

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIORY SCHOOL

Southend on Sea

LEA area: Southend on Sea

Unique reference number: 115443

Headteacher: Mrs V Wathen

Reporting inspector: Dr D. Alan Dobbins
27424

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 May 2000

Inspection number: 190420

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Emotional and behavioural difficulties
Age range of pupils:	8 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Burr Hill Chase Prittlewell Southend on Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS2 6PE
Telephone number:	01702 347490
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father Mason
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr D. Alan Dobbins	Registered inspector	Science; art; design and technology; equal opportunities.	The school's results and achievements; how well the pupils are taught; leadership and management.
J. Brasier	Lay inspector		Attendance; welfare, health, safety and child protection; partnership with parents.
G. Davies	Team inspector	Mathematics; history; modern foreign language.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; assessment and monitoring of academic and personal development.
C. Tombs	Team inspector	English; geography; physical education.	Spiritual, social moral and cultural provision; personal support and guidance.
I. Evenden	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; music.	Curriculum; staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Priory School is a local education authority mixed day special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school provides for 39 full-time pupils, 36 boys and 3 girls, from 8 to 16 years of age. The registered admission number is 46.

All pupils have statements of special educational need. As a consequence of their learning difficulties, the attainment of most pupils on entry is considerably below expectations for age. However, a small minority of pupils attain at age-appropriate levels.

Primarily, the school offers specialist provision for the Borough of Southend on Sea, but it also admits 12 pupils from five neighbouring boroughs. Forty-nine percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. No pupil is from an ethnic minority. The school was last inspected in October 1996. The headteacher was appointed as the acting headteacher in September 1997 and confirmed as the headteacher in February 1999.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Priory School is a good school. It is very well led and managed. The headteacher, who provides a clear direction for the work of the school, receives very effective support from the governing body and the senior teachers. They have developed, and operate, procedures that very effectively monitor and evaluate all the work of the school. Teaching is good. The relationship between pupils and all adults is very good and is based on the obvious mutual respect that each has for the other. In many subjects, pupils make good progress. When account is taken of the effect of their emotional and behaviour difficulties, the standards they attain and the progress they make represent good achievement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils learn well and achieve good standards of work in most subjects.
- Pupils' personal development, especially their social and moral development and their relationship with staff, is very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are very good.
- It is very well led and managed.

What could be improved

- The range of accredited awards that can be taken by pupils in their last year at school.
- The way in which pupils' work in the foundation subjects is assessed.
- The range of curriculum opportunities in design and technology, music and religious education.
- Opportunities for pupils to take some of their lessons in mainstream schools.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. All but one of the key issues for action identified then has been tackled successfully.

- Baseline assessment has been effectively introduced for pupils at Key Stage 2.

- The provision for the delivery of the cross curriculum skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number has been well supported by the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies, by the lunchtime reading programme and by extending the library provision.
- National curriculum requirements are now met for geography. The curriculum for music continues to be too narrow and that for religious education has not developed.
- There are now more effective links between Key Stages 2 and 3, which ensure continuity and progression in learning between the key stages.
- The systems for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and the work of the staff are now very good and form a solid base for further development.

The leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are now very effective. They make an important contribution to the improved behaviour, the higher quality of teaching seen throughout the school and to the better progress pupils now make in most subjects.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 11	By age 16	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	B	good	B
Writing	C	C	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	B	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

**IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.*

The school's targets are appropriate and well formulated. The precise targets for learning that are written in pupils' individual educational plans make a significant contribution to the very good progress pupils make in their personal development. Pupils make very good progress in information technology and this helps their learning in the other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils arrive at school intending to work hard. In most lessons this is achieved.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In lessons, at lunchtimes when they take part in their chosen option and when they visit the local community to support their learning in school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school's ethos encourages pupils to think about the effect of their actions on others. This helps pupils to see the consequences of their behaviour and, in doing so, helps to improve their behaviour.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The school is making a committed effort to improve attendance through the very good procedures to monitor attendance and through well-established links with relevant agencies.

For a small number of pupils their high rate of absence limits the effect of the good quality of teaching and the opportunities provided by the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

In lessons in English and mathematics, the quality of teaching is good. In science and personal and social education teaching is very good. Teaching is excellent in 2%, very good in 25%, good in 51%, satisfactory in 17% and unsatisfactory in 5% of lessons. In the lessons when teaching is of good or better quality, pupils behave well. In a minority of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory because inappropriate behaviour by pupils limits the standards they achieve and the progress they make. Teachers have high expectations for learning. The good choice of lesson tasks and the good deployment of learning support assistant match well with the needs and abilities of pupils. Whenever possible, teachers choose strategies which involve pupils being active in their learning. Each contributes to the good standards pupils achieve, the good progress they make and to the positive attitudes they have to their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sufficiently broad, balanced and relevant to satisfactorily meet the academic, personal and social needs of pupils and prepare them for life after school. However, further development is required in design and technology, music and religious education. Also, pupils at Key Stage 4 should have more opportunities to take external examinations to show what they know and can do in subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Provision for moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are excellent.

The school makes strenuous efforts to involve parents and carers in its work. They are appreciative of the work of the school. The curriculum pays due regard to the National Curriculum, although the breadth of work in some subjects needs to be increased. It is well extended by the very good range of extra-curricular activities and by the very good use of the facilities of the local community. The procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are very good. These contribute significantly to pupils' good behaviour and allows teaching and learning to be of good quality.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, who is very well supported by the governing body and the senior teachers, provides a very clear educational direction for the work of the school. All staff fully share a commitment to make the school as effective as possible in all its work.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very well. The governing body fully meets its role of 'critical friend' to the school. All statutory requirements that relate to its work are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating attendance, behaviour and the personal development of pupils are either good or better. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are very good.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school's development plan prioritises and costs developments very well. The school makes good use of specific grant monies.

The appropriate number of staff and learning support workers are well qualified and experienced and are effectively deployed. Resources to support teaching and learning are good in some subjects. Financial management is very good and the governing body

operates appropriate procedures to ensure best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The good quality of teaching.• The ease with which they can approach the school for advice.• The high expectations the school has for the work of pupils.• The close links the school has with parents and carers.• That the school is well led and managed.	

