

INSPECTION REPORT

Alresford Primary School

Alresford

LEA area:Essex

Unique reference number: 114734

Headteacher: Mr R Newman

Reporting inspector: Kathryn Taylor
22424

Dates of inspection: 12 – 16 November 2001

Inspection number: 219386

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ford Lane Alresford Colchester Essex
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Appropriate authority:	admin@alresford.essex.scg.uk
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Howe
Date of previous inspection:	November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22424	Kathryn Taylor	Registered inspector	Mathematics; Art Design and technology; Physical education.	Standards, Teaching, Leadership and management, Equality of opportunity.
9388	Anthony Mundy	Lay inspector		Partnership with parents, How well are pupils cared for, Pupils' attitudes and values,
25623	Ted Cox	Team inspector	Science; Information technology; History; Geography.	The curriculum.
26292	Helen Mundy	Team inspector	Provision for special educational needs; Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage; Music; English; Religious education.	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
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	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	7
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	9
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	11
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Alresford Primary School is a small school, which currently has 165 pupils, aged between four and eleven. Up to 20 more children will start in the Reception Class in January or April, depending on the date of their fifth birthday. There is a fairly even spread of boys to girls across the school. Pupils are arranged into seven single age classes. The children's overall attainment when they start school as rising-fives is above that usually found and this is reflected in baseline assessment results. The majority of children have previously attended some form of playgroup provision or nursery. Most pupils attending the school are white; seven pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Five pupils speak English as an additional language and two pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. One in five pupils is currently identified as having special educational needs and three pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils on the special needs register is similar to that in other schools nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils live in the village of Alresford or in the neighbouring villages. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are fairly mixed but are generally favourable. The school roll is fairly stable.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is not effective because it has been too slow to address the weaknesses identified in previous inspection reports. Although standards are in line with those expected in most subjects by age seven and eleven, standards are still not good enough. The quality of teaching, although satisfactory overall, has some significant weaknesses. There are weaknesses in the curriculum and in assessment. The leadership and management of the school and of subjects is unsatisfactory. The school is inclusive; all pupils are welcomed and valued and the school is successful in promoting pupils' personal development. There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and the staff. However, because of the weaknesses noted, the school is not providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school promotes well pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and that for their social development is good.
- Pupils are making good progress in information communications technology (ICT) and attaining good standards by age 11
- Pupils throughout the school achieve well in physical education and in sporting events

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage of Learning, which is currently unsatisfactory
- Standards in many subjects, which could be higher, especially the achievements of the potentially higher attaining pupils
- The definition of the roles and responsibilities of senior managers and the subject co-ordinators
- The co-ordinators' role in managing their subjects; namely in ensuring that they develop an overview of work across the school and ensure that curriculum planning and assessments are appropriately in place
- The leadership and management of the headteacher; namely the headteacher's role in supporting and monitoring teaching and learning, in guiding the work of the staff, and in ensuring that the school's planned developments are completed on time and are carried out with the necessary pace and rigour

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

**The Foundation Stage in this instance refers to the children in the reception class. They are entitled to a curriculum that is practically based and relates to the recommended six areas of learning*

Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory and the school's capacity to improve is compromised by weaknesses in the leadership and management. I am therefore of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMI) agrees, because it is likely to fail to provide an acceptable standard of education.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last full inspection in November 1999, the provision for pupils' moral development has improved and pupils' attitudes and behaviour have been strengthened. The proportion of good teaching is now higher, which is a marked improvement. However, there is still some unsatisfactory teaching. There have been significant improvements to the provision for teaching ICT and to the standards that pupils achieve in the subject.

The last inspection report identified weaknesses in some of the teaching, in pupils' progress, in assessment and in the leadership and management of the school. Because these same weaknesses had been noted in the previous inspection report, the school was then placed in the Serious Weaknesses category, and was subsequently subject to an interim visit by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in December 2000. The report following that visit noted that the school had made satisfactory progress towards addressing the key issues. The findings of this inspection are that although some progress has been made against each of the key issues, none has yet been satisfactorily addressed. The school lacks a clear educational direction that is focussed on raising standards. There is still a lack of clarity about the headteacher's, senior managers' and subject co-ordinators' roles in effecting improvements and taking responsibility for seeing improvements through to a final conclusion. Planned developments and new systems that have been established are not sufficiently rigorous, or always completed on time. Furthermore, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is unsatisfactory. Since the time of the last inspection parents' overall views of the school have worsened. A significant minority of parents now express concern, particularly about the standards that their children achieve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	B	C
Mathematics	C	D	B	C
Science	D	D	D	E

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Similar schools refers to schools nationally that have a similar proportion of pupil entitled to free school meals.

In the tests in 2001 at age 11 pupils achieved overall standards in English and mathematics that were above the national average and in line with those found in similar schools. In science standards were below the national average and well below those found in similar schools. Comparison of these pupils' results here with the same pupils' results when they took the tests at age seven, shows that pupils made below average progress in mathematics and English and well below average progress in science.

In the tests at age seven in 2001 overall standards in reading were in line with the national average but well below those found in similar schools. In writing and mathematics, standards were above the national average and in line with those in similar schools. Results in tests at age seven and eleven each year tend to fluctuate. This is sometimes the case when there are relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group. In general the school's test results do not compare favourably with those in similar schools. Neither test results nor inspection evidence highlight differences in pupils' attainment based solely on gender or ethnicity.

Inspection evidence shows that children in the Reception Class enter school with good prior attainment levels. The children are currently not making enough progress because the teaching methods and curriculum are not based on the children's age and experience. By the time the children are due to leave reception and join Year 1, they are therefore unlikely to meet the expected standards in some areas of their learning. In the current Year 2 and 6 classes, the majority of pupils are attaining the expected standards in English, mathematics and science. However, standards are not high enough, and pupils are not challenged sufficiently, especially the potentially higher attaining pupils.

Throughout the school pupils' standards in speaking and listening are very good and in physical education they are good. Pupils achieve good standards in ICT by age 11. In all other subjects pupils' attainment is broadly in line with what would be expected, except in religious education where pupils' knowledge and understanding is weak and below that expected. In many of these subjects, there is less evidence of pupils' previous work than would be expected, even at this time of the year. This raises questions about the frequency with which some subjects are taught, and whether pupils have opportunities to reach their full potential.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and learning. They listen very attentively in lessons and are very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behave very well in class, in the playground and around the school. They are very friendly, helpful and polite
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Boys and girls of different abilities, ages and backgrounds relate well to each other. They support and respect each other. Pupils, especially those in Year 6, are very independent and confident and show very good levels of maturity.
Attendance	Good. Attendance levels are above the national average. Pupils are keen to attend and arrive on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

In 40 of the 47 lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory and in just over half of the lessons teaching was good or better. The proportion of good and very good teaching is higher than at the time of the last inspection. However, there were seven unsatisfactory lessons. All of the unsatisfactory teaching seen was in the Foundation Stage of Learning or in Years 3 to 6. Very good teaching was seen in some lessons; in ICT, in physical education and in one music lesson and one science lesson.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage of Learning is unsatisfactory overall, because the school lacks anyone with knowledge and understanding of the recommended curriculum and teaching methods for children in their Reception Year. Because of this, the newly qualified teacher, who is conscientious and very keen to learn, has not received appropriate guidance. In Years 1 to 6, teachers have at least satisfactory teaching skills. Most teachers manage their pupils well and have a secure knowledge of the subjects and age groups they teach. Shortcomings in most classes relate to the teachers' over-use of worksheets and a lack of challenge for the potentially higher attaining pupils. Teachers give appropriate attention to supporting pupils with special educational needs. The teaching in English lessons seen was good in a number of classes, but was unsatisfactory in two lessons. Teaching of mathematics was also unsatisfactory in two lessons. In general the unsatisfactory teaching occurs because there is a lack of regular monitoring, support and guidance for teaching, rather than weak teaching skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. The curriculum covers all subjects but has significant weaknesses. It lacks overall breadth and balance because too much time is spent on English. The curriculum does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in particular. Teachers rely too heavily on commercial schemes of work because there is insufficient curriculum planning and guidance.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Class teachers support pupils in lessons and take account of pupils' needs when planning their work. Additional support is provided for some pupils, including those pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. Some of the additional teaching currently takes place in the information and communications technology suite when other pupils are being taught there. This is disruptive to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils are taught very well the difference between right and wrong. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to work and play together and to show consideration for each other. The curriculum satisfactorily supports pupils' spiritual and cultural development, although this could be extended with further developments in subjects such as history, geography, religious education, art and design and technology.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff take care to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Child protection procedures are well established and are used effectively. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are good. Pupils' academic progress is being monitored and assessed regularly. However, there are still weaknesses in assessment and in using assessment information to plan appropriate work for pupils.

Parents contribute well to the school and their children's learning. The school's links with parents and the information they provide for parents are satisfactory. A significant proportion of parents responding to the questionnaire, and at the meeting prior to inspection, do not have positive views of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory. Leadership is successful in promoting pupils' personal development and in maintaining the school's positive climate for learning. The headteacher's role in monitoring teaching and learning and in raising standards lacks the necessary rigour and pace. Subject co-ordinators do not have a clear enough overview of the teaching, standards and pupils' progress in the subjects they manage.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. There have been significant changes to the composition of the governing body since the last inspection. Governors are supportive of the school and have tried to help the school to improve. Some governors express some frustration about not been able to effect improvements at a faster rate.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school does not effectively evaluate the standards pupils achieve, or the quality of teaching and learning. It does not evaluate carefully enough the overall impact of its spending decisions on pupils' attainment and progress.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory. In the main staff are deployed appropriately. Good use is made of the support staff to improve standards in physical education and ICT. The

resources | school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.

- * There are enough teachers and support staff. Indoor accommodation is satisfactory.
- * The outdoor facilities are very good. There is, as yet, no access to outdoor facilities for the reception children to work in, but plans to address this are in place.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That their children enjoy school;• Standards of behaviour;• The quality of teaching;• They feel confident to approach the school;• The way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The way in which the school is led and managed;• The way the school works with parents;• The consistency of homework;• The range of activities outside lessons;• Information about their children's progress;• The challenge offered to pupils.

The inspection findings mainly endorse parents' positive views. Inspection evidence also agrees with many of the concerns raised by a significant minority of parents. Improvements are needed to the leadership and management of the school and to ensuring that pupils are sufficiently challenged. Inspectors saw homework from some, but not all classes. That seen was satisfactory. Inspectors did also note that the school needs to clarify to parents its arrangements for setting homework. While information for parents about their child's progress is satisfactory overall, reports to parents could in some instances provide more detail.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children entering the Reception Class have some pre-school experience either in a nursery or playgroup. When they start school the children's attainments in communication, language and literacy, and mathematics, and in their social and in personal development are all above average. At the current time children in the Reception Class are not making enough progress. As a result, although they are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in some areas of the curriculum by the time they join Year 1, they are unlikely to achieve those that relate to their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development.

2. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at age seven, pupils' overall standards in reading based on average point scores were in line with schools nationally, but well below those found in similar schools. What depressed reading results was that not enough pupils attained the expected Level 2, although the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was in line with that in schools nationally. Standards in writing and mathematics were above the national average, and in line with those in similar schools. In science the proportion of pupils that attained Level 2 was below the national average, although the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was close to the national average.

3. At age eleven in 2001, overall standards in English and mathematics were above the national average and in line with those found in similar schools. Standards in science were below those in schools nationally and well below those found in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics was well above the national average, and in science was in line with the national average.

