

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BARNES FARM INFANT SCHOOL**

Chelmsford, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115044

Headteacher: Mrs M Williamson

Reporting inspector: Ms R Frith  
2490

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 June 2003

Inspection number: 254997

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Henniker Gate Chelmer Village Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM2 6QH
Telephone number:	01245 467474
Fax number:	01245 461949
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Bloomsbury
Date of previous inspection:	8 June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2490	Ms R Frith	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language Foundation Stage Science	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?
9092	Mr R Elam	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	Mrs M Coles	Team inspector	Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8139	Mrs B Johnstone	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Religious education	
32142	Mrs B Richmond	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Barnes Farm Infant School is an average size community school for boys and girls aged four to seven years. There are 252 pupils on roll. The school serves an area of high density housing which is predominately privately owned. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. On entry to school, overall, pupils show levels of attainment which are similar to those seen nationally for children of that age, but a significant number each year have speech and language difficulties. Currently, 22 pupils are identified as having special educational needs including one with a Statement of Special Educational Need. Those receiving additional support reflect a wide range of learning difficulties. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and 13 come from homes where English is believed to be spoken as an additional language. Three of these children are in the reception classes and at the early stages of learning English.

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

The very good leadership and management by the headteacher and governors have been instrumental in developing Barnes Farm Infant School into a very good school where children flourish. Staff work well together as a strong team and teaching is frequently very good. Staff are particularly effective in developing the pupils' personal and social education and their learning skills, which are developed across all curriculum areas. This ensures that pupils achieve well and, in Year 2, are currently reaching standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well. Those currently in Year 2 are reaching above average standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology and physical education.
- The quality of teaching is very good, overall, and particularly effective in developing pupils' attitudes to learning, their ability to ask questions and to solve problems.
- Staff are effective in meeting the needs of boys and girls of different abilities and from a variety of backgrounds. Support staff make a good contribution to the pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school's nurturing environment and ethos of respect and co-operation promote good behaviour and very good relationships.
- Pupils like going to school and attend regularly.
- The school has developed a good partnership with parents who, in turn, have very positive views of the school.
- The school is very well led and managed.

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

- The organisation, resources and use of accommodation for children in the reception classes, thereby encouraging a less formal curriculum for those new to school.
- The way in which the school records the information gained on pupils' attainment and progress.

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

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

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and staff are continuing to develop their practice and raise standards. Staff have addressed the key issues arising from the last inspection in 1998 successfully but recognise the need to improve procedures for recording assessment data. These include the use of a computer program to track pupils' progress over time and the development of the newly introduced national assessments for children before they enter Year 1. Staff have reviewed how and when they mark pupils' work and practice is now consistent. Systems for monitoring standards have also improved and now fully involve teachers, senior managers and governors. Areas for future improvement are clearly identified and there is an obvious commitment to succeed.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	B	B	C	D
Writing	C	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	C	B	C

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

Children quickly settle to school life and make good progress in the reception classes. They are likely to reach the standards expected nationally for children of that age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative, physical, personal, social and emotional development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the 2002 national tests, Year 2 pupils achieved standards which were average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Results of the 2002 teacher assessments for science indicate below average standards. Overall, these results indicate an improvement in standards since the last inspection in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's trend of improvement over the last five years is broadly in line with the national trend, particularly in writing and mathematics. The school's success in maintaining good standards was recognised nationally when the staff received the national School Achievement Award.

Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils in Year 2 achieve well and that standards are currently above average in all subjects apart from design and technology, music and religious education where they are average. Improvements have been made in the curriculum, teaching and assessment which have helped to improve standards in science and reading. Standards in writing continue to be at a good level, with a significant number of pupils attaining well above average levels in their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make very good progress towards their targets. Higher-attainers receive work which develops their learning at a good rate because it provides challenge and interest. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. No significant difference was noted in the progress and attainment of boys and girls during the inspection, although in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy going to school and are interested in their work. Pupils' concentration and motivation develop considerably as they move through the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well-mannered, polite to adults and to each other and keen to talk with visitors. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils become increasingly responsible and aware of their own and others' needs. Relationships between pupils and adults and amongst pupils themselves provide a good basis for learning.
Attendance	Very good. The attendance rate for the last academic year was well above the national average.





## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly in relation to the increase in very good teaching and the absence of unsatisfactory teaching. This reflects the high value placed on identifying and sharing good practice and supporting staff through a good programme of professional development. Staff generally meet the needs of all pupils and are particularly effective in helping them to maintain their interest and concentration. However, due to the current accommodation and organisation, the youngest children are not always able to receive an appropriate curriculum. In some cases, learning is too directed and insufficient opportunities are provided for children to work and play outside the classrooms. In other respects, teaching is good for children in the reception classes and develops their attitudes to school and learning well. In Years 1 and 2, teachers focus on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy within a good curriculum. They have adopted the National Literacy Strategy very well and are particularly effective in developing the pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills across all areas of the curriculum. The teaching of English is very good. The Numeracy Strategy has been developed well and the teaching of mathematics is at least good with some being very good. Overall, pupils achieve well in school because they are encouraged to become independent, work on their own when appropriate, and develop enquiring minds. This results in them achieving particularly well in the areas of mathematical, scientific and historical investigation and enquiry. The school's valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs results in these pupils achieving in line with their abilities. Higher-attaining pupils are well challenged. The needs of bilingual pupils are well met through effective class teaching and very good support. Teachers manage all pupils very well and have high expectations of work and behaviour. Consequently, no time is wasted and pupils try hard to do their best.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning experiences for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are good. However, staff who teach children in the reception classes are restricted by the accommodation and lack of resources and so are unable to provide a broad curriculum such as that required for regular learning outside the classroom. Last year, the school received the Healthy Schools Award.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their needs are quickly identified and all staff give appropriate support. This ensures that pupils have access to a broad and interesting curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The curriculum and support offered to pupils are very good and ensure that they are able to understand lessons and fully contribute. Those at the early stages of learning English make particularly good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and a significant factor in the way pupils develop very good attitudes to school and sustain very good relationships. Pupils are encouraged to work and play together and thereby develop respect for the views, beliefs and cultures of others. Race relations are good.
How well the school cares	Staff know their pupils well and take appropriate account of individual needs. The school is aware of the need to further develop records of

for its pupils	pupils' achievement.
----------------	----------------------

Staff have developed good links with parents and provide them with good quality information. Parents have very positive views of the school and contribute well to their children's learning at home and at school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is very successful in developing a team of people with a shared sense of values and priorities. The deputy headteacher, bursar and other senior managers ably assist her. The school's work has been recognised by the national Investors in People Award.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and all statutory requirements are met. They are fully involved in the school development planning process and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses very effectively in order to decide what needs to be done next and they have a clear agenda for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages and uses its resources well in relation to teachers and support staff. Priorities for development are financed appropriately. Correct tendering procedures are followed and staff and governors obtain the best value for their spending.

The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers and support staff. This ensures that class sizes are not too large and that the pupils' needs are well met. Learning resources are good and used well to support learning throughout the school. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school is aware that the lack of appropriate outside accommodation for those in the reception classes restricts their opportunities to play and work in the way recommended by the national guidance for children of this age.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and pupils are helped to become mature and responsible learners.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good and teachers expect the children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they, in turn, feel comfortable about approaching staff. Parents are kept well informed.</li> <li>• Children receive the right amount of work to do at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors endorse the positive views held by parents and the high regard they have for the school. They understand the views of some parents who would like more activities outside lessons but judge the school to be providing a satisfactory range of activities, including those provided during the lunch period.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. On entry to school, children have a broad range of abilities and experiences but, overall, their knowledge, skills and understanding are similar to children of the same age nationally. However, each year there is a significant minority of children who have speech and language difficulties. Overall, children make good progress in the reception classes, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is due to the good teaching. Children do not, however, have sufficient opportunities to experience the outdoor curriculum as indicated in the national guidance and so their development in this area is restricted. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most are likely to reach the national standards in all areas of learning and, in particular, their confidence in writing is above that often seen by children of this age.
2. Results of the 2002 standard assessment tests for pupils in Year 2 indicate that, in comparison with all schools, pupils' attainment was average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Results of the 2002 standards teacher assessments in science indicate below average standards. Teachers challenge pupils well and in these tests the percentage of pupils attaining a Level 3 (higher than that expected for their age) was good in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, in relation to the take-up of free school meals, they attained below average standards in reading, above average standards in writing and average standards in mathematics. These similar schools comparisons mask the good progress made by pupils. The school is situated in a mixed socio-economic area and, although most families have some kind of employment, the small number qualifying for free school meals is not truly representative of the area. Since the last inspection, results have improved in reading, writing and mathematics and, overall, pupils achieve well. The school's trend of improvement over the last five years is broadly in line with the national trend.
3. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the pupils in Year 2 will continue the school's general rate of improving standards. They are achieving above average standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. Standards are average in design and technology, music and religious education. Overall, pupils achieve well, and their work indicates an improving trend. This is due to improvements in the curriculum and teaching where staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and develop the pupils' learning skills well. Higher-attainers are now well challenged and they perform better. Additional provision such as that for Year 2 higher-attainers in mathematics results in them making good progress from a higher than average base.
4. The standards attained by pupils with special educational needs are below those expected for the pupils' ages but they are satisfactory in relation to the pupils' identified needs and targets. These targets are clear, specific, achievable and suitably challenging. In the main, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards these targets, particularly in developing good literacy skills and behaviour. In addition, teachers plan support for these pupils in other areas where they need it, even if it is not the main identified area. Teachers track pupils' progress well to ensure that good progress is made over time. Pupils' work is always valued and this encourages them to try harder. Pupils receive additional input from dedicated support staff and make very good progress when staff refer to pupils' individual targets in planning work for them and focus on the development of language skills.
5. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. A focus on developing their range of vocabulary and understanding of newly learned words results in their having full access to a broad curriculum. Those at the early stages of learning English are helped to understand and follow instructions through the teachers' precise use of language, facial expressions and body movements. No significant difference was noted in the progress of boys

and girls during the inspection although, in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002, girls in this school did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

