

INSPECTION REPORT

Thames View Infant School

Barking

LEA area: Barking and Dagenham

Unique Reference Number: 101200

Inspection Number: 66779

Headteacher: Mrs. H. D. Collins

Reporting inspector: Mr. D. Rosenthal
14524

Dates of inspection: 15-18 November 1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Infant School
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	3 - 7
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Bastable Avenue Barking IG11 OLG
Telephone number:	0181 270 4317
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	None at present
Date of the previous inspection:	19-22 June 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. D. Rosenthal, Rgl Mrs. F. Luke, Lay Inspector	Science	Attainment and progress
	Music	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Religious education	Leadership and management
	English as an additional language	The efficiency of the school Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Ms. F. Bevan		Partnership with parents and the community
	History	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	Geography	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Art	
Mr. J. Lee Mrs. C. Pryor	Physical education	Teaching
	Mathematics	The curriculum and assessment
	Equality of opportunity	
	Under fives	
	English	
Mrs. V. Sander	Design and technology	
	Special educational needs	
Mr. S. Lucock	Information technology	

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Main Findings

What the school does well

- The teaching is very good in many science lessons.
- Most children make good progress in mathematics, science and religious education.
- Answers to teachers' questions are often good. Children use correct vocabulary.
- The school is very well managed and is set to move forward rapidly.
- Staff are well supported and the headteacher is aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Children are well cared for. They feel safe and happy in the school.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The teaching in a few classes is not good enough.
- II. The teaching methods have too little variety.
- III. In some subjects the older children are not expected to write well enough.
- IV. Children who are in the early stages of learning to speak English get too little support.
- V. Children with serious difficulties with learning are not helped early enough in their school career.
- VI. The learning in art, music and physical education is weak.

The school has a number of strengths. It is going in the right direction and its weaknesses are being overcome through strong management. The governors' action plan will show how weaknesses will be dealt with and a copy will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has overcome several of the weaknesses shown in the 1995 inspection but too many remain. Very good progress has been made in getting children to speak well when answering questions in class. Classrooms are better organised. Children with learning difficulties are assessed more thoroughly in most classes. However, teaching and learning are still not good enough in some classes and the work to be covered in art, music and physical education is still not planned well enough. There are, however, well thought out plans in hand to make the necessary improvements in all of these areas and the school is moving forward well.

• Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds in Year 2, based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Reading	E	C
Writing	E	C
Mathematics	E	C

Key	
<i>Well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>Average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>Below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>Well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

Most children achieve below the expected standard by age five. Assessments show that the school's performance is about average in science but well below average in English and mathematics for children aged seven. However, children at Thames View Infant School reach about the same standard in these subjects as in schools with a similar intake. The inspection shows that standards are rising in English and mathematics. Children reach the standards expected by the age of seven in information technology and religious education. In geography, standards are about average, but they are weaker in other subjects.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Mainly good
Science		Very good
Information Technology		Satisfactory
Religious Education		Satisfactory
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Teaching quality varies too much between classes and even between subjects. It is satisfactory in about eight out of ten lessons. Teaching for the under fives is generally satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 teaching in science is often very good. In other subjects (particularly music and physical education) teaching varies too widely, between very good and poor. Some teachers do a particularly good job but the overall quality of teaching needs to be improved.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good in many classes and around the school. Sometimes unsatisfactory, particularly when children are required to sit for long periods on the carpet during lessons.
Attendance	Below average. Too many children stay away when they are not ill.
Ethos*	Good. The school is committed to improving its standards. Most children show interest in their work. Relationships are good.
Leadership and management	The headteacher gives a very strong lead and is working well with her staff to improve the school. The governing body is new and needs to establish itself quickly.
Curriculum	Satisfactory. Good for science and mathematics. Better planning is needed for a few subjects. In the nursery more focused work is needed to overcome some children's weaknesses.
Pupils with special educational needs	Not enough guidance in class for writing. Special help for children with the greatest difficulties is good. Some problems need to be dealt with earlier, when children are in the nursery.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Mainly good. Spiritual and moral development are particularly strong, although there is room for improvement in some aspects of cultural education.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory, although better equipment is needed for the youngest children.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
VII. The way parents are encouraged to help VIII. The fact that the school is easy to approach IX. The way any complaints are handled X. The information provided about children's progress XI. The standards of work XII. The values and attitudes the school promotes XIII. The emphasis on good behaviour XIV. The fact that children like going to school	XV. Parents made no serious complaints XVI. A small number feel that teaching is

Because only a few parents returned their survey form and attendance at the parents' meeting was quite low, the views above may not be representative. The inspection findings mainly agree with the above views. However, there is room for improvement in some of the school's standards.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve attainment and the quality of education the school should:

- XVII. improve the weaker teaching, particularly in Year 1, so that all children receive consistently high quality lessons (see paras. 13, 25, 27, 33, 39, 43, 98, 100, 111, 113, 120, 145, 147-148, 153, 158);
- XVIII. bring more variety, movement, creative and practical work to the school day (see paras. 19, 31, 114, 128, 134, 140);
- XIX. expect more in terms of the quality of the writing children are required to do. Provide more support to help children to write independently (see paras. 11, 17, 126, 140, 141, 158);
- XX. provide better support for children who are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language (see paras. 18, 33, 41, 75, 85, 110, 127);
- XXI. provide sharply focused teaching for children identified as having special educational needs in the nursery (see paras. 44, 72, 74, 99, 103);
- XXII. improve the planning for the teaching of art, music and physical education (see paras. 15, 29, 38, 52, 80, 126, 132-133, 140, 145-146, 148, 150, 154, 158).

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. They are indicated in paragraphs 32, 35, 39, 52, 59, 62, 70, 72, 75-76, 80, 82, 92, 104, 106, 108-109, 118, 122, 130.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Thames View Infant School educates 237 full-time pupils in the main part of the school. Of these, seventy-eight children in the reception class are under five and so do not yet study the National Curriculum. A further 52 pupils aged between three and four are educated on a part-time basis in the attached nursery. The pupils generally live quite close to the school. They come from a variety of backgrounds but, in overall terms, their attainment is significantly below average on entry. Of the children currently at the school 29 come from homes where English is not the first language. 15 of these receive special support through the Local Education Authority Language Support Service. Around 40% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is considerably more than in most schools.
2. The school has undergone a significant number of changes recently. In the last two years nine members of the teaching staff have left and been replaced. The headteacher has been at the school for only one year. The governing body has been reconstituted. It now serves only the infant school, whereas the previous body was shared between the infant and junior schools.
3. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy by adopting two locally produced schemes. Its other main priorities are summarised below:
 - XXIII. implement a new scheme of work for science;
 - XXIV. improve computer facilities;
 - XXV. improve the curriculum for art, music, history, geography and physical education;
 - XXVI. improve the curriculum for the nursery and reception classes;
 - XXVII. improve pupils' behaviour;
 - XXVIII. assess children more effectively;
 - XXIX. improve the assessment arrangements and provision for pupils with special educational needs;
 - XXX. improve links with the community;
 - XXXI. improve the playground;
 - XXXII. redecorate classrooms.
4. The school has set targets for Year 2 children and intends the following percentages of pupils to reach the nationally expected level in the tests for 2000:

Reading	78%
Writing	82%
Mathematics	83%

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
For latest reporting year:

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	38	37	75
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	21	29	29	
	Girls	30	31	33	
	Total	51	60	62	
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	70 (77)	82 (78)	85 (77)	
	National	(80)	(81)	(85)	
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	23	28	31	
	Girls	30	33	36	
	Total	53	61	67	
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	73 (74)	84 (79)	92 (75)	
	National	(81)	(85)	(86)	