4. Results in the tests each year tend to fluctuate and this may well to some extent reflect differences in cohorts of pupils. Several points indicated by the test results are, however, of concern. Firstly, when pupils' results at age 11 in 2001 are compared with the same pupils' results when they took the tests in Year 2, overall improvements were below those found in similar schools in mathematics and English, and well below those in similar schools in science. Secondly, although pupils are entering the school with above average attainment overall, these good standards are not maintained, so that the school's results do not compare well with similar schools nationally. Thirdly, the school is not proactive in addressing pupil underachievement. For example, results in the science tests for the past three years have been consistently below the nationally expected levels, yet despite this, little is being done to find out why this is the case and to improve work in the subject. Neither test results nor inspection evidence highlight differences in pupils' attainment based solely on gender or ethnicity. Inspection evidence did however, highlight some differences in pupil progress; potentially higher attaining pupils in particular are not challenged by some of the teaching. The school has yet to identify its gifted and talented pupils.

5. In the current Year 2 class pupils' attainments in reading, writing, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations, and pupils are making good gains in learning because the teaching is challenging them. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards broadly in line with national expectations. However, progress in English and mathematics here is currently not good enough. Pupils' progress in science, however, is good. Without some significant intervention between now and the time of the test next May, the school is unlikely to meet the targets agreed with the Local Education Authority for the proportion of pupils to achieve the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics. Throughout the school pupils' standards in speaking and listening are very good.

6. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards that are sometimes below national expectations. However, pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs). Pupils' progress currently is compromised by the poor arrangements for teaching them in the same room as other pupils using computers. The small number of pupils who learn English as an additional language attain similar standards to their peers.

7. In information and communications technology, standards are improving well and are in line with those expected by age seven and above those expected by age 11. Pupils throughout the school attain good standards and make good progress in physical education. In religious education, standards are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

8. Evidence from the work seen in all other subjects; in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, and music, shows that most pupils achieve the nationally expected age appropriate levels. However, once again pupils are not being sufficiently challenged, partly because they do not spend enough time on these subjects.

9. There has been little improvement to overall standards and pupil progress since the last inspection, except in ICT and physical education. A significant number of parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection expressed concern about standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. During the inspection period, pupils' responses were at least satisfactory in all but one lesson, were most often good or very good, and sometimes were excellent. Ninety-three per cent of the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children enjoy school. Inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view. The good attitudes noted during the previous inspection have been strengthened. Pupils' good attendance and punctuality also have a positive effect on their attainment and progress. Registration periods are efficient, so that most lessons begin promptly.

11. Children in the Reception Class have positive attitudes and show good levels of independence and self-motivation. They enjoy meeting other children, and are very confident and secure in classroom and school routines. The children relate well to adults, listen to them very attentively, and are very well behaved.

12. All pupils come to school happily and very enthusiastically, and respond very well to their teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. They enjoy their lessons, and when required to work independently they do this well. Pupils listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other, and are poised and articulate when answering questions. In discussion with visitors, they are very friendly, confident, good-humoured and polite. They are proud of their achievements. Pupils treat each other respectfully and show appreciation of each other's efforts and achievements.

13. Excellent attitudes and behaviour were seen in a number of lessons. In a history lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils' response was excellent. When a programme showing on a video monitor was not fully visible from all areas of a cramped mobile classroom, pupils moved without disturbing others to gain a better view so that they could make notes of the important points. They concentrated intensively and, guided by the teacher, confidently discussed wider issues related to the points they had noted. In a lesson in the reception class, a group of children was very patient and exceptionally well-behaved during a prolonged

practical session, where they were often required to do little more than watch the teacher demonstrating simple activities. At one point, they were motionless for some minutes, holding papers until glued joints dried. In all year groups, pupils readily exchange ideas and share materials. They often make good use of time, and efficiently clear away at the ends of lessons.

14. Behaviour is very good in most lessons, and, in a number of instances even when the teaching is unsatisfactory. Pupils conform cheerfully to classroom rules. Behaviour around the school and in the playgrounds is equally very good. Playground behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are thoughtful, mutually respectful and rarely aggressive. Pupils, as well as some parents, are aware that incidents of bullying do sometimes occur and that these are not always effectively resolved. No pupil has been excluded from school since the last inspection.

15. Pupils' personal development is very good, although opportunities are fairly limited. Pupils willingly carry out everyday classroom duties and, in Years 5 and 6, have wider responsibilities including preparing the hall for assembly and, at lunchtime, helping to serve meals and clear away. Pupils in Year 6 are currently preparing the first issue of a school newspaper. The school has a Head Boy and Head Girl, but older pupils do not have opportunities to act as monitors. This is a missed opportunity as pupils in Year 6 show exceptionally high levels of maturity. A recent initiative where some of the pupils from Year 6 undertake shared reading with reception pupils is very good. During such activities the oldest pupils showed exceptional maturity in their handling and encouragement of the youngest children. They worked hard to make reading fun, inventing small games and strategies to help them learn unknown words. There is as yet no forum such as a school council that would provide opportunities for all pupils to contribute and express their views.

16. Relationships in the school are very good. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds respond politely and confidently to each other, and are mutually supportive. They speak very confidently to their teachers and other adults. Each member of the school community has equal status, and receives sensitive and effective support at work and play.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In 40 of the 47 lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory and in just over half of the lessons the teaching was good and sometimes very good. This represents an improvement to the proportion of good teaching since the last inspection, and the follow up HMI review. There were seven lessons in which teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

18. Teaching in the Foundation Stage of Learning is unsatisfactory overall, which limits children's progress. The newly qualified teacher is conscientious and very keen to learn, but she has as yet little knowledge and understanding of the new Foundation Stage curriculum. Since her appointment, she has received too little guidance about appropriate teaching methods and classroom organisation, although she did have some initial discussions with the previous reception class teacher and has visited other schools. There is no long-term planning for the teacher to use to guide her work, and medium-term planning is too brief and

is inadequately linked to the recommended Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals. The support assistant working in the reception class is also untrained, and does not receive enough guidance about her role. The inappropriateness of the curriculum restricts the value of the limited assessment procedures that are in place.

19. In Years 1 and 2 teaching and learning is always at least satisfactory, and there is good teaching in about two thirds of lessons seen. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is good or better in half of the lessons seen, but there is also unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson in every seven.

20. In Years 1 to 6 teachers have at least satisfactory teaching skills; for example, teachers are in the main well organised. Learning objectives are shared with pupils quite consistently and in many lessons there is some good questioning to move pupils' learning on. Relationships with pupils are very good and most teachers manage their pupils well. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects and age groups they teach. A general shortcoming in the teaching is the lack of detailed planning. Planning takes account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs, however, it does not provide adequately for the higher attaining pupils and this limits the progress that they make. Furthermore, planning is far too often linked to commercial schemes and worksheets rather than any assessment of pupils' prior attainments or direct consideration of National Curriculum requirements. One exception to this is teaching in Year 2, where both lesson observations and work scrutiny show consistent and very clear differentiation in the work set for the higher attaining pupils. This is enabling pupils of all prior attainment levels to make good progress. The over-use of worksheets was a criticism that has been made of teaching in the past, both in the last inspection report and in the follow up visit by HMI. Even when teachers know that the commercial schemes and materials are not appropriate for their children, they sometimes seem to feel compelled to use them. This was the case for example, in a lesson in religious education in Year 1. The published scheme required the teacher to read a complex bible story to pupils that was beyond their levels of maturity and contained complex language and abstract ideas. The lessons' learning intention related to understanding that consideration for others was an integral part of many religions. This learning objective could have been put across in a number of ways, some of which the teacher later used.

21. Teachers throughout the school provide some opportunities for pupils to consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills as they learn other subjects. Such opportunities can be extended. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum is also still at a fairly early stage of development. The quality of teachers' marking is at least satisfactory, and is good in a number of classes, providing detailed and developmental feedback to pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Inspectors were provided with examples of homework from some, but not all classes. The homework seen was satisfactory and was marked regularly. Some good teaching was seen in most of the subjects.

22. Where the teaching and learning was good, this was sometimes because teachers had a particular interest in the subject and good skills of their own, as seen for example in some lessons in art, music and physical education. In these instances teachers give good attention to teaching the specific skills. The teaching in six lessons seen during the inspection was very good. Most of this very good teaching was in ICT and physical education (PE) lessons. The school is making very good use of the expertise of a physical education coach for some of the physical education teaching, and of the learning support assistant who teaches ICT skills to all pupils. The quality of their teaching is very good, because they very have high expectations of pupils and a thorough understanding of what pupils in each year group need to learn and at what level. This means they challenge pupils and move their learning on at a very brisk pace. A very good science lesson was also seen in the Year 6 class. The teacher had very good subject knowledge, and continually challenged the pupils

to think and to extend their ideas and understanding. Teaching in a music lesson in Year 3 was also very good. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and challenged pupils to participate fully so that they were fully engaged and stayed on task. Good attention was also given to composing music.

23. The teaching of English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is always at least satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is inconsistent, and there is some unsatisfactory teaching in both subjects. In one class this occurs because the teacher is not managing pupils' behaviour well enough. She does not hold pupils' attention, so they are off task and do not therefore make enough progress in lessons. In another class the teacher simply does not understand the requirements and teaching methods promoted in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. As a result she is spending far too much time talking to pupils, and so pupils get little opportunity to record their own work and to learn at an appropriate pace. The lack of more regular, focussed and systematic monitoring of the teaching, rather than weak teaching skills, results in such inconsistencies. This means that when teachers are struggling, it goes unnoticed and teachers are not supported to improve. Pupils' progress is then compromised. In mathematics some of the staff need additional training to develop pupils' skills in mental mathematics, and their teaching of the mental and oral starter.

24. The quality of teaching in the science lessons seen was good in most classes. New teachers to the school have strengthened the science teaching. Pupils have good opportunities to experiment, and there is some good teacher explanation and input. Weaknesses relate to lack of challenge in lessons for the most able pupils, and teachers' over-reliance on the use of worksheets that limit pupils' ability to demonstrate their learning and understanding.

25. When pupils with special educational needs are taken out of class for additional support, the teaching seen is satisfactory and is sometimes good. Learning objectives relate well to pupils' individual needs as identified in their individual educational plans (IEPs). Class teachers take into account pupils' needs when planning lessons, and pupils are usually well supported in lessons.

26. In other subjects the quality of teaching seen is at least satisfactory. Some good or better teaching was seen in art, design and technology, history and music. There is a fairly good range of subject expertise amongst staff, which could be used to good effect if opportunities to share good practice were fully utilised.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS

27. The curriculum for children in the reception class is unsatisfactory, because it does not relate to that recommended for Children in the Foundation Stage of Learning, which came into effect in September 2000. Each day, the children participate in extended and unsuitable literacy and numeracy sessions that restrict the time available for the remainder of the curriculum. The children have too few opportunities to learn from practical and first-hand experiences and they do not yet have regular access to outdoor activities.

28. In Years 1 to 6 the statutory requirement to teach all National Curriculum subjects, religious education, sex education and personal and health education is met. However, the curriculum balance and relevance are unsatisfactory. Insufficient time is given to foundation subjects because proportionately, too much time is devoted to teaching English, despite this not being a weaker aspect of pupils' attainment, nor it having a significant impact on standards in English. The needs of potentially higher attaining pupils are not met adequately

through the curriculum. There are also missed opportunities to develop and apply pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to their work in other subjects.

29. Planning does not include enough clear details about the progression and development of skills that pupils need to learn as they move up through the school. Medium term planning, for example, does not refer to National Curriculum attainment target levels, and is too often based on commercially produced schemes. As a result, teachers do not have a clear view themselves of what National Curriculum levels pupils are meant to achieve. Furthermore the over-use of commercially produced worksheets does not encourage pupils to think hard enough, and provides few opportunities for pupils to write at length, to show what they know or have learnt and to develop new skills. Teachers' short-term planning gives more detail about the content of what is being taught, and this is regularly checked by the headteacher. However, the results of this monitoring are not reported to subject co-ordinators, so they do not have an overview of the curriculum coverage, or information that would help them consider how to raise standards in their subjects

30. All subject policies are in place except that for drugs education, which is in the process of being written. Not all the requirements in the school's policies are met. For example, in science, the co-ordinator has not yet analysed National Curriculum results, although this is stated in the policy.