6. Pupils' attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing is enhanced through the very good teaching in the literacy lessons and through the development of these skills throughout other areas of the curriculum. Pupils flourish in the supportive atmosphere of the school and this helps them to gain confidence when speaking formally and answering questions in class. Pupils are interested in what others have to say and listen well to adults and one another. The Reading Club where, once a week, pupils are given additional opportunities to work with a specialist teacher, develops their confidence in reading and interest in books. Teachers encourage pupils to use a joined script and this aids their attainment in the formation of letters. Similarly, from an early age, pupils are encouraged to write and features such as the "Writers' Workshop" develop their confidence and ability to write for a variety of purposes.
7. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly embedded in the teaching of mathematics and this has helped to raise standards. Pupils get regular practice in developing and consolidating their number skills and the daily mental mathematics sessions aid their thinking. This has enhanced the progress that pupils make and the standards they achieve. Pupils are also given regular opportunities to solve both word and number problems and benefit from the investigative approach to learning mathematics encouraged by teachers.
8. Following the previously unsatisfactory standards in science, the school reviewed its procedures for teaching and assessment and this has helped to raise standards and ensure that they reflect those seen nationally. For example, in the past, teachers underestimated the levels of work that pupils were attaining. Staff identified concerns with the assessment of pupils' work in science and, following training sessions, have improved their practice through clearly identifying the National Curriculum levels that pupils are at. They now use this information to ensure that work is planned appropriately and that pupils are suitably challenged. Pupils are being given well-planned opportunities to carry out their own investigations and learn scientific principles through a practical approach. All these features are having a very positive effect on the standards that pupils now achieve.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships with one another and with adults are strengths of the school and make a very good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. Their behaviour, overall, is good. These conclusions reflect the findings of the previous inspection and the views of parents. Parents state that their children enjoy school. The attendance of the pupils is also very good.
10. Overall, the pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Because of the hard work put in by the teachers in the reception classes the pupils develop positive attitudes to work which become even better in the following two years in the school. This includes those pupils who speak English as an additional language, who are given appropriate work and are fully included in all activities. Pupils often concentrate well and show interest in what they are doing. In part this is because of the good pace and variety of activities, as was seen particularly in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when pupils were adding two and three numbers. Also, the good pace in a reception class literacy lesson led to the pupils being very keen to learn. In most classes, pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and maintain their interest, even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom.
11. Pupils' social development is very good. The relationships among pupils and with adults contribute significantly to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch-times. In the classroom, the youngest respect each other's space when sitting close together on the carpet and understand and follow the rules of 'circle time' when pupils sit and discuss issues relating to their personal and social development. Good co-operation and collaboration were seen in a game of 'shove penny' in a Years 1 and 2 science lesson investigating friction. The pupils have very good relationships with the adults in the school. This was highlighted during a reception/Year 1 English lesson where the regard they had for the teacher gave them the confidence to try out spellings in front of their classmates. Reception

class pupils listened respectfully to the contributions of others during a discussion on what they did during the Eid celebrations.

12. The pupils' personal development is also very good. Their good spiritual development was demonstrated during a Year 2 religious education lesson on Judaism when they showed that they are sensitive to different beliefs. During a different Year 2 personal and social education lesson the pupils listened carefully to others' contributions because they have learnt to value each other's ideas. They are also concerned for the well-being of others and pupils were seen putting their arms consolingly round a classmate who had grazed her knee in the playground as they led her to the first aider. During lessons, the pupils show initiative and the teachers ensure that they learn to find in the classroom the resources they may need. For example, towards the end of an art lesson when they had finished their work, they had no need to seek permission to use the sliding guillotine to make a frame for their painting. They also show a mature approach to the various responsibilities around the school. The older ones take turns to be 'Friendly Owls' and take for granted that they should be on the lookout to play with any children in the playground who are by themselves. Even the youngest in the reception classes has the confidence to take the registers to the office.
13. Pupils' moral development is good and their behaviour improves during their time in the school. They behave well in the classroom, at play and lunch-times. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other and welcoming to visitors. They generally move around the school in an orderly way, though sometimes run if no adult is present. They wait patiently for other classes when going to and from their rooms for assemblies. They show respect for property, for example, when using the computers and take care collecting and putting away equipment. Nevertheless, in some lessons a few pupils chat with each other or fidget and the teacher has to remind them of what is expected. Bullying or name-calling is not a problem in the school.
14. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to make progress, eager to please and enjoy succeeding. They are usually well-behaved and respond well to the encouragement they receive, which helps to boost their confidence and enable them to take pride in their achievements. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
15. The level of attendance is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Over the past year it was nearly 96 per cent and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. Absences are few and usually due to the inevitable childhood illnesses, though a number of parents insist on taking their children on holiday in term-time. Pupils are keen to come to school, and punctuality for the vast majority is also very good. The very good arrangements in the morning ensure a prompt start to the day.

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

16. The school has improved the quality of teaching significantly since the last inspection and this has helped to enhance the progress that pupils make and the standards they achieve. There has been an increase in the very good or better lessons and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Overall, teaching was very good in over four out of ten lessons observed and good in nine out of ten. This quality of teaching reflects the high expectations of the headteacher and the value placed in the school on supporting staff and encouraging them to do well. A good programme of professional development is in place and teachers regularly share their expertise and good practice. All these features, together with the strong team spirit and the commitment of staff, result in good practice.
17. The quality of the teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall but restricted by the available accommodation and resources. Strengths of the staff include their ability to settle children quickly into school routines and their knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Expectations are high and teachers develop the children's basic skills well. Planning reflects the national guidance for teaching children of this age in all areas apart from that for children's outside curriculum. Here, despite efforts made by staff, accommodation and resources are not sufficient to provide fully a good range of learning experiences. In other areas, a good balance is made between direct adult teaching and activities that encourage the children's ability to make choices and work independently or with each other. The support staff

give valuable help to children and work with the teachers to provide a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Staff prepare the children well for their work in Year 1, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

18. These good features are systematically built upon in Years 1 and 2, where the teaching is very good. Teachers continue to focus well on developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and their encouragement in developing writing results in pupils achieving very well. Staff have focused on developing the pupils' basic skills in a coherent way and have used the literacy and numeracy strategies successfully to meet the needs of pupils. In one very good Year 2 literacy lesson, the pupils achieved well and reached good standards as they were taught to read with expression and understand the use of possessive apostrophes. The confidence of teachers is seen in the way they extend their literacy work through, for example, the "Writers' Workshop", when pupils in Year 2 were seen developing their understanding of setting and character after reading a Katy Morag story and using the knowledge gained to improve their own writing. The National Numeracy Strategy ensures that pupils get regular practice in using their mental mathematical and investigational skills and they often make good progress. For example, in one very good lesson observed in Year 2, the teacher was particularly effective in meeting the needs of a wide range of pupils and developing their mathematical thinking by questioning the pupils well.
19. In the best lessons, expectations are high, the pace of learning is good and pupils of all abilities are challenged. Teachers are confident in what they do because they understand how pupils learn and are encouraged and supported well when trying something new. This results in good links being made between different subjects, so that learning makes sense to the pupils and also extends opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in a variety of contexts. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this well in their planning. This also gives them the confidence to ask and answer questions and follow up on points made by the pupils.
20. Teachers generally use time and resources well, and support staff are well deployed. In a very good Year 2 history lesson, the pupils were encouraged to look at a range of resources to develop their chronological awareness of how things changed over time, such as the clothes people wore in several generations of a family. In a good science lesson in a Years 1 and 2 class, a specialist teacher and learning support assistant both worked well with the class teacher to ensure that pupils of different abilities and ages developed an understanding of forces through investigating the game of 'shove penny'.
21. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good and this has a significant influence on how staff manage the pupils in their care successfully. Pupils develop very good attitudes to learning and good behaviour and, consequently, no time is wasted, as pupils are keen to learn. Teachers are encouraging and supportive and this results in pupils becoming confident, eager to answer questions and put forward their views. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well and encourage them to improve and work harder in lessons if they think they can, or give additional support when learning becomes difficult. Teachers comment on pupils' work in lessons but less frequently in their books. This is a decision which is highlighted in the school's marking policy and results in most pupils being clear about how they can improve. Targets are set for pupils and this, too, helps them to understand and recognise the next stage in their learning. Staff work hard to improve the environment by displaying pupils' work. This supports the children's sense of self-esteem and encourages them to work harder. Provision of homework is satisfactory, overall, and good in mathematics, where it supports effectively the work done in school.
22. The quality of teaching, and the learning which it promotes, is very good in English, art and design and physical education. Teachers are very confident and have a clear understanding of what they want children to learn. They have particularly high expectations and most pupils respond to these. Many pupils like the challenges that their teachers provide and enjoy reading and writing. The teaching of physical skills is good as teachers demonstrate, or ask pupils to demonstrate, good practice. This shows other pupils what is expected and helps them to improve their own practice. Similarly, the pupils' skills in art and design are well-developed, as teachers encourage



- them to study a range of artists and use a variety of media. Consequently, much of the pupils' work shows a good use of different techniques and an imaginative approach.
23. The quality of teaching is good in mathematics, science, history, information and communication technology, music and religious education. In these subjects, teachers provide a good range of activities which match the pupils' abilities and encourage them to achieve well. Teachers have benefited from the national computer training and their increased expertise and confidence are being used to raise standards. At the time of the inspection, there was insufficient opportunity to observe the teaching of design and technology and geography, so no overall judgements can be made.
  24. The school recognises the needs of higher-attaining pupils and they are challenged appropriately within mainstream lessons. Staff have also identified gifted and talented pupils and are aware of their varying needs. Although this area of school development is relatively new, staff are developing their practice appropriately. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are well supported, so that they are included in all class activities and progress at a similar rate to their peers, in line with their levels of attainment. Teachers and support staff are effective in ensuring that pupils who speak English as an additional language receive support when necessary in order to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words. In one lesson observed in a reception class, a good variety of teaching skills was used and resulted in the pupils' full participation and consequent good progress. Teachers are aware of the possible differences in the needs of boys and girls and use a good range of teaching methods to meet their needs. For example, they have focused on encouraging boys to read, by offering a wide range of books, including non-fiction.
  25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is because pupils have been assessed accurately using outside agency support where necessary and their individual education plans are targeted carefully to help them learn. Most teachers use a wide range of successful strategies to motivate, involve and challenge pupils, and monitor regularly the progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets. Records are well maintained and regularly updated. Teaching assistants work very effectively with individuals, groups and the whole class. For example, they usually sit with pupils who need extra support, when the class teacher is teaching the whole class, and repeat questions and give extra encouragement. All teachers and teaching assistants work together very well as a team. The special educational needs co-ordinator teaches small groups and individuals very well both in class and out of class. Her objective is always that pupils will be able to work well with their class after having had some additional help to enable them to catch up. She works very well with all classes to support the planning for pupils with special educational needs.

