and of rounding numbers to the nearest 10, 100 and 1000. Good teaching includes thorough work on basic skills and interesting activities for pupils to use and test these skills. Pupils are able to put into order whole numbers and decimal numbers, work in percentages and in decimals, to two places, and know the equivalent values of simple fractions. They find the perimeter and area of shapes such as triangles and rectangles. Teachers organise well-structured tasks that stimulate pupils' interest and make mathematics an enjoyable subject. Work in ICT helps pupils to gain sound skills in entering formulae; for example, when they use a spreadsheet to work out the total cost of items at a given price. Pupils use a range of methods of showing and interpreting data; for example, they use graphs, bar charts, pie charts and frequency tables. All pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their work and explain their thinking. There is an emphasis on investigative work that challenges and extends understanding. Examples seen in pupils' books include investigating patterns in multiplication tables and looking at prime numbers and probability. However, work in pupils' books is not always sufficiently organised and well presented.
- 79 The overall quality of teaching is good. In lessons observed it was never less than good, and several very good lessons were seen. Scrutiny of pupils' work revealed that marking is somewhat sporadic, especially in the upper part of the school. Teachers clearly assess pupils well on a day-to-day basis through challenging questioning, effective discussions at the end of lessons and one-to-one discussions. However, inadequately marked work, particularly in Years 3 to 6, results in lost opportunities of informing pupils how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve; pupils respond positively, try hard and make good progress in their learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of the lesson. Teachers often refer back to these, and target questions well so that they can assess what individual pupils understand. A good example of this was seen in Year 3, when pupils were learning to recognise and name prisms and the teacher included all pupils effectively through expert questioning. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are helped effectively by the learning support assistants, who work effectively with groups of pupils, enabling them to make good progress. For example, in a lesson in Year 1, in addition to helping groups of pupils, the support staff were very supportive in whole-class sessions when they intervened to refocus the attention of children whose interest had waned or who were distracted.
- 80 Teachers consistently manage classes well, and as a result pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. There are clear behaviour management strategies in place across the school and these are generally well used. Occasionally, teachers are inconsistent in their approach; for example, when pupils are allowed to continue to talk, even though the teacher is speaking. Lesson planning is thorough and follows the National Numeracy Strategy. Activities are well adapted to meet the needs of groups of pupils. There are good opportunities in lessons for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to consolidate their understanding. Insufficient attention is given to the presentation of work and some work is untidy. As well as having the effect of devaluing pupils' efforts, poorly set out work does not help pupils to organise their thinking logically.

- 81 The subject is very well led and managed by a well-informed and active co-ordinator. Basic skills are well taught. The National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented and mathematical language is being developed well across the school. The use of ICT to support and extend pupils' learning is developing satisfactorily. It is used to increasingly good effect in Year 2; for example, when pupils explored a program to assemble a range of two-dimensional shapes. Apart from inconsistent marking, assessment is good overall and good use is made of information gained from assessment to analyse the progress of both individuals and groups. This information is used effectively to target areas that need improvement and, together with the good quality of teaching, is helping to raise standards in mathematics.