31. The curriculum is satisfactorily organised to meet the needs of pupils with special needs. Targets in pupils' IEPs identify appropriately pupils' specific needs in both literacy and numeracy. All pupils on Stages 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice receive group tuition each week from the special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) and some also receive individual support. This is beneficial, but pupils' progress is currently inhibited by the fact that much of the support takes place in the ICT room where noise levels, as to be expected, are often high because other pupils are working on the computers. The pupils' statements of special educational needs are satisfactory and meet requirements. Pupils with statements are well supported by the learning support assistants and their class teacher, and they also receive regular input from the SENCo.

32. There are currently frequent occasions when individuals and groups of pupils are withdrawn from lessons to learn ICT skills, or to receive additional SEN support. The school needs to take steps to monitor this very carefully, to ensure that pupils who miss out on lessons are given opportunities to catch up. The practice of removing pupils from parts of literacy and numeracy teaching is unacceptable, unless pupils are then withdrawn to be taught relevant and appropriate literacy and numeracy skills.

33. Links with the community and partner institutions make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. For example, pupils visit the parish church, a local museum and castle, and a steam railway; they study the environment and wildlife of a tidal creek. Recent visitors from the community have included a librarian and a poet, and the parish priest is also a frequent visitor. The school's summer fair and Christmas bazaar are major events, and are well supported by local residents. The headteacher is participating in a local business and education management experience scheme. The school has good links with its cluster of schools, and the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Each year, students carry out work experience in the school. Links with universities are tenuous because the school is unable currently to participate in the initial training of student teachers.

34. The school has maintained the good programme of extra-curricular activities noted in the previous inspection report. However, parents at the meeting prior to inspection commented that at the current time few of the after school activities and clubs are taking place. Pupils regularly compete against other schools in sporting events, for example in

rounders, football, netball, rugby, cricket and athletics. Football training is provided through the Football in the Community scheme by players from Colchester United Football Club, and cricket skills are coached by representatives from Essex County Cricket Club. Pupils perform in whole school musical productions, such as 'The Wizard of Oz', and a group of 11 years olds have come together to use the facilities in the computer suite to produce a school newspaper. Pupils have some opportunities to go on visits to places of interest, for example to the theatre, museums and Colchester Castle. Visitors to the school in the recent past have included the school nurse, the local police, local clergy and African drummers and historical dramatists who enabled pupils to act out scenes from Victorian times.

35. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The school meets the requirements for Collective Acts of Worship. In assemblies, time is given for reflection when prayers are read, but there is not always the opportunity for personal reflection. Teachers work hard to choose suitable and varied music to start and end assemblies; during the inspection period, this included music from artists such as Nat King Cole, Enya, Kurt Weil and Vivaldi. This helps pupils develop an understanding of the feelings that can be engendered by music. There are missed opportunities for work in subjects such as art to make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

36. The school has improved its provision for pupils' moral development, which is now very good. The well-ordered environment in the school reflects the high standard of behaviour encouraged by all adults, who set pupils a good example. Pupils are encouraged to be polite and friendly, and they readily make visitors welcome. The school's code of conduct is well-understood by pupils, but seldom needs to be referred to. Pupils negotiate rules for behaviour in their own classrooms, and for the use of the outside play areas. They are taught very clearly right from wrong.

37. Provision for pupils' social development is good and is supported well by their links with the community and the extra-curricular activities. In lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to work together in pairs and groups and are encouraged to be independent. Older pupils are given some opportunities to take responsibility, for example to look after younger pupils and to hear them read. Year 6 pupils also entertain elderly residents at Harvest Time. Daily lunch arrangements that incorporate a family service enable pupils to talk with and get to know pupils from different year groups, and for older pupils to take responsibility for serving lunch. Pupils' participation in family events such as sports days; swimming galas and bonfire parties also makes a contribution to pupils' social development. There is no school council, although the headteacher has plans to establish one. Pupils collect for local and national charities throughout the year, and distribute harvest produce to a nearby care home and to a centre for the homeless in Colchester.

38. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have some opportunities through subjects such as geography, history, art and music to learn about their own cultural traditions. The school makes use of opportunities as they arise to extend pupils' understanding of different cultural traditions. For example, a Chinese family recently talked to pupils about how they celebrated the Chinese New Year, and two Muslim pupils told the school about visiting the mosque. Pupils have listened to performances on African

drums and have been shown African styles of dress. They study Mexican art, and older pupils attend concerts at Colne Community College. Pupils visit the local church. However, no visits have been arranged to other places of worship. Pupils' cultural and spiritual development would be greatly enhanced by further development to the curriculum and by extending work in the foundation subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Some aspects of care have improved since the previous inspection. Good procedures have been established for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. The school has adopted the local education authority's child protection policy. The teacher nominated as the responsible officer is conscientious, well-informed and adequately trained. All staff understand child protection issues, and they discreetly implement the school's procedures. All teaching and ancillary staff recently received training.

40. The school has implemented the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out of school visits. Health and safety practice includes daily patrols by the recently appointed caretaker. One member of staff has a first aid certificate, and three members have swimming pool safety certificates. The school does not have a written record of fire alarm tests and fire evacuation practices.

41. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well. They are skilled in assessing when pupils need help, and in providing individual care and support. Teaching assistants develop very good relationships with pupils, and have good skills, despite lack of regular formal training. Pupils are well cared for at lunchtime; conscientious midday assistants supervise them. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory, and includes visits by the local police liaison officer and a railway safety officer. A farmer and a gravel pit manager also speak to pupils about local hazards. A new whole-school policy for personal, social and health education is currently being drafted. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory, although largely informal. Specific information about pupils' behaviour and social development may be added to the medical files provided for each class, but the system is too unstructured to be of much value to teachers new to the school.

42. A series of induction meetings are part of the warm welcome offered to parents when their children join the reception class. Pupils joining other year groups settle quickly and happily into the school's routines. Good procedures are in place in Year 6 to prepare pupils for transfer to secondary school.

43. A brief, draft policy for discipline is in place but this does not include sections on dealing with bullying or racism. There is no formal anti-bullying policy, which is communicated to pupils, staff and parents, and prominently displayed. This may well contribute to a minority of parents' concerns about bullying and about how it is dealt with. In most classrooms, teachers and pupils have agreed everyday rules to promote good behaviour and mutual co-operation. The headteacher awards merit stickers for pupils' daily achievements or progress. At weekly 'achievement assemblies', parents are invited to celebrate a variety of certificates awarded for sustained good work and effort. Staff and governors have agreed a policy on the use of force, and procedures for noting incidents of restraint of pupils. The school functions well as a happy and orderly community.

44. The policy for special educational needs is a satisfactory working document. The special needs register, however, does not meet requirements in relation to providing details of pupils' difficulties or needs. It does not identify when pupils have moved up or down through the stages of the Code of Practice, or have come off the register.

45. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory and most parents notify the school office if a child is away unexpectedly. However, where parents do not make contact, there are no structured procedures for following this up. Class registers are scrutinised periodically by the educational welfare officer. All registers are completed neatly, and conform to legal requirements.

46. Since the last inspection school has given some attention to establishing procedures for assessing pupils' attainments and progress. Further work is still needed to ensure such systems are reliable and are used effectively to track pupils' attainments and progress, and to inform curriculum planning. There are sound procedures in the Foundation Stage for carrying out baseline assessments when children enter the school. However the school has yet to implement systems for assessing pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals during the time that children are in the reception class. Throughout the rest of the school regular assessments of pupils' attainments in English and mathematics take place, and the optional National Curriculum tests are used at the end of each year. A recent review by the school of the systems and the reliability of assessments highlights some weaknesses in their procedures that still need to be addressed. Current systems are limited by teachers' insecure knowledge of age-appropriate National Curriculum Levels, and a lack of curriculum planning that is linked to the National Curriculum. Only when teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and the skills they want them to develop, can they assess pupils' progress accurately and reliably. Current arrangements inform teachers about what pupils can do, but not necessarily what they have learned or whether their learning could be better.

47. Class teachers use assessment information appropriately to identify which pupils need additional support, including those pupils with special needs. The use of assessment to inform teachers' planning is unsatisfactory, in part because too much of the teaching is planned using commercial schemes and worksheets. Commercial schemes therefore drive the planning, instead of teachers' knowledge of their pupils' needs. Furthermore, the school does not use pupils' results in the optional and national tests effectively enough to evaluate and guide its work, or to highlight inconsistencies in teaching. Assessment procedures in subjects other than mathematics and English still need to be developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory overall. At the start of each term, parents are informed about the work that is planned. Frequent newsletters are informative about school events and important dates. The school prospectus and the most recent governors' annual report to parents, however, omit some legally required information, and the annual report includes a misleading statement that the school is no longer considered by OFSTED to have Serious Weaknesses. Parents are welcome to visit the school at all times, and they have good access to class teachers and the headteacher. Some parents regularly help in school.

49. A very active association of parents and friends organises regular and valued social and fund- raising events, and raises significant amounts of money for the school each year. Good cooperation is established between the association and the governing body, and some families are active on both committees. Parents of pupils with special educational needs

have satisfactory involvement in their education. They understand the school's procedures and they receive advice on working at home with their children. Satisfactory records are maintained by the special needs co-ordinator. She regularly invites parents to a daytime meeting to discuss their children's progress.

50. Parents are provided with good information about the school's routines and expectations when their children join the school. Parents of pupils in Year 6 are well briefed about arrangement for transfer to secondary school. Parents are very interested in their children's learning and progress, and they encourage their children to have positive attitudes to school.

51. Since the last inspection, parents' views of the school have worsened. A significant proportion of parents at the meeting prior to the inspection, and in the questionnaire, expressed some concerns. A hundred and six questionnaires out of a possible 330 were returned, a proportion that represents the views of a significant number of parents. Twenty-five parents also attended the meeting. Over a third of parents responding to the questionnaire do not feel that the school works closely with them. Some parents feel that if they have concerns, these are listened to. However, they do not feel confident that their concerns are then subsequently acted upon. Four parents out of every ten are unhappy with homework, which they feel is not consistent, and with the information they receive about their child's progress. Inspectors were given homework from some, but not all classes to scrutinise; the homework seen was satisfactory. Inspectors did note, however, a lack of information to parents about what homework they should expect. Inspectors felt that the information on pupils' reports was satisfactory overall, providing some information about what children know and can do, and sometimes setting targets or showing how attainment may be improved. Arrangements for parents' consultation evenings are similar to those in other schools.

52. Three parents out of ten are unhappy with the leadership and management of the school, and inspection evidence also highlighted weaknesses. Half of all parents responding to the questionnaire are not happy with the level of extra-curricular activities. The school does offer a good range of activities, including trips, although inspectors did note that some activities are not being held currently because of staff changes. Some parents in the questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection do not feel their children are making enough progress, especially parents of pupils at Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence shows that pupils could be achieving better standards, particularly the potentially higher attaining pupils. Parents say their children enjoy school, and they have positive views about the teaching, pupils' behaviour and the way in which the school supports their children to become mature and responsible. Inspection evidence confirmed the parents' positive views.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The last inspection report identified poor progress since the inspection four years previously, and serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school. The report highlighted in particular the need to both clearly define and extend the roles of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject managers and to establish systems to monitor teaching and learning. These issues, and other key issues relating to developing the curriculum, assessment and aspects of the teaching have been given attention. However, the pace of change has been too slow and developments have lacked the necessary rigour. The impact of improvements is therefore limited, and not one issue has yet been addressed to a satisfactory conclusion. The areas identified for improvement in the last two inspection reports remain priorities for development in the future.