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

26. The quality and range of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory in so far as they do not receive sufficient regular opportunities to experience activities outside. Activities provided in other areas of learning are satisfactory, overall, although the curriculum for the youngest children is very formal and restricts their opportunities for play. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good and prepares pupils well for their National Curriculum work in Year 3. The statutory requirements for all subjects are met and staff follow the guidance in the programme of work for teaching religious education in Essex. Guidelines provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) have helped the school to develop appropriate schemes of work in most subjects. Some of these are still being developed. There are good long-term and medium-term plans, which set out work that builds on pupils' previous learning and become more demanding as the pupils get older. Units of work for each subject have appropriate amounts of time allocated to them. Policies for all subjects have been completed and are reviewed as a new scheme of work is introduced. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies successfully.
27. This is a very inclusive school. It ensures that boys and girls of all levels of attainment and backgrounds have equal access to the curriculum and are fully involved in all aspects of school life. Staff make very good provision to ensure that teaching and work are carefully matched to

pupils' ability levels. Planning is good across the year so those pupils in mixed-aged classes have the same opportunities as those in single-aged classes. The quality of support and teaching for pupils speaking English as an additional language ensures the inclusion of all pupils and their full and equal access to the curriculum and all aspects of school life. The school has a clear policy on race relations which is fully implemented to ensure that all pupils have access to the curricular opportunities without discrimination. This is evident in the way that teachers direct questions to pupils and ensure their full participation. There are very good personal relationships between staff and pupils and good procedures to support inclusion, including a peer support system called "Friendly Owls" and paired reading partners in Years 1 and 2.

28. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good in relation to meeting the various needs of individual pupils. They are fully included in lessons, when the extra adult support that they receive enables them to succeed. In addition, teachers plan easier tasks for these pupils that they can complete on their own and, as a consequence improve their ability to work independently. The provision outlined in a pupil's Statement of Special Educational Need is fully in place and is reviewed annually in line with the Code of Practice guidance. It provides good systems to ensure that this pupil is fully included in all aspects of school life. A register of gifted and talented pupils, known as the Able Pupil Register, has been set up. Teachers use a range of computer programs to support pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, this has a positive impact on their progress in reading, writing and spelling. This is an improvement from the last inspection when this aspect was judged to be good.
29. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school has recently developed a planned programme for all year groups which is highly appropriate for the ages of the pupils. This helps the pupils to develop skills in relation to recognising right from wrong, developing good relationships, personal hygiene and staying healthy. These are linked to the school's involvement in the Healthy Schools initiative. 'Circle time' in each class gives pupils the opportunity to express feelings. During a very good lesson in Year 1, 'circle time' was used to encourage pupils to talk about their individual talents and skills and how they should be proud of themselves. The teacher reinforced this well by reading an Australian story where a bush rat discovers his own talents after feeling unsure of himself. Pupils throughout the school are keen and happy to share their views and feelings because teachers make them feel valued and confident. This is an improvement from the judgement in the last inspection.
30. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. This judgement is the same as the previous inspection. There are extra-curricular visits and visitors into school throughout the year, which are linked to lessons. These include visits to a variety of places, such as Oakland's Museum linked to history work, Chelmer Village and Southend linked to geography, and Chelmsford Civic Theatre linked to literacy work. There are also interesting visits to Sanford Mill, Chalkwell, Mole Hall, the local church, and a bookshop. Year 2 pupils visit Riverside Sports Centre for weekly swimming lessons. Visitors include a police dog handler, a librarian, and theatre groups. The school organises many of its extra-curricular activities in theme weeks, such as 'Multi-Cultural Week', 'Healthy Schools Week', 'Jubilee Week'. There are no regular after-school activities or clubs for music and sport.
31. The school has developed satisfactory links with the community. There is no formal parent-staff association but the 'Friends' undertake fund-raising events throughout the year, such as the Christmas Fayre and summer fete. These events are usually initiated and led by the headteacher and school staff. Parents volunteer readily to help at these events and on school trips. There are many regular parent-helpers in school on a daily basis, who make a valuable contribution during lessons and to the school as a whole. During the Jubilee Week celebrations many parents, governors, grandparents, and other members of the community contributed and visited the display of 1950s artefacts in the hall.
32. The school has good links with partner institutions. Staff support many work-experience students from four local secondary schools and students undertaking BTec and Childcare Diploma courses from a local college. There are strong links with the neighbouring Barnes Farm Junior School, including links with the Year 6 pupils who help at the infant school sports day and during lunch-times in specific classes. There is a good transfer programme for Year 2 pupils into the junior

school, which includes visits and time spent in classes. The school maintains good links with the local playgroups that send pupils to the reception classes.

33. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school has been successful in raising the quality of this provision since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. The provision is monitored regularly to ensure that it is evident in all areas of the curriculum. The school provides a climate in which all pupils can flourish and in which each pupil is made to feel part of the whole community.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies do much to foster this development and enable pupils to appreciate the world around them. In one assembly, younger pupils listened to the story of *Elmer the Patchwork Elephant*. They heard how Elmer wanted to be like the other elephants and painted himself grey. In the end however, he realised that it was all right to be himself. This helped pupils to develop their self-esteem and see the value of others. The school encourages the regular visits of the local vicar to assemblies. Other areas of the curriculum provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value different aspects of life. Strong provision is made in English, art, music and religious education. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to experience creative and expressive activities and to talk about their own feelings and ideas.
35. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. The school has done much to ensure that pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are involved in making their own class rules and in helping one another in the playground. Very good provision for social development is evident in lessons when pupils work in groups. It is also evident in the provision for pupils when they rehearse together for concerts and other performances. Pupils are given responsibility around the school. They help in classroom, at assemblies and at other times during the school day. Opportunity is provided for pupils to take care of the school environment and to gain an understanding of the community in which they live. For example, they write about looking after the local environment and make visits to Chelmer Village to look at the amenities.
36. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development. Visits such as those to a local museum and church support their work in history and religious education. The school promotes racial harmony successfully and celebrates the richness and diversity of other cultures. Very good provision is made in English, art and music for pupils to appreciate different aspects of culture, including those from Africa, the Caribbean, China and Japan. Pupils listen to a wide range of music in assemblies. They look at art from around the world. Books in the library and texts read in lessons ensure that pupils increase their understanding of other cultures.

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

37. As at the time of the last inspection, staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development and for providing educational and personal support and guidance are good.
38. The school has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and the school follows local procedures. The staff generally have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to in the school if necessary. The provision for first aid is good, with several trained staff, records kept of any treatment and letters home to parents as appropriate. A health and safety policy is in place and the school carries out risk assessments, following the local authority guidelines. The governors are actively involved in touring the school to identify any potential hazards. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. The school regularly reminds parents to exercise care when bringing and collecting their children. Most parents were seen to drive their cars sensibly, but a few insist on waiting on the marked 'no parking' areas.

39. The monitoring of progress for pupils' personal development relies mainly on the teachers' knowledge of the individual pupils. Their personal qualities are enhanced by the various tasks they have around the school, such as the older supporting the younger in the playground, helping to tidy up at lunch-time and paired reading between Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The teachers promote independence by encouraging the pupils to move freely around the classroom to get resources and equipment. 'Circle time' helps pupils to learn to listen to others and to be tolerant of other points of view. Discussions with the pupils showed that they can talk sensibly about different aspects of the school's work and that they will respond positively to the opportunity to take part in a school council that the headteacher is planning to introduce.
40. The school cares appropriately for pupils with special educational needs. Their work is monitored regularly to ensure that they are making progress towards the targets set for them. Regular reviews of pupils' progress help to ensure that most work is suited to their needs. Outside agencies are involved, as required, to help meet their specific targets. The school uses a wide range of assessment tools that are used diagnostically to ensure that pupils' needs are met. The special educational needs co-ordinator works with, and observes, pupils in their own classrooms in order to review classroom strategies and, consequently, teachers get the feedback they need to ensure that they plan effectively for these pupils.
41. Staff have reviewed their procedures for assessment, recording and reporting several times since the last inspection and adapted their practices. This has brought about improvements. For example, assessment in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is generally good. Staff have recently worked hard to improve their assessment practice in science and have developed some new procedures and systems for recording attainment and progress. These are being piloted, although insufficient time has passed to judge their effectiveness. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in all other subjects is satisfactory, overall, but there are inconsistencies in how teachers record their attainment. This makes it difficult to track pupils' progress over time. Staff know their pupils very well but the current system of recording would not be robust enough if there was a sudden change in teaching staff. In the main, the strengths and weaknesses of pupils are carefully identified and teachers use the information gained from regular assessments, for example, in English, to improve their planning to meet the needs of individual pupils. Base-line assessment is carried out for children in the reception classes and senior staff are developing their use of a computer program to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics more easily from this entry point to Year 2.
42. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour and for preventing any oppressive behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy recognises the needs of the pupils and reflects the philosophy of the school, emphasising praise and encouragement. The lessons seen during the inspection showed that the staff consistently and successfully adopt this positive approach and, where necessary, remind pupils of what is not acceptable. Often, the high quality of the teaching provides pupils with work at the right level so that they are fully engaged, and behaviour is not an issue for the great majority. Though parents cannot recall any bullying or name-calling, they are confident that staff would take rapid and appropriate action if any were to occur. The pupils who show any sustained difficulty with behaviour are supported very well through the school's special needs procedures.
43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are good. The very good relationships between the pupils and the staff mean that the pupils enjoy being at the school and the positive support of the great majority of parents limits absence and lateness. The school contacts parents if a pupil is regularly absent or late. Nevertheless, the school does not usually telephone home on the first day of an unexplained absence, as is now the normal practice in many schools.