## SCIENCE

- 82 Pupils are on course to exceed national expectations by the end of Year 2 and achieve them by the end of Year 6. The improvement in standards reflects the increase of practical and investigative activities throughout the school. The quality of teaching has improved as teachers work together with increasing effectiveness to teach the newly introduced scheme of work. This has had a significant impact in ensuring that pupils, including those from ethnic minority heritages, achieve well.
- 83 In Year 2, most pupils know about the five senses and that living things change and grow. They know the difference between healthy and unhealthy food and how to categorise materials into natural and man-made materials. For example, a pupil in Year 1 wrote, 'Natural means things what is made from God. Man-made means made in a factory'. Pupils know how some materials can be changed and can describe the changes. A pupil in Year 2 wrote, 'Water turned into ice. Pupils used their investigative skills to ask questions, and employed first-hand experiences to answer them. For example, pupils in Year 1 were testing substances to find a waterproof material to mend a hole in Goldilocks' coat - this linked to work in English on traditional tales. Pupils are encouraged to use predictions. Evidence of pupils using a variety of methods to record results was seen in their work, in displays and in lessons. Pupils complete charts, graphs, worksheets, and formal written reports of experiments. There is satisfactory use of scientific vocabulary; pupils know what words like 'prediction' and 'fair test' mean. Skills develop from one year to the next and this means that all pupils make good progress
- 84 In Year 6, pupils can tell the difference between solids and liquids, compare properties of materials, and understand the effects of temperature change. They know about the skeleton and how to keep themselves healthy. Evidence from pupils' written work suggests that where it is good the tasks set were well matched to the pupils' abilities. Pupils use correct scientific vocabulary well and engage in scientific enquiry and investigation enthusiastically. Teachers ensure that there is a good range of recording including taking notes, drawing graphs, writing up experiments, and preparing charts. Marking is inconsistent, but where it is good, it adds much to pupils' learning. For example, in a report about an experiment that stretched elastic bands, the teacher wrote, 'What do you think will happen (when you let go)? Please reply.' The pupil replied, 'It will go back (to its old shape).'
- 85 The quality of teaching in classes in Years 1 to 6 is good. Teachers promote literacy and numeracy well, and the progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils with special educational needs are included effectively in lessons, where they are well supported by learning support assistants. In the most effective lessons, teachers are well prepared, have a good knowledge of the subject and their explanations are clear and lively. Teachers use effective questioning to build on pupils' learning and move it forward. They use a range of interesting teaching strategies to maintain pupils' attention. For example, one teacher used a computer game that was a version of 'Who wants to be a millionaire?' It posed questions on magnets and magnetism. Pupils answered on individual whiteboards, holding up their answers for the teacher and the rest of the class to see. This enabled the teacher to assess pupils' knowledge while making the activity fun and accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to science and their behaviour is good.



- 86 The subject is well led and managed. A new commercial scheme has been purchased that supports teachers. It helps them in planning and teaching a curriculum that develops skills, knowledge, and understanding from year to year. The co-ordinator has analysed the school's national test results for weaknesses and these have been addressed. She has reviewed resources for the new scheme of work, and has introduced assessment materials so that pupils' progress can be monitored. She has led staff meetings on assessment, and has identified points for future development and improvement. This includes further work on assessment, the consistent marking of pupils' work, and the further use of skills of prediction in lessons.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 87 Standards are on course to be above those expected nationally for pupils in Years 2 and 6 by the end of the school year. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. Much of the recent work has been focused on providing decoration for the new school; for example, there is to be a wall of clay tiles with handprints of every pupil.
- 88 In Years 1 and 2, pupils become increasingly skilled in using a wide range of techniques and materials, including pencils, crayons, charcoal, paints and fabrics. A good feature of teaching throughout the school is the teachers' provision of a variety of different coloured papers, so that pupils are not continually working on a white background. Pupils' observational drawings and work on pattern become more detailed in Years 1 and 2. In Year 2, pupils did sketches of very good quality because of the teacher's attention to providing a well-lit still-life model of fruit. This created sharp shadows that alerted pupils to the clear distinction between light and shade. Younger pupils are encouraged to observe carefully before they do bright and bold paintings of faces, with detailed features. Teachers make sure work is relevant for pupils. Recent snowfalls delighted pupils, and they created exciting pictures of snowy scenes, with bold snowmen and stark trees against a white background. In Year 1, the teacher stimulated pupils' interest by showing them a range of bright wrapping paper, and then got them to create and print designs of their own. Collage work is developed well as pupils create large pictures; for example, when they used different kinds of paper imaginatively in a large work about animals at night. Pupils illustrate their written work with lively drawings on a variety of subjects.
- 89 In Years 3 to 6, pupils use a wide variety of materials to express themselves very well artistically in two- and three-dimensions. In Year 3, pupils cut up their patterns of repeated shapes to create bold and bright designs on a black background. In Years 4 and 5, pupils made Egyptian masks on which they used well-researched and beautifully executed designs. Pupils in Year 6 show maturity in their sophisticated, arresting designs of white triangles on black paper. Three-dimensional work is done in a range of scales from small, individual models to large papier-mâché chicks. After a visit to an exhibition about 'Emotions', pupils created interesting sculptures, including one about anger: 'bullet holes' were made in tins by knocking nails into them. Pupils' work is increasingly informed through the study of works by significant artists. Visits to the National Gallery stimulate pupils' interest in how works of art can be made, and how artists from a range of times and cultures have expressed their thoughts and represented contemporary life.
- 90 Teaching is good. The range of pupils' experiences show that teachers have secure levels of subject knowledge. They include the systematic development of pupils' artistic skills and the use of interesting materials. The regular use of sketchbooks adds significantly to pupils' achievement. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Literacy is promoted effectively as pupils read about the work of significant artists, and numeracy is evident in the exploration of patterns. Pupils enjoy their artistic experiences. Throughout the school, teachers help pupils to gain good artistic habits as they collect ideas and practise new skills in sketchbooks. This gives pupils the confidence to work on a larger scale. Success in art and design raises pupils' self-esteem and adds significantly to the positive ethos of the school. Teachers are generous with their praise. Pupils with special educational needs gain confidence in a subject in which they are free of the constraints of language. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds recognise the