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete

reporting year :

		%
Authorised	School	8.0
Absence	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised	School	1.7
Absence	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	16.18
Satisfactory or better	79.41
Less than satisfactory	20.59

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Attainment

5. The oldest children in the reception classes are working below the standards expected for by the age of five in most areas of learning.
6. Over the last four years, the school's national test results in English and mathematics have fluctuated. The trend is upwards in reading and mathematics but in writing results have declined. This is unsatisfactory. The unstable picture of attainment is explained by continuing unevenness in the quality of teaching.
7. The national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 indicate that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well below the national average. However, children at Thames View Infant School do as well in these subjects as schools in similar areas. Inspection evidence gives a more positive picture in English and mathematics. Attainment in speaking and listening is generally around the national average. Reading, writing, and mathematics remain below average by age seven but they show improvement over last year.
8. In science, inspection evidence shows that the oldest children are working at around the level expected nationally and that overall attainment is broadly in line with the national average. Children often show good knowledge and understanding in oral work, although written work is below average.
9. Overall, attainment in religious education and in information technology is around average. Little evidence was seen of the use of computers to support learning in other subjects.
10. In geography and music, attainment is around the average in terms of the work covered. In art attainment is below average and drawing is particularly weak. In physical education attainment is well below average. Too little evidence is available in history and design and technology for a reliable judgement to be made on standards.
11. Across the curriculum, there are too few opportunities for children to write, draw and use mathematics to a suitable standard. This currently depresses attainment in science, history, geography, art and religious education.

Progress

12. Across a range of areas of learning, children in the nursery and reception class make satisfactory progress.
13. The progress most children make as they move through the school is inconsistent. This is because teaching quality varies too much. Progress is generally good in Year 2 because teaching is seldom less than satisfactory and is often good or very good. In other year groups, particularly Year 1, progress for most children is too variable and is often unsatisfactory. This is because of weak teaching in a number of lessons.
14. By the time children reach Year 2 they have made good progress with speaking and listening as part of their learning in English and other subjects. Discussion work in most classes leads many children to develop good understanding across a range of subjects, such as religious education and science.
15. Across the school progress in writing in English lessons is satisfactory, as is progress in reading.

Good progress is made in mathematics, science and religious education. Progress in information technology and geography is satisfactory. In art and music progress is unsatisfactory (often because teachers feel insecure in teaching the work) and in physical education progress is well below average, largely because of limited expectations.

16. As in the 1995 inspection report, there are still too many inconsistencies between classes and between subjects. A lack of variety in the teaching approaches sometimes leads to restlessness and so to slower progress. In general, too little progress is made in writing in subjects other than English. This is because written tasks are too brief, expectations of pupils are not clear and because written tasks are insufficiently supported, for example with word lists, personal dictionaries or structured tasks. This is particularly true for children who struggle with writing.

17. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who have special educational needs receive helpful focused support from teaching assistants in special sessions. This enables them to make satisfactory progress in literacy. In general, these children benefit from the oral approach in class lessons. However, when these children are asked to write in subjects other than English, they receive too little support. Their progress is then often unsatisfactory. In the nursery, there is too little focused teaching for children with early difficulties. Assessments need to be used to plan intervention if these children are to overcome their early difficulties and to find success later.

18. Children who are learning to speak English as an additional language benefit from oral work in many lessons and here they make satisfactory progress. However, those with the greatest difficulty receive too little direct teaching to help them improve their English, and often make too little headway in lessons.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

19. When children enter the school at age three, many find it hard to share, take turns and concentrate on their activities. As they get older, children's behaviour and social skills improve well. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are mainly positive. Most show an interest in their work, listen attentively, concentrate and respond well in discussion work. In the majority of lessons pupils work co-operatively with each other and there is a good working atmosphere. A significant number of pupils have been assessed as having behavioural problems. In some classes, particularly in Year 2, these pupils are well managed and are enabled to contribute positively to the lessons. In some other classes they lose concentration and become inattentive as the day goes on. This is sometimes because the teaching approaches lack variety. Children sit on the carpet for long periods during their lessons: they become uncomfortable and begin to fidget. A small number of pupils are difficult to manage. Their teachers have to work hard to maintain interest and co-operation. In many cases this is very successful. In a minority of lessons, the teaching approaches do little to improve the situation and unsatisfactory behaviour continues.

20. Behaviour around the school and in the playground is orderly and calm. Pupils are courteous towards each other and to adults. In general, children from all backgrounds get on well together. There is a growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. These children are made to feel welcome and are well integrated into the school community. Staff and pupils in the majority of classes form constructive relationships.

21. All pupils required to carry out duties do so in a trustworthy manner.

22. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Although behaviour still varies between classes, the picture has improved.

Attendance

23. The level of attendance meets the nationally expected standard, although it is well below the

current national average. The level is slightly below that found during the last inspection, despite the school's strenuous efforts to improve the situation. Term-time holidays and technicalities of the timing of taking pupils off roll when they move to different schools account for some of the reported absences.

24. Registration takes place promptly at the beginning of each session. Pupils almost all arrive at school on time. A small number of children arrive late habitually, but generally only by a few minutes. Lessons start and finish on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

25. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in about 80% of the lessons observed. It was good or very good in one lesson in three. However, in too many lessons the teaching is of an unsatisfactory standard. The inspection findings agree with the view of some parents that teaching is stronger in Year 2 than in Year 1.

26. All teachers work hard in this school. The best teaching is very good and takes place when teachers work to a well-planned curriculum, as in science and mathematics. Pupils then make thorough and systematic progress, sometimes on difficult material. They concentrate hard and respond well. The teaching is particularly strong in Year 2 and in some reception classes; elsewhere there are weaknesses, and progress is affected. Teachers in all classes work to the same objectives with all pupils, sometimes providing suitably graded follow-up work. Support staff generally work well with special educational needs pupils, helping them to work towards carefully planned targets linked to the class teaching.

27. Weak teaching is centred in some younger classes and across the school in certain subjects. This usually results from a combination of inadequate subject knowledge, low expectations and unsuitable methods. The pace is sometimes slow in younger classes especially. Children have to sit on the carpet for excessively long periods while being taught. The typical teaching day for many pupils lacks sufficient opportunities for active, practical, imaginative or creative work. This sometimes results in restlessness and some poor behaviour.

28. In general, teachers are sufficiently confident with most of the subjects they teach. Where their knowledge is strong, as in most teaching of science, religious education and mathematics, the teaching has more precision and depth. Good questioning enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills. Some teachers have less good subject knowledge in history, music and physical education. This limits the range and standard of work done.

29. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in science, most mathematics lessons, and some English work. Expectations are highest in Year 2 and in some reception classes. Elsewhere, especially in physical education and music, and in some younger classes, teachers often demand too little of pupils. In some classes teachers' expectations of pupils' written work and drawings are too low, and children receive too little guidance on how to write independently.

30. Most lessons are well planned, though the planning is sometimes not sharply related enough to where the pupils are. Most lessons have a common shape, which could be used more flexibly on occasions. Some lessons, especially in science and in Year 2 and some reception classes, are well organised, and teachers use suitable methods which help all pupils. In older classes especially, teachers use questions very well to develop pupils' thinking. In too many lessons however, especially physical education, teaching methods are not effective enough.

31. Pupil management and discipline are satisfactory except when teachers are unsure about the subject or how best to manage the learning. This can result in slow pace, loss of attention, and poor

behaviour. Teachers generally use time and learning resources well, to keep pupils on task. But there are problems in some lessons in art, history, music and geography, and pupils then lose headway. The daily teaching diet tends to lack variety.