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

44. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors parents showed that they are generally very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments, which are similar to those expressed at the time of the last

inspection. Parents say that the school is well led and the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school, behave well and make progress due to the level of support they receive. The school expects them to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents consider that their children receive the right amount of homework to do at home. The school works closely with parents who, in turn, feel comfortable approaching staff with any questions. Parents also feel they are kept well informed as to how their child is getting on. Some parents are concerned about the lack of activities outside lessons but the inspection team considered that, though there are no formal clubs, the lunch-time games and range of visits and visitors are generally typical of infant schools of this size.

45. The school has established good links with the parents and these contacts are effective. The headteacher sends newsletters home outlining the various activities that the pupils are involved in as well as providing general administrative information. Other letters refer to more specific matters. There is an extensive range of leaflets and other information on how parents can help their children at home. Nevertheless, the school recognises that more should be provided on what is being taught in the classroom. Very good opportunities for parents to see the teachers are provided every morning and afternoon. Parents obviously feel comfortable coming into the school and at the start of the day help their children to choose books to read at home. The teachers are readily available at the classroom door at the end of the day. The inspectors saw several informal conversations taking place and it is apparent that parents get on well with the school staff. Almost all parents come to the formal meetings with teachers in the autumn and summer terms and to the open day in the spring term. The annual report on progress is sent home in the spring term and generally provides a good summary of all the different subjects. However, it often lacks targets for improvement or the targets are very generalised.
46. The school informs parents at an early stage in the process of planning work for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers invite parents into school to discuss pupils' individual education plans. Most parents come into school for a discussion about the support planned for their child. Parents are invited to all reviews and can make an appointment at any time. Links between home and school are regular and constructive and this helps to ensure that pupils receive good support and make good progress.
47. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Discussion with pupils showed that their parents actively encourage and help them at home. Pupils are happy in school, work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and education process. Reading books go home every day and the great majority of parents comment in the reading records. Several parents help regularly in the classroom and more help with trips or one-off activities. Though there is no parent-staff association, parents support events arranged by the school. The school has sent the occasional questionnaire out to parents, but is not yet consulting parents fully about school life.

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

48. The success of the school stems from the very good leadership and management of the headteacher, senior managers and governors and the effective work of staff. All share a clear vision for the development of the school, with a specific focus on creating an environment conducive to teaching and the development of the children's learning skills. The headteacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and this is reflected in the school's practice, which encourages independence and learning through a good range of activities. These features are well demonstrated in the school, where an ethos of care and concern, together with high expectations, are evident. By the time pupils leave school they are confident, independent and sensitive to the needs of others. There is a good degree of mutual tolerance and respect, and race relations are good. This reflects the headteacher's strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
49. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and as well as her focus on raising standards, she is also keen to ensure that pupils feel secure in school and stimulated by their learning. To

this extent, she encourages staff to do their best to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence, thereby supporting their academic and personal needs. Because she is particularly effective at team building, motivating staff and supporting them, they in turn, respond well and work hard. A key feature of staffing is the strength of united teamwork that is very tangible in the school. It is purposeful and motivated, resulting in improving standards and a determined will to succeed. There is a strong senior management team, and the skills, expertise and experiences of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are complemented well. Senior managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development. The role of subject co-ordinator has developed and they share a clear understanding of what should be achieved. Co-ordinators are well informed and effective in promoting their subjects. They are keen to try out new developments in order to raise standards, such as the introduction of a new phonics programme for the youngest children.

50. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She ensures that all pupils have been accurately assessed, using outside agencies where necessary, and that pupils have relevant achievable targets. She works very closely with all colleagues and regularly monitors the use made of individual education plans. The school has reviewed the policy for special educational needs to make sure that it reflects the 2001 Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. There is a named governor with responsibility for this aspect of the school's work who works well with the special educational needs co-ordinator. The school provides a very good level of resources, especially staffing, to meet the needs of this group of pupils. Good attention is paid to the effective deployment of these staff at all times. This provides good value for money.
51. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work. Since the last inspection, planning has improved through the clearer identification of learning objectives and this, together with the improved quality of teaching, has increased pupils' progress and achievement. Improvements in assessment have identified the next stages in learning in literacy and numeracy and helped to meet the needs of pupils with a range of abilities. The use of information and communication technology has advanced throughout the school by both staff and pupils.
52. Staff have addressed successfully the key issues arising from the last inspection and the school has made good improvement. Governors give full support to the school and they and the headteacher have worked hard to raise standards and involve parents and the community. Governors have very good levels of knowledge and are very well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and fulfil their roles very well. The unity with which they worked to raise the local authority's awareness of the need for a larger school shows their commitment and support for the community. Although not being successful in their quest, all are satisfied that they did their best. Governors, headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement. There is a good culture of monitoring and target-setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims. The school improvement plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and this is confirmed by the issues for development in this report having already been identified by staff and governors. Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
53. There is a sufficient number of suitable qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to ensure that classes are not too large and that the curriculum is taught well. All staff have job descriptions and performance management is in place for teachers and support staff. Staff are deployed appropriately and the match of staff to co-ordinating roles maximises their experience and expertise. Several teachers have specialised knowledge that enhances the school's teaching. The special needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants provide very good support for those pupils with special educational needs. The office staff provide very good financial and administrative support. Newly appointed staff receive appropriate support with good induction arrangements. Staff development is linked to the school development plan but also takes account of the individuals' needs. It is effective in improving both teaching and learning.
54. The accommodation is satisfactory and enhances the delivery of the curriculum and the learning of the pupils. The classrooms are of a sufficient size and the staff work hard to provide attractive

displays of pupils' work and general information. Other rooms and areas are very well used for withdrawal of small groups of pupils. The playgrounds have a variety of games painted on the surface and are well used during play and lunch-times. Pupils and staff make efficient and effective use of the facilities available and there is good support from the premises staff in providing an attractive and well-maintained environment. Nevertheless, there are some weaknesses. Pupils in the reception classes do not have access to a dedicated outside play area. Though the school has recently improved the partitioning within the paired classrooms, noise still travels from one to another and affects learning adversely. The atrium becomes unacceptably hot in the summer. The four hatted classrooms are in good condition but suffer from extremes of temperature. In addition, in the winter, pupils lose teaching time because of the time required for them to put on and take off outer clothing when going to the main building for assembly, lunch, and use of the hall for physical education.

55. Overall, the provision of resources is good and they are used effectively to enhance the pupils' learning. Pupils use the library area regularly and the display often attracts their interest and encourages them to read unfamiliar books. It also encourages the development of their cultural awareness as books represent different parts of the world. The development of the computer suite has enabled teachers to teach specific skills to whole classes and offers opportunities for pupils to practise these more frequently. However, the pupils in the reception classes, as well as having no dedicated outside space, do not have large wheeled toys or, for example, equipment to encourage balancing.
56. The school development plan identifies appropriate educational priorities, which are linked effectively to annual financial planning. However, long-term development plans for all aspects of the school, including raising standards, are not yet sufficiently linked with long-term financial planning. Specific grants for special needs and other priorities are well used. The principles of best value are applied well when negotiating purchases of goods and services and the school compares itself with other similar schools in relation to attainment and development. The bursar ensures that there is updated financial information available to the headteacher and governors. The budget is managed effectively, both on a day-to-day basis and over the year, by the headteacher, bursar and governors. The large carry-forward in the last end-of-year accounts includes funding to subsidise the current budget and the additional teachers needed when the early entry of all reception children takes place in September 2004. This will result in the carry-forward being reduced by half, at the end of the current financial year, and being spent in total by the end of the financial year of 2004/2005. To this extent, the school does make projections over periods longer than a year. Not all the recommendations from the latest auditors report have been complied with. However, this has been with the agreement of the governing body and the local education authority. The school's well-established administrative routines enable the school office to function smoothly, with the staff providing an efficient service to pupils, parents and visitors. The school makes good use of new technology, for example using electronic mail and word-processing packages to plan pupils' work. Considering the quality of education provided and the standards achieved, the school provides good value for money.

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

57. Staff and governors should work together on the following areas to improve the quality of provision further and raise standards:
- (1) Improve the curriculum for children in the reception classes by:
    - ensuring that children have sufficient opportunities to experience the full outside curriculum;
    - purchasing appropriate equipment to resource the outside curriculum;
    - ensuring that the youngest children experience a less formal curriculum in the first few months of their schooling.(Paragraphs 1, 17, 26, 54, 55, 58)
  - (2) Improve assessment and recording by:
    - ensuring that teachers use a consistent approach to recording pupils' attainment;



- fully implementing and reviewing the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in science;
- developing the use of the computer program to record and monitor pupils' progress over time.

(Paragraphs 8, 41, 89, 96)

Through the school development planning process, staff have already identified the need to develop their practice in the above areas.