Inspectors' judgements confirm the regard which parents have for the work of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment and achievement take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.
2. Pupils' achieve well in English. In speaking and listening and in reading, they make good progress. They make satisfactory progress in writing and in spelling. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read fluently and with good understanding. They also make good progress in grammar, especially in recognising nouns and adjectives and in understanding syllables and verbs. By the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils gain between Levels 3 to 5 of the National Curriculum assessment procedures, with the highest level being achieved for reading. All pupils can read aloud with confidence, fluency and appropriate intonation. They show good speaking and listening skills, which they use appropriately well when discussing, for example the books they are reading. Their writing has progressed so that they can write fluently in a particular form, such as a thank you letter or in the style of a broadcast, when they take on the role of the reporter. They can draft and re-draft well and make effective use of word-processing to produce writing of good quality. By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils are socially and functionally literate. The highest attaining pupils make sufficient progress to gain satisfactory GCSE grades. Most pupils achieve superior grades on the Certificate of Achievement.
3. The standards achieved in mathematics are good across all key stages. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are making very good progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, they have learned numbers to 1000. They are good at addition and subtraction of thousands, hundreds, tens and units and can display numbers through bar graphs and charts. They have learned to handle money to £10.00. They can calculate the correct amount of money and know how much change there should be in simulated purchases. Over the duration of Key Stage 3, pupils continue to increase their mathematical vocabulary. They can use double, treble, quarter, half and third more accurately. Their understanding of number increases through being able to convert to different number forms, such as Roman numerals. They become familiar with the properties of simple shapes, for example triangle and square and also the more complex shapes such as octagons. They are learning about decimals. The highest attaining pupils fully understand the link between addition, subtraction and multiplication of fractions and percentages. They are beginning to learn about algebra through creating simple formulae. By the end of Key Stage 4, the highest attaining pupils gain pass grades in the GCSE. All pupils leave school numerate and the highest attaining pupils have a good understanding of the subject over its full range.
4. Exercises in mental arithmetic feature in most lessons. As a result, pupils are adept at developing correct answers. Pupils at Key Stage 4 especially, realise the importance of getting quick and accurate answers from the use of number in other subjects of the curriculum and for life after school.

5. In science, pupils make good progress and achieve well at Key Stages 2 and 3 over all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress over the syllabus for GCSE single (modular) science. The highest attaining pupils expect to gain grade C. By the end of Key Stage 2, the highest attaining pupils attain at Level 3. For example, they can use their scientific vocabulary accurately and confidently when explaining what they have learned about electricity, magnetism and light. Over the duration of Key Stage 3, they can plan experiments with greater attention to detail and observe and measure with an appropriate degree of precision. The highest attaining pupils attain at Level 5 in each of the attainment targets. For example, in attainment target 1, they are good at sorting, classifying, measuring and analysing. Then, through use of computers they can present their data and the results of simple statistical tests very well.
6. In other subjects, pupils make very good progress in information technology, with the highest attaining pupils attaining beyond the national average for the equivalent age. Good progress is made in geography at Key Stages 2 and 3 and in history at Key Stage 3, the only key stage at which the subject was taught over the time of the inspection. In physical education, pupils make good progress at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory progress at the other key stages. In art, progress is satisfactory over all key stages and in French it is satisfactory over Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, the two key stages at which it is taught. Progress in design and technology is satisfactory over the narrow curriculum presented in the subject. The progress pupils make in music and in religious education is unsatisfactory.
7. The small number of girls make equivalent progress to the boys. The progress made by pupils who become so troubled that they need to leave a lesson to use the quiet room or to discuss their concerns with a member of staff is less than that made by their peers. For a small number of pupils their progress is limited by their exclusion from school following action taken as a response to unacceptable behaviour. Pupils who come to school regularly make better progress than do those with higher absence rates.
8. Since the last inspection, the standards pupils achieve have improved in a number of subjects. For example, standards in speaking and listening and in reading are better at Key Stages 3 and 4. The standards achieved in mathematics have improved considerably, especially for pupils at Key Stage 2. There has been improvement in geography and in physical education at Key Stage 4 and considerable improvement in information technology across the school. In science the good progress reported at the last inspection has been maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. In three lessons in ten pupils' attitudes to their work are very good or better. In eight lessons in ten they are good or better. They are satisfactory or better in 93%. They are unsatisfactory in 7% of lessons because their behaviour is inappropriate.
10. Generally, pupils arrive at school on time and settle quickly into the routines of the school, including attending to their work. At both key stages, pupils listen carefully. When working as individuals they concentrate well and complete their tasks efficiently and quickly. As they progress through the school, they show an increasing ability to collaborate effectively for a common cause, such as making slides in a science lesson at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 particularly, pupils

discuss issues well and solve problems through constructive debate.

11. Behaviour in lessons, at lunchtimes when they take part in their chosen option and around the school, is good. Pupils also behave well when they visit the local community. Pupils respect and respond positively to the school charter on behaviour. They see the relevance of and are pleased when they are given merit points for their good attitude and good behaviour at the end of lessons. Older pupils can discuss the advantages of the system in a very mature way and have a very good understanding of the role of the quiet room and of the tutorial sessions in contributing to their personal development. They show respect for the property of others, the school's resources, the many presentations displayed throughout the school and for the building itself.
12. Relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and staff are very good. Inappropriate behaviour, which is seen when pupils are troubled or unsettled, is mostly of short duration and typically will be a verbal outburst against a fellow pupil. When, this occurs pupils feel that they have let themselves and their teachers down and will quickly apologise. They have learned to show concern for each other and offer strong support to classmates who become troubled or overly worried. The school's ethos encourages pupils to think about the consequences of their actions upon others. This helps pupils realise the full effect of their behaviour, including the hurt and disappointment that can be caused to others, as a first step to reducing and eliminating inappropriate behaviour.
13. The programme for personal and social development is very well planned. Teachers and learning support assistants are very good at making use of opportunities in lessons to reinforce topics studied in personal and social education. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in their personal and social development. They respond with confidence and maturity to the many opportunities they have to make choices during the day and when required show initiative in lessons, when off-site as members of the School Council or when taking part in the peer teaching programme.
14. At 75%, attendance is unsatisfactory. In the academic year 1998 - 1999 the school's overall attendance rate was badly affected by about five Year 11 pupils, who consistently failed to attend school. Since the beginning of this academic year, most pupils have attended very regularly. For example, 40% of pupils currently have attendance rates that are better than 90%. Pupils admitted to Key Stage 2, because of persistent non-attendance in their previous schools, often need to be placed on pastoral support plans to begin to attend school. Their planned absence from school has a negative affect on the overall attendance rate. However, as they become able to spend longer periods of time at school the overall rate is improving and for this term averages 81.6%. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) has indicated to the school that it is satisfied with the school's proposals to continue to increase attendance. Lessons begin and end on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. During the last inspection the quality of teaching was very good or better in 6% of lessons, satisfactory or better in 85% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 15% of lessons. Now, it is very good or better in 26% of lessons, satisfactory or better in 95% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 5% of lessons. This represents a substantial improvement over the quality of teaching seen at the last inspection.

