

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHLANDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Pitsea

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115243

Headteacher: Mr S Acton

Reporting inspector: Mr M Johnstone
21114

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th June 2001

Inspection number: 196138

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Winifred Road Pitsea Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Painter
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21114	Malcolm Johnstone	Registered inspector	Science Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17454	Brian Aldridge	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
20911	Judy Dawson	Team inspector	Geography History Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20645	Rosemary Webber	Team inspector	English Art and design Religious education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Northlands is a Foundation junior school situated in Pitsea to the south east of Basildon in Essex. The area served by the school is one with significant social and educational disadvantage. Most of the pupils live on the nearby local authority housing estate. Attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average in English and mathematics. The school has severe staff recruitment problems and has had two vacancies for most of the current school year. The school is about the same size as other junior schools and has 159 boys and 141 girls on roll. This number has changed very little since the previous inspection. Thirty-nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 33 per cent of pupils who have special educational needs. These percentages are above the national average. Only 0.6 per cent of the pupils (below the national average) have English as an additional language. These pupils speak fluent English and need no additional support.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is providing a satisfactory education in difficult circumstances. Standards are improving steadily, although in English, this is not rapid enough to mirror the rising trend nationally. Most of the teaching is at least satisfactory and almost a half is at least good. Teachers are working hard and the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to improvement. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and support learning well. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and is soundly led and managed. It is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher, governors and staff have a clear commitment to improving standards.
- Pupils like school and their attitudes to learning and social and moral development are good.
- Relationships are good and pupils behave well in lessons and around school.
- Pupils' progress over their time in school is improving.
- The provision for special educational needs is good and enables pupils to achieve their targets.
- Teaching has improved and there is some very good teaching across the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education.
- The involvement of the senior management team in the development of teaching and learning.
- The quality of teaching, particularly in the average and below average numeracy sets in Year 4.
- Planning for the development of skills from year to year in subjects that are taught as part of a topic.
- The attendance and punctuality of a significant minority of the pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement has been satisfactory overall since the previous inspection in July 1997. Since then attainment has risen broadly in line with the national improvement and the school has responded satisfactorily to the key issues of the last report. The school has developed a clear set of appropriate aims and there is a shared common purpose and agreed educational direction. Targets for attainment have been set and these are now linked more with curriculum development and classroom practice. There is still work to be done in applying these more consistently and rigorously to raise attainment. Good schemes of work have been brought in for most subjects but these are not firmly established in all subjects. Teacher assessment has improved and its use is now more effective in tracking pupils' progress. Despite staffing recruitment problems and staff changes, the role of the curriculum co-ordinators is developing well. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now a higher percentage of good and very good teaching across the school. Whilst the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced markedly, a small percentage remains.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E	E	E	D

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

The table shows that standards were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools that have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were also well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science and were not high enough. Over the past two years, the school has significantly increased the percentages of pupils gaining the level expected nationally in science, but this has not been the case in English and mathematics.

Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils who are now in Year 6 are on line to meet the higher targets set for them in English and mathematics. Whilst standards are still below the national average in mathematics and science and well below in English, this would represent a reasonable improvement in the percentages of pupils attaining the national levels, particularly in mathematics. Scrutiny of work in other year groups indicates rising standards due to better teaching and more stable staffing. Given the high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and the very low attainment on entry, pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory, and in some classes, they are good. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in any of the subjects. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and the very small number who of have English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress and achieve well.

Standards in religious education are improving but are not yet high enough. In most aspects of information and communication technology (ICT), pupils achieve well and standards meet national expectations. The work seen in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education is similar to that expected for pupils' ages. Work in history and geography is not as good as expected for pupils' ages and is affected by the uneven and generally unsatisfactory development of key skills from year to year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn and enthusiastic about many aspects of their lives in school. They respond well to challenge and are keen to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the pupils is good overall. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies is often excellent. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good and sometimes very good.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of all pupils is mostly good. The pupils get on well together and have good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. This is the foundation of the happy and caring community atmosphere in the school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. About 24 per cent of pupils are absent for more than ten percent of their lessons. They miss important elements of their learning and this has a significant impact on their attainment.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection. There is now more good and very good teaching and a smaller percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. Overall, teaching and learning meet the needs of all pupils satisfactorily. Of the 70 lessons observed, one per cent was excellent, 17 per cent was very good, 30 per cent was good and 46 per cent was satisfactory. Six per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. This occurred in Year 4 in the average and below-average numeracy sets and one religious education lesson. There is some very good and good teaching across all year groups that challenges the pupils, whatever their abilities, and enables them to achieve well. Pupils who have special educational needs are well taught and achieve well, particularly where there is additional support. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall. The introduction of setting pupils by ability is working well and enabling teachers to provide work that is more closely matched to pupils' needs. The small minority of unsatisfactory teaching in some sets is more a result of weak class management and organisation than a result of setting.

Strengths in the teaching are:

- Emphasis on correct technical vocabulary.
- Sharing with pupils what is to be learnt so that they understand what they need to do.
- Use of resources to stimulate an enthusiasm for learning.
- Relationships that develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Questioning that requires pupils' to think more deeply about their response.
- Expectations that develop a good attitude to work and desire to succeed.

Weaknesses relate to:

- Too slow a pace of working so that not all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Planning for the development of key skills in subjects other than English and mathematics with the result that learning does not always build effectively on what is already known.
- Missed opportunities to develop key literacy skills.
- Insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative and take more responsibility for their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. The school provides its pupils with a broad and relevant curriculum that covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets statutory requirements. Key skills in subjects other than English and mathematics have not been built up effectively from year to year.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Pupils with special needs, including those with physical disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Only two pupils are classified as having English as an additional language. Both are fluent in English and make similar progress to all other pupils. They are well integrated into all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is satisfactory overall. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and develop initiative. Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. The kindness and commitment of all adults who work with the pupils ensures that the day-to-day personal support and care for individual pupils is good. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the information is used satisfactorily to guide planning.

The school effectively facilitates a satisfactory partnership with parents and carers overall and provides a good number of opportunities for parents to become involved in the work of the school. The small number of parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection have mostly positive views about the school. They appreciate the care the school takes of their children and value the educational opportunities provided.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has successfully steered the school through a series of staffing difficulties and has formed a team of teachers and learning support assistants who work hard and are committed to improving pupils' attainment. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has begun to develop well over the past year. The role of the senior management team is not developed sufficiently for them to be a driving force in raising standards and the quality of teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are largely effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. Because governors visit the school regularly and compile reports on their visits, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has overseen good systems to check on the quality of teaching. This has resulted in better teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' performance in national tests is evaluated and action taken. This has not been rapid or effective enough in bringing significant improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Most resources are used effectively and the principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.

There are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum, although there have been problems in teaching staff recruitment that have disrupted pupils' education. The accommodation is good and there are good resources in most areas.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • They would feel comfortable approaching the school with a question or problem. • The school has improved since the previous inspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children do not get the right amount of homework. • They do not get enough information about their children's progress. • There are not enough interesting activities outside lessons.

Inspectors are in general agreement with parents' positive comments. The school has a clear policy on homework. Appropriate amounts of homework were given during the inspection, although this was inconsistent across the classes. The information provided for parents is considered to be good. When taking into account the visits made to places of interest and the visitors coming into school, alongside the satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs, the range of activities is similar to that found in many schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, standards were also well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science and were not high enough. Over the past two years, the school has increased significantly the percentage of pupils gaining the level expected nationally in science, but not in English and mathematics. The overall trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all three subjects has been broadly in line with the rising national trend.
2. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils who are now in Year 6 are on line to meet the higher targets set for them in English and mathematics. Whilst standards are still below the national average in mathematics and science and well below in English, this would represent a reasonable improvement in the percentages of pupils attaining the national levels. Using the optional National Curriculum tests for all year groups, the school has analysed the progress of pupils who are now in Year 6 since they came into school. This shows that over three-quarters of pupils have made at least two levels of improvement in English and mathematics. Given the very low attainment on entry and the significant number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN), this represents at least satisfactory progress.
3. Scrutiny of work in other year groups indicates rising standards due to better teaching and more stable staffing. Pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory, and in some classes, they are good. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in any of the subjects. Pupils who have SEN and the very small number who have English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Pupils who have SEN work hard in their lessons and want to please their teachers. They make particularly good progress where teachers plan day-to-day tasks for each pupil. This ensures that progress towards the targets in the plan is good and that these targets are reinforced in each lesson where a learning support assistant is helping. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets in their individual education plans. The achievements of the above average pupils are satisfactory and in the sets for numeracy and literacy, they are often good.
4. In English, pupils' listening skills are average but their speaking skills are below average. Most pupils lack confidence when speaking in front of others and do not elaborate on answers to questions. Achievements in speaking are restricted because teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils to extend their speech in order to express their ideas and views more fully. Pupils listen to their teachers well and respond appropriately to instructions. By the age of eleven, standards in reading are below average. Above-average pupils read fluently and achieve standards in line with national expectations. The average and below-average pupils across the school attain standards below those expected for their ages. They lack fluency and often their reading is rather hesitant and stilted, and their ability to read unfamiliar words by letter sounds is not fully secure. The school library is used well by teachers to promote research skills and most pupils know how to use an index and contents page successfully.
5. By the age of eleven, standards in writing are weaker than in other aspects of the subject and are well below the national average. Spelling is poor and pupils do not

use punctuation consistently well when writing independently. The successful implementation of new guidelines for handwriting has had a positive impact on standards and most pupils make good progress in this aspect of their English work. This initiative, however, has not yet had time to have an impact on standards in Year 6. Consequently, not all eleven-year-olds write in a consistent joined script. In personal writing, pupils use a limited range of vocabulary and this restricts their achievement in descriptive and creative writing. Pupils' well below average writing skills do have an adverse effect on their achievements in history, geography and religious education.