school's respect and admiration of art from other cultures, as they study and copy patterns from a range of sources, including Aboriginal art.

- 91 The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She inspires her colleagues and has raised their expertise to teach art and design confidently. The school follows a good scheme of work that includes national guidance and a range of other ideas that are helpful to teachers. Materials are varied and interesting, but the lack of running water inhibits teaching and learning in some classrooms. Opportunities for pupil to engage more regularly in messy work will be provided for in the new school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 92 Only one lesson was observed during inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on teaching, but from the evidence available, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a range of experiences that help them to gain satisfactory skills and achieve soundly by the end of Year 2. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve in line with their peers. There was less evidence to support any judgement on standards for pupils in Years 3 to 6, but planning shows that pupils have access to the appropriate curriculum, with interesting activities taught over the school year. Support for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is planned well so that they achieve in line with their peers.
- 93 Photographic evidence and displays show that pupils in Years 2 have made lively, jointed figures, using split pins to join the components. They have designed and constructed working wheeled vehicles, using a variety of fixing processes. As part of the programme for food technology, pupils have designed and made appetising sandwiches and party cakes with attractive toppings. Pupils have produced some good, imaginative work; for example, when they made fairytale puppets made from reclaimed materials. They have also made three-dimensional models of 'gingerbread' houses. Work from pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds compares well with that of their peers, and they enjoy design and technology. In Year 4, pupils have made designs for models of Viking ships. This links well with work in history, and pupils show attention to detail in the shape and decoration of their designs. Pupils also made brightly decorated bookmarks with personalised designs to reflect the interests of the reader.
- 94 In discussions with pupils, they say that they like making things and enjoy design and technology lessons. The subject is planned effectively over the school year, and the scheme of work is based on national guidelines. It maps pupils' progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well, as pupils label designs, write instructions and measure materials for their products. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, but there is a plan to assess pupils' achievement at the end of each unit of work and use the information gained to inform future planning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 95 Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are on course to be in line with national expectations by the end of the school year. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. The school alternates the teaching of geography with that of history, and evidence in children's books was limited because of the recent focus on history.
- 96 Pupils make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. There is evidence of the steady development of mapping skills across the school. For example, during a lesson in Year 1, pupils drew maps that identified features such as houses, shops, a railway station and a Methodist church, that they had seen on a walk around the school and along a nearby road. In Years 1 and 2, pupils explored maps and identified important features such as towns, roads, bridges, rivers, mountains and lakes. Because teachers encourage pupils to use correct geographical vocabulary, they express their responses to questions clearly. In an informative and interesting display by pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher had skilfully used the story of 'The Three Little



Pigs' to motivate the pupils to prepare a map that showed the wolf's journey from house to house. In Year 2, pupils compare the way people live and the similarities in the facilities in different places such as a Kenyan village, their own town and a seaside town such as Clacton or Southend. They gain awareness of the similarities and differences because of features such as climate and local employment.