16. There are a number of important contributors to the good quality of the teaching. Teaching is effectively monitored and evaluated by the headteacher, and the professional development programme is very well used to increase teachers' skills and knowledge. Teachers have high expectations for the learning and for the behaviour of pupils. They have a good knowledge of their subjects and of the circumstances and learning difficulties of the pupils. These help to ensure that pupils make good progress in attainment and meet behavioural targets set out in their individual educational plans.
17. Teaching methods used are very effective. For example, most lessons begin with an introduction, which identifies clear objectives for pupils' learning. Typically, then lessons are structured so that pupils are active in their learning. This benefits the progress they make. For example, in a science lesson at Key Stage 2, pupils made very good progress in understanding the reaction of ions to different temperatures by acting as ions. They moved slowly when the temperature was cold and quickly when it was hot. At Key Stage 4, pupils were required to follow detailed instructions when making a slide to observe the cell structure, including recognising the chromosomes, of an onion plant. The lesson was planned very well, with clear objectives for learning. Pupils used good quality equipment in a well-appointed laboratory. As a consequence they worked with enthusiasm and diligence and were delighted to be able to identify for a visitor the different characteristics of the cells they had cut and dyed. In these lessons and others where the quality of teaching was very good, pupils are inspired as learners.
18. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well. The procedures for rewarding good behaviour, the yellow and red card system, the quiet room and the 7 – 11 class provide very effective support for teachers and pupils in maintaining good behaviour. However, in 5% of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory because the poor behaviour of pupils results in unsatisfactory learning and progress.
19. In lessons at Key Stage 2, the learning support worker is very well deployed. By supporting pupils in the completion of their lesson tasks, she makes a significant contribution to teaching and learning. However, in too many lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 the learning support workers are not deployed sufficiently well to make an equivalent contribution. Assessment of pupils' progress in the core subjects is very well done. The gains pupils make are accurately recognised and recorded and help in the planning of future lessons. This is not the case for some foundation subjects. In these subjects the schemes of work are not sufficiently detailed to secure continuity and progression in pupils' learning over an extended period of time, such as a year or key stage. Lessons, or small groups of linked lessons, tend to be independent of each other and are not well linked to the schemes of work. As such assessment tends to focus on the gains pupils make in individual lessons and not on those made over longer periods of time. For the foundation subjects, assessment contributes too little to the planning of future lessons.
20. In four lessons in ten the quality of learning is very good or better. In eight lessons in ten it is good or better and is satisfactory or better in 93% of the lessons. In 7% of lessons pupils make unsatisfactory progress. When this is the case it is most often because they are troubled by events linked to their difficulties with learning, which have little to do with school, but which results in them paying too little attention to their learning.

21. As they grow through the school, pupils sustain their concentration for increasing lengths of time. They are helped in this by having regular opportunities in lessons to take some control of their own learning, which allows them to gain confidence in their own skills as independent learners. For example, from Key Stage 3 onwards, the highest attaining pupils are good at using CD-ROMs and searching the Internet to gain information.
22. Teachers make best use of their links with the home to support pupils' learning. The homework policy is well thought through and works well to support the work of some pupils. However, for most pupils the links between home and school are not sufficiently well established to make a significant contribution to the work of the school. About a third of parents believe that pupils do not get the right amount of homework.

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

23. The curriculum is sufficiently broad, balanced and relevant to meet the academic, personal and social needs of pupils. However, some subjects require further development for the school to best prepare pupils for their next stage of education and for life after school.
24. The curriculum appropriately places considerable emphasises on the personal and social development of pupils. The planning documents are good. The targets identified in pupils' individual educational plans are precisely written and are agreed with pupils. Pupils easily know when they achieve the targets and also the progress they are making. The programme includes sex education, information about the misuse of drugs and discussion about moral and social dilemmas facing pupils as they grow through the school. It is closely linked with the good programme in careers education through which pupils earn a Trident award. Pupils enjoy taking part in three weeks of work experience in Year 10 and Year 11, which provides them with a very good awareness of the requirements of the world of work. Sensitive teaching, which consistently reinforces positive behaviour and good attitudes; the effective tutorial system which provides for each pupil a named teacher to whom he or she can go to in times of trouble; the quiet room where pupils can elect to go to themselves; and being able to visit the headteacher's room to discuss their troubles all help pupils make very good progress in areas of their personal growth that they have had difficulties with in the past.
25. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well and effectively implemented into the curriculum. This is particularly so for speaking and listening and reading in English, for pupils over all the school and in mathematics for pupils at Key Stage 2.
26. The time allocated for the study of music and religious education for pupils at Key Stage 2 is insufficient. The provision for religious education throughout the school pays too little regard to the locally agreed syllabus and to developing a Christian dimension. The provision of design and technology does not sufficiently reflect the National Curriculum programmes of study for pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3. The link between food technology and the other elements of the subject is not secure. In the core subjects, pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 take appropriate examinations including the GCSE. This is not the case for the other subjects. The lack of opportunity to take accredited awards, which can demonstrate the achievements

and the progress pupils make over their time in the school, disadvantages them in their movement to the next stage of education and to the world of work.

27. The good range of extra-curricular activities include residential trips, for example to the Brecon Beacons to engage in outdoor activities and to Manchester United Football Club to be coached by players and to take part in a tournament. Pupils take part in the large number of lunchtime clubs such as the CDROM club, music club, football training and an indoor games club where pupils play draughts and chess.
28. All pupils have equal access to all the work of the school. The very small number of girls take a full part in all lessons and have equal access with boys to the other activities offered by the school. Occasionally, the behaviour of pupils requires that they be removed from their class. For these pupils the school has created the 7 – 11 class, into which pupils are assigned when their behaviour makes it impossible for them to remain with their regular class. This class operates as an internal exclusion. Pupils work as individuals and follow their normal timetable. It is to the credit of the school that they have extended the notion of equal opportunity for pupils whose behaviour is at times inappropriate by creating this class, rather than excluding pupils from school and denying them the opportunity to continue with their learning and their personal and social development.
29. Better use is made of the local community to support teaching and learning than was the case at the last inspection. For example, very good use is made of local installations to extend pupils' knowledge of information technology. The locality is used to study fossils, weather forecasting and the natural characteristics of beaches and forests. Local businesses have given the school generous support for items of equipment and for awards. Although, the school has good links with nearby colleges that provide appropriate post - 16 training opportunities for pupils, the links with local schools are very limited. Only a small number of pupils gain from attending lessons in other schools.
30. Even though provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, lessons in religious education play too little a part. Several other subjects, especially English provide significant opportunities to reflect on questions of value and meaning. The weekly assembly, which recognises and celebrates the achievements of pupils, acts of kindness, thoughtful behaviour, good effort and good work, helps to reinforce attitudes of consideration, sensitivity and care. Regular visits to school by a member of the local clergy, and pupils reading prayers at the beginning of lunchtime, also make effective contributions to increasing pupils' spiritual awareness.
31. Provision for moral development is very good. The well organised and well delivered programme of personal and social education, supplements the values of kindness, trust, honesty and fairness, which permeate the school. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong in a clear and effective way. Wider moral issues are discussed in lessons, especially in English, science and geography.
32. Provision for social development is very good, is well planned and permeates all the work of the school. For example, staff are very caring and calm and provide very good role models. Pupils are offered a large number of additional opportunities to develop their social skills. They regularly take part in charity collections and fund raising events. They join in inter-school sports, go on a range of visits out of school, including residential camps. They receive a range of visitors to the school. These

provide different situations in which pupils can show that they can act appropriately.