## 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	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	25	29	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	42	48	10	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 points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	252
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
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	46	44	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	43	42
	Girls	40	43	42
	Total	78	86	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (95)	96 (100)	93 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	42	42
	Girls	40	40	38
	Total	79	82	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (94)	91 (95)	89 (99)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
150	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0

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

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

#### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	163

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
	£
Total income	637,226
Total expenditure	589,610
Expenditure per pupil	2,575
Balance brought forward from previous year	64,833
Balance carried forward to next year	47,616

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
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	230
Number of questionnaires returned	80

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	16	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	26	0	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	0	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	52	2	1	2
The teaching is good.	74	25	0	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	44	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	52	4	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	34	0	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	32	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	31	20	8	14

### Other issues raised by parents

- Parents at the meeting were very positive about the school and hold it in high regard. They were pleased that the ethos of a community school in Chelmer Village had been retained as the school had grown but expressed concern that the building of a new school would 'split' the community. Concerns were also expressed in relation to school admissions. As the school was oversubscribed, some siblings had not been allocated a place at the school for the academic year 2003/2004. Increased numbers had also resulted in a few children being taught in a mixed-age class. However, despite misapprehensions these children were thought to be doing 'fine' and had settled well.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

58. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the good provision identified at that time and has improved the quality of teaching. Staff have responded well to national developments for children in the Foundation Stage of learning and have recognised the need to develop the outside curriculum as recommended by national guidance. The quality of teaching is good, overall, in the reception classes and occasionally very good. Teaching is particularly good for communication, language and literacy, where children quickly develop confidence with practising early reading and writing skills and is satisfactory in physical development. Teachers work hard to develop pupils' personal, social and emotional development and lay good foundations so that the children enter Year 1 with good behaviour and attitudes to learning. This has been made more difficult this year as each of the three reception classes has a substantial group of young children who started school a few weeks prior to the inspection. Consequently, staff had to integrate these new children, making sure that the work offered was appropriate. In most cases they were successful but for some children the structure of learning was a little too formal. The school has planned to change its admissions policy in the near future to alleviate this problem. Also, the accommodation for reception children, with one class being housed separately in a mobile classroom, makes it difficult to provide a rich learning environment.
59. Staff work well as a team and support staff play an important role in developing the children's learning and in supporting their achievements. The curriculum takes into consideration the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and staff adapt it to meet the needs of the children. A key feature of the success of staff is their ability to reflect on their practice and to develop new strategies and opportunities which help to raise standards. This is demonstrated by the introduction of a phonics programme, which helps the children to remember the sound that letters, or groups of letters, make. Teachers use assessments of the children's attainment to inform their planning. Appropriate records are kept to monitor the progress that children make in all areas of learning. The co-ordinator has recently returned from maternity leave and has quickly identified areas for development, which are based on her good understanding of how young children learn and the needs of individual children. Her management and leadership are good.
60. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They are well supported and the work for those that need additional help is well focused. By the time they start in Year 1 children currently in the reception classes are likely to reach national standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative, personal, social, emotional and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Those with special educational needs are well supported by effective everyday practice and receive additional specialist support, which encourages their development of language and understanding. Those children at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are similarly well supported by the teachers and support staff. In one good lesson observed, the teacher was very effective in involving these children as she used good facial expressions and body language to act out the meaning of some words and phrases. In addition, a good range of vocabulary was used and speech was clear and precise. This resulted in the children fully understanding what was expected of them.

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

61. Staff have developed a good induction programme which encourages parents to become involved in their child's learning and become aware of the policies and procedures in school. These features contribute to a smooth and successful start to the children's formal education. Children are helped to settle in the reception classes by attending school for a few short sessions in the term before they enter school formally. A caring learning environment is created in which children understand the structure of the day and by the time they enter Year 1, most have good attitudes to learning. Children are also encouraged to play and work with each other and, consequently, are helped to develop good relationships. They were observed working well together when sharing

the resources for sand and water play and in the imaginative play areas.

Teachers and support staff make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation and children learn how to share and take turns. Children are encouraged to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and are aware of personal hygiene issues.

62. Staff indicate how children should behave through operating a consistent policy of behaviour management and the children's skills are continually developed through the positive interactions between staff and children. Boys and girls are encouraged to play together and take part in all activities so that they develop a good range of skills across all areas of learning. The tasks ensure a satisfactory balance between teacher-directed activities and times when children are able to work without direct adult supervision. This develops the children's confidence and growing independence and initiative when they are presented with choices. Teachers are particularly effective in developing the children's confidence in writing.

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

63. Pupils have average skills on entry to school, although a significant number experience difficulty with speech and language. Staff recognise this and work well as a team to develop opportunities for improvement. They provide an environment which encourages children's speaking and listening skills and supports the developing use of vocabulary. Some good examples were observed when a teacher was encouraging the children to talk about puddles and how they change over time, as preparation for the week's focus on knowledge and understanding of the world. Also, in another class, children were encouraged to listen to the teacher as she showed them a range of historical artefacts, and answer questions which developed their historical thinking. These examples show how the children are encouraged to respond to adults and to each other, develop their use of vocabulary and sustain good levels of concentration. Children's speaking skills are also developed systematically through the provision of specific activities, as in the imaginative play areas. Most pupils make good progress and have the confidence to speak with adults and each other.
64. Most children are interested in books, handle them carefully and show enjoyment of a range of stories. Children have regular opportunities to listen to stories and they respond well. Regular sessions support children in their recognition of letters and the sounds that they make and these are having a significant effect on developing the children's reading and writing skills. Higher-attainers in the reception classes read their books well, with good understanding. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home and this has a significant effect on the progress they make and the standards that they achieve.
65. On entry to school, children very quickly develop the confidence to write and this is supported through activities such as the "Writers' Workshops", where work is structured to maintain the children's interest and encourage them to write at length. Children become aware of writing for different purposes through, for example, writing postcards and lists of the things needed to take on a Teddy Bears' Picnic. This maintains their motivation and develops their interests.

### **Mathematical development**

66. The children's mathematical skills and understanding are taught during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. Most children enjoy their work and respond well to the activities provided. In one good lesson observed, the session started well because the teacher captured the children's interests by encouraging them to play number games. The children were also confident to 'have a go' at writing numbers on their small white boards and, consequently, made good progress in writing numbers clearly and accurately. The teacher's very good management skills were also used well during a session when she taught the whole class about weight. She had high expectations of what children could achieve and involved them well in their learning through practical activities. Her effective questioning encouraged them to develop the use of language such as 'heavier than' and 'lighter than' as they held a range of objects of differing weights. Later, the learning support assistant worked well with small groups of children encouraging them to use balances and record their findings.





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

67. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through taking part in a range of activities within a specific weekly focus. They develop early scientific skills through observing how plants grow and taking part in a Spring Walk. They also look at a range of materials and discover new words to describe their texture. In one lesson observed, the teacher was skilful in developing the children's ideas about rain, clouds, snow, ice and puddles through asking interesting questions and encouraging responses. Later in the week, these ideas were developed further, as children played with melting blocks of ice. Activities such as *What I See on My Way to School* encourage children to find out about their immediate environment and value the area in which they live. Early historical skills are developed as children see the growth of a baby and talk about 'Then' and 'Now'.
68. Opportunities are provided for children to assemble and take apart simple models, using a variety of construction kits. Children were observed doing this whilst others in the class worked on the computers in the suite. Here, their skills in using the computer are developed through the use of a range of programs which also help to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Children also developed their mouse control through dressing a teddy on screen for a visit to the seaside on a sunny day. Some good learning took place when children were encouraged to program a moveable toy to reach a given position.
69. Children celebrate key festivals such as Chinese New Year and Christmas and are beginning to understand the activities associated with them. They have a good understanding of stories from the Bible such as that of the Prodigal Son. The religious education curriculum meets statutory requirements and contributes positively to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Physical development**

70. Children get regular opportunities to improve their physical development during formal physical education sessions and during playtimes but do not have regular access to outdoor play. Also, the school has insufficient resources to develop the children's physical skills; for example, through using wheeled toys, balancing and climbing apparatus. Teaching of physical development was broadly satisfactory in the lessons observed. These focused on moving over and under apparatus in a variety of ways. In one, the warm-up session was developed well and increased the children's awareness of the need to follow instructions. However, children were not encouraged to reflect on the effects of exercise on their bodies and, because it took a long time for children to get out the apparatus, the effect of the warm-up was reduced. The lesson was quite ambitious as a few of the children were relatively new to the school and were getting used to the teacher's expectations and procedures for physical education. Children did make satisfactory progress, however, because of the teacher's skill of keeping them on task through giving clear instructions.

## **Creative development**

71. The children's creative development is fostered successfully through a wide range of activities. The children's work on display celebrates their learning and enhances the environment. Children develop their skills through painting, printing and colour mixing. They had also made puppets of a good quality, which resulted in an interesting display in one of the rooms. Reception children develop their cutting and sticking skills further by making a weather mobile and collages. In one lesson observed, children used wax crayons and paint to produce some good pictures of sunsets. The role-play areas in the nursery and reception classes provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own.
72. The children's responses are also developed through specific music sessions and through singing rhymes and songs. In one good lesson, children sang songs and made music through using parts of the body such as their hands and feet. The well-planned lesson and well-established

routines led to the children making good progress and developing their understanding of musical sequences.