- 97 In Years 3 to 6, pupils widen their knowledge of the world. They study settlements in India and in the United Kingdom, to identify differences and similarities in features such as homes, food, employment and education. Pupils from ethnic minority families gain self-esteem as they recognise the wide range of ways of life, all of which are valued in the school. As pupils become more aware of the influence that the landscape and climate have on people's lives, teachers plan interesting lessons about the physical world. Pupils explore maps and see where the world's great mountain ranges and rivers are located. They explore coastal features and are involved in local studies at Walton-on-the-Naze and Swanage. As their knowledge and understanding of the interpretation of maps increases, pupils recognise the importance of symbols and keys that inform the reader about specific features. Literacy is promoted satisfactorily in research work, but there was little evidence of longer pieces of writing. Numeracy is practised as pupils compare temperatures and distances.
- 98 From the work seen, teaching has been at least satisfactory over time. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work, based on national guidelines, has been adapted by the co-ordinator. It ensures that pupils build effectively on what they already know. The well-focused work on the development of geographical language benefits pupils who speak English as an additional language. Well-organised fieldwork and visits within the local area are used effectively to support work in geography. The co-ordinator has identified appropriate priorities for development, including assessment, which is rudimentary. A plan is in place to promote improvements in the teaching and learning of the subject. Resources are satisfactory overall but are more limited in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6.

## **HISTORY**

- 99 Standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with expectations for the age groups and pupils achieve satisfactorily. The rate of progress is consistent across the school and for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils from ethnic minority heritages enjoy history because teachers make learning interesting.
- 100 No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 but pupils' past work shows that by the end of Year 2, pupils think about time and events that happened a short while, or a long time, ago. Pupils recognise how they themselves have grown and changed, and that their parents and grandparents were born some time ago. They make useful comparisons between 'then' and 'now', and look at household objects from the past. Pupils' workbooks show that in studying the Great Fire of London, pupils compared houses in the seventeenth century with those of today, and fire fighting methods then and now. This makes the past seem more real and relevant to the pupils and helps them to understand it. Literacy is developed well through historical writing. Pupils know about significant figures from the past, such as Guy Fawkes. The school organises this topic effectively to link with Bonfire Night, and pupils' learning about the Gunpowder Plot was made more relevant and exciting through a visit to the Royal Gunpowder Mills.
- 101 In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop a clearer and more detailed picture of changes over time, and explore life in ancient civilisations. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 studied ancient Egyptian rituals and beliefs about death. The teacher engaged pupils' interest very effectively as she used a feather and a balance to show them how lives were 'weighed' and told how good lives were rewarded. There were good cross-curricular links with religious education. By using a poem about Tutankhamen in his tomb, the teacher reinforced the message that we can learn about the past through literature. Learning became increasingly interesting as pupils were asked to write a job description for a 'mummifier'. One suggested that a strong stomach was essential. Skills of historical research are further developed in Year 5 as pupils talk about and compare pictures of life

in Tudor England. Through well-guided discussions and skilful questions designed to involve the whole class, the teacher elicited pupils' sound knowledge of education, clothing and homes in Tudor England. Good teaching ensures that pupils learn to evaluate evidence, and there is a consistent emphasis on the need to think about the type of evidence and how valid it is. Some valuable links are made with mathematics through the work pupils do on probability.