33. Provision for cultural development is good. English, art and music especially offer opportunities for pupils to explore our own culture. In addition, they gain awareness of other cultures through a programme of visits, for example to London's art galleries, theatres, museums and libraries. Since the last inspection the provision for cultural education has improved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Pupils are cared for very well. Provision is better than at the time of the last inspection. Health and safety requirements are met in full. Pupils are safe and secure at school. Child protection procedures meet statutory requirements. Pupils benefit from the good relationships, which link the school with relevant local agencies. All staff are appropriately trained and regularly updated through good in-service training. Staff pay particular attention to pupils who are in care or who are on the 'at risk' register. The school links well with the local Child Protection Committee.
35. The school recognises that the attendance and behaviour of pupils make an important contribution to the progress they make. The procedures for improving attendance are good. Records of attendance are accurate and up to date. Collaboration with the Southend on Sea Education Welfare Service is very good and is based on regular contact, which includes a formal review every three weeks of the attendance rates of pupils and their trends. Considerable effort has been made to make the school an attractive and welcoming place, so as to provide additional support for the procedures specifically aimed at improving attendance.
36. The procedures for improving behaviour are very good. They focus primarily on rewarding appropriate behaviour, but sanctions, for example placement in the 7 – 11 class or exclusion from school are used when required. Pupils agree their targets for behaviour, which are clearly identified in their individual educational plans. Each pupil has a primary target for the week, which is known to all staff. The complex reward system for attaining the behaviour targets is based on winning 'leaves' on which the good achievement of pupils is written. The leaves are then hung on a tree in the entrance hall for all to see. All staff take a full part in the procedures for developing pupils' behaviour. Red and yellow cards are used for serious failure to comply with expected behaviour and the reasons why these are issued are carefully analysed and recorded and help inform future action. Whenever required, parents or carers are called in to discuss behaviour problems. The quiet room and tutorial sessions also contribute to the development of pupils behaviour by giving them a place to go when they are troubled and by identifying someone they can talk with about their behaviour. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and are routinely reinforced by staff in their lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
37. The procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and the progress they make are good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, geography, physical education and personal and social education. The procedures for assessment in design and technology, art, and French are satisfactory while those for religious education, history and music are unsatisfactory. In these subjects too little information is gained on what pupils know and can do, on the

progress they make over time or in helping to plan future lessons.

38. Base line assessments take place on entry into Key Stage 2, including tests of literacy and numeracy and pupils' individual education plans contain academic as well social and behavioural targets. The targets are written precisely and are reviewed in target setting tutorials that take place at least three times a year. Those for information technology and personal and social education are particularly well linked to the learning outcomes of the subjects. For most subjects the schemes of work are well written and reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. This and the regular marking and recording of pupils' work enables teachers to monitor and support the pupils' academic progress and to secure continuity and progression in their learning. Standard assessment tasks are given to pupils when required by the National Curriculum.
39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal and social development are excellent. The programme for personal and social education is indirectly but very effectively supported in the other lessons and activities through the staff's shared approach to pupils' personal and social development and by the tutor system. Tutor sessions are well used for counselling. The tutor meets with the pupil regularly and tracks and reviews his/her progress against the specific targets of the individual education plan, for which the tutor can assign an appropriate number of points. The use of in-house merit and achievement awards, such as awards for understanding, fairness, kindness and for a wide range of sporting achievements also play an important part in promoting personal and social development. The good standard of behaviour and the absence of oppressive behaviour in the school are very much the product of this approach.
40. The procedures for caring for the pupils are supported by the very good analysis of relevant data that provides current information on pupils' academic performance, behaviour and attendance, including exclusions. It also provides detail on the developing patterns in pupils' behaviour, for example, the number of times he/she visits the quiet room, at what time of day, and in whose lessons. The information gained from this analysis is well used and, for example may result in changing targets in individual educational plans, modification to the curriculum, further development in pupils' individual support, or referral to specialist agencies. Since the last inspection the school has become more effective in caring for its pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and believe that it provides a very good education for their children.
42. The information provided for parents and carers is very good and has substantially improved since the last inspection. The content of annual reviews and school reports is well-expressed in clear language so that the achievements and the progress pupils make are easily recognised. The prospectus is well presented, well written and informative. The annual report of the governing body is also well presented and clear, but reports on the achievements and successes of pupils only in part.
43. The school makes a significant effort to involve parents and carers in its work so as to help benefit the progress pupils make. For example, they can get advice on procedures to manage behaviour in the home. Many parents and carers take advantage of this and become involved in the development of behaviour plans and

know the weekly target behaviour for their child. Parents appreciate the frequent telephone calls that are made to report the successes of their child. However, despite the school's enthusiasm to involve parents and carers in its work most show only a little interest in the life of the school. For example, only about 25% regularly attend open evenings. However, up to 75% attend their child's annual review meeting. There is no parent association.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the work of the school. The school development plan is detailed and provides very good guidance for the further development of the school.
45. The school's aims and values are clear and are based on an unconditional and positive regard for pupils as individuals and their entitlement to the very best educational experience the school can provide. The very good relationship between staff and pupils is, to a considerable extent, based on the obvious respect which staff have for pupils. The School Council, which meets the headteacher whenever necessary is a very good working example of the respect which pupils and staff have for each other. The 7 - 11 class, which allows sanctions to be imposed on pupils but limits the need for exclusion from school, reflects the school's desire to ensure equal opportunity for pupils regardless of their actions.
46. The governing body fully meets its role of 'critical friend' to the school and provides very good support to the headteacher. Through reports to the sub-committees and through regular visits to school, they are kept very well informed of the effectiveness of the developments identified in the school development plan and of other aspects of work of the school.
47. The very good programme for monitoring the effectiveness of the work of the school, the good use of the local authority advisor and the well organised in-service training programme are testament to the school's commitment for further improvement. Delegation of responsibilities is very well done. The two senior teachers have a clear understanding of their duties and discharge them very effectively. The programme for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, includes teachers' planning, their effectiveness in lessons, the progress pupils make in their learning through regular review of their individual education plans and an analysis of their work samples. Attendance, information technology, behaviour, literacy and numeracy across the school are also reviewed in good formal and detailed arrangements. Through these procedures and by other means, for example meeting pupils as they enter school to start their day, the headteacher sets high expectations for pupils and staff alike. She makes a significant contribution to the very good ethos for learning, which is a notable aspect of the success achieved by the school.
48. New staff are quickly and effectively inducted into the procedures and requirements of the school. The appraisal procedures for staff identifies for each teacher and learning support assistant three targets for improvement, one of which has to do with pupils' progress. This works very effectively in training in new initiatives and in providing training according to need or desire. Because of the small number of teachers, they do not always teach subjects in which they have specialist training. This is not a problem in many subjects but the standards achieved and the progress

pupils make in music and religious education is affected by the lack of specialist knowledge of the teachers.

49. Accommodation is mostly very good. It contains sufficient specialist teaching areas for the National Curriculum to be fully delivered, although the science laboratory also doubles as the computer suite. The temporary classroom has been painted to match the rest of the school and is in good condition. The lack of specialist facilities for physical education is very effectively negated by the good use of local facilities. Resources to support teaching and learning are sufficient and of suitable quality in all subjects, except for information technology. Resources are good in English, mathematics, science, history, design and technology and French. There is a wealth of good material to support personal and social development.
50. Financial planning is detailed and thorough and the governors, together with the senior management team, make careful decisions about the use of the funds available to the school. There are robust plans to spend the very large carry over figure, which have been delayed by the transfer of the school into the new unitary authority. All the recommendations of the most recent audit have been implemented in full.
51. The school has made significant improvements in the use of new technology since the last inspection. There are now efficient computer-based systems in place and the headteacher and administrative assistants make good use of these to monitor finance, curriculum and personnel. The school is aware of the principles of best value and applies them appropriately in purchasing, tendering and contracting arrangements. It is particularly good at collecting and analysing data and uses this information to evaluate and review its practice. It is in a good position to compare its costs and performance with that of schools with similar characteristics.
52. Taking into account the good achievement of pupils and the good progress they make in most subjects, the positive attitudes to their work, their good standards of behaviour, the good quality of teaching, effective use of resources and very good management, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The governing body and the headteacher should further develop the curriculum by:
 - extending accreditation opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 4; (Paras 26,74,78,87,98)
 - improving assessment procedures in the history, music and religious education, in order to identify the progress pupils make and to inform planning, teaching and learning; (Paras 37, 93, 105, 113)
 - broadening and improving the curriculum in music, religious education and design and technology; (Paras 26, 77, 105, 113)
 - providing increased opportunities for pupils to study in mainstream schools as part of the development of flexible programmes of study (Para 29)

and should

- continue to improve attendance. (Para 14, 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.6	25.0	51.6	16.6	5.0		