6. In mathematics, above-average pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of number. They use mental calculations accurately and respond quickly to teachers' questions. Average and below-average pupils do not have this accurate mental recall and this slows down their overall progress. Similarly, work in other areas of number is sometimes slow because pupils have difficulty remembering basic number facts. Pupils' progress in lessons is good in most of the mathematics sets. Unsatisfactory teaching in the average and below-average sets in Year 4, however, results in unsatisfactory progress in some lessons. Pupils' achievements in shape, space and measures and data handling are satisfactory. Pupils are not confident in searching for a solution to a problem by trying out ideas of their own. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.
7. Standards in science are improving markedly, although still below the national average. The school has increased the percentage of pupils attaining the average level by 19 per cent since 1999. From a low base, pupils throughout the school achieve well in the development of a scientific vocabulary and in their enquiry skills. There is clear evidence of a shift over the past year from teaching scientific knowledge through topics to developing scientific enquiry skills through lessons in science as a separate subject. This is raising overall standards. However, since this aspect of their learning has not been developed consistently and progressively over a period of time, pupils' skills are below average. Few pupils are able to select their own equipment to conduct a test, decide on an appropriate approach for themselves and suggest improvements in their work. Average and below-average pupils find difficulty in recording information in their own way due to below average writing skills. There is little evidence of pupils' writing extended descriptions or explanations of their work in science.
8. Standards in religious education are improving but are not yet high enough. Although the teachers ensure that the pupils learn the facts about the religions that they study, there is not enough emphasis on the skills identified in the Agreed Syllabus. In most aspects of information and communication technology (ICT), pupils achieve well and standards meet national expectations. However, pupils do not have sufficient knowledge or experience of using ICT systems to control events in a predetermined manner and to sense physical data.
9. The work seen in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education is similar to that expected for pupils' ages. There are some aspects of some subjects that are weaker, for example, in music pupils have little knowledge or experience of composition and in design and technology pupils have little experience of using materials such as wood. Work in history and geography is not as good as expected for pupils' ages and is affected by the uneven and generally unsatisfactory development of key skills from year to year. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have limited skills in the interpretation of the past and historical enquiry, their sense of chronology and mapping skills because these aspects are not taught often enough for pupils to improve.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour, personal development and the relationships they have with each other and with the adults who teach and care for them are good overall. Those parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection support the positive values promoted by the school and the majority of pupils respond well to these expectations. The quality of these aspects of pupils' development has been maintained well since the previous inspection and in some areas has improved. The level of attendance has not improved significantly since the previous inspection; it is below the national average and is unsatisfactory.
11. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn and enthusiastic about many aspects of their lives in school. Analysis of the views of the small number of parents who returned the questionnaire and attended the meeting prior to the inspection, indicates that the children like school. This was confirmed by many of the pupils.
12. Most pupils respond well to learning. In literacy lessons, for example, many contribute thoughtfully to discussions, listening carefully to their teachers and to others in the class. They rise to the challenge of the mental mathematics sessions, trying hard to be the first with the answer. Pupils particularly like the practical aspects of many of their lessons. In science, for example, they enjoy investigating. The enthusiasm of pupils in Year 6 has increased as result of their field studies in Lyme Regis and in the local area. Younger pupils watch the photographic record of the residential visit on the computer with great interest, and say that they can't wait until it is their turn to go. Many pupils contribute to the school newsletter. The "Kids' Voice" is an interesting publication and reflects a high level of enthusiasm and involvement by the editorial team and the contributors.
13. The behaviour of the pupils is good overall. This supports the views expressed by parents prior to and during the inspection. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies is often excellent and there is a higher level of good and very good behaviour in lessons and around the school than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils respond well to the usually consistent, firm and fair management by all members of staff, they understand what is expected of them and know the boundaries that are clearly established within the school community. Behaviour in lessons is good overall and often very good. This makes an important contribution to the progress that pupils make during their time in school. When there is insufficient challenge and interest in lessons, some pupils become restless and noisy and do not learn as much as they should. Parents do not express any concerns about bullying and consider that the school deals effectively with any such incidents. There have been no exclusions and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
14. Pupils with SEN behave well and have very positive attitudes to their work. They are keen to get on with their tasks and work very well together when placed in small groups with other pupils. They listen to the adults who help them with their work and grow in self-confidence as they achieve their targets. They are happy to learn and keen to share their work and learning. The good relationships between pupils, teachers and learning support assistants are a key factor in the increasing confidence pupils with SEN show during lessons.
15. The personal development of all pupils is mostly good. The pupils get on well together and have good, and often very good, relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. This is the foundation of the happy and caring community atmosphere in the school. Pupils have the opportunity to talk about their feelings and

views during circle times and when opportunities arise in their lessons. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, for example, studying a story about an Indian boy, the good questioning by the teacher revealed that pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and sensitivity to the lives of their contemporaries in other cultures. Because of the strong relationships most pupils have with their teachers, they answer questions with confidence, secure in the knowledge that, even if they are wrong, their contributions will be valued. Pupils collaborate well with each other in lessons, sharing ideas and resources and listening quietly to each other's views. They understand the impact of their actions on their friends and on the environment and have some awareness of the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. They carry out their classroom responsibilities sensibly, although many lack initiative when choosing resources and organising their own work.

16. Most pupils treat the resources and the school environment with appropriate care and respect. The school council members take their responsibility to represent the views of their classmates very seriously. They have already had an important impact on school life and have a number of ideas for future improvements. The majority of the pupils are open and very friendly individuals and, although a significant minority has limited conversational and social skills, they smile readily and are usually polite. During their time in school, most pupils develop appropriate levels of maturity.
17. Attendance at the school is unsatisfactory. It has been consistently a few per cent below the national average since the previous inspection. Unauthorised absence, however, is lower than it was and this is an improvement. About 24 per cent of pupils are absent for more than ten percent of their lessons. They are missing important elements of their learning and this has a significant impact on the standards they achieve, placing them at a disadvantage in the national tests. Although most pupils are punctual, a significant minority is persistently late to school and this disrupts their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. There is now more good and very good teaching and a smaller percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. Overall, teaching and learning meet the needs of all pupils satisfactorily. Of the 70 lessons observed, one per cent was excellent, 17 per cent was very good, 30 per cent was good and 46 per cent was satisfactory. Six per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Some of the inconsistency noted at the time of the previous inspection is still present. For example, in the three Year 4 classes, teaching in one class was good and occasionally excellent, whilst in two other classes, there was some unsatisfactory teaching. This occurred in the average and below-average sets for numeracy and in one religious education lesson. In these lessons, pupils made insufficient progress. In other year groups, however, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen and there was no such inconsistency.
19. Improvements have been brought about by changes in staffing, better teamwork, the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies, regular monitoring by the headteacher and the grouping of pupils into ability sets for English and mathematics. Teaching is also better in subjects that now have a discrete scheme of work to help teachers with their planning of skills from year to year.
20. The teaching of English and mathematics are satisfactory overall and, given pupils' very low attainment on entry, their overall progress is sound. In almost a half of the lessons in mathematics it is good, although there is more unsatisfactory teaching than in English where a third of the teaching is good or better but there is no unsatisfactory

teaching. This represents good improvement in the teaching of English since the previous inspection when 20 per cent was unsatisfactory.