- 102 The teachers' effective use of resources, challenging questions and interesting content and presentation, motivate and stimulate pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, and they respond well. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage them well, and pupils concentrate and focus well on the lessons, showing interest and enthusiasm. However, there is not enough emphasis on finishing work and its presentation, especially in Years 4 to 6.
- 103 The co-ordinator manages the subject soundly. Good use is made of a range of visits, such as those to Colchester Castle, Brentwood Museum and a working windmill, and of visitors, such as a Roman soldier in full armour. These stimulate the pupils and make the subject more relevant and exciting. Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from this lively approach. The school rightly emphasises the development of historical skills of research, as well as knowledge. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are inconsistent.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 104 Pupils' attainment is in line with nationally expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. The subject is used increasingly to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. Current facilities are far from perfect, with the pupils in Years 1 and 2 having to walk from one site to another to use the suite of computers.
- 105 In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop appropriate skills for word processing. In English, most pupils are able to word-process their written work effectively to produce scripts of stories, poems and reports. In art and design, pupils use a graphics package confidently to draw shapes, fill them in with colour, and create a background; for example, when they made attractive pictures of snow scenes. Pupils in Year 1 created an attractively display of well-observed portraits of pupils in the class. Work is linked increasingly to other subjects and is used to support pupils' learning in lessons, especially in Year 2. In mathematics, pupils have used a simple data-handling program effectively to plot the colour of different types of fruit. Work was linked well to mathematics and art and design when pupils explored how shapes fit together. Higher-attaining pupils look for information by exploring CD ROMs and searching on the Internet.
- 106 In Years 3 to 6, pupils extend the sound foundation established earlier in the school. They become increasingly confident in using ICT to solve problems and enhance their learning. In Year 4, pupils created passports for themselves by taking and printing digital photographs and adding appropriate text. In Year 5, the teacher motivated pupils to 'dig deeper' into what people ate in Tudor times, and this resulted in a fine set of menus in a variety of fonts, printed on coloured paper to look like parchment. Pupils' understanding of citizenship was extended in Year 5, when they wrote well-structured and attractively presented letters to a local councillor, complaining about graffiti in the local area.
- 107 Overall, pupils, including those from ethnic minority families, achieve satisfactorily. Pupils enjoy using computers and they work well, usually in pairs, and show respect for each other. They take turns on the equipment and support each other thoughtfully. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy using computers to hone their skills in spelling and number work. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils use spreadsheets effectively; for example, to calculate the amount of water used in the home. In another exercise, pupils used their mathematical skills well to write formulae to calculate the cost of a specific number of items at a given price. Throughout the school, computers are used increasingly to support work in other subjects, but there is some way to go. Increasingly, pupils search CD ROMs and the Internet for information to support their learning. Older pupils use the Internet to find, save and print information on topics studied in history and geography. Pupils do not have sufficient experience of control and monitoring, but, the school has good, clear plans to enhance this area of ICT as the equipment becomes available.
- 108 The quality of teaching is good in the suite of computers. Most teachers' have sound subject knowledge which they use well to extend pupils' skills. They build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and give clear instructions that encourage pupils and help them to

be successful. Direct teaching of the whole class, to teach skills and routines, is followed up by opportunities for pupils to practise, use and extend their skills in the classroom during other lessons. In the classrooms, the planned use of ICT is variable across the subjects. The co-ordinator is working well with teachers on both sites to raise standards in ICT by promoting its use in other subjects. The curriculum is based on national guidelines, adapted to meet the needs of the school. The co-ordinator is aware that assessment procedures, to ensure progression in pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge, need to be developed further.