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	39
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	19.8

	%
School data	5.6

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	39
Any other minority ethnic group	

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.9
Average class size	5.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	46	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	505807
Total expenditure	464472
Expenditure per pupil	11058
Balance brought forward from previous year	78278
Balance carried forward to next year	41335

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	39
Number of questionnaires returned	16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	44	0	6	6
My child is making good progress in school.	44	38	6	6	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	47	7	7	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	47	33	0	7
The teaching is good.	67	27	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	25	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	19	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	20	7	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	31	0	6	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	27	0	7	7

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

ENGLISH

54. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they make are nearly always good and occasionally very good in all three key stages. There is consistently good progress in speaking and listening and in reading as pupils move up through the school and satisfactory progress in writing. Pupils' English folders are neat and well presented. They show the care and pride taken over drafting and editing work, and good use of word processing.
55. Pupils in Key Stage 2, display a wide range of ability, from a pupil who is bright and articulate and who reads fluently well beyond his chronological age to another who is reluctant to speak and struggles to read or write even when using simple words. End of key stage tests show that pupils perform at National Curriculum levels 2-4. All pupils in this key stage make good progress as a result of consistently good or very good teaching and their positive attitude to the subject. They make good progress in lessons, in identifying and recognising nouns and adjectives and understand syllables, questions and verbs. They show good comprehension skills and enjoy listening to stories. In their writing, most pupils use accurate but simple punctuation, write neatly and can use a dictionary to look up the meaning of words. By the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of pupils is between Levels 3 and 5 of the National Curriculum. All pupils are confident enough to read aloud, some with support. They show good speaking and listening skills in discussion about their work. They understand key words in the passages they read, like genius, poverty and synopsis when they read about a pen portrait of Charles Dickens. In a Year 8 one-to-one lesson, the pupil made good progress in improving his knowledge and understanding of vocabulary. He was able to give a range of opposites using prefixes (for example, disbelieve, incorrect) and to use them appropriately in sentences. Pupils, over Year 9, learn to understand complex information such as that given in the book *Belfast Saturday*. They can recall accurately the characters and events. When discussing the scene after the bombing, pupils show intelligent and sensitive awareness of the task of the reporter. They are able to write fluently with reasonable accuracy in the adapted style of a broadcast when they take on the role of the reporter. They rehearse their report, record it on a cassette and then improve it after reflection. Speaking and listening skills are of very good quality. Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow the syllabus for the GCSE examination or the Certificate of Achievement. In the 1999 examinations, one pupil gained a GCSE grade E, and the others gained good grades on the Certificate of Achievement. This year it is expected that more pupils will gain GCSE grades C to G.
56. The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons, there are clear introductions so that pupils know what is expected of them and clear endings so that pupils can review what they have learnt and how they have behaved. Positive behaviour management, work and questioning which meets the needs of all pupils, are features of good or very good lessons. In Key Stage 2, high expectations and some dynamic teaching keeps pupils fully involved completing their lesson tasks over the full duration of lessons. At Key Stage 4, the teacher's good subject knowledge enables her to use a range of strategies and resources, which challenge and extend pupils' thinking. This is not the case in one lesson at Year 7, where the teacher's lack of secure subject knowledge and insecurity about control, limited

pupils' opportunities and the progress they made. In some lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3, the learning support assistants are not sufficiently involved in promoting pupils' learning.

57. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive in almost all of the lessons. From Key Stage 2 onwards there is an appropriate emphasis on building up pupils' confidence, self-esteem and their feelings of success and achievement. As a result, most pupils work with a sense of purpose, tinged with anticipation. As pupils move up through the school, there is an increased willingness to listen, take part in discussion and to respond to others' points of view. Pupils throughout, show an enjoyment of reading and sharing books. Older pupils appreciate the need to improve writing through drafting, editing and proof reading. Certificates are awarded each term for the most improvement in reading.
58. The subject is well led by an experienced teacher, who although not a specialist, has received substantial in-service training. The policy and the scheme of work are good. The orders for the subject are covered with appropriate balance. The National Literacy Strategy supports teaching and learning in English and is helping the school address the challenge of raising standards through a whole-school development of literacy skills. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are very good. Resources for the subject are good and include easy access to computers, library provision and a wide selection of books and relevant textbooks.
59. English makes a consistent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in that it develops aspects of individual and social identity, raises pupils' awareness of moral and social issues and enables pupils to reflect and engage with the sentiments expressed in drama, poetry and fiction. There has been a significant improvement in English since the last inspection in all aspects of the subject. Baseline entry assessment and very good continuous assessment, confirms pupils' progress, sets new targets and informs teaching and planning. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are now good, and are reinforced across all areas of the curriculum, in the weekly assembly meetings, in tutorial periods, in public speaking events and in the school's council meetings. This subject is now a strength of the school.

MATHEMATICS

60. Standards of achievement in mathematics are good across all Key Stages. Pupils make good progress over Key Stage 3 and 4 and very good progress at Key Stage 2.
61. During Key Stage 2, pupils read numbers up to 1000, and round up numbers to 10 and as a result of their competence in subtraction and addition can identify the next number in a sequence of numbers. They know how to collect data through the use of a questionnaire; use the information to create column graphs and understand how to interpret their graphs by making appropriate comparisons. Pupils are confident when using thousands, hundreds, tens and units to identify place value. They increase their mathematics vocabulary, for example when they grasp the meaning of same, different, even, odds, more, less and digit. They can add and subtract money using pounds and pence up to £10 and, by the end of the key stage, can carry out simple mental calculations without the help of a number grid.
62. During Key Stage 3, pupils continue to extend the vocabulary of mathematics as

they learn about double, treble, quarter, half and third. Their understanding of number develops through, for example converting numbers into Roman numerals. Their work on shape and space includes recognising and naming a wider range of shapes, such as polygons. They have learned of the angular properties of these shapes. They can measure angles with sufficient accuracy and use these skills when constructing pie charts. The pupils' increasing confidence in the use of decimals is linked to their work with the more complex addition, subtraction and multiplication of fractions. They use this information to convert decimal numbers and fractions into percentages. Toward the end of the key stage, they are introduced to algebra by creating simple formula and by learning to understand how to order operations.