21. In English, good lessons promoted the effective development of key literacy skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout whole class activities. They provide suitable opportunities for pupils to read aloud and practice skills. In all lessons, teachers effectively share and evaluate what will be learnt with pupils. This develops learning well by enabling pupils to understand precisely what it is they are going to learn and whether or not they have achieved this. Where teaching is most effective, good questions in the closing recap sessions of the literacy hour challenge pupils to improve their work. In a Year 6 literacy session, for example, the teacher asks; *'What other words might we use to make the sentence more interesting?'* Weaknesses in the teaching of English occur when teachers do not sufficiently target a specific group of pupils for intensive support and not enough opportunities are taken to focus on and develop basic literacy skills. In some lessons, guided reading is not sufficiently structured and too few opportunities are given to pupils to read aloud in order for them to develop and improve their confidence and skills.
22. In mathematics, teachers have a secure knowledge of the numeracy strategy and this helps them structure their lessons effectively. In the most effective lessons, for example, in Year 3 and 6 and in the above average set in Year 4, learning moves at a rapid pace and pupils are encouraged to think things out for themselves. Problems are posed to encourage pupils to think more deeply and apply their skills. At these times, pupils learn well because teachers use a range of methods to interest and enthuse them. In all lessons, teachers tell pupils what they are going to learn and this gives them a clearer knowledge of their own learning. Most teachers use good technical language and expect pupils to explain what they are learning by using these words. In satisfactory and unsatisfactory lessons, teachers do not establish a quick enough pace in the opening mental arithmetic sessions and this slows the development of pupils' quick recall skills. Teachers do not sufficiently encourage pupils to search for a solution to a problem by trying out ideas of their own.
23. In science, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some very good teaching in Year 3 and Year 6. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Improvement is largely due to a better focus on scientific enquiry and good use of the learning environment outside lessons. The linking of science to everyday situations is improving pupils' learning and enthusiasm for the subject.
24. In the lessons observed in ICT teaching was good. Teachers know enough about the subject to teach skills effectively. They plan work that is based on the work pupils are doing in other subjects and in the lessons observed pay good attention to the different learning needs of pupils. Teaching in the computer suite is developing pupils' basic skills well. Teachers, however, do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about the control aspects of the subject. Teaching in religious education varies in quality and is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons teachers use a wide range of strategies and give clear explanations but the less effective lack pace and challenge.
25. Teaching and learning in art and design are good and pupils' achieve well. This is because teachers demonstrate and encourage the correct techniques. In design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. There is some very good teaching in art and design, history and music and in these lessons pupils make rapid progress. In history and geography, teachers have not developed pupils' skills effectively from

year to year and their overall progress has been uneven with long breaks between subject specific activities.

26. Across all the subjects, strengths in the teaching are:
- Good emphasis on correct technical vocabulary so that pupils are introduced to new and appropriate vocabulary.
 - Sharing with pupils what is to be learnt so that they understand what they need to do.
 - Thoughtful use of resources to stimulate an enthusiasm for learning.
 - Relationships that develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
 - Skilful questioning that requires pupils' to think more deeply about their response. For example, in one physical education lesson designed to improve teamwork, the teacher asks; *'Why was it more difficult when you changed partners?'* and in a mathematics lesson the teacher asks; *Tell the class how you got that answer so quickly.'*

Expectations that develop a good attitude to work and desire to succeed.

27. Weaknesses relate to:
- Too slow a pace of working so that not all pupils achieve as well as they should.
 - Planning for the development of key skills in subjects other than English and mathematics with the result that learning does not always build effectively on what is already known.
 - Missed opportunities to develop key literacy skills.
 - Insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative and take more responsibility for their own learning.
28. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is mostly good. It is enhanced by the pupils' individual education plans that are carefully drawn up by class teachers and the co-ordinator. Teachers keep a folder that contains each pupil's individual education plan and the programme of work which is drawn from that plan. Learning support assistants link with certain pupils to hear them read, work at meeting their targets and keep their progress under review. Most pupils with SEN are taught in the lower sets for English and mathematics. In English and mathematics sets, teaching is at least satisfactory and at times good but is unsatisfactory in the lessons observed in Year 4. The pace of the lessons is too slow and the learning support assistant is not used effectively enough by the teacher to support pupils' learning. Generally where learning support assistants read with pupils, they read words for pupils. Teachers do not instruct them to remind pupils of the sounds made by each letter or group of letters. This slows down their rate of progress in these sessions. However, the work of learning support assistants is valuable in raising pupils' confidence in their abilities.

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

29. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. The school provides its pupils with a broad and relevant curriculum that covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets statutory requirements. The teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks effectively for teaching English and mathematics. Appropriate time is allowed for most subjects of the curriculum but there is an imbalance in the provision for those subjects that are included in the themes or topics. For example, apart from maps to support the historical topics there has been very little geography taught in this academic year in Year 4. This results in uneven and unsatisfactory overall progress in these subjects.

30. At the time of the previous inspection a key issue was to implement schemes of work that identify what each year group should learn. The report stated that the curriculum was based on the acquisition of facts rather than the development of skills. The school has gone some way towards addressing these issues, although work remains to be done. Apart from the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks the school is now using government guidance for science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, art and design and physical education, and a commercial scheme for music. These schemes of work help to ensure that the pupils build on their previous learning and develop their skills from year to year. The Essex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education is used as a basis for planning the religious education curriculum.
31. Science and religious education are included alongside history and geography under the topics for each term. While science and religious education have new schemes of work to help to ensure that the pupils make sufficient progress from year to year, the school has not yet adopted such schemes of work for history and geography. The teachers are careful to make sure that the work is consistent between the two or three classes in each year group and pupils learn the historical and geographical facts relevant to the topic. But there is no planning to ensure that historical and geographical skills are taught consistently throughout the school.
32. The provision for literacy and numeracy is sound overall and there are satisfactory opportunities provided for pupils to apply their skills within other subjects. Appropriate levels of homework are set to support literacy and numeracy and other subjects and each pupil has a useful contact book where parents and teachers can comment. All teachers set targets for their pupils for English and some teachers set targets for mathematics. These help pupils to assess how well they are learning.
33. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that are open to all pupils. There are sports and music clubs at different times of the year and pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to attend mathematics and science clubs at a local secondary school.
34. The curriculum is planned to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. Pupils who are accommodated in classes outside their year group join their peers for literacy and numeracy. Pupils with SEN, including those with physical disabilities, are fully integrated into all aspects of school life, as are the very small numbers of pupils from other cultures. There is no difference in the provision for boys and girls and the school analyses results to ensure that there is no obvious underachievement of any particular group of pupils.
35. The school's plans to develop personal, social and health education have just received accreditation from the Local Education Authority as part of the "Healthy Schools" award. Although this aspect of the curriculum is still underdeveloped, there is a clear action plan for implementing a curriculum taught, where possible, through the themes for the half terms. The policies for sex education and drugs awareness have just been redrafted and are now good. There is a working party consisting of school staff, parents and the school council who are involved in the planning to develop citizenship and several staff have had in-service training to support this. This is a promising development. At present, however, there is a lack of consistency in the provision for personal, social and health education.
36. There are good links with the community. Links with local churches are strong and religious leaders from local churches regularly take assemblies. The school performs in the local Church, the senior citizen's home and the shopping centre. At Christmas, the choir performed to a large audience at a local firm's headquarters and there are

strong links with a national retailer. There are sound links with local secondary schools and the teachers visit Northlands. There are useful bridging workshops to provide some continuity in the curriculum as well as the science and mathematics clubs. Links with the infant school are less well developed although there is occasional paired reading between Year 5 and Year 2. The co-ordinators for pupils with SEN meet regularly. Pupils joining the junior school have a visit beforehand. The improvement of the links between the schools has been identified as part of the school's development plan.