## MUSIC

- 109 Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and they achieve standards in line with expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Singing is a strength in the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.
- 110 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a satisfactory knowledge of the names and sounds of a number of untuned percussion instruments. In Year 1, pupils worked well together as they made a 'sound picture' by exploring long and short sounds and weaving them together in their own composition. In Year 2, the teacher skilfully linked work in science with current learning in music. The pupils explored sounds made with wooden or metal instruments, and listened intently as they investigated the sounds made by shaking or scraping the instruments. Singing is well pitched and rhythmical, and pupils recognise the importance of simple breathing techniques and intonation. Many pupils in Year 2 play the recorder in a club run by a parent governor. This helps them to read formal musical notation and gives them early experience in ensemble work.
- 111 By the end of Year 6, pupils acquire knowledge and skills which help them to appreciate a range of music and make music for personal pleasure and the enjoyment of others. Pupils in Year 3 display an effective knowledge of the underlying rhythmic pattern in ostinato accompaniments. In a well-planned lesson, they explored this element of music on glockenspiels, to accompany their singing. In Year 4, pupils sang a folk song well, creating an underlying 'drone' to accompany themselves on tuned percussion instruments. The clear progress made in this lesson owed much to the positive attitudes and sustained interest shown by the pupils. The school regularly provides pupils with the opportunity to compose, perform, listen to and appraise music. A very good example of this was observed in Year 5, as pupils used a number of aspects from the Hindu faith as a stimulus for their own compositions. Pupils worked collaboratively, listening well to each other's work and valuing other people's ideas before arriving at an agreement on the finished work. Pupils then played their compositions to the rest of the class and evaluated each other's efforts. A spiritual dimension was evident in this lesson as the pupils came together to play their music one after the other, with an underlying theme of 'The Circle of Life'. The success of this lesson owed much to the specialist knowledge of the class teacher.
- 112 The quality of singing in lessons and assemblies is good. Pupils enjoy their singing and take care with their breathing technique, correct phrasing and the sensitive interpretation of lyrics. This is helped by the positive attitudes towards their work and the sheer pleasure they display in their musical activities. Pupils who wish to extend their musical skills can have tuition in woodwind, guitar and violin; those pupils who currently do this benefit from developing a wider knowledge and view of music.
- 113 The overall quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory and it is sometimes good or better. The school benefits from the services of a visiting music specialist and a newly qualified teacher with a specialist knowledge of music. Lessons are always well planned, organised and resourced. Although the objectives of each lesson are not always shared with pupils, activities are explained and organised well. Teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to be actively engaged in practical music making and are encouraged to appraise and evaluate music. Pupils improve their musical skills through repetition linked to careful listening and striving for a better sound. They consider pieces by western composers and music from other cultures and traditions. Good working relationships between teachers and pupils make a positive contribution

to learning. Literacy is developed appropriately as pupils read the words of songs and find out about great composers. Pupils become increasingly aware of the mathematical patterns represented in repeated rhythms and series of notes.

- 114 Leadership and management in the subject are currently satisfactory. The school has a well-attended choir and is developing a school orchestra. All pupils benefit from the school's regular practice of playing host to a number of visiting musicians. Interesting music from a range of cultures is played each morning in assemblies. This raises the self-esteem of pupils from ethnic minority heritages. With the opportunity for pupils to engage in collaborative learning and listen to and appreciate a range of world music, the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 115 The lessons seen during the inspection focused mainly on dance. Evidence from these lessons and an examination of the scheme of work and teachers' planning indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in their physical education skills and achieve standards in line with expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve in line with their peers. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have swimming lessons, and three quarters of them already fulfil the National Curriculum requirement (swimming twenty-five metres) expected of pupils by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special education needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make the same progress as their peers.
- 116 Pupils develop secure skills for making sequences of movements to create dance routines. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils created a dance from a series of simple, linked movements, with a specific beginning and end, as they interpreted a piece of music sensitively. The teacher made good use of example to improve all pupils' efforts. In Year 3, very good teaching promoted a high level of self-discipline as pupils worked in pairs to create a piece of work based on the theme of 'machinery'. The success of this lesson owed much to the teacher's very good selection of music. Pupils in Year 6 displayed some imaginative movements as they worked in pairs to create their own contemporary versions of a country dance. As in all the dance lessons observed, pupils focussed on the skills to be developed, and improved them over time through repetition. Skills for playing games are taught systematically. Pupils are encouraged to work in teams; for example, when pupils in Year 4 enhanced their passing techniques as they worked in pairs to control and move the ball in a given direction.
- 117 The overall quality of teaching is sound. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced. Teachers focus on health and safety issues and provide pupils with appropriate warm-up activities. Teachers provide demonstrations of the skills to be learned, and give opportunities for pupils to show good practice and to evaluate each other's efforts. This makes a contribution to pupils' positive attitudes towards their own work and their wish to improve it. Teachers remind pupils of health and safety issues and the well being of others. Pupils work with sustained concentration and display real enthusiasm for the work they are involved in. Work in physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to express their feelings and develop the ability to work together towards a common goal.
- 118 Opportunities are given for pupils to make progress in their physical education skills by repeating them within more complex and demanding activities. The final part of lessons is usually used to review the activities and to plan for future improvement. Praise is used in an effective manner to promote confidence in pupils' abilities. All this makes a positive contribution to learning. Teachers make good use of the limited indoor and outdoor space and organise a range of games for pupils to acquire appropriate skills for games
- 119 Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. There is a helpful policy and a useful scheme of work for the subject. Although resources for the subject are adequate, accommodation is unsatisfactory, though this issue will be addressed in the near future, when the school moves