## **ENGLISH**

73. By the end of Year 2 standards are above the national average in speaking, listening, reading and writing, with a few pupils attaining standards that are well above the national average. These standards are due to very good teaching, the work of the support staff and the provision for developing pupils' literacy skills in other curriculum subjects. The writers' workshops and the reading club also have a significant impact on pupils' learning.
74. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in lessons. The school has made some improvement in the standard of pupils' work since the last inspection. All pupils achieve very well. They make very good progress in gaining confidence as writers and in developing reading skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons, due to the effective support they receive. Most pupils for whom English is an additional language are confident in reading and writing and do not require additional support. They make similar progress to other pupils. Higher-attaining pupils show skill in all areas of the work and achieve well.
75. Some pupils enter school with speaking and listening skills that are below average. However, they quickly gain confidence because of the opportunity provided in all subjects for pupils to talk together and exchange ideas. By Year 2 many pupils speak clearly and respond to questions well. They talk with an increased use of vocabulary and structure their words to make sense to the listener. Pupils' listening skills are good. They listen attentively in lessons and assemblies and when teachers are giving instructions.
76. Pupils in Year 1 understand what they read and retell the events in a story. Many pupils use initial sounds and other sound patterns well to work out unknown words. By Year 2 many pupils are confident readers and make their reading come alive for the listener. They read with fluency and expression and talk about the characters in their books. Higher-attaining pupils use different voices well when reading a conversation. They show skill at reading unseen texts and offer opinions about the books they read. The school is aware of the need to develop pupils' comprehension skills. There is now good provision for this, which has resulted in an improvement in pupils' skills.
77. Pupils show an ability to write well and appear confident in what they do. They quickly settle to tasks and often write at length. In an effective and interesting lesson, Year 1 pupils thought about the questions they might ask Humpty Dumpty. They worked in pairs, with one pupil writing the questions and another the answers. They wrote "Why did you fall off the wall? Did you hurt yourself? Were you pushed?" The pupils writing the answers wrote some interesting replies. Pupils in Year 1 spell many simple words accurately. By Year 2 many pupils show confidence at spelling words and in attempting to spell those which are unfamiliar. They use different vocabulary and punctuation well to make their writing more interesting to the reader. This was evident in a lesson, when Year 2 pupils described where they would look for a lost dog. One pupil wrote of "trees rustling in the wind" and another added speech marks to indicate a conversation between two people. Many pupils in Year 1 form letter shapes correctly and use joined up writing. By Year 2, most pupils write legibly, with a good cursive script. Regular weekly handwriting practice ensures that pupils' skills are further developed. The presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory.
78. Pupils have very good attitudes toward the subject. They work well together and enjoy sharing ideas. They begin to develop independent skills and do not always ask for help. They "have a go" first and then seek guidance from the teacher. They behave well because they are interested in what they do and respond positively to the teachers' high expectations.
79. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are well planned, and carefully prepared resources are used well to aid pupils' learning. Teachers make skilled use of questioning to extend pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils looked at the way a character had been

portrayed by the author. The teacher asked specific questions about the text and, as a result, pupils understood how the use of descriptive words added to the overall impact of the writing. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils use tape recorders for talking books and computer programs for

practising spellings. Pupils' work is often marked by teachers with the pupil concerned. This is to ensure that pupils understand how their work might be improved. Homework is used satisfactorily to reinforce learning.

80. There is very good provision for literacy across the curriculum. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to follow different texts and to read aloud to each other. The provision for writing activities is a particular strength. For example, in history, Year 2 pupils write instructions for making a mummy as part of their Egyptian topic; they write questions to ask their grandparents about their schooldays and make a list of the answers. They write an account of the Easter story in religious education and sequence the events well.
81. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator monitors the provision across the school and samples of pupils' work are checked regularly to ensure that they make progress. This has a positive impact on maintaining the standard of work. A new scheme of work has been introduced and daily plans are clear. In the last inspection these were found to be in need of development. As well as the very good provision for the literacy hour, there is also additional provision. The weekly writers' workshop provides an opportunity for pupils to write unaided and at length. The reading club similarly enables pupils to increase their reading skills and to develop their confidence. Assessment procedures are good. Detailed records are kept and analysed. The co-ordinator has a file of assessed and levelled work to guide teachers' judgements. Good liaison arrangements between teachers and support staff enable an individual pupil's progress to be measured accurately.
82. The resources are good and have been improved since the last inspection. The library provision is satisfactory but the co-ordinator has plans to improve this resource and to increase the storage space. Pupils have taken part in Book Week and an author has visited the school. This further developed the pupils' interest in books. The subject makes a very good contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision of a range of different texts ensures that pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is developed.
83. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The previous inspection highlighted several issues regarding standards, teaching and leadership. The school has been successful in addressing all these weaknesses.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in Year 2 are attaining above the expected standards in mathematics. The number of pupils who achieve the higher Level 3 is also above average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. These standards are higher than those at the time of the last inspection. Overall, pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language are usually fully integrated into all classroom activities and they make similar progress to their classmates. The school addresses the needs of higher-attaining pupils well by identifying them and by ensuring that their work is sufficiently challenging. The mathematics co-ordinator has taught a special class for them in Year 2, once a week, to extend their knowledge and skills. The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection. This is because the school analyses test results and assessment information and ensures that teaching is well focused. The quality of teaching is good and the needs of all pupils are taken into account.
85. Standards in number work are above average. In Year 2 pupils know the value of digits in three and four-digit numbers. They can add and subtract two digit numbers, know a range of multiples, can round to the nearest ten and divide two-digit numbers by single-digit numbers. Standards in

shape, space and measures are above average. In Year 2, pupils can measure accurately in metres and centimetres and can tell the time to the nearest five minutes. They can find the lines of symmetry in a square, rectangle and circle. Standards in handling data are above average. In Year 2, pupils can transfer data from a tally chart to a table and then enter that information into a computer program that represents the data in different graphical forms. Pupils can interpret the data well and some pupils can write questions using very specific language to interpret the data. Standards in using and applying mathematics are above average. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to solve both word and mathematical problems and pupils benefit from an investigative approach to learning mathematics. Teachers plan work well to enable pupils to apply their literacy skills when working in mathematics; for example, in reading and understanding problems. The application of mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum needs to be developed.

86. The teaching of mathematics is good. All teaching observed during the inspection was at least good and some teaching was very good. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly embedded in the work of the school and this has helped to raise standards. Teachers have a good understanding of the strategy and, consequently, plan well to take account of the needs of all pupils and ensure their good progress. Teachers make clear the objectives of their lessons by writing them on the board and sharing them with their pupils. Also, in most classes, teachers question pupils well to ensure that they have understood and are clear about the objectives, but this does not always happen. In the mental warm-up part of the lesson teachers use good strategies to ensure that all pupils are involved. For instance, pupils use individual white boards or answer with number fans. Teachers make very clear to pupils what they have to do but do not always tell the pupils how much time they have for the task.
87. The summing-up part of the lesson is not always used well to ensure that all the pupils' misconceptions and difficulties have been discussed and explained. Nor do teachers take the opportunity to assess thoroughly pupils' understanding in this part of the lesson. Teachers highlight mathematical language well, model it effectively for the pupils and actively encourage the pupils to use the correct mathematical words. Some teachers, for example, in a lesson in a Year 1 and 2 class on rotation, actively helped the pupils to remember not only the words but also how to spell them by preparing mathematical vocabulary on cards. Classroom displays support the mathematics being taught and there are good prompts and other mathematical resources to support learning in most classrooms. Pupils use these prompts well to help them learn. Teachers' questioning of pupils is satisfactory. They use a range of questions, from one needing a quick response to a mental calculation to one that asks pupils for an explanation of how to do something. Teachers vary the difficulty of the questions they ask so that all pupils have the opportunity to answer. For example, in a Reception Year and Year 1 class, the teacher used the number track very well to focus her questioning and to set different questions for the different age groups in the mental and oral starter. More emphasis needs, however, to be placed on getting pupils to explain and reason. Teachers plan well to enable all pupils to participate and to be able to respond in a variety of ways. For instance, pupils answer targeted questions orally, by writing answers on a white board, by using a number fan, or by demonstrating to the rest of the class on the main board in the classroom. The marking of pupils' work is very brief and does not usually indicate where pupils have received extra support. It does not usually indicate to pupils how they can improve or model calculation methods. Pupils complete many worksheets and do not usually record their mathematics in a book. Consequently, they do not have enough opportunities to record their mathematics, particularly in number line, jottings and expanded methods formats.
88. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in mathematics lessons are good. They enjoy the lessons, work together well and work quickly. Their work is neat but not usually dated. This makes it difficult to quickly assess their progress over time. Teachers are positive and enthusiastic about mathematics and, consequently, the pupils respond well.
89. The leadership and management of this subject are very good. The subject leader monitors teaching and learning regularly. She is a leading mathematics teacher and enthusiastic about the subject. She plans to review the mathematics policy this year. Resources for teaching mathematics have been improved with the purchase of a range of practical and published resources. There is some good use of information and communication technology to support

learning but this needs to be developed further. A successful parents' evening has been held to inform them of the way that mathematics is taught in school today. In addition to ongoing assessment, the school uses published resources to assess pupils' progress. This gives teachers good information so that extra time can be allocated to teaching aspects of mathematics that pupils find hard to understand and to plan for extra support where pupils need it. There is a group target-setting system in place but more work is needed on this, especially in ensuring that the targets are meaningful to the pupils. The use of homework to raise standards is good. All pupils have a homework pack of mathematical activities.

## **SCIENCE**

90. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve well, particularly in developing their skills of scientific enquiry and investigation. This indicates an improvement in standards compared with those at the time of the last inspection. Following last year's disappointing results of teachers' assessments in science, staff reviewed their assessment practice and how they taught the pupils. The co-ordinator also monitored teaching and learning across the school and found that pupils made good progress. Following some training in assessing pupils' work, staff were judged to be assessing pupils' work too harshly and, consequently, pupils were not seen to be doing as well as they actually were. Since then teaching and assessment have improved and this has resulted in the raising of standards, overall.
91. Teachers now have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and use this well to plan appropriate work that matches the variety of needs within each class. Consequently, pupils such as those with special educational needs, the higher-attainers and those who speak English as an additional language, receive work which builds systematically on their prior learning and helps them to achieve well. Pupils in the mixed-age classes are also well catered for and supported to enable them to make good progress. Teachers in each year group plan together and this ensures continuity in teaching.
92. A particular strength of the teaching is the way pupils are encouraged to develop their scientific skills of investigation and enquiry. For example, in Year 1, pupils worked well using a range of resources to discover the type of forces exerted and by the end of the session knew that 'pressing is a kind of push force and lifting is a kind of pull force'. Because the group activities were interesting, the pupils' behaviour and attitudes were very good. Those working with the teacher soon realised the amount of force needed to make a toy car move faster to a given place. In Year 2, pupils continue to develop their understanding of forces by investigating the effect of friction on the movement of a shoe. In a very good lesson observed, this topic was introduced very well by the teacher who linked it to a recently read story, which included a girl slipping over. This captured the attention of the pupils who were keen to find out which surface would be the safest to walk on. At the start of the lesson, the teacher asked questions to assess what the pupils already knew and also asked two pupils to act as 'secretaries' by using the computer to record their answers for future reference. This was a good use of information and communication technology. After a clear exposition by the teacher and more effective questioning, which developed the pupils' scientific thinking, they worked well together in groups to develop a 'fair test'. The teacher had different expectations of how the pupils should record their findings in relation to their prior attainment so that, for example, higher-attainers devised their own and lower-attainers were given printed sheets to help them. Because of the teacher's high expectations and the pupils' motivation, by the end of the lesson pupils had made very good progress.
93. Overall, the study of science contributes positively to the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Teachers plan to develop these skills in a systematic way, for example, in the way pupils' measure and record their findings and how they develop their speaking and listening skills through working together. Subjects such as art are also developed through science as pupils use observational drawings of plants to record their knowledge of parts and how plants grow. When spoken with, pupils had a good knowledge and understanding of their previous work and most showed enthusiasm for the subject.