32. Teachers usually mark pupils' work suitably. However, there is some variation here, so that some pupils get help to improve in some subjects while others do not. Children regularly take work home, mainly reading, spellings, and number work. This helps them to make progress.

33. Support for pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is not the first language is good in some respects and classes but weak in others. The teachers employed to support pupils who are in the early stages of learning English do too little direct teaching to give children the language foundations they need.

34. In the last inspection recommendations were made aimed at improving the quality of teaching and making it more consistent. The quality of teaching still varies too much, but the school has made satisfactory progress in some respects. Improvements have been made in classroom organisation, use of resources, improving speaking and listening, and provision for children with special educational needs. The teaching of writing needs further attention, and the work tackled in music, art and physical education remains too limited. The school is well placed to improve the teaching further through its monitoring and development programmes.

The curriculum and assessment

35. The curriculum for children under five is much improved since the last inspection. The work is more carefully planned to ensure continuity and progression as children move through the nursery and reception classes. The planning makes suitable provision to prepare children for the next stage of education in Year 1. However, the plans are not consistently translated into practice in all classes and some of the activities provided continue to lack focus and challenge.

36. In Years 1 and 2 the curriculum is broadly based. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. The school gives an appropriately high priority to the teaching of English and mathematics; half of the available teaching time is given to these subjects. Reasonable time is allocated to most other subjects although art and technology get too little attention. While the formal curriculum appears balanced on paper it is too narrow in practice because insufficient time is spent on physical, creative and practical activity.

37. The previous inspection noted that the available teaching time was below national recommendations. This continues to be the case. The school is now planning to lengthen the day, following necessary consultation. If approved, this should be helpful in bringing a better balance to children's experiences.

38. Teachers have worked hard to improve the curriculum, which is now good for English, mathematics, science, information technology, religious education, history and geography. However, the provision for the arts is generally weak. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection in relation to the curriculum for art, music and physical education, which remain unsatisfactory. The lack of progress is partly explained by the frequent changes in the management of the school, a high turnover of staff and the new national emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

39. The school has recently introduced a new curriculum for English and mathematics, based on frameworks provided by the LEA. These incorporate fully the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. However, the literacy strategy is not yet being implemented effectively in Year 1 because assessments are not used well enough to address children's weaknesses. Strategies to apply reading, writing and information technology skills across a broad range of subjects are generally not good enough.

40. Collaborative planning by teachers in year groups aims to ensure that pupils in different classes

in the same year are taught broadly similar work. However, because there are considerable variations in the quality of teaching, children do not all receive a consistent delivery of the curriculum. In this respect, there has been insufficient progress since the time of the last inspection in 1995.

41. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory and provision for pupils with statements is good. The withdrawal of pupils for additional support is carefully arranged in order not to restrict their access to the curriculum as a whole. However, the curriculum provided for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language is not sufficiently targeted at their needs and support is superficial. In some cases, these pupils do not gain appropriate access to the curriculum.

42. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest such as the church, Barking Abbey grounds and Greenwich Observatory. These visits broaden children's horizons and they often remember them well. There is currently no extra-curricular provision, although clubs for reading and playing the recorder are planned to take place later in the school year. Parents are well informed about the curriculum. There is a helpful emphasis on children reading at home with their parents and completing homework tasks in mathematics and spelling.

43. The school's arrangements for assessing the children's progress are satisfactory, although the information gained needs to be used more effectively in Year 1 English. Effective systems have been put in place for assessing attainment in literacy, numeracy and science in Years 1 and 2. Assessments for English and mathematics are suitably built into the teaching and are often used to identify the next steps in the pupil's learning. A whole school approach to marking has also been recently introduced. Unfortunately, assessment systems have not yet been implemented consistently and the use made of assessment information to inform planning is variable. Year 2 teachers make good use of marking to help pupils to improve the quality of their writing. The setting of individual targets for improvement in writing is having a positive impact on attainment. Pupils understand the targets and work positively towards them. Significant achievements in other subjects are recorded appropriately on pupils' personal record sheets. Although broadly satisfactory, assessment in other subjects needs to be made more systematic.

44. The school has made satisfactory progress in involving staff in the identification of children with special educational needs. In most cases, clear and comprehensive records are maintained and some of the planned work is effective in addressing difficulties, particularly with literacy. However, although reasonable assessments are made of children's early difficulties in the nursery, too little is done to provide focused help to overcome the problems. There are large numbers of pupils on the special educational needs register in Years 1 and 2. Earlier identification and provision is required in order to address and overcome their difficulties.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

45. The 1995 inspection found the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to be generally sound. Cultural development was not as good as other aspects. In most respects, the school has made good progress. Overall, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now good, although aspects of the provision for cultural development still require improvement.

46. The school makes good provision for children's spiritual development. The religious education curriculum provides helpful insights into the values, beliefs and practices of various mainstream religions. Work undertaken is helpful in developing children's understanding and tolerance of others. A recent visit to the local church is well remembered by the children, who appear to have gained valuable insights into the concepts of worship and prayer. Assemblies are of good quality. They include simple stories, prayers and hymns. Assemblies provide genuine acts of worship and are conducted sincerely and reverently. There is also a sense of fun and community. Some of the work carried out in other subjects allows children to consider their place in the world, and how they relate

to other humans and to the animal kingdom.

47. The provision for moral development is also good. Assembly topics are likely to support children in seeing that there is a difference between right and wrong. The school places a great deal of emphasis on children being considerate towards each other. School policies, including the emphasis on discussion in class, mean that the children are frequently encouraged to think about moral issues and the effect of making the right and wrong choices in life.

48. The provision for social development is good. In the early years classes the children are encouraged to make sensible choices from a range of activities and to look after equipment. Overall, they are helped to settle into school confidently and so to make a good start to their education. The planning for the nursery and reception classes shows clearly how pupils are to be introduced to various life skills to do with personal hygiene and dressing. In the older classes, children are encouraged to take some responsibility for their learning, for example through working towards very clear personal targets in their writing. Children are encouraged to carry out a number of jobs around the school to assist teachers and other children. They do so well.

49. In general, the school's emphasis on care for others is effective. The school is generally successful in teaching children to work together as a class and sometimes in smaller groups. In reading activities, for example, children work productively in pairs in order to help each other. Around Christmas and harvest time, the school helps children to learn about caring for others through its activities with older people at the local Day Centre.

50. Cultural development is more variable than the other areas. There are strengths here but overall provision is only satisfactory. There are valuable opportunities for cultural development through the curriculum. Some examples of these include:

- XXXIII. the use of good quality literature as part of the English lessons;
- XXXIV. some study of famous artists in art lessons;
- XXXV. listening to some music of quality;
- XXXVI. the use of traditional rhymes and poems in the younger classes; and
- XXXVII. some visits to places of interest such as the local Abbey grounds.

51. Since the last inspection in 1995, the school has strengthened its provision to help children learn about people from cultures other than their own. The religious education curriculum and many school assemblies cover festivals and cultural practices from different religious traditions. Children gain good understanding of the history and meaning of these festivals. Good displays around the school provide interest and information for the children. Pupils from varying cultural traditions are welcomed into the school and are accepted warmly as part of the community. Their contributions are valued in lessons.

52. In order to enhance the provision for children's cultural development, the school should improve its planning for art, music and aspects of physical education. These areas are currently weak. It should also consider strengthening drama as part of the curriculum for English.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

53. As at the time of the 1995 inspection, the school makes good overall provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils.