into new premises later in the year. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular sporting activities including football, karate and baseball, with pupils taking part in friendly inter-school matches in soccer and rounders. The special 'activity day' for pupils in Year 5, when pupils engage in abseiling, canoeing and team building skills, makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development and extends their interests.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 120 Pupils are on course to attain standards in line with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus, with examples of good work evident. Pupils achieve well from a lower than average base and make satisfactory progress.
- 121 Pupils in Year 2 become increasingly aware of the importance of religion in many peoples' lives. They gain a deeper understanding of how people of different faiths worship and live together. Through good teaching, pupils become more aware of how 'special people' have made a significant impact on how we behave and relate to one another. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils explored the stories of Jesus as a healer. The teacher guided pupils to think perceptively and sensitively about how hands can be used to be kind or cruel. Very good teaching in this lesson included an exercise in which the pupils attached kind words such as 'help' and 'heal' to the displayed poem, whilst cruel words were consigned to the waste-basket. Pupils listened attentively to the story of the healing of Jairus' daughter and discussed the events, the people and how they might have felt. The teacher made very good use of drama to reinforce the message, as pupils took on the roles. As they did so, their comments, actions and expressions displayed an unusual understanding and perception, not just of the events that took place but also of how the people were affected by them.
- 122 Standards in Year 6 are average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are guided well to see how a range of religious beliefs have much in common. Pupils in Year 3 reflected on how we treat people in our society. Through consideration of Jesus' parable of the lost sheep, pupils reflected on why people are made outcasts in our society. Pupils gained an awareness of why Jesus chose to use parables, 'so they understood it more'. As well as listening attentively and recalling relevant details of the story, pupils made good progress in understanding why Jesus told the story and how it has a relevance for us today. Pupils in Year 6 learnt about the siege of Masada as part of their consideration of Judaism. This was a demanding lesson and pupils were not only looking at and tracing the development of the sequence of events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem and the siege of Masada; they were confronting some very challenging issues, that are pertinent to modern life. Terrorism, war and the concept of martyrdom for a cause were all issues raised and considered by the pupils in a sensible and mature way.
- 123 The teaching seen was good overall, with some very good teaching. It was well planned with clear learning objectives that set a sharp focus for what was to be learned. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage and motivate them well so that all, including those who speak English as an additional language, are involved in and enjoy their learning. Pupils from ethnic minority heritages are integrated sensitively in lessons. Good examples of challenge and work clearly set to extend different groups of pupils were seen. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory and teachers check progress through effective questioning. Pupils' learn at a good rate in lessons and their attainment is above average in the aspects taught because of the good quality of the teaching. Much of the work done in religious education is not recorded in books, especially in Years 1 and 2. Written work in Years 3 to 6 is sometimes poorly presented, handwriting is not joined and marking is not always consistent.
- 124 The subject co-ordinator gives sound leadership. He has a clear vision of how the subject needs to be developed; for example, the need for more effective links with other faiths as part of preparing pupils for life in a multicultural Britain. Monitoring of standards is done through checking the planning and by work sampling, but there is a need for a consistent and 'easy to use' system of assessing and recording what pupils understand and can do. Information can then be used to help plan future lessons to suit the needs of pupils. Overall, resources are satisfactory, they include a variety of books, new bibles and artefacts for different faiths and are supplemented by

visits. A specialist visiting teacher brings in valuable expertise to enhance the curriculum for older pupils. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.