37. At the time of the previous inspection the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was satisfactory. There has been an improvement in the provision for pupils' moral and social development and these aspects of the curriculum are now good.
38. The school's aims reflect the commitment to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and to raise their self-esteem. A lively and successful assembly demonstrated how we all are important and we all need each other. Success is celebrated in assemblies and in the classrooms. Pupils glowed with pride in one lesson as the teacher called them "artists of great renown". In the best mathematics lessons the pupils are "fellow mathematicians". Pupils are taught to be sensitive to world issues. Older pupils have written debates on issues such as cloning. The school's involvement in the Education Action Zone initiative to raise self-esteem is being piloted in parts of the school where pupils are reminded that; "You can do it". In some lessons observed during the inspection the activities generated delight and wonder. There was a buzz of excitement as pupils pressed a key on their computers and a database instantly filled in the columns. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are fascinated by the mini-beast topic they are working on. The school complies with the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship although there is no music for pupils to respond to and any focal point or change of atmosphere to distinguish the act of worship from the rest of the assembly.
39. The strategies for promoting good moral and social skills are applied consistently throughout the school. The school rules are relevant and easily understood. There is a good playground charter that is understood by everyone. The 'Good Citizens' awards are valued and effective. A school council has recently been formed. Two pupils from each class are enabled to make an impact on the life of the school. They are expected to consult their peers about the issues that are discussed, like, for example, the organisation at lunchtime and the playground charter. Older pupils have regular responsibilities around school. Pupils regularly raise money for charity and have good links with the community. The residential visit to Lyme Regis and the local visits enable pupils to interact with their teachers and each other outside the school environment. A group of pupils in Year 6 produce "Kids Voice", the school newspaper. This is under the guidance of a teacher but the pupils organise it, interview people and correlate the articles from pupils of all year groups before publishing it. The breakfast club is extremely well run and has developed into a social occasion. There are, however, still too few opportunities for pupils to develop initiative for their own learning. There are still occasions when teachers tend to do too much for the pupils, particularly the older ones.
40. Pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to learn about other cultures. In English lessons, for example, pupils have been studying fairy tales and stories from other cultures. Above average pupils in Year 6 listened to the story of 'Ali the Piper' and compared it with 'The Pied Piper'. They have been taught the common factors within fairy tales, for example, good overcoming evil and use this knowledge to discuss possible endings to the story. In Year 4 the teacher encouraged pupils to empathise with a pupil from Africa starting school in England. In history, pupils learn

about ancient civilisations and their own past. They study Judaism and Hinduism in religious education lessons. Some pupils belong to the school choir and play hand chimes. There have been recorder clubs but there are no opportunities for pupils to learn to play other musical instrument or to compose their own music. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to study the work of artists and musicians. The Snap Theatre Company visited the school and pupils regularly perform in school assemblies. There is a good range of books available for pupils to explore their own and other cultures and pupils research using the Internet.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The overall quality of the care provided for all pupils is satisfactory. The kindness and commitment of all adults who work with the pupils ensures that the day-to-day personal support and care for individual pupils is good. The excellent breakfast club provides pupils with a good start to the day that helps them to maintain concentration and effort through the morning. The information provided by monitoring the academic performance and personal development of pupils is used to ensure a satisfactory level of educational and personal support and guidance for all pupils. The overall quality of the care provided by the school has been maintained since the previous inspection.
42. All staff liase well with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils who have SEN are fully met. The school has very good and effective procedures to identify and meet the needs of its pupils with SEN following the guidance of the Code of Practice. The school monitors the progress pupils make and in turn this information is passed to parents at the regular reviews of progress. The individual education plans are of good quality and concentrate on the skills and knowledge that pupils need to help them make progress towards their targets. Teachers and the SEN co-ordinator work hard on writing plans although the school should reconsider how it organises the termly reviews for these plans. At the moment too much of the work falls to the SEN co-ordinator and much could be achieved in the usual cycle of parents' meetings.
43. The school's procedures governing health and safety and child protection are satisfactory. The health and safety policy identifies staff responsibilities and regular inspection of the premises by the caretaker ensures that the school is a safe and healthy environment for the staff and pupils. A good safety audit of the whole school has recently been carried out using local authority guidelines. The governor with responsibility for health and safety has a good awareness of the importance of health and safety in the school environment. The provision for first aid is good with an appropriate number of trained personnel. Teachers ensure that pupils clearly understand how to use resources safely and the importance of good hygiene and diet. Pupils receive sound information about sex and drugs and there are plans to improve this provision next year when the school implements the 'Healthy Schools' initiative. The provision for child protection is satisfactory. The headteacher has received appropriate training and all staff are aware of the importance of this aspect of care. Appropriate confidential records are kept and there are good links with external agencies.
44. The procedures for following up absence are very good and have resulted in a reduction in the level of authorised absence. Monitoring of overall attendance is satisfactory and pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance over a term are awarded a certificate in recognition of this achievement. These measures, however, have not been successful in improving attendance overall. The names of those pupils who arrive late in the mornings are recorded and parents are reminded of the importance of punctuality. Morning and afternoon registration procedures comply with legal requirements. The school has both formal and informal procedures for

recording and monitoring instances of unacceptable behaviour and bullying. These are effective in achieving good standards of behaviour in the school. Bullying is not tolerated and any unkind behaviour is kindly, but very firmly, dealt with. Parents are contacted if their child's behaviour is giving cause for concern and the school values their co-operation in providing an element of consistency in dealing with any problems that arise. The good relationships between pupils and their teachers promotes trust and pupils comment that they are confident that their teacher would help them if they were worried about something.

45. There were some weaknesses in the school's procedures for measuring pupils' attainment and tracking the progress they make at the time of the previous inspection. The school now has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. In other subjects they are mostly satisfactory. The assessment co-ordinator had worked hard to produce a detailed assessment policy and ensures that these procedures are carried out. Teachers use standardised tests in English and mathematics, including the optional annual National Curriculum tests. These are used successfully to chart the progress of individuals, classes and year groups of pupils from year to year. In this way the school monitors progress and checks that there are no consistent differences in the progress of different groups of pupils. Assessment data is used effectively to group pupils into ability sets for English and mathematics. The grouping has had a positive outcome as pupils' achievements in these subjects are improving. The teachers also set targets for individual pupils for English and some teachers do so for mathematics. These help pupils to develop knowledge of their own learning. At the end of each year, the teachers indicate what they expect their pupils to achieve in all subjects by the end of the following year. The co-ordinator ensures that these procedures are carried out consistently even when there are new teachers.
46. Although there are good procedures for measuring what the pupils can do, the use of these assessments to adjust the curriculum to meet pupils' needs is only satisfactory. The assessments for subjects other than English and mathematics are based on what the pupils have been taught rather than what they have learnt. Although the teachers measure pupils' achievements in other subjects against National Curriculum levels, these are not precise or consistent enough for teachers to identify any gaps in their curriculum planning. Where the subject has a scheme of work, especially if the school has followed the government guidance for planning the curriculum, the materials used for assessing pupils' achievements are appropriate. If there is no such scheme of work and the teachers measure pupils' progress with the work they have covered in their topic, there is no way of identifying gaps in their learning. It is then difficult to track pupils' development of skills throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The small number of parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection has mostly positive views about the school. They appreciate the care the school takes of their children and value the educational opportunities provided. Most parents support the school in its efforts to improve their children's behaviour but some do not make sure their children attend regularly and on time. A significant minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that they were not well enough informed about their child's progress, there was insufficient homework and there were not enough interesting activities outside lessons. These negative views were not substantiated by evidence from the inspection.
48. The school effectively facilitates a satisfactory partnership with parents and carers overall and provides a good number of opportunities for parents to become involved in the work of the school. Although many parents welcome these opportunities, a significant number show little interest. The overall impact, therefore, of parents' involvement on the life and work of the school is satisfactory. The quality of the partnership between home and school has been maintained since the previous inspection and, in some respects, has improved.
49. The school provides good quality information for parents about the school and the progress their children make. The prospectus and governors' annual report for parents contain useful and practical information and termly newsletters keep parents up-to-date with activities. Parents have opportunities for formal and informal consultation with staff about their children's progress and know that they are welcome to talk to the teachers or the headteacher if they wish for more information. The annual reports on children's progress have improved and they are now good. The subject text is a good balance between strengths and weaknesses and targets are implicit in the weaknesses.
50. The school provides a good range of opportunities for parents to work in partnership with the school for the benefit of the children. There have been workshops to learn about the literacy and numeracy strategies and to understand how pupils are taught to write. Parents are invited into the school twice a week to read with their children at the beginning of the morning and teachers are available in the playground at the beginning of each day for an exchange of information or to arrange a time for more extensive discussion. Parents are welcomed to class assemblies and music and drama productions. The school does not, however, provide parents with any regular details of what their children will be learning to enable them to support the work of the school in a more focused manner.
51. Parental involvement is welcomed and valued by the school and those parents who take advantage of the opportunities the school offers have a good impact on their children's learning. These parents help their children at home with reading and other homework and ensure that they attend regularly and on time. This has a positive effect on the progress these children make. Many parents volunteer to help with visits and attend class assemblies with enthusiasm, watching their children perform with enjoyment. Almost three-quarters of parents have signed the home/school agreement and many take their responsibilities under this agreement seriously. Although parents have an opportunity to formally express their opinions about the school at the governors' annual meeting, the school has not, as yet, involved parents in the decision making process of the school.
52. The school makes every effort to ensure that parents of pupils who have SEN have the opportunity to take part in the identification and provision for their children. There are good systems to inform parents of their child's progress within the SEN provision