54. The headteacher is successful in creating and maintaining a positive school ethos, where pupils are greatly valued and respected and their individuality is celebrated. This is a very successful aspect of the management; pupils develop and maintain self-esteem and self-confidence and forge very good relationships with each other and with the staff.

55. The headteacher has established systems to monitor the teaching and learning in each class once per term and he provides verbal and written feedback to staff. However the purpose and focus of observations to date has been on the teaching skills and not on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and attainment. Written feedback to teachers sometimes tends to stress the positive aspects, rather than those that need improving. Important weakness in teaching identified in the last inspection report such as the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils and the over-use of worksheets have not been addressed through the monitoring. Furthermore as it is not usual practice for anyone else to monitor the teaching, the frequency of observations is rather limited. Monitoring systems have not noted the unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection, despite the fact that weaknesses noted by inspectors are also evident from the samples of work in pupils' books. Systems to support and monitor the teaching in one particular class, following the previous inspection, have, however been successful in addressing weaknesses identified there.

56. The headteacher scrutinises the work of higher, average and lower attaining pupils from each class. The agreed criteria to date has been to assess pupils' handwriting, their presentation of work, the quality of teachers' marking and whether work has been completed. Such monitoring does not comment on the quality or content of pupils' work and their progress over time, nor does it note the lack of differentiation in work set for the potentially higher attaining pupils. The headteacher intends at the end of this term to extend his monitoring activities to incorporate the monitoring of pupils' progress during lesson observations, and in the work scrutiny. Current weaknesses, however, mean the progress which pupils make each year remains inconsistent, and is far too dependent on pupils' individual teachers.

57. The school's aims that emphasise pupils' personal and social development, and preparation for life beyond school, are largely met. However, the aims that express a commitment to the highest standards are not met.

58. Since the last inspection, the role of the deputy headteacher has been extended to include the management of the curriculum and assessment, and responsibility for guiding and developing the work of all subject co-ordinators. Although she has termly meetings with each subject co-ordinator and has been able to guide their work, the impact of this on ensuring that subjects have been developed to a satisfactory standard is fairly limited. This is largely because of the lack of time she and the co-ordinators are given to carry out their tasks. The deputy headteachers' role as overall curriculum manager is also limited by the fact that she does not monitor the curriculum planning; the headteacher does. The deputy headteacher has implemented some satisfactory procedures for assessment of pupils' attainments in the core subjects of English and mathematics. However, because she has had very limited opportunities to monitor teaching and curriculum planning, she has little on which to base any judgements about the effectiveness and reliability of such assessments. The work of the senior managers would be more effective if participants had responsibility for following actions through to their final conclusion within an agreed timescale, and their responsibility included evaluating the impact of any developments on pupils' overall attainment and progress. Job descriptions that define the roles of the deputy headteacher, the headteacher and subject co-ordinators were reviewed following the last inspection and these have recently been reviewed again.

59. The co-ordination of information communication technology and physical education is satisfactory. The leadership and management of most other subjects is unsatisfactory, because too little has been achieved since the last inspection. This occurs in part because job descriptions limit the role and expectations of the co-ordinators. The co-ordinators infrequently see teachers' planning and do not observe the teaching, so they do not have an overview of the work in their subjects. They do not have responsibility for analysing test results, developing assessment procedures or for resourcing the subject. Co-ordinators also have limited time during school hours to carry out their work.

60. The current leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is poor. The special needs co-ordinator has been in post for a relatively short time; she is suitably qualified, and has had recent training on the new and revised Code of Practice. The special needs governor also oversees the school's provision.

61. The school development plans highlight appropriate priorities linked to the key issues in the last inspection report. Developments are currently behind schedule, and the timescale for completion has been extended. The school says that changes in staffing have affected the school's ability to complete the targets on time. However it is unclear to inspectors why new staff to the school this term limited the school's ability to meet targets that were to be achieved by the end of last term. It is this failure to stick to deadlines that seriously compromises the school's ability to move forward and improve.

62. The composition of the governing body has changed quite significantly since the last inspection two years ago. There have been three different chairs of governors, and the current chair is in post on a temporary basis until the end of this term. Governors have been instrumental in trying to help the school to move forward since its last inspection. They are interested and supportive of the school. Governing body meetings and those of sub-committees take place regularly. Some but not all governors are well-informed about their role and about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors' role in monitoring the school's work, including the school's progress in meeting the objectives of the post OFSTED action plan, have not been successful in ensuring that deadlines have been met. Some governors express frustration at not being able to ensure this. To some extent they attribute this to the fact that because they lack the educational background, they sometimes find it hard to assess whether the school's failure to meet deadlines is in fact reasonable or not. Budgeting is currently the responsibility of the headteacher and the financial administrator who provide a draft budget for the strategic and finance committee to consider. The governors' finance committee meet half termly to review expenditure.

63. The number of teachers and support staff is appropriately matched to the demands of the curriculum. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of primary school subjects and the age group they teach although at the current time no one has sufficient understanding of the recommended teaching methods and curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of Learning, which is a significant weakness. The arrangements for performance management are in place. Teaching assistants are conscientious and enthusiastic; they provide good support for individuals or small groups of pupils.

64. Staffing levels have been fairly stable in the past, although three new teachers joined the school this term, and all are on temporary contracts. One permanent member of staff is to join the school next term. Staff induction arrangements are unsatisfactory. A draft policy outlines some general points, and staff have had regular meetings with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. However, practical support for teachers in the classroom and with planning is inadequate. What seriously compromises the effectiveness of teachers new to the school, especially those who have no previous experience of

teaching, or any recent experience in this country, is the lack of curriculum guidance. Teaching is appropriately supported by training opportunities and through whole school staff training. The administrative and cleaning staff and lunchtime assistants all contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school and to providing a happy and pleasant atmosphere for pupils.

65. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources, including specific grants and other funding. Short-term financial planning is satisfactory, and longer-term developments are costed. The headteacher and administrator apply best value principles when negotiating purchases of goods and services. Very good use is made of the unqualified teaching staff for ICT and for sport. Despite some improvements in this regard since the last inspection, the headteacher could still make better use of his time to focus on activities that have a direct impact on improving standards, and the quality of teaching and learning.

66. Administrative routines are satisfactory, and the school office is very well staffed for the size of the school and functions smoothly. The school's administrator ensures that financial information is available to the headteacher, and when required, to governors. Satisfactory systems are established for checking and collating purchases, and paying creditors. An audit in 2000 by the local education authority required numerous significant and urgent amendments to financial procedures. The headteacher confirms that these have been implemented. The audit indicates the proper expenditure of all funds allocated to the school, including those for pupils with special educational needs. The core curriculum is adequately funded, and the school makes good use of new technology.

67. The building is of a satisfactory size for the delivery of the curriculum. There is however limited space for group work. Current arrangements for teaching pupils with special educational needs in the same room as pupils having ICT lessons is totally inappropriate, and this needs to be addressed promptly. Outdoor accommodation is good, and includes good facilities for games including an outdoor swimming pool. The school also has a pond and wildlife area. There is as yet no suitable outside working area for pupils in the Foundation Stage of Learning. The headteacher reports that funds are allocated and that plans have been drawn up, and the required work will be taking place in the near future. Resources are satisfactory for the delivery of the curriculum, but are not extensive.

68. The school provides well for pupils' personal development and offers a supportive environment; for pupils, so that they develop and maintain very good attitudes to learning and very good; relationships. Although most pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected, pupils of; all abilities, but especially potentially higher attaining pupils, could be achieving better standards. Pupils enter the school with good attainments. The issues for improvement identified in the last two inspection reports, although given attention, are still outstanding. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. When consideration is given to all of these factors, the school is not providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning by ensuring that:
 - * curriculum planning follows the most recent national guidance;
 - * classroom organisation and the teaching methods employed are appropriate to the children's age and experience;
 - * planned building alterations are implemented to provide the children with access to outdoor facilities.
(Paragraphs 1, 18,27,63,64, 67,70,71,72,73,74,75,76)

- Improve standards in most subjects, especially those achieved by the potentially higher attaining pupils by ensuring that:
 - * teachers' planning is less dependent on the use of published worksheets, and takes into account the needs of all pupils and challenges them;
 - * assessment of pupils' attainments and progress are reliable and are used to inform teaching;
 - * appropriate time is given to all subjects.
(Paragraphs: 4, 5, 8, 20, 24, 27, 28, 29, 46, 47, 52, 68, 81, 82, 84, 85, 88, 91, 94, 97, 101, 109, 110, 111, 113, 116, 118, 122, 123, 133, 137, 146, 148, 150)

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior managers and subject co-ordinators.
(Paragraphs: 58, 59, 59, 102, 110)

- Extend the co-ordinators' roles in raising standards by ensuring that they have sufficient time allocated to gain an overview of the work in their subjects and can then take the necessary action to improve it.
(Paragraphs: 30,59, 64,102,104,110,117,125,132,138,151)

- Improve the headteacher's leadership and management to ensure that:
 - * school developments focus on raising standards;
 - * improvements are carried out with the necessary rigour and pace, and are completed on time;
 - * the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and attainment is central to the school's monitoring procedures
 - * the headteacher is better informed about what is happening around the school on a day-to-day basis, and takes action to address any weaknesses and support the staff as appropriate;
 - * changes are made to the arrangements for teaching pupils with special educational needs so that they are not taught in the same room as pupils having ICT lessons
(Paragraphs: 6, 23, 31, 32, 52, 55, 53, 56, 57, 61, 64, 65, 67, 99, 103, 133)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satis factory	Unsatis factory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	18	16	7	0	0
Percentage	0	13	38	34	15	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y R- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	165
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.6

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	15	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	12	14	14
	Total	20	23	23
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80 (81)	92 (92)	92(88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	21	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	84(85)	88(88)	88 (100)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	5	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	16	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	80(76)	75(59)	80 (86)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	17	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85(83)	80(79)	85 (90)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	158
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	23.9

Education support staff:

Y R – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	154

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	403,277.00
Total expenditure	395,782.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,117.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,300.00
Balance carried forward to next year	13,795.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
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
Number of questionnaires returned

330
105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	50	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	22	54	18	5	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	64	7	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	8	50	25	15	2
The teaching is good.	23	61	9	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	37	32	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	43	8	8	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	30	56	8	5	1
The school works closely with parents.	17	44	28	8	3
The school is well led and managed.	11	50	16	15	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	55	8	3	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	29	32	18	12

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

69. The school does not have a nursery, but admits up to 30 children into the reception class each year. Children join the Reception Class at the start of the term in which their fifth birthday falls. As a result, children born between April and August are in school for only a single term before joining Year 1. There are currently 10 children in the reception class, none of whom is identified as having special educational needs, or learns English as an additional language. Most children have experienced pre-school education at private nurseries or play groups before starting school. Evidence from baseline assessment indicates that when children enter the Reception Class they have skills that are well above average in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and in their personal, social and emotional development.

70. Current provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory, which means the children's progress in all areas of learning is inhibited. The curriculum and teaching methods employed do not follow national guidance. The strength in children's attainment when they start school indicates that most children who are currently in the reception class are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. They are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development.

Personal, social and emotional development.