54. The procedures for monitoring progress and personal development are satisfactory. Records are completed regularly and are passed on to the child's next teacher. They provide a satisfactory picture of children's overall development.

55. The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are satisfactory. The behaviour policy is understood well by the children. Staff deal with any behavioural problems

consistently, although some of the teaching approaches lack variety and occasionally lead to difficulties. No bullying was seen during the inspection. The school makes sure that children know what to do should it occur. A suitable system has been set up to ensure that teachers and the headteacher take appropriate action.

56. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The parents are regularly reminded of the need to inform the school of the reason for any absence. The school secretary checks the registers carefully and contacts parents when absences are not explained adequately. The headteacher is quickly made aware of any problems to do with attendance. She speaks to parents if patterns of absence or lateness build up. The Education Social Worker gives the school good support and will visit families if requested.

57. There are appropriate links between the school and the local playgroup, with opportunities for the playgroup children to visit the school. Induction procedures for children starting school, which include children being teamed with a friend, are helpful. Arrangements to help children to make a confident start in the nursery are also satisfactory.

58. Generally, the school provides a safe and caring environment for all its pupils. Regular checks are made to buildings, grounds and equipment in order to identify any dangers. Good arrangements are made for first aid. Appropriate records are kept of children who are hurt; parents confirm that letters are sent home where necessary. Pupils are made aware of health and safety matters through regular discussion in school. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and staff have also received appropriate training.

Partnership with parents and the community

59. The 1995 inspection report found that the school valued the support of parents. Parents were welcome in school and were given an opportunity to discuss their children's progress. However, the school needed to find more ways of working in close partnership with parents. Links with outside agencies were well established and made a valuable contribution to the life of the school. Evidence available to the current inspection team shows that much of the above remains true. The school does now offer parents more opportunities to work closely in partnership, but their response is often weak.

60. Overall, the links the school seeks to make with parents and the community are satisfactory and contribute positively to children's intellectual and social development.

61. There is a policy of encouraging parents to come and help in school, but few do so. The school runs a family literacy course, which is well attended by parents. Some participants now come into school and listen to children read. Parents support the home-school reading scheme and many provide helpful support for their children with reading at home. This makes a positive impact on their children's progress.

62. The information provided for parents by the school is good. Regular, informative newsletters are sent out by the headteacher. The Prospectus encourages working together with parents; it meets statutory requirements and is well set out. The Governors' Annual Report to parents meets statutory requirements, except that there is virtually no mention of the previous inspection action plan or the steps taken to move the school forward. This information must be given in future.

63. Written reports on children are sent to parents annually. These meet statutory requirements and provide suitable information to parents. There are good opportunities for parents to meet with staff to discuss progress, including informal discussions at the end of the school day.

64. Links with the wider community are satisfactory. Two members of the business community come into the school on a regular basis to help children with their reading. This support is well managed and makes a positive impact on standards. The school undertakes a number of visits

within the community and there are good links with the local church. These visits provide helpful enrichment to the curriculum. The school has encouraged children to support local old people, through harvest gifts and concerts at Christmas. Children are encouraged to think of others by raising funds for charity. The school is currently supporting the work of the NSPCC. These activities successfully encourage the children to have a sense of responsibility for their community.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

65. In some respects, the progress made in the management of the school since the last inspection has been good. The school's aims are now clear, roles and responsibilities are well defined, and curriculum co-ordinators show greater influence and involvement. However, the previous governing body did not monitor development work well enough, perhaps because it had joint responsibility for two schools, and this means that progress in curriculum development has been weak.

66. A number of issues needing action in relation to the school as a whole were identified in the last report. In some cases, good progress has been made in bringing about change, but overall progress has been unsatisfactory. Details are summarised as follows:

XXXVIII. good progress has been made with getting children to participate productively in oral work in lessons;

XXXIX. classroom organisation has improved and is now satisfactory;

XL. teachers are now more involved in identifying and planning for children with special educational needs;

XLI. teaching remains too variable, with a sharp contrast between the quality of the best and worst teaching;

XLII. children's writing is still not good enough. There is too little writing across the curriculum;

XLIII. planning for art, music and physical education remains unsatisfactory and the work carried out so far does too little to guide staff.

67. The Action Plan, written to address the weaknesses identified in the last inspection, was satisfactory. It showed how improvements were to be made. Appropriate action was taken immediately following the 1995 inspection. However, curriculum planning issues did not receive enough attention. It seems that some of the early progress was not well enough embedded. Significant changes in staff and the pressures on the previous joint governing body meant that some issues did not receive the ongoing attention and monitoring required.

The current management of the school

68. The school is now moving forward confidently. The headteacher is making a strong impact and overall leadership in the school is very good. The headteacher knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. There is now a good development plan, showing what needs to be done and how it is to be achieved. A positive and optimistic atmosphere has been created and all involved show commitment to ongoing improvement.

69. The deputy headteacher has much to offer the school and is developing a positive role in supporting the headteacher in leading the school to improve its attainment and the quality of education provided. Subject co-ordinators show good understanding of their roles and many are playing an active part in improving the school's curriculum and teaching.

70. A new governing body has been formed and it has taken the right steps to set itself up to work well, for instance by appointing committees to oversee various parts of its work. There is currently only an acting chair of governors. A substantive appointment should be made at the earliest opportunity. The new governing body needs to establish itself quickly and to work vigorously with the

headteacher in matters relating to standards and to curriculum development.

71. Overall, the school has a clear agenda for improvement and the staff are moving forward together in order to make the necessary improvements. The greatest challenge for senior staff is to ensure that all teaching now reaches the quality of the best. There is too much variation between classes.

· **The management of provision for children with special educational needs**

72. The management of the provision for children with special educational needs is sound in most respects. However, the assessment and provision for these children is not implemented consistently throughout the school.

73. There are a number of strengths:

The systems for identifying and reviewing children's needs meet requirements. The support staff, who provide help for children with special educational needs, are well managed and are used successfully to build children's skills in reading. Teachers make brief plans for small groups of children in need of help. These plans are effective in showing precisely what should be learnt and how it is to be brought about. For the older children, records are kept systematically and different agencies are involved as required.

74. The weaknesses are as follows:

Some of the paperwork is over-complex. An unusually large number of pupils are assessed as having behavioural difficulties. There is too little concentration on addressing children's needs at an early stage, particularly in the early years.

- **The management of provision for children who speak English as an additional language**

75. Two teachers visit the school to provide support for children who are just learning to speak English. In some aspects of their work these teachers are effective. However, their involvement in class work is often superficial; too little of their time is spent in teaching. Their expertise needs to be used more efficiently. These support teachers are not managed directly by the school.

- **Statutory requirements**

76. The school's work generally meets statutory requirements. The one exception is that the governors' annual reports to parents do not give any significant detail about progress made with the action plan, which was drawn up following the inspection in 1995. The new action plan in relation to the current inspection should be discussed regularly and progress should be reported to parents each year.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

77. At the last inspection, staffing was satisfactory, although mention was made of the need for a more systematic approach to providing support for newly qualified teachers and less experienced staff.

78. Currently, the number, qualifications and experience of the school's teaching staff meet the needs of the curriculum satisfactorily. The staff are well qualified and offer a range of experience and expertise. There are now subject co-ordinators for all subjects. The arrangements for supporting newly qualified and less experienced staff are now very good, and are organised well by the headteacher.

79. Teaching and non-teaching staff have attended a suitable number of appropriate courses, including those for the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Training for staff is appropriately linked to the School Development Plan and to individual staff needs.