63. During Key Stage 4, pupils continue to consolidate their previously learned skills and techniques for problem solving. Increasingly, they apply their mathematical knowledge in real life situations. Pupils understand the role that estimation plays in their work and learn to estimate more accurately as the progress through the key stage. They are able to carry out investigations such as looking for rules that govern the patterns of a rhombus and will list the number of permutations possible when 1, 2, and 3 dice are thrown. They are numerate when they leave school and the highest attaining pupils have a good understanding of all of the elements, which make up the subject.
64. Over all the school, mental arithmetic exercises are a part of every mathematics lesson. Pupils enjoy the pace and demands of the wide range of activities provided and show that not only is this key skill well developed but also that they understand the importance of mental calculations in other aspects of the curriculum and in life outside of school.
65. Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject have a direct impact on their learning and the progress that they make. They learn to persevere for longer periods of time when working independently and show more confidence and are more articulate when asking questions or when explaining their answers. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and the staff help make lessons very enjoyable for pupils, makes them want to succeed in their learning and makes an important contribution to the standards they achieve and the progress they make.
66. The co-ordination of mathematics is good. The policy reflects the school's aims and is translated into practice through a scheme of work that includes the National Curriculum orders for the subject. Supplemented by parts of the national strategy for numeracy. It is supported by good assessment procedures, which help with the planning of future lessons, as well as providing good information for the subject's annual reports to parents and carers.
67. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils have improved considerably.

SCIENCE

68. Over Key Stage 2 and 3, pupils make good progress in science over all the attainment targets of the programmes of study. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress over the syllabus for GCSE short course science. Over all the school pupils achieve very well.

69. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn about themselves and about forces like pushing and pulling. They are beginning to learn about electricity, magnetism and light and how materials may change. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils can use their new vocabulary accurately and confidently when they describe, for example the effect of temperature on the state of matter. Also, because of the choice of teaching strategies, which give pupils many opportunities to find out for themselves, they are beginning to recognise that testing, then recording their results can result in new learning. Over Key Stage 3, they can plan experiments with greater detail, observe and measure with increased precision and explain their results using appropriate terminology. The highest attaining pupils attain up to Level 5 in each of the attainment targets. For example, in attainment target 1, they are good at sorting, classifying, measuring, analysing and presenting their data through graphs and simple probability tests, with the help of computers. In attainment target 2, they know that cells build into tissues and organs. They can describe the parts of cells, for example nucleus and cytoplasm and know of their functions. They can name, locate and explain the function of the major organ systems and have learned to classify insects and vertebrates. They are equally good at classifying by large characteristics and with the aid of a microscope, by much smaller characteristics. In attainment target 3, the highest attaining pupils know what causes matter to change its state, can test for acidity using the pH scale and can neutralise liquids if required. They are beginning to understand the logic of the periodic table. In physical processes they are learning about p-waves and s-waves. They have developed their own seismograph, which they have tested and refined by simulating earth quakes by moving the table it was placed on. To support their study of waves, light and sound (attainment target 4) they visit Bradwell Nuclear Power Station and learn by first hand experience of how electricity can be produced from nuclear power. They make good progress in learning about L.A.S.E.R light by bending the light and by decoding holograms. They make good progress in their study of electricity and magnetism. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is based on the syllabus for single course science. The highest attaining pupils expect to gain C grades.
70. Pupils are committed to learning in science. They concentrate and behave well. When conducting their experiments they show initiative, act maturely as learners, are respectful of equipment and pay due regard to safety rules. They enjoy being active in their learning, as were Key Stage 2 pupils when they were simulating the activity levels of ions at different temperatures and Year 10 pupils when they were preparing slides to identify chromosomes.
71. The quality of teaching in science is very good. Long-term planning documents are very good and allow precise planning for lessons. The teacher is very knowledgeable of the subject and of the learning difficulties of pupils. Science is also well resourced and the specialist teaching area is good. In most lessons the learning support assistant is well deployed. Each contributes to the very good match that is routinely made between pupils needs and abilities and the lesson tasks. This results in lesson time being used very well.
72. The co-ordination of science is very good. Pupils' progress is good, the quality of teaching is very good in all lessons and the quality and quantity resources to support teaching and learning are now good. Each has improved since the last inspection and science continues to be a strength of the school.

ART

73. Only one lesson was seen in art over the time of the inspection. The judgements made here rely on discussions with pupils, the analysis of planning documents and of previously completed work. The standards achieved and the progress pupils make in art are satisfactory over all the school.
74. Over the duration of Key Stage 2, pupils have learned what is meant by colour, pattern, texture, line, tone, shape and form. By the end of the key stage, they can apply their skills satisfactorily well to drawing and painting portraits and landscapes and in weaving and tie-dyeing. In collage, they learn to produce work that is symmetrical, in relief and constructed from photographic prints. Their vocabulary in art increases, so that the highest attaining pupils can explain their work using landscape, perspective and blending. They are beginning to know of the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Braque and Hockney and also of the impressionist approach to painting. By the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils have gained the skills of finding information and planning in preparation for their work, but the lowest attaining pupils continue to plan their work as they produce it. They learn about three-dimensional shapes through pottery and ceramics and produce good quality work, which is often very well finished in bright colours. They become increasingly aware of different approaches to painting through the study of artists such as Kadinsky, Picasso, Cezanne and Monet. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 4 varies only a little from that experienced by pupils at Key Stage 3. Pupils currently in Key Stage 4 are not working toward an accredited award. Because of this they are unable to demonstrate their achievements and the progress they have made in the subject over their time at school. Over all the key stages, the quality of the work in ceramics is very good.
75. In the lesson observed pupils enjoyed their work. They behaved well, worked well as individuals and when they were required to co-operate with each other. The quality of teaching was good. Pupils knew what was required of them. The learning support assistant was well deployed to ensure that pupils remained on task and followed the appropriate procedure. Lesson time was well used. Pupils made good progress in completing their work.
76. The scheme of work is too brief and does not provide sufficient detail to promote continuity and progression in the skills, and an understanding, of the subject over a key stage. Lesson planning is disadvantaged because of this, as is the assessment of the gains pupils make. Assessment tends to be isolated to what is learned in lessons. Planning gains little from the assessment of pupils work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

77. The curriculum in design and technology is too narrow and does not include some elements of the relevant National Curriculum programmes of study. Work in resistant materials is mostly with wood. The curriculum in food technology is too narrow. Too little attention is given to design element of the subject. In the lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress.
78. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have learned to use simple tools, such as a screwdriver and hammer and have learned to measure, mark out and cut wood with tenon and coping saws. The highest attaining pupils can join wood accurately and securely using glue, screws and nails. They have learned to use power tools such as sanding machines to provide a better finish to their work. By the end of Key

Stage 3, pupils have learned to respond to a design brief, for example when they make a night sidelight. They extend their use of hand tools by learning to use chisels and learn to use power tools for turning, drilling and cutting. The skills they gain help them join flat pack materials such as desks and drawers or make artefacts such as simple toys or turning models. They learn to apply different finishes such as paint, varnish, stain and polish so that over the key stage the quality of their work improves in detail, construction and finish. They have too few opportunities to work with materials other than wood and to extend their skills and knowledge in the process of design or in evaluating their work. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 4 is too similar to that of key Stage 3. There is no accredited course at Key Stage 4 for pupils to follow to demonstrate the achievements they have made in the subject over their time at school.