94. The skills of the learning support assistants and specialist teachers are used well to help pupils learn more effectively. They are briefed about their role by the teacher before the lesson and often work with a designated group of pupils to support and guide them. This was seen in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, when pupils with special educational needs were helped to develop their understanding of forces and record their findings following an investigation. Expectations were high, but realistic, thereby encouraging pupils to do their best according to their ability and understanding.
95. As they move through the school all pupils develop a good attitude to their work and are keen to succeed. They respond well and behaviour is good. For example, when using the school grounds during their study of forces, pupils behaved sensibly and carefully as they moved balls across the playground surface. Positive contributions were made to their moral and social development during this activity as they worked close to each other sharing the space and resources. Additional features such as the provision of Science Week, where staff and visitors provide a range of activities across several topics, obviously motivate pupils well and enhance their achievement. Their spiritual education is developed as they work outside studying the changes in spring and autumn.
96. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has given clear educational direction to improve standards after some very good monitoring of results, teaching and learning. Following this, she had identified the need to improve practice in the areas of assessment, and a greater focus on the development of pupils' scientific skills of enquiry and investigation. With other staff, she has been working on developing assessment practice so that all teachers assess and record pupils' achievements in a similar way and therefore make it easier to monitor and evaluate their progress over time. It is clear that this focus on the development of science has brought about improvements in standards.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has been successful in maintaining the standard of pupils' work and the overall quality of teaching has improved. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above national expectations and there are a few pupils whose attainment is well above expectations in all areas of their work. In the last inspection, pupils' attainment was found to be similar. All pupils achieve very well. They make very good progress in using a range of different media and in developing creative skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, also make very good progress in lessons because they are well supported.
98. Pupils are skilful at using a range of different media. These include painting, drawing, modelling and printing. When Year 2 pupils made a close observational drawing of shells found on a beach, they showed a good awareness of shape and pattern. They make collages using different materials in connection with their work in science and make a still-life drawing of spring flowers, using paint effectively to bring the flowers to life. Year 1 pupils look at sunflowers and make their own sketches of these. They compare them with the sunflowers painted by Van Gogh. In an effective lesson, Year 2 pupils looked at Andy Goldsworthy's *Interwoven Circles* and then made their own patterns using chalks and other materials. They evaluated their completed pictures successfully. Much of the pupils' work showed a good use of different techniques and an imaginative approach to creating their designs. Pupils have very good attitudes toward the subject. They are eager to discuss their work and to say how it is progressing. They share resources sensibly and are always well-behaved.
99. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are well prepared and resources carefully chosen to enable pupils to develop their skills. Focus is given to ensuring that pupils are taught the techniques required for each area of work. A particular strength is the provision made for pupils to learn about the work of well-known artists. This was evident in a lesson when Year 2 pupils looked at the way Bridget Riley had used lines in her work. Pupils talked about the way they might use paint, pipe cleaners and other materials to produce a variety of lines. They successfully used long and short lines and ones of different thickness to create their pictures. There are good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to aid their learning. Year 1 pupils successfully

drew and coloured a picture of a face, using a computer program. Art and design is used well in subjects across the curriculum. This has a positive impact on further developing pupils' skills. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place.

100. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of the provision. She uses her own artistic skills to promote the subject well within the school. As a result, all staff value the creative opportunity the subject provides for pupils. Displays of pupils' work in school further celebrate pupils' success. A Millennium tapestry is in the process of being completed. The subject makes a very good contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision of creative and expressive opportunities and of developing pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness is a particular strength.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Only one Year 2 design and technology lesson was observed during the week of the inspection. However, evidence from displays and an examination of pupils' past work indicate that standards are in line with the expected level in Year 2 and that all pupils make satisfactory progress, including pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils have above average making skills but there is very little evaluation of their own work and none of it is recorded. Pupils cannot achieve the higher Level 3 unless they evaluate their work well. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection. No judgement can be made about teaching as only one lesson was observed.
102. From evidence of work on display, it is evident that pupils develop, plan and communicate their ideas well through, for example, models and drawings. They work with different tools, equipment and materials to make quality products but there is no evidence of how they had evaluated the processes and products.
103. In the one lesson observed, teaching and learning were very good. This was because the teacher had resourced the lesson very well. She had assembled a collection of packets and boxes of shortbread biscuits. She challenged the pupils well to think about the reasons why biscuits are packaged in different ways, the cost implications of the different packaging, the reasons why different materials are used, whether certain types of packaging can be resealed and used again and the shapes used for the different types of packaging. Pupils' responses were very good. They demonstrated that they had a good understanding of the issues involved. There were good links to information and communication technology in this lesson, as the pupils had already designed their own tartan, using the Colour Magic program, in an earlier lesson. They incorporated their tartan as part of their design. The class teacher had designed good planning sheets, with appropriate prompt questions for the pupils, to ensure that they progressed well. She questioned the pupils well to ensure that they thought through the design process in an appropriate order and, consequently, they did this well.
104. The co-ordination of design and technology is good. The co-ordinator has rewritten the schemes of work for design and technology and recently reviewed the subject policy with all the staff. There is an assessment system based on the school's assessment sheets but the co-ordinator is planning to improve this by devising a design and technology specific assessment record sheet. There has been very little monitoring of lessons so far because the school operates a rolling system for monitoring, and design and technology has not yet been a focused subject. This will soon be addressed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. Standards by the end of Year 2 are good and exceed national expectations. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The school alternates the teaching of geography with that of history. As no geography lessons were observed during the period of the inspection, it was not possible to make a judgement on teaching.



106. Displays and a scrutiny of work show that standards are good throughout the school, thereby maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. The work illustrates good links between geography and other subjects. A display on “My Home, My School” used computer-generated images and included links with literacy, science, and pupils’ personal development. Pupils had written poems, for example, “Inside my house is a loving family”. Also, they examined how to care for the environment and their school pond by controlling litter. In a very good interactive display in the atrium, a map of the British Isles had been used as a focus for links with literacy and science by posing questions on the weather for pupils to answer. Prints of famous weather paintings such as ‘Seascape’ by Van Gogh and ‘Rainbow Landscape’ by Rubens were used well to add another dimension to the display.
107. Pupils up to Year 2 study Egypt or India, islands, deserts, the weather, geographical features and language, a contrasting locality of Southend and also a local area study. There is appropriate coverage of the curriculum and the work is often linked to other subjects, which is a strength of the school. There is evidence of the steady development of mapping skills, with even very young pupils being encouraged to draw routes and simple maps using keys. In a Year 1 class, a display showed pupils’ own maps identifying features such as houses, shops, and other landmarks on a walk to the village. Pupils used digital cameras well to record the route. There was further evidence in books of work on islands, routes, and plans for the playground, which illustrated pupils’ growing knowledge and understanding of places and their increasing use of geographical enquiry skills. Marking and assessment of pupils’ work is not sufficiently developed and is unsatisfactory at present.
108. The leadership and management of this subject are good. The scheme of work based on national guidelines is still being developed by the co-ordinator. It ensures that pupils build effectively on what they already know. She has identified points for further action, such as monitoring of lessons and links with other subjects, such as history. Essential areas for development will be the monitoring of teaching and learning, and the use of assessment. There is a good range of resources including books, posters, maps, CD-Roms, digital cameras, and the Internet.

## HISTORY

109. Pupils in Year 2 reach above average standards. Progress is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The rate of progress is consistently good across the school, because teachers make learning interesting, relevant, and exciting for the pupils. This judgement is the same as at the last inspection and the school’s high standards have therefore been maintained.
110. By the end of Year 2, pupils have studied units of work on famous people and events, such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, Nelson Mandela, Remembrance Day, and the Great Fire of London. They have also studied units of work comparing and contrasting the past with changes in their own lives, including My School and Community, Families and Journeys. The work scrutiny indicated good attainment across all ability levels, including pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Literacy is well developed in the subject and includes a good range of recording, including original writing, which is of a high standard. In a geography and history project on Egypt, one child had written “How to make a mummy. 1. Take one dead pharaoh. 2. Lay the body on the embalming table. 3. Remove the brain using a hook. 4. Throw the brain away.” A range of good displays in classrooms showed pupils’ developing historical enquiry skills. These included: the use of historical vocabulary such as *past* and *long ago* and an increasing confidence to both ask and answer questions about the past. For example, a Year 1 wrote, “In the past children used to write with ink pen and sometimes they used chalk.”
111. The teaching was good for all pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Good teacher knowledge and understanding of the subject enabled teachers to use questioning very effectively to help pupils understand about life

and events in the past. There was good pupil management and a particularly well-developed teaching of historical enquiry and interpretation. In a very good session in Year 1, the teacher encouraged the pupils to dig for evidence like archeologists, handle artefacts, interview a parent and discuss what they could find out from a painting. The pupils were able to develop their questioning skills because the teacher had provided them with a rich range of activities that stimulated their curiosity. Throughout the school, there is good use of historical resources to help pupils' understanding of past and present. These include photographs, artefacts, videos, artworks, people, local environment and locality. Teachers were good at relating the past to the pupils' own experiences. For example, a teacher used her own photographs of herself, her parents, grandfather and great grandfather to help pupils develop a sense of time. Time-lines, however, were not evident in many classes.

112. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good and they listened well to their teachers and to one another. They were very confident in asking and answering questions. There were good cross-curricular links throughout lessons observed; this was also evident in the celebrations for the Golden Jubilee, which brought together all aspects of the curriculum in a week of activities. This culminated in a Jubilee day where everyone dressed in the style of the 1950s, including the

headteacher who came dressed as the Queen. Pupils made authentic food and hats and learnt about the events of the period. Parents and community contributed to an exhibition of 1950s artefacts

113. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The current subject leader has written a policy document and developed the history scheme of work based on the QCA guidance. This includes specific learning objectives for each unit of work, suggested activities and resources. The co-ordinator has identified assessment as a priority for future development and has included assessment opportunities in the scheme of work. The systems are in place to ensure further improvement in this subject. Resources are of good quality and quantity and appropriate to teach the subject. These include books, videos and CD-ROMs. The co-ordinator has ensured that funds have been spent efficiently.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. The school has made significant progress in information and communication technology since the last inspection. There has been a high level of investment in both equipment and training. Class teachers now teach specific lessons to develop the skills laid down by the school's programme of work. In Year 2, attainment is above average as it was at the time of the last inspection. The new information and communication technology suite is now fully functional. All pupils are fully included in the lessons, including pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Higher-attaining pupils are suitably challenged.
115. In Year 2, most pupils have good keyboard skills and can log on, open the appropriate screen in a program, save and print without adult help. They have completed a range of topics on the computer and there are strong cross-curricular links to art, science, mathematics, history and English. They can change the size and colour of font, edit text, underline and insert word art. They know how to use the Internet to research their history topic.
116. Teaching is good, overall, and in one lesson it was very good. This is because teachers were always well prepared, had good subject knowledge of the programs they were teaching and had high expectations about the amount of work that pupils should complete and how pupils should behave. In Year 2, teachers had planned work well for pupils of different prior attainment. This included not only making tasks easier for some pupils but also giving different, more challenging tasks to higher-attaining pupils. For example, after all pupils had transferred data from a tally chart to a table, entered that information into the computer and then represented the data in different graphical forms, some pupils worked together to write questions to interpret the data represented. They found this task challenging but persevered and learnt well how they needed to be very specific about the language they used and what sort of information the data could give

them. Teachers plan for good links with other subjects. In addition to links with mathematics, in Year 1, teachers had planned for good links to the art topic of colour mixing and portraits. Pupils were able to use the Colour Magic program to mix colours and draw portraits. In a Year 2 science lesson, two pupils recorded on a word processing program, the pupils' understanding of forces at the beginning of the lesson. Learning support assistants and parents support pupils very well in lessons. They question them well and encourage pupils to work things out for themselves. Teachers make good use of the laptop, projector and screen to ensure that pupils have a good introduction to the work that they are to do. When the introduction takes place on a PC, it is less effective, as pupils find it difficult to see what is happening in sufficient detail.

117. The leadership and management of this subject are good. The subject leader has led developments in this subject well. She supports colleagues with useful help-sheets. For example, there is one to explain how to use the digital camera. She has led training well and actively supports colleagues when necessary. There is an Internet policy and an agreement that all staff have signed. Pupils are only allowed to access the Internet in lessons. There are sufficient computers in the ICT suite and there is one computer in each classroom. The school has a good scheme of work and a good range of software, which it is updating on a regular basis. There is a good system for assessing pupils' attainment. This will be improved further when the school adopts the FLIPPI system for assessment developed by the local education authority team.

## **MUSIC**

118. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has been successful in maintaining the standard of pupils' work and the quality of teaching, overall, has improved. By the end of Year 2 attainment is in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well. They make good progress in singing together and gain confidence in playing percussion instruments. In the last inspection pupils' attainment was found to be similar. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress in lessons.
119. Many pupils in Year 2 show satisfactory rhythmic skills. They play untuned percussion instruments to repeat different rhythmic patterns and gain an understanding of how these might be combined to create a particular effect. In another lesson, Year 2 pupils used clapping, stamping and finger clicking to provide an accompaniment to a song. They kept a steady beat whilst performing and varied the sounds to make the accompaniment more interesting. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy singing and perform well in assemblies. Many pupils in Year 2 can sing a simple round in two parts. They show a good memory for the words of songs and develop a satisfactory sense of pitch. Pupils have very good attitudes toward the subject. They are always well-behaved and handle the instruments carefully. They listen to music attentively in assemblies.
120. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers involve pupils in an appropriate range of musical activities. They make good provision for developing pupils' listening and performing skills. This was evident in a lesson, when Year 1 pupils listened to a recording of some North American rhythms played on percussion instruments. Pupils then played a simple rhythmic pattern on instruments, entering one at a time. They realised the need to listen carefully to each other, in order to make the rhythms fit together. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils to create their own simple notations to record their compositions. Good opportunity is provided for pupils to take part in concerts. There are performances at Christmas and other times during the year. A concert of music through the decades was very much enjoyed by parents.
121. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is a practising musician and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place. The resources are good and there are plans to purchase some keyboards. This will increase the provision for pupils to use ICT. The subject makes a very good contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A particular strength is the provision for pupils to be creative and expressive and to appreciate different music from around the world.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

122. Standards of attainment in physical education are above average in Year 2. This is a similar situation to that found at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls. All Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim on a weekly basis in the summer term.
123. Year 2 pupils have good ball control skills and perform country-dances well. They know about and can explain well why exercise is important for a healthy life-style. Pupils enjoy physical education. They work well independently and together. All pupils join in and try hard. This is because teachers make lessons interesting and fun. They include games like the 'bean game' as a warm-up activity in Year 1, using 'David Beckham' as the command to start running or dribbling the ball in Year 2 and including humour and a sense of fun in the dance lesson in Year 2. Pupils can evaluate their work well and explain what they or another pupil need to do to improve. For example, in the Year 1 lesson on ball skills, the teacher asked the pupils very focused questions to challenge them to think about improvement. They demonstrated that they could do this well.
124. The teaching of physical education is very good. In the lessons observed, teaching was always at least good. There were well-focused objectives for what the pupils were to learn in the lesson and the teachers made their objectives and expectations about pupils' behaviour very clear. Consequently, pupils were very active, behaved well and made good progress. There was a very good emphasis on quality and improving performance. Teachers demonstrated well and also used pupils very well to demonstrate how to perform specific skills. For example, in a very good Year 2 dance lesson, the teacher took part in the dancing throughout the whole lesson and modelled for the pupils what they were to do. In a very good balls skills lesson in Year 1, many pupils had the opportunity to show their classmates how to perform well different skills, such as catching and bouncing. Pupils work hard on their own and when working together. All pupils are fully included in these lessons. In the Year 1 ball skills lesson, the teacher planned for pupils of different prior attainment to use different sized balls to practise the skills. This enabled all pupils to make good progress. In all lessons observed, pupils knew the reason why they were warming-up and cooling-down. They could explain well why these activities were important. Teachers encouraged them to think about the effect on their hearts by asking the pupils to put their hands on their hearts and feel the effect of exercising or cooling down. Teachers make very good use of time by starting lessons promptly, planning them well and having all the necessary resources ready. All pupils are dressed appropriately for physical education and they change quickly. Consequently, little time is lost. When a Year 2 games lesson was curtailed by heavy rain, the teacher made good use of the time in the classroom by getting the pupils to work together in small groups to devise their own games to develop the dribbling skills that they had been practising on the field.
125. The coordination of physical education is good. The subject leader has rewritten the scheme of work and improved teaching resources and some practical resources. She has clearly identified appropriate areas for development, particularly dance and assessment. She has changed the format for Sports Day successfully to give a greater emphasis on teamwork, although there are still opportunities for individual activities. The school has good facilities for physical education. There is a good-sized hall with apparatus in good condition, a playground area and a large field. The co-ordinator is planning to improve the assessment system as, at the moment, teachers record short-term assessments on their planning sheets because there is no systematic recording for this subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

126. By the end of Year 2 attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In the last inspection pupils' attainment was found to be similar and pupils achieve well. They make good progress in talking about their own ideas and in understanding some of the ways that different people worship. Those pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in lessons because they are well supported.

127. Pupils understand some of the signs and symbols associated with different world religions. They know the importance of light and the way candles are used as a means of celebration. They know some of the stories found in the Bible, such as the Creation, Noah's Ark and the stories of Jesus. They understand some of the different religious traditions. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils talked about the Jewish Shabbat meal. They looked at the special loaf and cup containing wine, as well as the candlesticks and spice box. They appreciated the importance of this meal to the Jewish people. Pupils have very good attitudes toward the subject. They listen well to stories and are always eager to talk about their own experiences. Their behaviour is always very good.
128. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas and to talk about their own experiences. They use resources well to extend pupils' understanding. These qualities of teaching have a positive impact on pupils' learning. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils looked at special books. They talked about their visit to a local church and seeing a Bible placed on a lectern. The teacher showed pupils a children's Bible and an example of a Torah scroll. As a result, pupils gained an understanding of the value of these books in the Christian and Jewish faiths and the need to handle them with respect. Good opportunities are provided for developing pupils' writing in lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils made a booklet about the Easter story, with many pupils expressing their ideas at length.
129. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has done much to ensure that there are sufficient resources available for the different world religions. This has a positive impact on the provision for the subject. Opportunities are provided for pupils to visit the Church of Our Saviour. This enables pupils to increase their understanding of different forms of worship. The subject makes a very good contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a strong focus on the provision for pupils' moral education and in teaching some of the stories from world religions. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place.
130. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has been successful in maintaining the standard of pupils' work. The progress of pupils and their response in lessons has improved.