80. At the time of the 1995 inspection, classrooms were untidy, resources were poorly stored, display in some classes was weak and some parts of the school were in need of redecoration. This inspection shows that the situation is much improved. Classrooms are generally well managed and resources are stored accessibly. The accommodation is good, although décor remains shabby in many areas. The school has sufficient classroom and hall space, as well as areas for individual or small group work, and a dedicated school library. The school grounds are adequate although the playground could be made more interesting. There are plans to bring this about. In some classes more effective use could be made of pupils' work, including artwork and writing, for display. The 1995 inspection showed that the outdoor spaces needed to be used more effectively. The nursery garden is now used well and is shared by children in the nursery and reception classes. However, the outdoor spaces are not used well enough for physical education: games lessons are often carried out inappropriately in the school hall.

81. Overall, the quality and quantity of the schools' learning resources are satisfactory, although there are some shortages in materials for design and technology. Resources for the early years, particularly the nursery, are barely adequate and need improvement.

The efficiency of the school

82. The annual budget is drawn up after careful consideration of priorities. Subject co-ordinators, for instance, make bids to fund requirements for books and equipment. In general, the way money is spent supports the teaching well. Overall, resource levels have improved since the last inspection and equipment needed for teaching in most subjects is now readily available. The nursery and reception classes would benefit from more spending on equipment and funds have already been allocated to make improvements.

83. The budgetary surplus carried forward from previous years has now been earmarked for special projects, which should enhance the school environment. Spending is now planned very tightly.

84. The School Development Plan is well constructed and individual staff have a good understanding of how their work contributes to school improvement. This represents good progress since the previous inspection.

85. Support staff, who assist in the nursery and reception classes, are used effectively to support children and teachers. Special support assistants, who mainly help children to develop literacy skills, are also used well. Their time is carefully managed and their efforts are successful in helping children to make progress. In direct contrast, two visiting teachers, sent to help children who speak English as an additional language are used inefficiently. They have too little responsibility for direct teaching of these pupils.

86. Classroom space is better used than at the time of the last inspection. Classrooms are generally well laid out and equipment is accessible. There are plans to improve the grounds. The school generally makes appropriate use of the outside spaces, including the nursery garden, which is also used by other classes. However, games lessons for Year 1 and Year 2 children are often conducted in the hall. This space is too small and the use of the outdoor environment would often lead to better progress.

87. The 1995 inspection found that the monitoring and administration of finances were sound. However, when a detailed audit was carried out in 1997, a significant number of weaknesses were noted. The current inspection did not involve a further audit. However, the previous weaknesses were discussed with staff and the indications are that good progress has been made to resolve them.

88. The cost of educating children at Thames View Infant School is close to the average for schools in the London area. As at the time of the last inspection, the school makes generally suitable use of the money it receives. It achieves standards in line with schools in similar areas. It provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

89. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Overall, children in the nursery and reception classes make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. However, on average attainment by the age of five remains below the expected standard in most aspects.

90. Children enter the nursery or reception classes with poor speaking and listening skills. Many of the nursery children have a limited vocabulary and many find it difficult to express themselves at any length in the school environment. They are reluctant to talk and only respond to questions with one-word answers. They find it hard to listen and concentrate for more than a short while. Over time, good progress is made in speaking and listening. Older reception pupils listen more attentively and are developing the confidence to speak in front of others. However, they still find it difficult to respond at any length.

91. Nursery and reception children enjoy being read to and looking at books. However, many handle books inappropriately. For example, they sometimes turn the pages carelessly or toss books to one side, rather than returning them to the appropriate place. Some pupils are able to talk about the pictures in books and they know the difference between words and pictures. Many understand that print carries meaning but only a few children are able to recognise any words. As children move through the nursery and reception classes they are gaining a respect for books and are developing an acquaintance with stories and rhymes. Overall, satisfactory progress is made with early reading skills.

92. Insufficient progress is made with developing the fine hand movements required for drawing and cutting, and for writing at a later stage. Children under five have access to a range of pencils, chalks and paints and are beginning to explore the range of marks they can make. The nursery children have been in school for only a short while and many have not passed the scribbling stage. Some reception pupils are learning the difference between drawing and writing and a few are able to attempt to write their names. However, most have poor pencil control and drawing continues to be immature.

93. Good progress is made with early mathematical development. Nursery children have learnt to recognise basic colours. They are also able to match some shapes such as triangles, squares and circles. Reception pupils can count securely to ten and some do better than this. Most have knowledge of basic two-dimensional shapes and can identify them by name. They understand the difference between a curved and a straight side. Attainment comes close to the level expected by the age of five.

94. Through discussion, children are making satisfactory headway with their general knowledge and understanding of the world. They are learning about the changes that occur as they grow from babies, to toddlers and beyond. They are also learning about the weather as they explore the school environment. The children are suitably encouraged to observe the changes in living things such as trees as the seasons change. Children generally make satisfactory progress in using a computer. In the work seen, younger children use the mouse with sufficient control to choose items from a menu. Older children successfully choose shapes and fill them with colour when using a painting program.

95. Children's creative development is generally satisfactory but overall they achieve less than the national expectation by the age of five. Nursery children enjoy making marks with paint and brushes, although the materials provided do not encourage enough care and precision. Children are given appropriate opportunities to print using a range of natural and man-made objects such as their hands, leaves, sponges and jar lids. Suitable skills are being established in relation to joining materials. Music is used appropriately and children gain language skills through the use of songs and rhymes. Nursery children enjoy singing activities but some children struggle with the words and their participation is tentative. Most reception pupils have learnt a suitable repertoire of songs and

perform them accurately. Some performances are still tentative but children have developed a good sense of pitch. When performing simple accompaniments, children can generally keep a steady beat. Most are able to repeat short rhythms accurately.

96. Children generally make satisfactory progress in physical development. Nursery and reception children have appropriate opportunities to run and climb and to ride on equipment such as bicycles. Through these activities they are developing strength and control. They are also learning to share space and equipment and to take turns. Reception pupils make good progress, for instance by developing controlled movements in gymnastics work. Many are starting successfully to link simple actions together, showing fluency and control.

97. Many nursery pupils and those with no pre-school experience find it hard to share and to take turns. Others lack the language skills to express their needs or to negotiate with other children. This leads to some minor skirmishes. Most pupils are able to choose and to engage with various activities but many are unable to sustain concentration. Some are inclined to flit superficially from activity to activity. Over time, children make good progress with social development. Older reception pupils are able to play alongside each other well. Their concentration on activities is far more sustained and focused.

98. Most teaching for the under fives is satisfactory but it is too variable, ranging from very good to poor.

99. The teaching in the nursery is generally satisfactory. The staff work well as a team and interact well with the children as they play. However, in some areas the teaching does not compensate enough for the pupils' low standards on entry. In particular, more concentrated input is needed on speech and vocabulary development. Here, expectations need to be higher. Too little emphasis is given to addressing the individual needs of children with difficulties.

100. Reception teachers are generally making effective use of planning to provide continuity and progression in the children's learning. However, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching between classes: some of the teaching is poor.

101. In the best reception class lessons the teaching is clear and calm and a range of strategies is used actively to involve the children. High expectations are set for children's spoken language. Support staff are well deployed. Teachers check children's progress carefully by asking questions.

102. In weaker lessons, reception class pupils are not actively involved. The pace is far too slow and expectations are low, particularly in relation to pupils' behaviour.