79. Pupils show good attitudes to learning the skills of making. They enjoy working as individuals on their own projects. They work diligently and with appropriate regard to safety rules. Most pupils take pride in their finished product, even more so when it is displayed in the school's foyer.
80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The class teacher and support assistant provide quick and appropriate advice and support for pupils who are completing their projects. They make sure that pupils abide by appropriate safety rules when they use hand and power tools. For many pupils lesson time is well used. They work diligently and with enthusiasm. For a small minority of pupils this is not the case. Their unsatisfactory behaviour disrupts their learning and sometimes that of others. As a result the progress they make is limited. The scheme of work for craft, design and technology is linked with that for art. It is too brief to be a good planning document. It does not secure continuity and progression in learning over the key stages and, as such, it is difficult to recognise the gains pupils have made in their knowledge of design or in their making skills.
81. The craft design and technology room is well equipped, especially for work with wood. The food technology area is satisfactorily equipped. Co-ordination of the subject is hampered by the separate responsibilities allocated to the teacher who works mostly with resistant materials and the teacher for food technology. There is too little work in food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

82. Pupils' achievements in geography are good at Key Stages 2 and 3, the two key stages at which the subject is taught. They make good progress within and between key stages by building their knowledge and building on their geographical skills and understanding.
83. During Key Stage 2, pupils are making good progress in learning about the weather. They understand and can indicate the compass points. They can identify the weather symbols and they know why predictions in weather forecasts are not always correct. They have learned about the weather in other parts of the world. Most can complete good quality worksheets on the topic, unaided and with accuracy. In the first year of Key Stage 3, pupils can make informed decisions about why and where people choose to live. They understand historical factors and influences as well as those of more recent times. In Year 8, pupils make good progress in understanding and appreciating landforms and how they are formed by the power of the sea. Practical activities and fieldwork at a local beach effectively

reinforce their class-based learning. In Year 9, progress continues to be good. Pupils show their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to a study on birth and death rates. They can use and explain terms like infant mortality, rate and life expectancy.

84. The quality of teaching is very good at Key Stage 2, and good at Key Stage 3. Teachers display good knowledge of the subject and are confident and effective in managing pupils' behaviour. Specialist and technical vocabulary is routinely and accurately used. Teaching strategies are well chosen and in combination with appropriate resources stimulate and extend pupils' learning. Questioning and explanation are good throughout, often at different levels of complexity so as to meet individual needs. The purposeful ethos created in geography lessons maximises learning opportunities, although the better deployment of the learning support assistant in lessons at Key Stage 3 would make teaching and learning more effective. In lessons at Key Stage 2 the learning support assistant is invariably well deployed and makes an important contribution to pupils' learning by actively supporting pupils.
85. Pupils' response to teaching in all key stages is mostly good and occasionally very good and contributes to the good quality of their learning and their progress. Pupils show an interest in learning about other places and the people who live there. They display a willingness to ask and answer questions on geography. Pupils' behaviour when they take part in field visit, for example to a local beach, is very good.
86. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and experienced teacher. The policy document and scheme of work are good and show that the programmes of study are covered in a sensible and logical order. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but make only a little contribution to the planning of future lessons.
87. Geography makes a good contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills, as lessons frequently require pupils to read, write about and discuss topics. It also plays a significant role in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through learning about environmental and population issues. Resources and accommodation for geography are satisfactory. Good use is made of the local environment to support learning through practical experiences. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are at a disadvantage because they have no opportunity to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge of the subject by taking an accredited award.
88. Since the last inspection, the subject has improved significantly, in teaching, pupils' progress, resources and curriculum planning.

HISTORY

89. Due to the cyclical timetable for history no lesson was seen at Key Stage 2, therefore no judgements are made. Their programme of work for the next term will include consolidating their understanding of a time line and a study of Roman life. The standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 3 are good. They have a good understanding of chronology; they can make relevant comparisons between the past and the present and understand why and how changes take place over time. As they progress through the key stage they become more perceptive in their analysis of secondary sources of information and show confidence when discussing their interpretations.

90. During Key Stage 3, pupils make progress as they study the role of the church in medieval times and the part that Puritanism played in the development of parliament. They increase their knowledge of the history of Great Britain through looking at major events and by studying key people, for example, the Highlanders and Llywelyn the Great in the development of Scotland and Wales. They learn about the history of Ireland and know of the development of the slave trade as part of their work on world history. They have learned about the changes, which can occur over time by studying Norman, medieval and Victorian towns and villages. They learn about the changing lives of people by studying Britain before and after the industrial revolution. For example, they know how young children were required to work and of the conditions under which they worked.
91. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to history. They show that they can recall historical facts such as knowing how many people died during the great plague and knowing the name of the sister of Elizabeth 1. They understand how the past can be represented in different ways. They can make good deductions about life in a medieval farm as they study an old drawing but make better deductions after looking at a video clip representing the same topic. Pupils enjoy reading the key facts which in many lessons are written on the chalkboard and they enjoy discussions that are prompted by questions based on their particular interest in the topic.
92. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and resources, including videos, reference books and work sheets match the pupils' learning needs and the requirements of the topic. The good balance achieved between imparting information and prompting active inquiry through the use of reference books and work sheets is effective for promoting learning through maintaining pupil's interest. The teacher's knowledge about and enthusiasm for history also contributes to the development of pupils' positive attitudes to the subject. Although, occasionally this can lead to too much work being planned for pupils to finish work in the time available.
93. History is well managed. The scheme of work is directly linked to National Curriculum programmes of study. It provides for continuity and progression and the balance and richness of its content ensures that history is a subject that contributes to other curricular areas, for example in providing opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development. Resources, including models, audio-visual aids and reference books are good in quality, sufficient in quantity and readily to hand in the history room. Additionally, the library is well stocked with a good range of reference books. Annual reports provide information on the gains pupils have made over the year. However, there is no planned system that routinely records what pupils know and can do over a shorter time, such as a lesson or a small number of lessons on a topic that provides information which can be used to plan future lessons.
94. The good teaching and levels of achievement that were identified at the last inspection have been maintained.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

95. The standards achieved and the progress pupils make have improved considerably since the last inspection. Now, it is a strength of the school. The subject is taught at all three key stages. There are some shortcomings in the breadth of the work undertaken, but this stems from the inadequacy of current hardware and software

resources. Some computers are very old and several have limited usefulness because of a small range of software. Only, one is linked to the Internet. Pupils log on and proceed independently with confidence, often using several programs to produce good word processing, desk top published material or imaginative creative pieces. The teacher's considerable range of expertise enables her to take a supportive, interventionist or observer role to develop the skills and knowledge of individual pupils. She constantly encourages them to take for themselves the next step of discovery into a new task. The enthusiasm and interests of pupils and their confidence to learn for themselves results in their working at levels comparable with or sometimes better than the national standards for equivalent ages.