71. Children are very keen to come to school each day. They settle very quickly into established routines, and show a good level of independence. For example, they cheerfully leave their parents at the classroom door and, without reminders, put away their coats, book bags and lunchboxes, and apply themselves to their work. During the day, their concentration does not waver, despite the fact that much of the teaching is unstimulating and is not matched to children's ages and interests. However, consistent praise from the teacher and other adults sustains the children's high self-esteem. Children express their feelings very clearly, and are sensitive to the needs of others. Their positive attitudes are reinforced by the good relationships with the staff and between their parents and the staff. Although children are well behaved, they are not passive, and are always eager to ask questions. They wait patiently to take turns in activities, and they amicably share equipment. They have excellent understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Children's behaviour in lessons is always at least very good and is often excellent. Children have good understanding of their own cultural traditions, as seen for example, when a child could explain clearly how a baby is christened in church. The teacher occasionally referred to other cultures, but classroom resources, including artefacts, posters, dressing-up clothes and cooking utensils are all western orientated, and do not extend children's understanding of a range of cultures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

72. On entry to the Reception Class, the children's speaking and listening skills are very good. They easily sustain conversations with each other, and answer questions sensibly. However, the teaching does not exploit and build on these skills. For example, during the inspection, children working in small groups with construction sets were given modelling

tasks to complete, but they were not asked to discuss how the objectives might best be achieved. Children listen very attentively to instructions, and to stories, and ask sensible questions related to what they hear. They are confident to ask the meanings of words new to them. They have good knowledge of initial letter sounds, and when reading can link sounds to letters of the alphabet. However, phonic sounds are often taught out of context without reference to related literacy activities. For example, children know that 'W is for 'witch', 'windmill' and 'wicked', and they practise writing the letter; however, they are not challenged to try to write the words, and higher attainers are not challenged to put them in sentences, although some children are clearly capable of doing this. The children's attainment in reading is above average for their age. All children have a good understanding of book conventions. Most can recognise many of the words in their reading books, and they know that the sound of the first letter helps them to read the whole word. However, staff do not sufficiently check children's understanding by discussing with them the content of stories or the meanings of illustrations. Children can read their own names, but have not yet been taught to recognise the names of others. All children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to take books home to read with their parents, but staff give inadequate advice to enable parents to help to develop their children's reading.

73. Many children enter the Reception Class with well-developed early writing skills. They make sound initial progress, and are soon able to write short, coherent sentences. Letters are formed correctly, but children are not taught to set letters accurately on the lines of their writing books and are given few opportunities to practise "pretend-writing." For example, the home corner does not have a telephone message pad or any other prompts for writing. Although children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is above average for their age, their current progress is unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

74. Attainment is well above average when children enter the reception class. Very good skills in language give children the potential to develop well mathematically. Children of average attainment for example can accurately count ten randomly placed objects, and can assess five chairs at a table as sufficient for five children. They can recognise numbers to ten, and a few can write their age and house number. Number rhymes are not used consistently to show practical applications of mathematics. Teaching seen is unsatisfactory and is matched erratically to children's attainment. For example, during the inspection, in a taught play-shopping session, children understood the concept of two items costing significantly more than one item, but were confused by different values applied to almost identical coins. In this session, objectives were unclear, and little progress was made because the adult was unable to gauge the children's prior knowledge of the value of different coins. Children can add together two sets of objects totalling ten, and enter the results formally in their workbooks, using the signs for plus and equals. However, as they do not fully understand the use of the signs, and cannot read back the calculations, such formal recordings should be discouraged. Similarly, a child of below average attainment, who had difficulty in making pencil marks on paper, was expected to copy numerals, and complete formal sums. Worksheets and written tasks are rarely differentiated to meet the needs of pupils of different prior attainment levels. The children have very good understanding of positional language. They can place teddy bears 'beside', 'behind' and 'near'. They know that ducks are smaller than geese, and that the elephant is the largest land animal. Children of average attainment understand 'taller than' and 'shorter than' when comparing the heights of construction set towers. They know the names of some two-dimensional shapes, and some properties of three-dimensional shapes. Although children's attainment in mathematical development is above average for their age, their current progress is unsatisfactory.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

75. On entry to the reception class, children have good vocabulary and great curiosity. For example, they know the names of many animals, and of objects around the classroom and in books. However, they have few opportunities to investigate for themselves. For example, during an unsatisfactory lesson, children were given purses for their pretend-shopping play; the purse shapes were pre-glued envelopes, and the children filled them with pencil rubbings of coins. Opportunities were missed for the children to assess the suitability of a variety of materials for use as a purse, and to select and join suitable material in a purse shape. In a similarly unsatisfactory lesson, taken by another teacher, children watched patiently as the teacher measured paper for each of them, cut it out and indicated where adhesive should be applied. Generally, children are not invited to contribute ideas or to experiment and learn from mistakes. Children are currently observing the progress of a hyacinth bulb. They know that water is required for continuing growth. They enjoy using construction sets, and often develop good structures resembling their original ideas. Children have good understanding of short periods of time. For example, they know that an egg timer can be used to tell them when an activity must be finished. They have made clocks, and are beginning to understand the sequence of the hours of the day. However, some children still do not know the sequence of the days of the week. The children have a very good sense of place, and have good understanding of their immediate environment. During the inspection, for example, an average attaining child recalled the sequence of a recent fire drill, and knew exactly why the drill was important. In ICT, children can select and open computer programs. They have satisfactory skills in using the mouse to complete simple exercises, such as dressing a teddy bear. The use of technology in the classroom is, however underdeveloped as there is little equipment available to demonstrate how things work. Children of all prior attainment levels are under-achieving in this area of learning.

Creative development

76. When children enter the reception class, most have had experience of painting. Most children know the names of colours, and can distinguish between light and dark ones. They have recently had experience of mixing colours, but few can recall how to mix specific colours, as for example when a child was trying to remember how to make the colour orange. The painting area is poorly organised and unattractive. During a session observed, the lesson objective, "to make a comic", was clear, but the children and a parent helper received little guidance about how this difficult task might be achieved. Unsuitable resources in this session contributed to poor results, and the children, aware of their failure, suggested that the finished articles were more suitable as greetings cards. Children have made satisfactory observational drawings of hyacinths, but work is not always matched to attainment. For example, children of below average attainment are required to colour small pictures, although they have difficulty in accurately using coloured pencils. No music sessions were observed during the inspection, although children were observed singing in assembly and learning the words of unfamiliar songs. They participated fully, and concentrated for extended periods. Imaginative play is under-developed. The home corner is inadequately resourced, and uninviting to children. Children bring their own ideas for play, but are rarely stimulated by suggestions from adults. Children of all attainments are under-achieving in this area of learning.

Physical development

77. The previous inspection report judged provision to be unsatisfactory because of the lack of access to outdoor facilities. This is still the case, although the headteacher confirms that plans for development are now well advanced and funds have been set aside. Children's physical development is satisfactory, and they are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. However, they are not adequately challenged. In a satisfactory lesson seen during the inspection, children demonstrated good awareness of space. To a musical accompaniment, they balanced on one leg, and made imaginative shapes with their bodies each time the music stopped. In this lesson, the teacher introduced the 'sound of the week' and invited the children to fly like wasps. Her participation was very effective, and ensured that all children were fully involved. In the playground, Reception Class children were observed climbing confidently on large play equipment used by the older children. They climbed on beams, and swung on ropes and tyres. The children know that warming-up is part of the physical education routine, but are not reminded by the teacher of why this is important. Children's fine manipulative skills are good. For example, they accurately use confetti and sequins to embellish their work. Most children can manipulate buttons and zip fasteners. Scissor control is good.

ENGLISH

78. In the national tests in 2001 at age seven, the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected Level 2 in reading was below the national average, and well below that in similar schools. The proportion attaining the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average but below that found in similar schools. In writing the proportion attaining Level 2 and Level 3 was above the national average and in line with similar schools. Boys and girls attained similar standards, and inspection evidence did not highlight any gender differences.

79. In the English tests at age 11 in 2001, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was in line with schools nationally, but below that found in similar schools. The proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was well above the national average and in line with that in similar schools. In keeping with the national trend pupils performed better in reading than in writing. Based on prior attainment when pupils sat the tests at age seven, pupils' progress was below that found in similar schools.

80. Standards have stayed much the same since the last inspection. Pupils in the current Year 2 and 6 classes are attaining standards in English that are in line with national expectations, except in speaking and listening where standards are very good. By age 11, pupils are very articulate, and confident to speak in a range of contexts. They listen very well. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. They speak very confidently in class discussions, and listen with interest and respect to the contributions of others. Pupils are attentive in a variety of contexts. Teachers speak clearly and fluently to their classes and this provides good role models. The school's tradition of annual productions also offers pupils opportunities to attempt a variety of roles and chorus work, and this contributes to the development of their skills in speaking.

81. At age seven standards in reading are satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils can read independently from a variety of books and magazines, and discuss confidently what they read. The standards attained by average attaining pupils are much lower: pupils make simple errors, and do not always take account of the punctuation in text. Pupils need to be taught a wider range of reading strategies. Many depend on adult help with unfamiliar words, and they do not always understand what they are reading. When not being supported, some pupils make slow progress during reading sessions. A small proportion of pupils in Years 1

and 2 have weak reading skills. They do not find it easy to sound out unknown words, and often make wild guesses based on initial letter sounds. Although teachers guide pupils' reading, they do not give enough attention to assessing pupils' difficulties and to offering strategies to improve. Teachers do offer some advice to parents through pupils' reading diaries, but rarely focus on specifics, such as 'Discuss illustrations and story' or 'Make sure this is understood'.

82. Reading standards at age 11 are satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils read independently and with good concentration and some talk at length about their favourite books. The average attaining pupils have good understanding of texts, and they confidently read aloud with good pace and some dramatic expression. Many of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in the reading tests when they were in Year 2. The school's current prediction is that few of these pupils will however this year reach the similarly higher Level 5 in the test at age 11. This indicates either significant underachievement for these pupils, or unreliable assessment and target setting procedures. By age 11, pupils know how to locate books in the library, and higher attaining pupils confidently use reference books to aid learning in other subjects. Other pupils are sometimes less confident in this area. For example, during the inspection one average attaining pupil confused the meanings of 'index' and 'contents'. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading. Pupils in Year 3 can self-correct and break words down into syllables although a few are still sometimes hesitant when they meet unfamiliar words. By the time they are in Year 4, pupils take good account of the punctuation in texts, and can evaluate the usefulness of different types of texts as a source of information. Most pupils read fluently by the time they are in Year 5, although a few lack expression when reading aloud. Some pupils have reading books that are too simple for them, and books are not changed frequently enough. For example, one Year 3 pupil heard reading had already read the same book three times. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs receive additional support in reading. A reading test is carried out on all pupils every term, which provides a crude measure of pupils' progress. However, the test used is not diagnostic and therefore does not provide information about the strategies pupils' use, or those that need to be developed.

83. In Year 2, standards in writing are in line with national expectations, and a few pupils are on course to achieve the higher Level 3 by the end of the year. These pupils can, for example, re-write popular stories in their own words, and show understanding of a variety of story endings, expressing ideas clearly, and sometimes at length. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attainment require significant guidance and adult help to write complete sentences. Often, their letter formation is weak. General presentation of work is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although misplaced ascending and descending letter strokes are often not corrected in the marking, and some pupils use incorrect pencil grip.

84. Standards in writing are in line with those expected by age eleven. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can write fluently in a variety of genres. They use complex sentences and grammar, and a wide vocabulary. Pupils paragraph their work decisively, and take great pride in presentation. However, evidence from work scrutiny shows that tasks given to potentially higher attaining pupils is rarely different to that for other pupils. This work does not challenge them, and is sometimes too difficult for average attaining pupils.

85. A good range of writing is evident in Years 3 to 6, and most work is of a satisfactory standard. However, all pupils could make better progress and attain higher standards if better use was made of opportunities to write about their work in subjects other than English. Currently such opportunities are very limited. The over-use of worksheets also inhibits pupils' progress, a weakness that was noted in the previous inspection report. Pupils also need to be encouraged to draft and redraft their work.

86. In all lessons, boys and girls work to similar standards. They cooperate well, and their relationships are very good. Behaviour was excellent in three of the six lessons seen, and good or better in the rest. Pupils are very self-disciplined and want to learn. Behaviour was good or better, even when the teaching was unsatisfactory.