103. The early years team is new to the school. Teachers are working hard to plan and implement a balanced curriculum for the children. An appropriate curriculum is provided for those children who have little or no pre-schooling. The 1995 inspection noted that some activities provided for the under fives were insufficiently focused or challenging to ensure appropriate progression in their learning. This issue has not been satisfactorily resolved. The clear objectives for learning, now identified in the long- and medium-term planning, are not always translated into sufficiently focused teaching.

104. Resources for the early years have been sadly neglected in the past and are currently barely adequate. The school recognises this as a priority and has allocated appropriate funds to rectify deficiencies.

- **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

- **English**

105. Attainment in English is below national expectations. The national test results for seven-year-

olds in 1999 show that attainment in reading is well below the national average. Attainment in writing is below the national average. However, in both reading and writing children at Thames View Infant School do as well as those in similar areas and many children are just reaching the expected level.

106. Performance in national tests for reading shows a slow upward trend since 1995. The 1999 results for writing show many more pupils achieving the nationally expected level than in 1998 but fewer than in 1996 and 1997. Changes in staff, continuing inconsistency in teaching quality, changes to the curriculum, and a mobile school population may account for the significant variations in test results.

107. Inspection findings are that many pupils are on course to meet the national expectations for speaking, listening and writing by age seven. However, attainment in reading remains low. Children entering the nursery and reception classes have poor speaking and listening skills. They have a restricted use of language and many lack the vocabulary to express themselves clearly. The articulation of some pupils is poor. Most listen carefully to their teachers but only for limited periods. By Year 2 most are able to listen attentively. Many pupils are confident enough to speak up audibly providing detailed responses to questions. This represents good progress overall.

108. In English lessons, most older pupils write independently, attempting to spell words using their knowledge of sounds to help them. Handwriting is legible and letters are generally formed correctly. Many write in sentences using capital letters and full stops, although not consistently. Their choice of vocabulary is unadventurous.

109. By Year 2 most pupils are able to read familiar words in simple texts and are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to help them read unknown words. Some are able to read accurately, but use a limited range of strategies. Comprehension is limited, as is children's ability to discuss what they read. Most read the reading scheme books regularly at home but other than this their experience of books is narrow.

110. Attainment on entry to the school is low and so children generally make satisfactory progress to reach the standards they do. However, progress is erratic. Pupils make good progress in Year 2. Here, the teaching is consistently strong and does much to make up for rather slow progress made in Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress. Children who speak English as an additional language receive too little direct teaching and so do not make sufficient headway in establishing the basic language foundations needed to access the curriculum.

111. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall, with the strengths outweighing the weaknesses. However, teaching is too variable. In Year 2 lessons are always satisfactory, and often good or very good, but in Year 1 some are unsatisfactory. In 1995 there were marked differences in the standards achieved in different classes. This remains an issue for the school, and is directly related to these variations in the quality of teaching.

112. In the best lessons teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well structured with clear objectives, which are suitably explained to the children. There is a good use of questioning to engage the children's interest and to develop and check their understanding. Tasks are clearly explained and teachers demonstrate well how to do the work, for example when showing the children how to form letters correctly. There is very good use of marking to help pupils improve the quality of their writing. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and this enables them to participate successfully in English lessons.

113. In weaker lessons teachers lack confidence with the planned materials and lessons are not suitably adapted to the pupils' needs. The pace of lessons is slow and children are required to sit and listen for too long without being actively involved. Questioning does not succeed in engaging pupils or maintaining their interest. Expectations particularly in relation to reading and writing are not high enough and children are not given enough opportunity to write. Unsatisfactory use is made of marking to help the children to improve the quality of their work.

114. The pupils' responses vary, depending on the quality of teaching they receive. Overall their

response is satisfactory. Children of all ages listen to stories with interest and enjoyment, joining in enthusiastically. Most are keen to respond to questions and try hard to complete tasks. Older pupils work conscientiously at written tasks. In lessons where the pace is slow or the teaching is unclear the pupils show less interest. They are unable to sustain concentration and become restless. This is exacerbated by excessive time spent sitting on the carpet and insufficient variety in the teaching approaches.

115. The school rightly places a high emphasis on the teaching of English. The curriculum is well mapped out and supported by quality resources. Overall, the school has a coherent strategy for improving children's literacy skills. However, it is not secure in all classes. The teaching of literacy is good in Year 2 but implementation in Year 1 is not based sufficiently on an assessment of pupils' needs. There is a need for a more focused introduction of the early skills of talking and reading in the nursery. Across the school there are too few opportunities for children to read and write effectively in subjects other than English.

116. The school has made good progress since the 1995 inspection in terms of developing children's speaking and listening skills. There is now a more balanced approach to the teaching of reading. The English curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to read in groups, with partners and individually. The quality of resources for reading has been improved. Children of all ages are successfully encouraged to read at home. The school has also developed more systematic approaches to teaching spelling and writing, but not yet handwriting. More needs to be done to get children to write neatly in their independent work.

Mathematics

117. Standards of attainment in mathematics are below the average level reached across schools nationally. However, they are in line with and in some respects better than those reached by similar schools. Older pupils are working at a level which indicates that standards are rising, and that most should reach at least the expected basic standard by age seven.

118. Most pupils approaching age five can count to 10, though some do so only with support. A few can count beyond 10. Most can recognise and name shapes such as circles and rectangles. Other children without pre-school experience know only the lowest numbers. Most pupils approaching age seven have a sound grasp of basic number facts to 10 and can carry out mental addition and subtraction in this range quickly and accurately. A few pupils are beginning to grasp the relationship between addition and subtraction, and the majority can carry out a written operation in front of the class and explain what they are doing, using correct mathematical terms. Written work is correctly though not always clearly set out, and standard symbols are known and used. Pupils have produced simple bar graphs and used these to log weather conditions, though in general there is little evidence of mathematics being used in other subjects.

119. In most lessons children of all levels of attainment make good progress in mathematics, consolidating their number knowledge and their ability to carry out calculations mentally, orally and in writing. Not enough progress is made in some younger classes, affecting the final standards attained, but some show they grasp quickly concepts such as combining sets of bricks to carry out addition. Higher and average attainers in older classes show by talking through a computation that they are learning how addition and subtraction are linked. Lower attainers, including children with special educational needs, generally make good progress towards targets linked to class work. Progress over time is also good, given that most children enter the school with limited number knowledge, though relatively few pupils reach the higher levels by age seven.

120. Most pupils respond well to their mathematics lessons. They join in choral work enthusiastically and are generally quick and eager to offer a response in oral work. Most are still developing their ability to talk through their work, but even less confident pupils will attempt this with some encouragement. Pupils respond less well in some younger classes when the pace is slow and/or teachers do not use suitable methods. This again affects progress.

121. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 7 of the 9 lessons seen. It was good or very good in 6. Lessons are taught in line with the national recommendations and are usually well planned with clear objectives. In the best lessons (seen with older classes) teachers keep up a brisk pace and ensure all pupils are engaged throughout by setting high expectations of response and participation in oral work. They use resources such as number cards and overhead projector very well to support their teaching. In some Year 1 lessons the teaching is weaker because either the pace is slow or the work is not clearly enough presented. Pupils then lose interest and do not learn enough.

122. The curriculum for mathematics and numeracy meets fully the demands of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils' work is carefully assessed over time. The subject is very well organised and managed. Resources are suitable, though those for practical work could be better.

123. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be in line with those attained nationally. Such judgements are now made differently, but improvements have been made in terms of pupils' ability to do mental mathematics and talk about their work. However, not enough pupils are yet reaching the higher standards, though the school is well placed to achieve this.