96. During Key Stage 2, a lesson enabled pupils who had looked at symbols in use at weather stations to create their own. They have learned the functions of laptop machines, employ correct terminology consistently, use the mouse with confidence as well as select an image, import it and manipulate it into a design that included text. By the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils can design their own animal by cutting and pasting from clip art images, carefully re-sizing and linking them together, before inventing suitable names for the hybrid creature. They can visit parts of the Internet and download, for example information from a weather station. They can download photographs and scan them into their own machines to edit. At Key Stage 4, pupils can use spreadsheets to analyse information they gain from questionnaires, before presenting the results visually using a number of graphic presentations for best impact.
97. Teaching is mostly good and frequently very good. The teacher has high expectations and challenges pupils to give of their best. She expects pupils to try for themselves before providing a suggestion. This promotes independent and confident learners who become very capable of finding out for themselves by experimentation. Even if pupils arrive at the lesson in disruptive mood, within a very short time they are settled and engrossed in their task. Lessons are purposeful and of brisk pace. Pupils are interested in their work and quickly become independent and knowledgeable learners. As a result the quality of learning is very good.
98. Assessment is regular and linked into external certification in a variety of areas of competence. Some pupils who 'pass' a certificate are dissatisfied and re-take the tests to gain a 'merit' or 'distinction'. Overall, there is a sense of pride in achievement and a desire to improve skills further. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are unable to take the subject at GCSE level. This acts to disadvantage them, as many have the skills and knowledge in the subject to attain good pass grades. Computers are used to support teaching and learning in other subjects, especially in science.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

99. Only a few French lessons were observed during the week of the inspection. The judgements made here are supported by an analysis of pupils' work, assessment records and annual reports to parents. French is taught to pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they make are satisfactory. They are learning the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and show equal effort when working at each. They understand and respond well to the teacher's or taped speech, they read text from the chalkboard, over-head projector and work sheets. They realise that written work not only provides a record

of what has been completed, but is a necessary part of the process of learning a foreign language. Written work is well presented.

100. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn to identify the month and day of the week from a taped list. They can recognise colours by name and confidently identify written or spoken numbers in French. The highest attaining pupils can recognise and say the larger numbers associated with the days of the month. By the end of the key stage, they have learned to name the different parts of the body, personal belongings such as a pencil, and different parts of a house such as the kitchen and bedroom. Their increased vocabulary enables them to describe a “criminal” with dark hair and large beard. During Key Stage 3, pupils learn more words so that they can ask questions and answer simple questions about, for example shopping or going out for a meal or snack. They can take part in longer dialogues, such those required to order tickets in a station or for making purchases at the post office or a petrol station. By the end of the key stage, their vocabulary is sufficiently well developed for them to complete simple French crossword puzzles and correctly use a few key French verbs.
101. Pupils enjoy learning French. They understand the language’s role as a means of communication and show effort and confidence when trying to use correct pronunciation. They are particularly pleased when they link a spoken word with its written equivalent and vie for the opportunity to read off the chalkboard. They enjoy singing simple French songs and playing games that help in their learning. This occurred in a lesson at Key Stage 2. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the racing car commentary, which helped them to identify the colours of the winning car.
102. The teaching of French is satisfactory. The balanced use of English and French and the balance maintained between the teaching of the four key language areas enables all pupils to take the fullest part in lessons. Lessons are conducted at a good pace. Pupils’ quality of learning would benefit from a greater number of opportunities in lessons to consolidate learning rather than taking part in new learning at all times.
103. The policy for French and its associated scheme of work reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. Both are well linked to the procedures for assessing and recording the progress pupils make in each of the four areas of the language. Resources for the subject are very good and are well used.

MUSIC

104. There is no evidence of improvement since last inspection when the subject received an unsatisfactory report. Too little time is allocated to the learning of music at Key Stage 2.
105. At Key Stage 3, the lessons are well planned but the pupils achieve very little. They have exercise books and these contain some written work but this is the product of copied notes that are not well understood by pupils. Pupils are required to complete too many activities in lessons. As a result, pupils often fail to complete what is asked of them. They listen to a wide range of music from ‘classical’ to ‘heavy metal pop’ but there is too little emphasis on concentrated listening, understanding or musical knowledge. Keyboard playing is used as a reward, but pupils show little skill. They can not read standard notation. Their performance is dependent on matching note names written simply as letters on paper and also on the keyboard.

The teacher encourages singing but, most often, pupils do not take part in an appropriate fashion. Very little progress is made. A small number of pupils show signs of enthusiasm. There is little emphasis on gaining or improving skills. Knowledge of key skills is so poor that no composition work can be attempted. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

106. The teacher of music has insufficient knowledge of the subject. Resources are satisfactory, but are not well used.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and 3 and are good at Key Stage 4. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in listening and responding to instructions. They show a reasonable awareness of space and an appreciation and enjoyment of exercise. They are consolidating their skills in striking, catching throwing and bouncing a ball and are developing an understanding of the rules of games such as mini tennis.
108. During Key Stage 3, pupils make satisfactory progress in refining their techniques. For example in long jumping, they understand the importance of the run up, take off, and body position in the air and landing. They know the importance of warming up before activity and recognise the benefits of exercise on the body. Over the duration of Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress. They work hard on a suitable variety of exercises to improve their posture and general fitness as they move around a circuit that includes a multi-gym. They show good ball skills and good understanding of the rules when playing games such as basketball. All pupils have lessons in swimming in each year. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are able to swim unaided and competently for 25 metres. Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress in increasing their stamina and survival skills.
109. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher has a good knowledge of the subject, high expectations for learning and an appropriate regard for safety. Good performance is routinely praised and good use is made of open-ended questions. Both promote learning and helps to manage the behaviour of pupils. Lessons are well planned and proceed at a brisk pace so that learning opportunities are good. The teacher gives clear and effective instructions and appropriate demonstrations so that pupils know what is expected of them. For some pupils, the quality and rigour of their movements limits the standard of their performance.
110. Pupils' response to teaching in physical education is good, but the progress made by a small number of pupils is limited by poor behaviour. As pupils move through the key stages they behave more responsibly. For example, they pay better regard to their own safety and that of others. They work more effectively as a member of a group and show an awareness of the rules of games and of good sporting behaviour. They wear appropriate kit, look smart and are well turned out for lessons. Pupils are confident participants in all activities.
111. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and experienced specialist. The policy and the scheme of work are both good and address all areas of the relevant programmes of study. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are satisfactory and include, for the older pupils, self-assessment. The subject makes a consistent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and personal development, through activities involving co-operation, competition, rules, self-discipline and fair

play and through opportunities for self-awareness and personal reflection. The award of certificates and a sportsmanship trophy celebrate pupils' achievements. Resources for the subject are good and the limitations of the accommodation are compensated by good use of local facilities. Provision in the subject is substantially enhanced by extra-curricular activities, which include inter-school sports, an outdoor activities residential week and workshops with Southend on Sea Football Club and the London Leopard's basketball team. However, pupils at Key Stage 4 have no opportunity to demonstrate through an accredited award scheme the progress they have made in the subject during their time at school.

112. The high standards reported for the subject at the last inspection have been maintained.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. There is no evidence of improvement since the last inspection. Although the syllabus broadly follows the recommendations of the Southend on Sea Locally Agreed Syllabus, in practice too little emphasis is placed on teaching the religious and spiritual elements within the subject. Too little time is allocated to the subject at Key Stage 2 and at Key Stage 4, although pupils at Key Stage 4 debate moral and social issues in the humanities, but with no specific emphasis on religious values. The place and influence of the subject in the curriculum, the nature of its subject matter and the methods of its presentation are poor. Assessment is unsatisfactory.