87. Teaching in four lessons seen was good but that in two lessons in Years 3 to 6 was unsatisfactory. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils were well motivated and very attentive when the teacher used an owl puppet to get pupils' attention before introducing them to word structures. The lesson proceeded at a very good pace so that pupils learned well. Similarly, in a good lesson in Year 2, work was well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all prior attainment levels. The teacher demonstrated well the required sequencing needed to send a lighthouse keeper's lunch by a rope and pulley. This led pupils to making good suggestions for writing their own sequences, including the use of bullet points and other means of punctuation. In Years 3 to 6, where teaching was good, teachers had good subject knowledge and moved the lessons on at a fast rate which enabled pupils to make good progress, for example in developing library skills, and in designing a leaflet. In one unsatisfactory lesson in Year 6 the teacher had a lack understanding of the teaching methods promoted in The Literacy Strategy. As a result she spent far too long speaking, so that most of the lesson was used as a guided reading session and pupils did not have enough time to do their own writing. In the other unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher's objectives were unclear, and pupils' finished work was of a poor standard. The teacher did not point out pupils' errors in their drafted work, so that their final version did not reflect their capabilities.

88. In almost all classes, work is not planned carefully enough to meet the needs of pupils of all attainments. Pupils of potentially higher attainment are not fully challenged. In most classes pupils do have individual learning targets. Most targets are relevant and are known to pupils, but occasionally, targets are poorly planned. Planned writing opportunities are generally satisfactory, but teachers' expectations are too low for the quantity and quality of work produced by individuals, particularly in pupils' writing in subjects across the curriculum. In some lessons, learning support assistants have little effect upon pupils' understanding and progress, because the teacher's lesson objectives are not clear enough.

89. Where teaching is good learning support assistants are deployed well to support lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The support assistant, who has had specific training in additional literacy, is helping pupils to make good progress. On the basis of evidence seen, the use of homework to support work in English is satisfactory. The use of ICT could be better used to support pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

90. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001, the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3 in mathematics at age seven was in line with schools nationally. At age 11, the proportion attaining the expected Level 4 was in line with schools nationally, and the proportion attaining Level 5 was well above the national average. Standards in mathematics at age seven and eleven improved from 2000 to 2001. However, when pupils' results at age 11 are compared to the results of these same pupils when they took the tests at age seven, progress levels are below those found in similar schools nationally. Although the results in Year 6 were lower in 2000 than in 2001, prior attainment grades were then satisfactory. Results over time show no overall trends, which is sometimes the case with relatively small cohorts of pupils.

91. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations and as such are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. There is however,

less recorded work in mathematics than one might expect to find at this stage in the term. The work that is available shows for example, that pupils have sound understanding of money and of place value to tens of thousands, and a sound knowledge of fractions including converting different fractions to a lowest common denominator. Evidence from a lesson observation shows some pupils have very good mathematical understanding and well developed thinking that is not being extended by the teaching, and pupil's overall progress here is currently unsatisfactory. As a consequence the school may well struggle to achieve the targets agreed with the local education authority (LEA) for the proportion of pupils expected to attain at least Level 4 in the tests next May. Other work samples seen from Year 6 pupils are based on Springboard Maths, a booster programme for lower attaining Year 5 pupils. This is inappropriately being taught to all Year 6 pupils rather than to those pupils identified as unlikely to attain Level 4 without additional intervention. It is unclear either to the teacher or to the mathematics co-ordinator why she has been instructed to teach this programme to all Year 6 pupils.

92. In the current Year 2 class, standards are in line with those expected for pupils of this age, and there is clear evidence of the pupils being challenged and the most able pupils reaching the higher attainment levels. For example, scrutiny of work shows higher attaining pupils are already able to give the correct change, to identify patterns in a series of number stories, to add on tens mentally and to order numbers to at least 50.

93. Pupils' current progress in mathematics throughout Years 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress is less secure. Some good progress is evident in Years 3 and 5 but there is unsatisfactory progress in Years 4 and 6. The teaching observed in both Year 4 and 6 classes was unsatisfactory, and slow progress is also reflected in the pupils' work seen over the current term.

94. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory and as such has stayed much the same as at the time of the last inspection. A common weakness in teaching in most classes is the lack of differentiated tasks for the potentially higher attaining pupils, which limits the progress that these pupils make, and the standards they achieve. Work set for lower attaining pupils, including pupils with special needs, is usually well matched to their current attainment levels, and pupils are well supported in lessons. Some pupils also receive additional support in withdrawal sessions when they work with the SENCo or learning support staff.

95. Standards in using and applying mathematics, are an area already identified by the school as needing improvement. Lesson observations show that some teachers need further training and support to develop pupils' mathematical thinking, and to encourage pupils to use a variety of strategies in calculations and when solving problems mentally. Teachers are, for the most part, not skilled in teaching this aspect.

96. The teaching seen in one lesson, a lesson in Year 2 was good. The teacher related mathematical problems to pupils' everyday experiences. Pupils were encouraged to think and to explain their methods. Questions such as "What am I doing now?" and "How did you work that out?" helped pupils to focus and encouraged them both to think and to explain their thinking. When pupils offered incorrect answers, the teacher took time to explore their thinking so as to understand their mistakes and move their learning on.

97. Teachers' plans in most instances outline clear objectives, which are shared with pupils, and there is some good questioning in a number of lessons. In general however, teachers expectations of pupils need to be raised, especially their expectations of higher attaining pupils. Planning rarely shows appropriate differentiation for these pupils. Teachers' over-reliance on the use of worksheets also limits pupils' progress, and this was also a weakness identified in previous inspection reports.

98. Most teachers explain tasks and concepts well, so that pupils know what to do. The majority of pupils show a good level of interest, independence and perseverance during whole class teaching sessions, during group activities and when set individual tasks. They work well in pairs and groups when it is appropriate to do so. Teachers generally manage pupils well, and for their part pupils are very co-operative. However in one lesson in Year 4, the lesson got off to a bad start as the teacher did not have the attention of the pupils before proceeding, and for the most part pupils behaved inappropriately during the lesson. As a result when they were meant to start working on independent tasks, more than half the class were unsure of how to do their work, and the teacher had to show them again.

99. In some lessons, more time needs to be allocated to pupils working on individual or group tasks. Sometimes pupils do not have enough time to practise and consolidate their learning. This is particularly the case in the Year 6 class where the teacher has had no previous training in teaching The Numeracy Strategy, and has not had sufficient guidance since starting at the school.

100. Pupils have few opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to work in other subjects, such as geography and science, because they too infrequently record work in these subjects. However when required to do so, as seen in two lessons in design and technology, pupils apply their skills effectively. Displays in classrooms include some useful mathematical information to guide pupils' learning.

101. The school has established systems for regularly assessing pupils' attainments. These are based on a commercial scheme. However, if assessments are to be effective and informative, the school will need to determine the precise links between the commercial assessment scheme, the commercial scheme used to guide teaching and the National Curriculum Levels. A recent review of the school's assessments procedures has also highlighted areas that still need development to ensure consistency and reliability. The school does not make best use of national and optional test results when planning improvements. For example, pupils' results in the tests of 2001 have yet to be analysed and shared with the staff. This is planned for the latter part of this term. However this should have been done before the onset of this academic year, so that teachers throughout the school can amend their practice in the light of any weaknesses identified.

102. The overall management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has been managing the subject for the past year. She has a sound understanding of the subject requirements, and she has had the opportunity to observe parts of lessons in four classes and to sample pupils' work. However, neither she nor anyone else has done a full audit of the teaching and learning in the subject since the time of the last inspection. Some mathematics lessons will have been observed where these coincided with the headteacher's termly monitoring of teaching. However, the scope of these observations would not have highlighted weaknesses in pupils' attainment and progress, or lack of challenge for the most able pupils. The need to monitor planning, teaching, learning and pupils' progress continues to be a priority to ensure full curriculum coverage, and that pupils are taught to at least a satisfactory standard in relation to their abilities.

103. Resources are satisfactory. The school is currently using a number of commercially produced mathematics schemes of work, and is exploring the possibility of purchasing a new one. Instead of constantly looking for appropriate commercially produced schemes to meet its needs, the school needs to work on developing its own teaching plans and practice, based on the needs of pupils at this school. Already too often it is the content of the schemes that informs what is taught, instead of teaching being based on any assessment of the pupils' needs. There is limited use of ICT to support pupils' work in mathematics. Withdrawal from some mathematics lessons for ICT teaching and for SEN support needs to be monitored carefully to ensure that pupils who miss out on parts of lessons are not subsequently disadvantaged.

SCIENCE

104. Teacher assessments for pupils aged seven in 2001 show that the proportion of pupils reaching both the expected and higher levels was in line with the national average and with that in similar schools. By the age of 11, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels is below the national average, and is well below average when compared with schools in a similar context. Standards by age eleven have not improved since the last inspection. The progress of pupils' who took the tests when they were 11 in 2001 was well below average, based on the results they achieved in the national tests taken when they were seven in 1997. This weakness in attainment is in part because the management of the subject is unsatisfactory. As a result, too much reliance is placed on commercial schemes and worksheets, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to write at length about what they have learnt and the work given to potentially higher attaining pupils does not make them think hard enough. All of this undermines what pupils, especially higher attaining pupils, can achieve.

105. Standards of work in the current Year 2 and 6 classes are in line with national expectations. The good quality of the teaching in both these classes is helping to raise standards here. For example, by the age of eleven, pupils can describe accurately how to assemble simple electrical circuits containing one bulb, but are uncertain about how to use bulbs in series or in parallel, and the effect that these arrangements would have on the light emitted. They understand that some materials do not permit the current to flow, and act as insulators. They explain the difference between veins and arteries. Pupils carry out experiments to test growing conditions for cress. They know that oxygen is carried around the body by the blood, pumped by the heart. Pupils learn and remember new scientific words. Some higher attaining pupils are very knowledgeable. For example, one boy gave a clear description of how static electricity is formed when two materials are rubbed together.

106. At age seven, pupils know that batteries provide a safe source of electricity for things such as torches and remote control units. They learn that batteries come in a variety of different sizes and shapes. Higher attaining pupils suggest that the poles help us to fit the batteries correctly into the battery holder. Pupils test this by taking a torch to pieces and re-assembling it. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to understand that their torch will not light if similar poles are touching. Pupils have satisfactory understanding of the life cycle of the frog and birds. They describe what creatures they might find under stones and fallen branches.

107. The school bases much of its work on allowing pupils to conduct investigations, and this sets pupils on the way to develop good scientific habits. The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons during the inspection was good overall, with very good teaching seen in a lesson in Year 6. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 was good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Work in Year 1 is carefully planned to take account of the fact that more than half the class are only in their second year of schooling.

Starting with a reading from a book they have read in the literacy hour, the teacher introduced the idea of using light at night. She made good use of the classroom assistant to take pupils into a blacked-out room to let them experience total darkness, before switching on lights. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher used questions very well to promote discussion about which batteries suited particular items. Good use was made of resources to show the wide range of batteries available.

108. Teaching in lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 has also improved since the previous inspection. Teaching was good or very good in two lessons, and satisfactory with some shortcomings in the other two lessons. In a very good lesson in Year 6 about insulators and conductors, the teacher gave clear explanations of the objectives of the lesson and constantly asked pupils to explain what they were doing. She frequently replied to pupils' questions with another question, skilfully pitched at a level the pupil could answer but which would lead the pupil to better understanding. The teacher set high expectations that all pupils would contribute and that their explanations would be precise. This encourages pupils to think carefully. High teacher expectations were also seen in a lesson when pupils in Year 3 compared different types of plastic. This led one higher achieving pupil to note that the plastic used as an insulator on electrical cable was "Strong and bendy but won't catch fire." Teaching does not make pupils think hard enough in some lessons, for example when pupils in Year 5 were not given the chance to write about what they know about the properties of air, and when pupils in Year 4 were not provided with a sufficiently wide range of metals to test with magnets.