of the school. The action plans drawn up by the school ensures that parents are kept informed about their children's work. Regular annual reports are of good quality and the termly review of progress is organised well by the SEN co-ordinator.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has successfully steered the school through a series of staffing difficulties and has formed a team of teachers, learning support assistants and administrative staff who are committed to improving pupils' attainment. He is well supported by the governors who along with the staff have worked to develop a well-conceived set of aims that are reflected well in the all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher leads the school in an understated manner; strong opinions held about some areas of work, for example, the suitability of topic themes that include work across a variety of subjects are being reviewed. This is resulting in the development of more clearly defined subject specific schemes of work that give a better foundation for curriculum planning and learning. Parents and governors give due credit to the headteacher for stabilising the school and improving aspects such as pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection.
54. The roles and tasks of curriculum co-ordinators have begun to develop well over the past year. Highlighted as an area for development during the previous inspection, co-ordinators have responsibility for a budget and for the development of their subjects. This is helping to raise standards. Regular meetings are held to discuss the work of the school and the development of year group leaders has been important in forming a sense of teamwork. The senior management team meets regularly with the headteacher to review the school's progress and discuss issues involving the development of teaching and learning but they are not involved in financial planning. The headteacher has a good understanding of his responsibilities in shaping the direction of the school. However, the role of the senior management team, who are all good teachers, is not developed sufficiently for them to be a driving force in raising standards and the quality of teaching.
55. The headteacher has overseen good systems to check on the quality of teaching. Financial support from the Education Action Zone has also enabled some monitoring of teaching to take place. The results of these observations show those classes where satisfactory and less than satisfactory teaching takes place. The headteacher has acted upon these results to good effect and teaching has improved since the previous inspection. This is also the case with school development planning. Governors and staff take part in the forming the plan and the headteacher presents a draft to the governing body for ratification. This ensures a good measure of corporate ownership of the plan. The plan is carefully costed. The school has good plans to begin work on a new music room using some of the large carried forward finances accrued over the past few years. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the need to question the financial decisions taken by the school and to look carefully at the results of their decisions. They apply the principles of best value soundly. The school and the governors evaluate pupils' performance in national tests and some action is taken. This, however, has not been rapid or effective enough in bringing significant improvement.
56. The governors are largely effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. The annual report to parents is informative and well produced. Because governors visit the school regularly and compile reports on their visits, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors offer good advice to the school and, although they depend a little too much on the information provided by the

headteacher, they understand the need to question the results and general work of the school. They set appropriate targets for the headteacher and other members of staff.

57. The work of the bursar and secretarial staff is very good. These duties and other administrative tasks are carried out very efficiently so that teachers are able to get on with teaching and working with pupils. Computers are used effectively in the office to prepare budget reports for governors. They are not used as well as they might be to calculate the information from assessments. An administrative assistant is employed for two days each week carrying out a task that could be managed more efficiently and quickly by computers.
58. The governing body has established good procedures for monitoring the school's provision for SEN. They have a named governor who takes an active interest in the delivery of that provision and in the progress of the pupils. Regular reports are written and presented to the governing body. The SEN governor works in school as a learning support assistant and has a good understanding of the processes of identification and assessment. The SEN co-ordinator provides good leadership and is developing good systems and ways of working since her recent arrival. The co-ordination of special educational needs has been hindered by the staffing difficulties experienced by the school. The governors and the headteacher have taken appropriate steps to ensure this does not occur again. These will enable the SEN co-ordinator to develop systems in classes to monitor the teaching and learning of pupils with SEN in a consistent and uninterrupted way.
59. The school has recently experienced severe recruiting difficulties that have resulted in some instability in staffing over the last twelve month. This has had an adverse effect on the continuity and progression of learning for some pupils and on the role of the SEN co-ordinator who has had to cover a class. However, this has been very recently resolved with the appointment of two newly qualified teachers to the school. The qualifications, number, and experience of the teachers in the school are now well matched to meet the educational needs of all pupils. There is a good number of support staff who are effectively deployed and they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
60. Good induction procedures are in place for both new members of staff to the school and for newly qualified teachers. The mentoring policy is strong and effectively supports new teachers in the development of their teaching skills. Some good progress has been made since the previous inspection concerning staff development and appraisal. In-service training is well focused and targeted to the school's priorities for development. Staff attend a good range of courses in order to keep up to date with current developments in teaching and all courses are effectively monitored and evaluated. Because of the recent instability only half of the teaching staff have had their targets set in line with the school's appraisal policy. The governors have set appropriate performance management targets for the headteacher.
61. The school's accommodation is good and ensures the effective delivery of the curriculum. Most classrooms are spacious and there are plenty of working areas outside of classrooms for pupils to use when involved in more practical activities and group work. The school has a spacious reference library with study tables for personal research and a fiction library for older pupils. Teachers support pupils learning in ICT effectively in the well-equipped computer suite. The school building and grounds are well maintained by maintenance and ground staff. Outside grassed and playground areas are spacious and have been developed imaginatively by teachers to ensure that playtimes are interesting and enjoyable. Various features

such as flower and shrub gardens, wild and marsh areas have been established in order to support pupils learning in science.

62. Learning resources in most subjects are good. The school libraries are well stocked overall and the music curriculum is soon to be enhanced when recently ordered resources arrive. Although satisfactory, more small apparatus and consumables are needed in science.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- Raise standards of attainment in:

1) English:

- ensure that key literacy skills such as phonics (the sounds made by letters and letter combinations), punctuation and spelling are more rigorously developed in shared and guided reading and word level work sessions in the literacy hour;
- ensure consistency in the way that guided reading is organised and structured across the school;
- improve pupils' speaking skills by challenging the pupils to give fuller answers to questions in all subjects.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 4, 4, 21, 66, 67, 68, 69 and 71)

2) Mathematics:

- improve the quality of teaching in the average and below-average sets in Year 4;
- ensure that there is a consistently speedy opening mental number activity in lessons in order to sharpen and improve pupils' mental calculation skills;
- encourage pupils to search for a solution by trying out ideas of their own more often.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 6, 22, 74, 75 and 77)

3) Science:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to select their own equipment for an investigation;
- encourage pupils to conduct their own test, decide on an appropriate approach for themselves and suggest their own ideas for how their work might be improved;
- encourage a variety of recording methods to develop pupils' writing skills and ensure that above-average pupils write their own extended accounts of their investigations;
- use computers more to support learning and improve planning and assessment in the subject.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 7, 83 and 85)

4) Religious education:

- develop further the existing scheme of work to include how skills might be developed from year to year to ensure better progression in learning;
- provide more opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning through writing.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 8, 121 and 123)

- Improve the quality of teaching in the two classes in Year 4 by working with the teachers to develop classroom management and organisation skills. (This issue is discussed in paragraphs 18 and 75)
- Extend the role and influence of the senior management team to include greater involvement in the development of teaching and learning and financial decision making. (This issue is discussed in paragraph 54)

- Ensure that key skills are developed consistently from year to year in subjects that are planned as part of a general topic. (This issue is discussed in paragraphs 27, 29, 31, 85, 98, 99, 102 and 104)
- Continue to work to improve the attendance and punctuality of a significant minority of the pupils.
(This issue us discussed paragraph 17)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should also consider the following less significant weaknesses for inclusion in the action plan.