Science

124. The last inspection report indicated that children's attainment was broadly in line with the levels expected nationally. Pupils generally made steady progress but in some cases children did not understand the tasks set for them and occasionally lacked concentration. The quality of teaching was variable, but mainly satisfactory, with examples of good and unsatisfactory teaching. In general, good progress has been made since 1995 and the positive way the subject is managed should enable this progress to continue.

125. In 1999 teacher assessment showed attainment in line with all schools, with a significant proportion of children attaining the higher levels. Attainment was well above that of similar schools.

126. Inspection evidence shows a picture similar to the teachers' assessments. Overall, attainment is now close to the national average. A large proportion of children in Year 2 are confident with the knowledge and understanding expected for their age and some are moving beyond this. In Year 2 children show a good grasp of the ways in which foodstuffs can be changed by heating. They give good explanations of the processes and use scientific vocabulary well. Observation skills are good. Question and answer work throughout the school shows generally good attainment. However, written work is weaker. Children do record some of their work well on the sheets provided by the teachers. They use tables, charts and written sentences. In general there is less independent written work than would be expected from children of these ages and there is too little observational drawing requiring children to look at natural objects with care and precision. These weaknesses limit higher level attainment.

127. In lessons, children make generally good or very good progress. A Year 2 lesson revised the work covered on changing foodstuffs. The children had retained a great deal of information and were able to remember and interpret the work they had tackled previously. Some were able to comment accurately on the possibility of reversing changes to heated or cooked food. The emphasis on oral work helps most children to develop good understanding. In Year 1 most children make good progress in considering differences in the characteristics of animals and human beings. There is a great deal of discussion work in these lessons. This allows the children who have good understanding the opportunity to develop and explain what they know. They move forward well. The children who find learning more difficult make good headway and generally manage to contribute to lessons. However, children who are just learning to speak English as an additional language often have difficulty in understanding the teaching. Some cannot follow the work and so their progress is negligible.

128. Children's response is never less than satisfactory and is often good or very good. They frequently show great interest in the lesson content and many are keen to answer questions, using complete sentences and correct vocabulary. This is partly explained by the motivating nature of the work seen and the good use by teachers of stimulus materials. Some classes include pupils assessed as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. Often their difficulties were not apparent in the lessons seen. Occasionally, groups of children lose concentration but they are usually brought back on track by the teacher. Some minor restlessness sometimes arises when children have had too little practical activity during, or before the science lesson.

129. Most lessons are very well taught and none of the teaching is less than satisfactory. The work is carefully planned: one lesson leads on to the next, so building up understanding. Lessons are generally directed at the whole class, with a significant emphasis on oral work. Teachers offer good, clear explanations and ask questions which make the children think and explain clearly. As a result, pupils often answer in well-expressed sentences. Teaching is founded on good subject knowledge. This means that staff explain the science clearly, and use question and answer work skilfully to build understanding. Good guidance is offered to teachers in the scheme of work. This is effective in encouraging systematic teaching and the interesting approaches used in lessons.

130. To improve standards in science further, the school needs to consider how children can use writing, drawing and mathematics to a higher standard as part of their lessons.

· OTHER SUBJECTS

· Art

131. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. The following judgements are based mainly on the displays of children's work around the school. Overall, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory as they move through the school and standards are below average by age seven. The range of work covered is rather narrow and children make too little headway in developing precision and accuracy in their work. There is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to make choices about the media in which they will work.

132. Pupils are mixing paint from primary colours and this has improved considerably since 1995. In Year 1 children use pattern and texture well in their paintings of fireworks. However, there is little evidence of further development of similar skills across the school. In observational drawing, some pupils use line and tone well, but in general, accuracy and attention to detail are weak at all ages. Year 2 pupils have been exploring printing techniques using a variety of materials. Finished products are satisfactory but children do not yet have the skills to show how work could be developed or improved. There is no evidence of extended work or guided experimentation in the use of three-dimensional media.

133. The current scheme of work does not give teachers sufficient guidance on the work to be tackled or the standards to be achieved. The situation here is similar to that found in 1995. Work has begun on improving the scheme and this now needs to be completed to a good standard as a matter of urgency. A subject co-ordinator has recently been appointed and is well qualified in art. This promises to make development work more effective than in the past. The school has recently opened a special room for art lessons. This is well resourced and well laid out. However, the set-up is very new and so classes are not yet using it routinely.

· Design and Technology

134. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Little finished work was available for scrutiny and so it is not possible to make a judgement about children's attainment and progress.

However, the subject receives too little attention within the curriculum and so it is unlikely that children will make the progress they should.

135. By age seven most pupils are able to use scissors safely, but their cutting lacks precision. Most are able to use simple tools with a reasonable degree of accuracy and can, for instance, join pieces of card with a paper fastener. The drawing and colouring skills of Year 2 pupils are poor.

136. Both of the lessons seen were well planned and prepared, but both had a slow pace. In one lesson, there was appropriate revision of previous learning and the teacher gave a suitable demonstration of how to create a moveable joint. However, there was little opportunity for creativity or for children to make choices of materials and tools. Children are keen to engage in practical work and approach their work carefully.

137. The scheme of work gives clear objectives for pupils of different ages, and provides good exemplification of the designing and making activities to be attempted. However, the scheme has been introduced only recently and has not yet had an effect on pupils' attainment and progress. The school recognises the need for the training of staff. Resources for the subject are currently unsatisfactory and need to be improved if the scheme of work is to be implemented properly. The combination of art and design and technology on some timetables means that in practice insufficient time is spent on the teaching of design and technology.

Geography

138. Children make satisfactory progress overall so that by the age of seven their knowledge and understanding are secure at the level expected in the National Curriculum. Year 1 and 2 pupils are beginning to use simple geographical terms to describe daily weather and weather patterns across the four seasons. They know how the weather affects people's lives. Children use globes, maps and plans effectively as part of their work. Most seven-year-olds can locate and identify features such as seas, cities and rivers.

139. Progress is satisfactory overall. Oral work shows the development of suitable knowledge and understanding although writing and drawing are weaker.

140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers follow the scheme of work and lessons are generally taught consistently across classes in the same year group. This is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. In the best lessons teachers have a solid grasp of the subject matter being taught and successfully break down activities into small steps. This leads to good understanding. Careful explanation and questioning help children to develop good understanding of geographical terms. A weakness of some of the teaching relates to the tasks set for pupils towards the end of a lesson. Written tasks are not well enough supported and children with weak writing skills therefore achieve too little. Not enough is expected of children's drawing.

History

141. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement about the progress which pupils make in Years 1 and 2, or about the quality of the teaching. Only one history lesson was observed during the inspection and there was a limited amount of written work available. Since the last inspection, a well thought out and organised scheme of work has been developed, which identifies learning objectives, key questions and suggested activities. Work covered in books shows that the scheme of work is being followed, but the depth of coverage varies between classes. There is no evidence of work being adapted for children of different attainment levels. Pupils struggling with writing skills often complete a picture but rarely do any written work. As in some other subjects these children appear to receive too little support with writing.

Information Technology

142. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations in the subject, with pupils able to edit text using a word processor and use a range of software tools for painting. Pupils have learnt to use the line, fill and polygon drawing tools to create colourful and interesting designs, systematically building on previous work. Standards of attainment in Year 1 are a little below expectations for that age but children are making suitable progress, for instance in using the shift key and the space bar in word processing work.