109. There are still some weaknesses in teachers' approach to planning lessons, and some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is apparent in the scrutiny of work, when pupils are often all asked to complete the same exercises. As a result, the needs of different attainment groups, in particular those of higher attaining pupils, are not being met. Too many worksheets are used. This restricts opportunities for pupils to develop skills in presenting their information in different ways and showing what they know and understand by writing longer answers in their own words. Teachers make useful comments when they mark pupils' work that show them where they have made mistakes. They make good use of support assistants to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given equal opportunities to succeed in science, and this contributes to those pupils making satisfactory progress.

110. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is not given enough time to check teaching and learning in lessons. This was also noted as a weakness in the previous two inspection reports. The headteacher, and not the co-ordinator, monitors teachers' planning. The co-ordinator is not provided with any feedback about the quality of teachers' planning. The co-ordinator does scrutinise a sample of pupils' work each term and reports back to colleagues. However, there is no collection of pupils' work showing the National Curriculum levels expected at appropriate stages which would help teachers to judge standards of work; this is perhaps why teachers' assessments are unreliable. For example, the targets set for pupils at age eleven in the last two years show the school did not expect any pupils to reach the higher Level 5, but subsequently several pupils did. Similarly, during the inspection some pupils showed by their answers and the depth of their thinking that they are capable of doing more than they are expected to. Not enough use is made of results from National Curriculum tests to assess pupils' performance, and to show how standards can be raised. Results from last year have still not been analysed.

111. Two years ago, the school bought a commercial scheme to support the science curriculum. There are no signs yet that it is having any effect on raising standards. In some instances, teachers place too much importance on teaching the units suggested by the scheme rather than using them to help pupils reach higher standards.

112. Information and communications technology is used to support science lessons, for example, in producing databases and graphs about the growth of plants, but its use needs to be extended to include equipment to measure and sense temperature, movement and sound. The co-ordinator has worked hard to provide resources for science through fund raising events and asking parents to contribute materials. Resources are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Two art lessons and two design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection period. Additional evidence was available from displays in classrooms and around the school. An album with photographs of previous art displays was also seen, but as this was not annotated to show the age of pupils completing the work, the skills being developed or the media used, it did not provide information about curriculum coverage or pupils' attainments and progress in the past. In the lessons seen and from work on display, it is clear that pupils' attainments throughout the school are much the same as at the time of the last inspection and are broadly in line with nationally expected levels. However, there is little evidence of higher attainment or pupils being challenged to achieve their full potential. Some exceptions to this can be seen in the artwork on display in the Year 5 classroom, some good observational drawings in Year 2 and the portraits in Year 1, which are of a better standard.

114. The last inspection report did not include a judgement about the quality of teaching in either subject. In the lessons seen during this inspection teaching was good overall. Activities were interesting, and good attention was given to developing pupils' skills. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Year 2, pupils were making an animal's body using lollipop sticks. They made good gains in learning the importance of measuring and cutting accurately, the techniques of using a saw and the need for safety when using it. Similarly in a well-taught art lesson in Year 5 pupils learned well the skill of art composition. They used a viewer to look at a variety of carefully placed objects from different angles and perspectives. The teacher demonstrated very well how to draw what they saw and how to use colour, line and tone effectively. Good use was also made of the work of other artists to demonstrate the application of techniques. The pupils were introduced to a good range of new skills, and expectations of pupils were high.

115. In all four lessons, pupils behaved well and showed good or very good attitudes to their work. For example, in a lesson in Year 3, pupils were highly motivated because the teaching was very focussed and pupil thoroughly enjoyed their work on creating patterns. Teachers create a very good climate for learning in these subjects so that pupils learn well in an informal environment where they enjoy conversations with their peers, teachers and support assistants.

116. What limits pupils' progress and attainments over time is that both subjects have been given too little attention and there is minimal improvement to the curriculum since the last inspection. Furthermore an imbalance in the overall curriculum limits the time available for these subjects. Although the school notes that they are following the QCA curriculum guidance and an outline curriculum map has now been drawn up, pupils in Year 6 when questioned, could recall carrying out some of the prescribed activities but clearly had no

recollection of completing all of them. There is no guidance for staff about how to develop pupils' skills progressively in either subject as they move up through the school. Pupils' progress over time is therefore dependent on the individual teachers' subject knowledge, and on latest curriculum guidance.

117. Developing work in both art and design technology has been given little attention during the past two years. The overall leadership and management of the subjects are still unsatisfactory. The temporary art co-ordinator who joined the school this term has however worked well in her own time to draw up some whole school guidance, an outline curriculum map and a list of the available resources which has been distributed to all staff. The design and technology coordinator has over the two years been given a limited amount of time non-contact time and has carried out similar activities. Resources are satisfactory for the delivery of the curriculum. Some examples of ICT being used to support pupils' artwork were seen during the inspection period.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

118. Only one history lesson and three geography lessons were seen during the inspection. In some workbooks, only a small amount of work was found on which to make judgements. However, discussions with pupils, and the work that was checked show that pupils' attainments in history and geography by age seven and eleven are broadly in line with national expectations. This is similar to the situation at the previous inspection. The lack of evidence in books, however, raises questions about the amount of history and geography that is taught and whether pupils are being sufficiently challenged.

119. Discussions with pupils, and evidence from books show that by the age of seven, pupils can talk about their own village and say that it is in Essex in England. They identify changes that have taken place in school with the building of a new classroom and new houses that have been built in the village. They describe holidays that they have had at the seaside and in the countryside and talk about how the seaside differs from the area round their village. In a lesson about the local area, pupils in Year 1 were able to place on a map some photographs of buildings and other geographical features. By the age of 11, pupils can talk about local industries such as an apple orchard that they visited. They describe how the apples are stored, and can give accurate directions of their route from home to school. Pupils show a good understanding of the use of co-ordinates in map work, and can give detailed compass directions. They describe the dangers to the environment from pollution and global warming. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils discovered how dirty water is made usable by filtering. In a lesson in the Year 4 class they learned to give grid references for two points on a map and describe the route between the points. They were able to use the key to identify symbols for roads, tracks and paths.

120. In history, pupils in Year 2 learned about the way in which Remembrance Sunday is celebrated. They visited the village war memorial and noted that both world wars are commemorated on the memorial. Higher and average attaining pupils can explain why poppies are worn and they wrote about the significance of the two-minute silence. Higher attaining pupils identify games and toys used in Victorian Times by studying pictures, and they note those games that are not played nowadays. Average and lower attaining pupils however, find this work difficult. Pupils can identify differences in photographs noting that old photographs were usually tinted brown, and begin to understand that we can find out about things that happened in the past by excavating artefacts. In Year 1, pupils gain an understanding of what is meant by the past when they compare modern and old teddy bears.

121. In Year 6 pupils study life in Victorian times in greater depth. They write about the daily life of working class children in the form of a diary. An average attaining pupil described the life of a maid and how hard she worked. However, a lower-attaining pupil, although giving a description of a boy, could not say what he did or for whom he worked. Pupils have satisfactory memories of work done in previous years. For example, they know that the Ancient Greeks fought battles with the Persians and Spartans and can talk about the gods worshipped. They cannot describe differences between the way of life in Ancient Greece and Sparta, and their knowledge of the events surrounding the story of *Helen of Troy* is sketchy. Pupils name the queens of Henry V111, and know why he established the Church of England. They have clear memories of their visit to Hampton Court, and draw comparisons between the kitchens there and their kitchens at home.

122. The teaching seen in geography lessons was sound overall. Good, open-ended questions and careful prompting were a good feature of a lesson in Year 1 when the teacher reminded pupils of a recent walk through the village. This enabled pupils to place pictures of buildings on a map. The classroom computer was used to allow pupils to write captions for a poster they started to compile about the village. In Year 4, the teacher's personal interest in map reading was communicated to pupils, who successfully learnt to give grid references and clear directions. They were helped in this task when the teacher reminded them of how they had programmed a toy robot in information and communications technology lessons. More work would have been produced if there had been fewer interruptions due to misbehaviour. The work for lower and average attaining pupils was suited to their abilities when they identified and described routes on a local map. Work for more able pupils, however, did not make them think hard enough.

123. In a good geography lesson in Year 5, the teacher provided pupils with the chance to filter water to clean it. This led pupils to discuss various ways of filtering substances out of water. However, an opportunity to ask pupils to predict what might happen as they filtered various mixtures was missed. The scrutiny of pupils' work completed this term showed that, in some classes, there is very little recorded work. What work there is, is often very short and is often poorly presented. Some work is also not marked.

124. In the one history lesson seen, the teacher made it clear to pupils what they were expected to look for and note down while they watched a video contrasting the lives of rich and poor people in Victorian times. Good questioning and interventions by the teacher ensured that pupils stayed focussed on the task, so that most came to a good understanding of how people lived in those times.

125. The overall leadership and management of both subjects are unsatisfactory. Neither co-ordinator has sufficient time to monitor standards of teaching and learning adequately. They do not see teachers' planning at the beginning of term, and therefore have no information about its quality or whether the curriculum is being developed in a progressive way. Co-ordinators have some opportunity to look at teachers' medium term planning on the one half-day they are allocated each term to manage their subject. However, as this half-day often comes late in the term, it is therefore of limited value. For example, the history co-ordinator was given time away from her class during the inspection to monitor planning, but this was eight weeks after the term had started, when a considerable part of the medium term plan had already been taught. Both co-ordinators have ensured that the long term plans for their subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The management of history is more successful than geography because the co-ordinator has collected work from selected pupils, talked to those pupils about their work, and checked the work against National Curriculum levels. This analysis provides useful information for the co-ordinator and other teachers to see how well pupils are doing and provides some information about how much history is being taught. When the geography co-ordinator tried to carry out a similar

exercise, not enough work was available to monitor. As a result, it was difficult for the co-ordinator to make judgements about the standards in geography.

126. Resources for geography and history are satisfactory overall. Although the school has few historical artefacts of its own, it gets round this by subscribing to the Museums Loan Service. Visits to local museums, re-enactments of Tudor life at Kentwell Hall and visits by theatre companies enrich pupils' learning in history. In geography, pupils study the local environment, including the creek and tidal mill, and Walton-on-the-Naze.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

127. The standards attained by pupils at the age of 11 are above national expectations, and those attained by seven year olds are broadly typical of those expected for pupils of their age. This represents an improvement since the last inspection for eleven-year-olds, who have gained greatly from the introduction of the computer suite to which they have regular access, and from the high quality teaching they receive whilst working there. For older pupils, there are slight gaps in their use of ICT systems to measure physical data such as temperature and sound, because the relevant equipment has only just arrived and has not yet been incorporated into the curriculum. Pupils are making good progress in acquiring ICT skills.

128. Provision for ICT has improved since September with the appointment of a highly qualified teaching assistant, who acts as a subject manager. As a result, most pupils are confident users of ICT in the areas of the curriculum they are being taught. Pupils in Year 1 learn to control a mouse well to select a spray can and paint brush when using a painting program to create pictures of bonfire night. They type in text and change the colour of the words. They construct simple graphs showing their favourite pets. By the age of seven, pupils use both drop-down menus and icons to help them carry out tasks such as saving and printing their work. They have a good understanding of how to use the keyboard, for example, using the *shift* key to make single capital letters and the *caps lock* key to print whole words in capitals. Pupils can select tunes connected to a picture, choose different instruments to play the tune and alter the tempo. They open their own files to retrieve and add to the work they have done.

129. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop a good understanding of how to combine pictures and print and, pupils in Year 4 create a simple newspaper about life in Tudor times. They select pictures from the Internet and books and scan them into their work to make them more interesting and informative. In Year 5, lower attaining pupils were seen making good progress in learning to use a database to answer questions about birds. By the age of 11, pupils are able to collect information about the weather in a database and to present the information as graphs. They rotate, re-size and move shapes when using a graphical program to produce pictures based on the painting entitled "The Snail" by Matisse. Pupils learn techniques to use coloured backgrounds, decorative borders and fonts and pictures imported from collections of artwork and the internet to produce colourful book covers. They use the Internet to carry out research about famous Victorians, which they then use in their homework. Pupils show a good understanding of the use of ICT in the wider world. For example, they explain that computers make the storage and retrieval of information more efficient in business and commerce. Pupils have a good understanding of how programmable devices, such as washing machines, lighten the burden of housework today.

130. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, consequently they make good progress in ICT. They take part in lessons with the rest of their class so that they learn skills such as saving and printing their work and how to get information from databases. In addition, pupils who are withdrawn from class for extra help from special educational

needs teachers receive extra help on computers. The subject manager looks at pupils' individual education plans and sets up programs to support their special educational needs, such as letter recognition, number work and sequencing pictures and stories.

131. Although computers were used to support lessons in classrooms, no lessons were seen in which teachers taught specific computer skills. All lessons in the computer suite are taught by the subject manager. The quality of the teaching seen was consistently high. Lessons are planned well and closely follow the requirements of the National Curriculum. The work is interesting to pupils, and the small numbers using the suite, usually eight pupils at a time, means that pupils get individual attention and that they get through a great deal of work in lessons. For example, in a lesson with Year 5 pupils, two higher ability pupils who had missed the introduction to work on databases caught up with their classmates and were finding out information without adult help in the space of one lesson. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy their lessons. As a result, most pupils achieve well in taught sessions.

132. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Good use is made of the expertise of the subject manager and the facilities in the computer suite. There are good resources, most of which are used well, and new resources, such as an interactive whiteboard are soon to be installed. Pupils are already benefiting from the hard work put in by the subject manager since her appointment in September. All pupils have a personal file in which all the work they produce on computers will be stored and which will follow them through the school. Opportunities for older pupils to learn and practise new skills are being provided through the school newspaper that pupils in Year 6 are in the process of compiling. All but the two newly appointed teachers have undertaken some training on computers, and all will take part in training to support government initiatives in the New Year. However, there are some management issues which need to be addressed. The subject manager, although highly qualified, is not a qualified teacher. No-one on the teaching staff has overall responsibility for ensuring that the National Curriculum requirements are met, and that ICT is used to support learning in other subjects. Although ICT is being used to support work in subjects such as mathematics, history and art, there are instances where greater use of computers could be made in classes, for example, in recording results of experiments in science.

133. In the policy statement, the subject manager is not included in arrangements for assessing pupils' progress, which is the responsibility of class teachers. It is not clear how teachers' assessments of work carried out in classrooms is used to inform planning of their own work, or that carried out in the computer suite. The computer suite is also used by special educational needs groups at the same time that pupils are using computers. The school intends to increase the number of computers in the suite, and this will put more pressure on the space available for both groups of pupils. Nonetheless, given the good resources available, the expertise of the subject manager and training arranged for staff, the school is in a good position to improve further standards in ICT.

MUSIC

134. The previous report did not include a judgement about pupils' attainment in music. During this inspection, a whole-school singing assembly was seen, and three music lessons in Years 1, 2 and 3 in which the teaching was good overall. Additionally, a group of pupils in Year 6 performed a short, original composition, and subsequently discussed their work with an inspector.

135. Throughout the school, and by the time pupils' leave the school, their attainment is in line with national expectations. By Year 1, for example pupils have learned the names of simple percussion instruments. They understand terms such as 'vary the speed', and can

select instruments to demonstrate sounds of their own choice. Pupils in Year 2 understand that pitch varies from high to low. They are confident to attempt to play short phrases using a range of instruments. In a good lesson seen here, the teacher used well a tape recorder to play back, and improve, pupils' performance. She asked challenging questions to assess pupils' learning, and encouraged pupils to assess their own work. In Year 3, pupils demonstrated a good sense of rhythm. They know the 'rest' symbol in music, and can apply it when playing instruments. They learn a good range of songs, and are confident when singing in pairs to the class. In a very good lesson seen in Year 3, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject stimulated pupils to produce their best work in singing and composing.

136. Pupils in Year 6 have studied Holst's Planets Suite, and have discussed how the music affects their feelings. They have experimented with sounds related to contrasting moods and activities. For example, they decided upon suitable sounds to represent space travel, including gravity and blast-off, and performed their work in a school assembly. They have good recall of work from the previous year. They sing sweetly in rounds, and have satisfactory understanding of musical terminology such as the semi-tone, quaver and crescendo. In school musical productions, they have opportunities to sing alone or in a chorus.

137. Pupils in all year groups listen to wide varieties of music and songs. In assemblies, they hear a different piece of music each day. Their knowledge of composers and performers is good, although they sometimes confuse these terms. Although progress is satisfactory in all aspects of the music curriculum, the length of lessons is quite short which does not leave much time for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. All pupils are fully involved, and those with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons. Singing throughout the school is good. Pupils enjoy learning and singing a wide range of songs, and they learn to apply breathing techniques demonstrated to them.

138. The teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was good. Teachers' planning for music is satisfactory, but there are currently no assessment systems in place. The two co-ordinators who took over the role at the start of the autumn term have very good subject knowledge, but are not allocated time to monitor and support teaching and learning throughout the school. They have a number of other responsibilities, and feel they have insufficient time to organise a school choir or orchestra. The policy for music, and schemes of work, are satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

139. Pupils' attainments in physical education at age seven and eleven, and throughout the school, exceed the nationally expected levels. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Although no teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching and learning seen elsewhere, and evidence of the schools' success in sporting events and competitions, is sufficient to make a judgement that the good standards attained lower down the school are maintained at the top of the school. By the time pupils leave the school, most have learned to swim at least 25 metres.

140. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons and over time because the teaching is good and the provision for physical education is good. A generous amount of time is given to the subject, and extra-curricular provision at

different times in the year also enhances pupils' attainments. The school employs some professional specialist coaching. Good use is made of specialist staff to develop the expertise of class teachers, because they regularly sit in on lessons, which provides good training opportunities.

141. In two of the lessons seen, a professional coach taught gymnastics and the teaching was very good. What made this teaching particularly effective was the very good subject knowledge and use of demonstration that helped pupils to perform well-coordinated and controlled movements. Pupils took great pride in their work, and worked very hard to improve their performance during the lessons. Very good use was made of pupils' performances to share good practice and move pupils learning on at a brisk pace. Because the instructor regularly teaches all of the pupils, he knows them well and is instrumental in ensuring that what pupils learn each term, and from one year to the next, builds progressively on pupils' prior attainment and extends their performance well.

142. In two games lessons seen, which were taught by the headteacher and the PE coordinator, the teaching was good. Both teachers have good subject knowledge, and the skills of football and hockey were taught well so that pupils made good progress and quickly improved their performance. Pupils were supported effectively if they experienced difficulty. For example, in Year 3 the teacher sensitively supported and encouraged pupils who were less confident, praising their efforts and highlighting what they had done well, as well as providing guidance on how to improve.

143. In all of the lessons seen, teachers used assessment well to highlight good practice and identify points for development; this helped to move pupils' learning on at a good rate. All teachers set a good example to pupils by changing into appropriate clothing and participating in lessons. Pupils were well managed and very well-behaved, because teaching challenged them and they did not have time to become restless.

144. Current arrangements enable appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum requirements, and opportunities for assessing pupils' attainments during lessons are utilised well and are linked to the lesson's learning objectives. A good range of extra-curricular activities take place during different points in the year, but few are currently taking place, and some parents at the meeting prior to the inspection were unhappy about this. The school has high participation in local and county sporting events such as netball, football, rugby, and cricket athletics. These and the school's links with Colchester football and rugby clubs and Essex County Cricket club, enhance the school's provision and make a very good contribution to pupils' social development. The school has a number of trophies on display that has been awarded for achievement. When an inspector spoke with one of the professional coaches, he was keen to point out that pupils at Alresford are not only well known for their sporting achievements, but also for their very good attitudes in competitive sport.

145. Resources are good and these include an outdoor swimming pool available for use in the summer months. The subject is soundly led. The coordinator has an overview of work across the subject from liaising with the sports coaches. The school is currently building up a bank of lesson plans which will be available and useful for other staff to use.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. The previous inspection report did not include a judgement about standards of pupils' work or teaching in religious education, but it did note pupils' satisfactory progress in the subject. During this inspection, three lessons were seen. Other inspection evidence

included observation of collective worship and a small number of examples of pupils' work, and interviews with pupils. On the basis of this evidence, attainment by ages seven and eleven is below that expected by the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils' progress in the subject during their time in school is unsatisfactory and this represents a decline in standards.

147. In Year 6, no religious education has yet been taught this year. Discussion with a group of pupils in Year 6 demonstrates that pupils have studied a number of faiths in the past without clearly understanding the major principles of any one of them. Although pupils of average attainment know that Christians believe in God, and that Jesus was crucified, they are confused about the sequence of events at Easter. They have some knowledge of a christening and baptism. They do not relate the Old Testament to the Jewish faith, and cannot differentiate between holy books used in different religions. For example, they believe the Torah to be a Muslim book. They know a few Old Testament stories, but cannot place in sequence bible stories about the Jews in Egypt. Pupils' moral development is not inhibited by their lack of religious understanding. For example, they believe that all people should have freedom of worship, and they cannot comprehend why wars should be fought that are based on differences in religious beliefs.

148. In Year 2, pupils of average attainment have some understanding of Christianity, and they occasionally visit the local church. They know some differences between Christian and Sikh weddings, but their knowledge of faiths is confused. For example, in discussion during the inspection, a group of pupils thought that Moses and Jesus were friends, and that Jesus told stories about Noah's flood. At the end of a lesson about the Hindu festival of Divali, a pupil of average attainment defined a diva (candleholder) as 'something you wear round your neck'. Pupils of all attainments have a strong sense of morality. They know the importance of keeping promises, and are able to give many examples in children's stories of good overcoming evil. In a satisfactory lesson seen in Year 3, pupils were spiritually uplifted by the story of Mother Theresa. They had previously downloaded information from the Internet, and knew the dates of her birth and death, and of the award of the Nobel peace prize. The lesson emphasised her vocation and her goodness to others, and one pupil summed up her role as being 'God's assistant'. However, in this lesson, the teacher mentioned neither Mother Theresa's Christianity nor her commitment to people of all faiths.

149. School assemblies are generally Christian in content, and comply with legal requirements. The music coordinators carefully select a wide variety of music and song to reinforce assembly themes. The quality of music establishes feelings of spirituality in assemblies, and pupils sing, pray, and reflect quietly upon current topics. However, few opportunities are provided in religious education lessons for pupils to reflect upon their learning. In an autumn-themed assembly for Years Reception, 1 and 2, no music was played, and the teacher talked for too long. Pupils who indicated that they wanted to contribute were sometimes waved aside.

150. Teaching and learning in the three lessons seen was satisfactory overall. However, pupils' progress over time is unsatisfactory. This is because pupils spend too little time on the subject and not enough time has been given to ensuring that what pupils learn each year builds on their previous learning. In lessons seen, teachers' subject knowledge and expertise of developing pupils' religious understanding were generally weak, and planning was too brief. Pupils' attitudes were always good, and they listened attentively even when stories were too long or too complex for them to understand fully. Few links are established between religious education and other subjects, and the quality and quantity of pupils' written work is limited, even when account is taken of the time of year the inspection took place. Resources are satisfactory, but are poorly organised and inadequately used in lessons seen.

151. The head teacher is the religious education co-ordinator. His expertise is satisfactory, although he has not attended any recent training. He does not observe the teaching and learning across the subject, and is therefore not aware of the current strengths and weaknesses.