- Spread the good practice in teacher assessment in English and mathematics to build more consistently and effectively on what pupils already know in other subjects. (paragraphs 46 and 85)
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop initiative and responsibility for their own learning. (paragraphs 15 and 27)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	60

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	17	30	46	6	0	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	Y3 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	300
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	116

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	112

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	40	34	74

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	29
	Girls	17	15	24
	Total	33	34	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (47)	46 (45)	72 (53)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	23	30
	Girls	19	18	22
	Total	37	41	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (52)	55 (49)	70 (60)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	297
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: Y3 – Y7

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	201

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	703,974
Total expenditure	721,468
Expenditure per pupil	2,389
Balance brought forward from previous year	179,028
Balance carried forward to next year	161,534

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	300
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	43	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	54	35	8	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	41	11	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	41	22	3	0
The teaching is good.	49	41	11	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	35	19	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	27	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	49	16	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	49	32	8	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	35	11	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	41	27	3	11

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

ENGLISH

64. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests indicate that standards are well below the national average. This is also the case when results are compared with those of similar schools. This is a similar finding to that made at the time of the previous inspection. Since that time, the school has increased its points score but improvement has not kept pace with the rising national trend. Overall, there has been insufficient improvement and standards are not high enough. There has been no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in these tests.
65. The scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection does indicate that standards are improving. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are achieving standards more in line with national expectations and in Year 5 pupils are achieving standards below rather than well below the national average. The school's realistic target for the pupils who are now in Year 6 would represent a reasonable rise of 10 per cent in the number of pupils attaining the average level. Inspection evidence indicates that the school is on target to attain this. Overall, the achievements of most pupils are satisfactory given the well below average intake and the high percentage of pupils who have SEN. The achievements of pupils with SEN and the few with EAL are good. This is because of the good quality support they receive in lessons and, in the case of those pupils who have EAL, it is because of the appropriate additional support they receive when first entering the school.
66. This improving picture of achievement across the school can be largely attributed to the improved quality of teaching, well targeted additional classroom support by other adults, and the effective way the pupils are grouped by ability. This enables teachers to match work more precisely to the needs of all pupils. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school and this accounts for the variable levels of achievement and progress made by pupils across the school. For example, there are inconsistencies in how some aspects of the literacy hour such as guided reading are structured and organised. There is also inconsistency in how rigorously teachers focus on and promote key skills such as letter sounds, punctuation and grammar during shared and guided work.
67. Throughout the school, pupils generally lack confidence when speaking in front of others and they do not readily give extended answers to questions in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' progress in speaking is restricted because teachers too often accept short phrased answers to questions. They do not sufficiently challenge pupils to extend their speech in order to express their ideas and views more fully. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to their learning and they listen attentively in many different situations and respond appropriately to instructions. Pupils' listening skills are better than their speaking skills and are broadly average.
68. By the age of eleven, standards in reading are below average. Above-average pupils read fluently and achieve standards in line with national expectations. The average and below-average pupils across the school attain standards below those expected for their ages. Because teachers promote reading for pleasure effectively, most pupils soon acquire a love of books and are enthusiastic readers. However, most pupils lack fluency and often their reading is rather hesitant and stilted and their ability to read unfamiliar words by letter sounds is not fully secure. This is because teachers do not systematically and sufficiently develop such skills during shared and guided reading. However, teachers do promote comprehension skills effectively through skilful questioning and most pupils read texts with appropriate understanding.

The school library is used well by teachers to promote research skills and most pupils know how to use an index and contents page successfully.

69. By the age of eleven, standards in writing are weaker than in other aspects of the subject and are well below the national average. Spelling is poor and pupils do not use punctuation consistently well when writing independently. The successful implementation of new guidelines for handwriting has impacted positively on standards and most pupils make good progress in this aspect of the subject. This is particularly so in Years 3, 4 and 5. This initiative, however, has not yet had time impact on standards in Year 6. Consequently, not all eleven-year-olds write in a consistent joined script. In personal writing, pupils use a limited range of vocabulary and this restricts their achievement in descriptive and creative writing. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and for different purposes across the curriculum and they promote subject specific vocabulary particularly well across the curriculum.
70. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Thirty-five per cent of teaching in the lessons seen was good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and this is an improvement since the previous inspection when 20 per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory or poor. In the good lessons, teachers effectively develop key literacy skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout whole class activities. They provide suitable opportunities for pupils to read aloud and practice skills. All teachers effectively share and evaluate what will be learnt with pupils and this enables them to understand precisely what it is they are going to learn and whether or not they have achieved this. In the good lessons, teachers question pupils skilfully to ensure that they gain a good understanding of the texts that they read. In all lessons, teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour. Guided reading is appropriately organised and ensures that all pupils develop and practice skills in order to make appropriate gains in their learning. Teachers illustrate teaching points effectively in word sentence work through effective explanation and demonstration of skills.
71. Weaknesses in teaching occur when teachers do not sufficiently target a specific group of pupils for intensive support. Not enough opportunities are taken to focus on and develop basic skills such as letter sounds to help pupils' read, spelling, grammar and punctuation. In some lessons, guided reading is not sufficiently structured and too few opportunities are given to pupils to read aloud in order for them to develop and improve their confidence and skills.
72. The subject is now well co-ordinated and the standards pupils achieve and the quality of teaching and learning are effectively monitored across the school. This is resulting in improvements. Assessments for monitoring pupils' progress in the subject are good, particularly in reading and these assessments, including the results of national tests, are carefully analysed in order to inform ability setting and to set school targets in the subject. The setting of personal learning targets for writing for individual pupils has been a very successful initiative in making pupils aware of their own learning. This has begun to impact positively on raising standards in writing. For example, one pupil was seen to be very proud of the fact that he had achieved his target and was keen to share his success with others.

MATHEMATICS

73. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the school's results were well below average and a well below average percentage of pupils achieved the expected level 4. When compared with similar schools, the school's results were below average. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous

inspection, although there has been a steady rise in the schools' average points score. Standards are improving but are not yet high enough. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the age of eleven, standards in this year's Year 6 are now below, rather than well below, average in all aspects of mathematics. Pupils' work in books is often better than that; a good proportion of the work in the top set in Year 6 is from the higher levels of the National Curriculum. Given the well below average attainment of pupils on entry to the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In the other year groups, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected levels is not far off those expected for their age. There are no differences between the attainment of boys and girls and pupils with SEN make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Placing pupils in sets this year has helped teachers prepare effective learning plans for each set and this is helping to raise standards. These take much more account of the different needs of the pupils than at the time of the previous inspection. The benefits of a higher percentage of good and very good teaching are beginning to work through. These two factors largely account for the difference between the 2000 test results and pupils' current standards.

74. By the time they are eleven, above average pupils have good knowledge of number. They use mental calculations accurately and respond quickly to their teachers' questions. Average and below average pupils do not have this accurate mental recall and this slows down their overall progress. Similarly, work in other areas of number is sometimes slow because pupils cannot remember basic number facts. Year 6 pupils solve problems satisfactorily using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. However, most pupils are not confident in searching for a solution to a problem by trying out ideas of their own. They calculate the area of rectangles, triangles and more complex shapes made up of these shapes. Pupils work out percentages, fractions and ratios. In a lesson in the top set in Year 6 a pupil explained that one-eighth could be understood by dividing 8 into 100 and in some way the answer, $12 \frac{1}{2}$ could be used after the decimal point. This was good reasoning and a similar picture was seen in the top set in Year 4 where a nine-year-old divided 256 by 7 and showed that a good way to start was to subtract 210 as he knew 30×7 was 210. After that he could proceed to divide the amount that was left. Pupils' numeracy skills give satisfactory support to their work in other subjects. Pupils draw graphs, tables and read various scales to support work in science. They use measurement skills to design and make models in design and technology and in geography, use co-ordinates and different scales.
75. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, there is some inconsistency. There are marked differences between year groups and between classes in the same year group. This leads to some uneven progress in learning. Teaching in Year 3 is never less than satisfactory and is good in the middle set and very good in the bottom set. In Year 5 teaching is often good and pupils learn well. Pupils learn very well in the top sets of Years 4 and 6 but there is too little challenge for pupils in the middle and lower set of Year 4. In these sets teaching is unsatisfactory. This is because the teachers do not manage the lessons well enough and either too little or too much is expected of pupils. The teachers do not look at their teaching and judge what has been successful or not. In these sets, the skills of the learning support assistants are not always used well enough to develop pupils' learning.
76. In the top sets of Year 4 and Year 6 there are plenty of challenging activities, pupils are fairly and firmly managed and they are told clearly what they have to do to get better results. The work in these classes cracks along at a very good pace and leads pupils into thinking for themselves and poses problems for them to solve. Another common element in these lessons is the very good last section of the lesson during which pupils are asked to explain their methods to their 'fellow mathematicians.'

Pupils enjoy these lessons because as they say; *'I know I'm good at maths'* and; *'I like thinking hard'*.