143. All of the teaching observed was satisfactory and some was good. A new scheme of work has been introduced throughout the school and this has led to tightly focussed teaching with clear and appropriate learning objectives, and a clear description of what children should produce. Provision for the subject is well organised within classrooms. There are good wall displays and labels for parts of the computer. There is an emphasis throughout the school on whole class lessons to introduce new skills and revise old ones. These lessons make effective use of the available computers, although small monitors sometimes make it quite hard for some pupils to see the screen well enough. Pupils are subsequently required to work in pairs at the computer in order to practise what they have learnt. During the week of the inspection little of this practice was seen. However, there was evidence from displays of pupils' work that over time children are given opportunities to make satisfactory individual progress with their information technology skills.

144. Resources are generally good: some classrooms have more than one computer. Some teachers need further guidance on making the best use of the older machines. The addition of some large screen monitors would enhance the effectiveness of whole class teaching sessions.

Music

145. The 1995 inspection report indicated that pupils made generally unsatisfactory progress with singing, playing and simple composition. Teaching was variable, with some shortcomings. Children's attainment and progress are now somewhat improved. However, too little has been done to improve the planning for the subject and the quality of teaching still varies too much. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

146. Attainment is broadly average in terms of children's ability to sing accurately and play simple instruments by the time they reach Year 2. They listen with reasonable attention to detail. However, performance is often rather tentative and overall progress is not secure because the scheme of work is not mapped out well enough. Progress in individual lessons varies too much and is unsatisfactory overall. Younger children develop a reasonable repertoire of songs, often based on the rhymes taught in the early years classes. They know the words well and perform the melodies quite accurately. It is not clear that children's repertoire continues to grow systematically enough in Year 2.

147. Throughout the school the quality of teaching varies too much. It is unsatisfactory overall. Teachers' insecurity about teaching the subject means that pupils' progress is limited.

148. In the best lessons, the teachers work to improve children's accuracy when singing and playing. Recorded music is used effectively to develop children's listening skills and to teach new songs. However, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching, leading to limited progress for the pupils. Teachers lack confidence, particularly in introducing new songs. In some cases, unsuitable lesson content leads to behaviour problems and so to unsatisfactory progress. In the least successful teaching, time is wasted by over-concentration on what the children do wrong. They have little incentive to improve. Overall, there is little variety within music lessons. In some cases, there is too little emphasis on developing children's repertoire of songs systematically and too little concentration on improving expressive performance and accompaniment over time.

149. A new co-ordinator has been appointed quite recently. She has a good view of the improvements required and has suitable plans to bring them about.

Physical Education

150. Children make unsatisfactory progress in physical education. The situation has not improved since the inspection carried out in 1995. By the age of seven spatial awareness is poor and hand-eye co-ordination is weak. The majority of pupils struggle with basic sending and receiving skills. Very few have developed sufficient accuracy or economy of effort. Attainment is well below average.

151. Good foundations are laid in the reception classes. Gymnastic work helps children to develop suitable control. Satisfactory progress is made in activities such as running and jumping. Many children are starting to link simple actions together with fluency and control. However, this progress is not sustained in Years 1 and 2, where there is very poor development of games skills for children at all levels of attainment. Pupils have little understanding of how to observe, copy and play simple games. This lack of progress by pupils of all attainment levels is mainly attributable to teachers' low expectations and the limited indoor environment in which lessons are taught.

152. Response to physical education lessons is good in the reception classes, where teachers demand a lot, but gets progressively weaker as children move up the school. Pupils show enthusiasm to learn but tend to be frustrated by undemanding tasks, the over-tight control of some teachers and the limited indoor space in which they work. Children try hard to work together when required. However, groupwork is often unproductive because there is too little time or space to develop and refine the work.

153. Most of the teaching is unsatisfactory. Some is poor. Reception class teaching shows appropriate expectations of the children and good organisational skills. In Years 1 and 2 expectations are too low and it is not always clear what pupils are to learn from the work undertaken. Class management is over-firm and does not allow pupils fully to explore, practice and refine skills. Some of the equipment used in lessons is inappropriate for the children's current skill levels.

154. There is not yet a coherent scheme of work for physical education, although an appropriate start has been made on constructing one. The lack of clear guidance for teachers leads to low expectations.

Religious Education

155. Overall, standards achieved by children in Year 2 are above average. Children retain a great deal of knowledge about the religions they study (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) and are able to see similarities and differences between festivals, worship and traditions. In most of the lessons seen, discussion was good and children used vocabulary well. Teachers have a strong expectation that children will respect the views of people of different traditions, and in general they do so.

156. Children of different attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, gain from most of the lessons. Progress in lessons is generally satisfactory. In some it is very good. Teachers' concentration on oral work is effective in developing pupils' understanding. The systematic introduction of precise vocabulary also benefits the children. Over time, children learn a good deal about religion and develop helpful understanding of the stories associated with different faiths.

157. In the most lessons children behave well and show interest in the work. In the best sessions, behaviour is excellent, children pay close attention to what the teacher says and show interest in the subject matter. However, children become restless, inattentive and slightly rude in the odd lesson where teaching is poor.

158. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory, though examples of both very good and poor teaching were seen. The strengths of the teaching include the use of good resources and very clear

explanation. Most teachers strike a good balance between telling children things, asking demanding questions and expecting extended and detailed answers. This leads to the steady acquisition of knowledge and the development of good understanding. Weaknesses of the teaching relate to rather limited expectations of children's writing and drawing. When lessons involve recording, there should be an insistence on quality. In the worst taught lesson the teacher fell into the trap of telling the Creation Myth from the Bible as fact. She asked questions the children were unable to answer and was unable to maintain discipline appropriately. Progress was poor.

159. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards are rising. The resources for the subject have been improved and are now good. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator and the work taught relates well to the Local Agreed Syllabus.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

160. A team of seven inspectors visited the school over a period of four days. A total of 17.5 inspector days were spent in viewing lessons and gathering other first-hand evidence. A total of sixty-nine lessons or parts of lessons were seen. In history and design and technology, too few lessons were seen to enable inspectors to form an accurate view of children's attainment and progress. In each class in Years 1 and 2, the complete written work of three pupils (assessed as of high, average and low attainment by staff) was looked at in detail.

161. A small sample of pupils from each year group read to an inspector. Discussions were held with pupils about their reading. Informal discussions were also held with pupils during many lessons in most subjects. Extensive discussions were held with the headteacher and with all members of staff with management responsibility. Meetings were held with the secretarial staff, some midday supervisors and the caretaker. Two meetings were held with members of the governing body. A meeting of parents was held and a survey of parents' views was carried out. The results were analysed. The survey had a very low return rate (12% of the forms sent out) and so results may not represent the views of all parents. Attendance at the parents' meeting was quite low.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y2	237	2	66	94
Nursery Class	26	0	2	N/A

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size:	26

Education support staff (YR – Y2)

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week	170

Qualified teachers (Nursery class)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Education support staff (Nursery class)

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week	33

Finance data

Financial year:	1998-9
	£
Total Income	488,491.00
Total Expenditure	483,293.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,083.16
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,915.00
Balance carried forward to next year	26,113.00

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 290

Number of questionnaires returned: 35

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	37.1	54.2	5.7	-	-
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	57.1	40.0	2.8	-	-
The school handles complaints from parents well	25.7	57.1	11.4	-	-
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	22.8	62.9	8.6	5.7	-
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	40.0	45.7	8.6	2.8	-
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	34.3	54.3	5.7	-	-
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	28.6	48.6	20.0	-	-
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	34.3	45.7	8.6	11.4	-
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	48.6	45.7	2.8	-	-
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	45.7	45.7	5.7	-	-
My child(ren) like(s) school	71.4	28.6	-	-	-

As not all completed questionnaires provided a response to every question, and as figures are rounded up or down, rows do not always add up exactly to 100%.