77. Most teachers have a secure understanding of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy but a small minority do not give pupils a rigorous enough mental starter to the lesson. In the lower set in Year 3 the teacher expected pupils to answer his questions quickly and accurately and gave very good feedback when they were successful. Planning for lessons is satisfactory but where teaching is unsatisfactory more attention needs to be paid to how well pupils learn so that the next plans can be based on how well pupils have done. In all lessons, teachers tell pupils what they are going to learn and this gives them a clearer knowledge of their own learning. Teachers do not sufficiently encourage pupils to search for a solution to a problem by trying out ideas of their own. Where teaching is good or better, teachers check whether pupils think they are learning effectively. Most teachers use good technical language and expect pupils to explain what they are learning by using these words. For example, the teacher in the top set in Year 4 often prompts pupils by saying; *'The inverse of multiplication is ...'* and all of the pupils responded *'division'*. This and other good lessons help pupils learn well because teachers used a range of methods to interest and enthuse them.
78. The school uses ICT well to promote better learning. For example, a program is used regularly by some pupils for fifteen minutes every day. This has raised the attainment of these pupils so that they are within striking distance of achieving the levels expected of eleven-year-olds. The computer lessons pupils receive also help them see how programs use mathematical calculations to work at a faster pace. Pupils also use computers well to construct graphs of the information they have collected.
79. Some teachers write very useful comments in pupils' books, striking up a dialogue with pupils to help them improve the quality of their work. Assessments show that a high proportion of the pupils gain the expected two levels in the four years they are at school. The mathematics co-ordinator and some of the other teachers use the assessments of pupils' work in their books and regular tests to look carefully at their plans but this is not a consistent pattern through the whole school. The tracking of pupils' progress from year to year is satisfactory and the annual non-statutory tests are being used more effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum provision.
80. The school has made a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are now good as the co-ordinators' role has been strengthened. There are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The school's main task is to make sure that the quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and that the overall quality rises to match the best that some teachers demonstrate.

SCIENCE

81. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were well below the national average and below the average of schools with a similar intake. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. However, since that time, the school has increased its average points score by more than the national average. In the most recent national tests, 72 per cent of the pupils achieved the expected level 4, which represents an increase of 19 per cent on the previous year. Given the well below average attainment of pupils on entry and the above average proportion of pupils with SEN, this represents at least satisfactory achievement and progress since the previous inspection. Evidence from the inspection indicates that attainment is still below the national average but the trend of improvement is continuing. This is the

result of a more structured curriculum and better teaching, particularly of investigative science. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls in the national tests or the work seen during the inspection.

82. In work on life processes and living things, pupils in Year 3 and 4 make sound predications of where they might find certain small animals. They know that animals choose habitats on the basis of safety and food supplies. In Year 4 their knowledge is extended successfully and above average and average pupils identify vertebrates and invertebrates accurately. Good support for pupils with SEN helps them to participate in all activities and achieve well. For example, teachers ensure that they are involved in all question and answer sessions and supported with the gathering and recording of evidence. Pupils in Year 5 have a sound understanding of what constitutes a fair test when classifying materials by their properties, for example, when testing materials to see whether they are waterproof, they know to use the same amount of water in the test. When testing various soil samples, collected on a recent outing to the coast, pupils in Year 6 identify them with satisfactory accuracy. They do this through careful observation with a hand lens, by touch and by testing in water. Throughout the school, pupils develop a sound knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes.
83. From a low base, pupils throughout the school achieve well in the development of a scientific vocabulary and in their enquiry skills. There is clear evidence of a shift over the past year from teaching scientific knowledge to developing scientific enquiry skills. However, since this aspect of their learning has not been developed consistently and progressively over a period of time, pupils' skills are below average. Few pupils are able to select their own equipment to conduct a test, decide on an appropriate approach for themselves and suggest improvements in their work. Average and below average pupils find difficulty in recording information in their own way due to below average writing skills. There is little evidence of pupils writing extended descriptions or explanations of their work in science.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some very good teaching in Years 3 and 6. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Improvement is due to staffing changes, better focus on scientific enquiry and good use of the learning environment outside lessons. The linking of science to everyday situations is improving pupils' learning and enthusiasm for the subject. For example, pupils study the dangers of litter and other forms of pollution to the environment. They make and test their own parachutes and boomerangs and test the best material to make a fisherman's clothes. These activities develop pupils' enjoyment and fascination with the subject and introduce a spiritual dimension to their work. Some good links are made between, for example, science and religious education when pupils study the needs of animals. This helps pupils realise the importance of science in the wider world. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the potential dangers in appropriate situations during lessons, for example, a Year 6 teacher asks the pupils; *'Why have I put rubber gloves on all your tables?'* Teachers use good questioning to develop pupils' understanding, for example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher asks: *'What key factors must we consider when choosing the material for making the fisherman's clothes?'*
85. Weaknesses in teaching relate to a lack of pace so that learning is not as rapid as it should be. Planning that is too brief to indicate what different groups of pupils will learn and doing too much for the pupils rather than letting them take more initiative for their own learning. Teachers do not use computers sufficiently to record and analyse data from their investigative work. Although satisfactory assessments are

carried out regularly, they are not yet linked sufficiently to the scheme of work and so lose some of their effectiveness in informing the planning process.

86. Leadership and management of the subject were unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. A new co-ordinator has recently taken on the role and promising initiatives are being developed. There is now a good scheme of work based on the development of key skills from year to year. This is providing a good base to help teachers to plan more effectively for the development of enquiry skills. Where science is integrated into a general topic, key skills are not developed so effectively and assessment is not sharp enough to indicate where pupils' work needs to be improved. This is recognised by the school as a priority for development.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are now similar to those expected for pupils' ages. At the time of the previous report, standards were below age related expectations and pupils made unsatisfactory progress in the knowledge and understanding aspect of the subject. This is now no longer the case and pupils achieve well in all elements of art and design.
88. Across the school, pupils have opportunity to work with a good range of media such as inks, paints, pastels, charcoal, textiles and clay. They mix media and apply various techniques to create interesting effects in their work. For example, in Year 3, pupils use crayons to create a winter style background then successfully blow black paint through a straw onto it. In this way they represent the starkness of the bare branches of trees in winter. Pupils use information and communication technology effectively to enrich their work and use computer programs well to create computer-generated art. Pupils' experience of three-dimensional work is sound and most pupils work satisfactorily in clay. For example, pupils in Year 3 show good attention to shape and pattern as they imprint a clay tile with various objects in order to depict the features of a house.
89. Pupils achieve well in painting skills and techniques and most know how to colour mix to obtain a precise shade of colour. They then apply paint effectively using various techniques to create different textures. For example, pupils in Year 5 mix and apply watercolour paint very well to create a colour wash background. They mix hues of blue and green for their seascape paintings and show they understand well the different brush techniques, for example, short line strokes and stippling. Pupils in Year 3 show a good sense of colour and colour mixing as they use shades of red and yellow in order to create sunset and sunrise images as a backdrop to silhouettes of famous buildings around the world.
90. Pupils develop satisfactory skills of observational drawing. They learn to observe in detail and use shading techniques well to create depth of tone and shadow in their drawings. For example, pupils in Year 3 draw carefully the features on a shoe and show good attention to line and shape. They use shading techniques skilfully to create shadow and tone. Pupils in Year 5 work with various media such as pastels, charcoal and chalk in order to complete observational drawings of a vase of daffodils. In Year 6, pupils observe accurately the features on their hand and use line and shading techniques to good effect to pick out detail and create shape and shadow. Pupils use the work of other artists well to inform their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 work in the style of Pablo Picasso's blue period in order to develop their sense colour and colour mixing and understand how colour can be used to create mood.
91. On the basis of the lessons seen and scrutiny of pupils' past work, the quality of teaching is good. Of three art lessons observed during the inspection, two were very

good. Features of the very good teaching observed was the very skilful way in which teachers demonstrated and promoted key skills and techniques. Pupils were shown the correct way to use brush and mix colours. There was continuous assessment of pupils' progress throughout the lessons. This resulted in pupils receiving good guidance and support through skilful demonstration and ensured pupils made good progress and achieved well. Teachers effectively use the paintings of famous artists and their own personal artwork to develop pupils' ideas and illustrate teaching points. When there are shortcomings in teaching, teachers do not sufficiently develop key skills in lessons.

92. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is hard working and enthusiastic and has ensured that the subject has been effectively developed since the previous inspection. Good quality guidelines have been produced to inform teachers' planning. Good resources have been built up to ensure that pupils have a good range of quality materials and equipment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Attainment of eleven-year-olds could not be judged. There were no lessons planned during the inspection and there was not enough work around the school by this year group. However, the work seen in Years 3 and 4 during the inspection, was similar to that expected for pupils' ages. This is largely because the school is using a national scheme of work, which clearly sets out the skills to be taught and learned. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was unsatisfactory and there was no whole-school curriculum for teachers to follow.
94. In Year 3, pupils examine toys to discover how they move. Pupils are enthusiastic and work well talking about and drawing their ideas of how the toys move. One girl used the term 'vibrate' to describe the motion and another drew a good diagram of a cog to show how circular motion could be used. This mechanical aspect continues as pupils in Year 4 produce satisfactory moving illustrations of animals using a crack and slide mechanism. In this lesson learning was satisfactory as pupils experimented with pivoting the crack at different spots to produce more and less movement. Because of a lack of time this work was not moved on to the next stage of formally evaluating why cranks of different lengths should produce different movements. The lesson was satisfactory overall and pupils made their pictures and understood how horizontal movement could be changed to an oscillating motion.
95. Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to take products apart and gain an understanding about the components. For example, pupils in Year 6 disassembled slippers before making their own. Pupils understand how to design their projects making notes about the materials they want to use and how after making their projects they judge how well they have worked. In the two lessons seen teaching was good in Year 3 and satisfactory in Year 4. Teaching was better for the younger children because the teacher had high expectations of the vocabulary that pupils should use to describe what they were observing. In the past, pupils have made bread, biscuits and cakes in a good quality, well-equipped kitchen. Teddy bears made by stitching and stuffing fabric patterns show satisfactory skills. The school's project to mark the millennium is a good example of fabric work and consists of ten well-constructed banners showing a thousand years of history. Pupils have made shaduufs, balancing the water bucket in a tripod support. Pupils in Year 6 experimented with materials and construction techniques to make a desert shelter. There is a gap in pupils' experience concerned with using materials like wood although the scheme of work shows that this will be covered.
96. In the lessons seen pupils were keen to help each other and enjoyed their work, often with the teacher in Year 4 having to insist that they stop work to get to assembly. The

school is well resourced and the co-ordinator has developed a sound approach to planning and assessment in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

97. Standards in geography are below those expected for pupils' ages throughout the school as they were at the time of the previous inspection. There has been insufficient progress in standards since that time, although teaching is now better. The subject is linked to other subjects and is taught as part of a theme or topic. While this gives continuity to pupils' learning it is not rigorous enough to enable pupils to develop their geographical skills effectively throughout the school. As a consequence pupils in Year 6 were unable to identify common features on an Ordnance Survey Map when comparing settlements. In another lesson, Year 6 pupils were encouraged to give reasons why the Tesco store was built where it was. They eventually achieved this but this proved difficult. It was evident that the pupils were not used to geographical enquiry.
98. The teaching and learning was satisfactory in two of the three lessons observed during the inspection and good in the third. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. In the good lesson, the teacher questioned her pupils effectively, encouraging them to define different sized settlements. She made good use of resources allowing pupils to find different sized settlements on a variety of Ordnance Survey maps. Pupils were enthusiastic about this task and worked well together. There were good links with numeracy as the teacher showed them how to work out the approximate area of the settlements they had identified. All pupils, including those with SEN, made good progress in this lesson because they learnt a lot about the features of maps. In all the lessons the teachers had sound subject knowledge and good relationships with their pupils. Lesson planning is not strong enough to clearly identify what the different groups of pupils will learn. Consequently, the work given does not always meet pupils' individual needs effectively. Satisfactory lessons move along at a sound pace but more could be expected of the pupils.
99. There are still weaknesses in the geography curriculum and key subject skills are not taught regularly enough. There has, for example, been very little geography taught in Year 4 this academic year. Although there have been maps to support the history topics in this year group, there is no evidence of pupils using any geographical skills. Pupils in Year 5 have studied the water cycle and there are accounts of visits to Old Leigh and a reference to the development of Basildon. Year 3 have studied buildings around the world and have compared the temperature throughout the year in Basildon and Egypt. Teachers make good use of the local area and their residential trips. However, the system of linking the teaching of geography within the topics, without the support of a good scheme of work, is unsatisfactory. It prevents the pupils from making the progress they should. The leadership and management of the subject have been unsatisfactory. However, the new co-ordinator is aware of these weaknesses in the curriculum although she has had no opportunity to address the issues yet.

HISTORY

100. Only three history lessons were observed during the week of the inspection and these were in Year 6. Discussion with the pupils and an analysis of pupils' topic books indicates that standards are below those expected for pupils' ages. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection.
101. In Year 3, pupils have covered all aspects of the history curriculum for their age, including the use of historical enquiry and an understanding of primary and secondary historical evidence and their attainment is in line with national expectations

for Year 3. Above-average pupils, however, present their work in the same way as the rest of the pupils, sometimes filling in missing words on worksheets when they would have been able to organise their own work.

102. Throughout the school, pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of ancient civilisations such as Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece as well as significant periods in British history. In an assembly during the inspection, Year 5 pupils gave a good account of life and the monarchy of the Tudor and Stuart times. Pupils in Year 6 have studied the Victorians and the history of the local area and Lyme Regis following their residential visit. However, discussion with the pupils and their response in lessons indicates that they do not have the skills to interpret historical evidence beyond the secondary evidence found in books and on the Internet. They do not know that this evidence is subjective and could be inaccurate. Many pupils lack an understanding of chronology because they have forgotten what they have learnt. Their topics are interesting and pupils build up a sound knowledge while they are completing them. This acquisition of knowledge, however, is not backed up with the relevant understanding and skills that should be developed from year to year. This was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and has not been successfully addressed.
103. Pupils enjoy their history lessons and their attitudes to their work are good and often very good. In one very good lesson the pupils studied old photographs of Pitsea. The teacher asked for statements about each photograph as pupils worked in threes. They then moved to another photograph. Pupils organised themselves well, and pertinent questions from the teacher during the lessons guided them towards gathering first hand evidence from the photographs and comparing it with the present day. This was an unfamiliar skill and pupils made very good progress. Pupils with SEN make effective contributions to discussion and the analysis of evidence. In another good lesson, the teacher followed up the visit to Lyme Regis with a discussion about the Cobb and its history. She maintained pupils' interest so that they entered into the task of writing a brochure about the Cobb with enthusiasm and perseverance. Because of this, pupils made good progress in the lesson. Progress was satisfactory in the parallel lesson where less use was made of evidence and the teacher spent some time reminding pupils of the facts with no reference to the evidence for this. Pupils consolidated what they had learnt to produce their brochures but their historical skills were not extended. The teaching was satisfactory. In all these lessons the teachers had good relationships with their pupils. The teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is satisfactory overall.
104. There are still weaknesses in the history curriculum that limit the attainment and progress of the pupils. The subject is taught through a number of themes or topics. These are broad and interesting but there is no overview of the development of historical understanding and skills throughout the school, as there is no scheme of work for the subject. This means that the development of skills is spasmodic, depending on the topic rather than the programme of study for history. The leadership and management of the subject have been unsatisfactory. However, the new co-ordinator is aware of the need to amend the planning to cater for the development of skills throughout the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

105. Attainment in ICT is in line with national expectations, except in control technology, which is not well enough developed. The well-equipped computer suite, placed centrally in the school, has ensured that pupils receive enough opportunities to learn skills in the subject. Additional computers and software from the Education Action Zone has helped the school maintain resources at a good level.

106. In their weekly session in the computer suite pupils are taught the skills which cover the National Curriculum in the subject. Eleven-year-olds draft their work directly onto the screen and understand how to edit it. For example, they change the type and size of the font as they consider the nature of their work. Ten-year-olds mixed text and illustrations well when preparing a publicity pamphlet for the Leigh-on-Sea visit. They placed an illustration on the page and understood how to put text around the picture. While half the class carried out this exercise, other pupils designed a publicity poster and talked about how the size and style of font would be important when they came to transfer their designs to the computer. They understand how computers are used in design in the world outside school.
107. Teachers use computers satisfactorily to support work in other subjects, for example, pupils in Year 4 use computers to refine their research work on animals as they use a paint program to draw an animal and then insert text to explain their work. In Year 3, pupils use computers to draw graphs of the information they have collected in science. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have used spreadsheets to collate their information and have applied a formula successfully to a column of figures. This work was based on a survey pupils had made of the building materials in use around the school and local area. Throughout the schools pupils understand how to apply the tools which most programs use. They open files, know how to cut and paste, drag and insert and save their work. Pupils do not have sufficient knowledge or experience of using ICT systems to control events in a predetermined manner and to sense physical data.
108. In the lessons observed, teaching was good. Teachers know enough about the subject to teach skills effectively. They plan work which is based on the work pupils are doing in other subjects and in the lessons observed paid good attention to the different learning needs of pupils, including those with SEN. This enables these pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Learning support assistants provide good support for pupils in lessons. Lessons are well organised and in Year 6 the teacher make effective use of an interactive whiteboard to show pupils step-by-step procedures to apply calculations to their spreadsheets. This develops their understanding well. Pupils are managed well and they are keen to learn in the computer suite. Teachers use laptop computers well to reinforce and extend pupils learning in mathematics and English. Pupils who are assessed to be just short of the expected levels in English and mathematics use the laptops for 15 minutes each day and have recorded good progress since they started using the programs.
109. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is a skilled manager and the school's commitment to the subject is demonstrated in the development of the computer suite. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the need to develop software and the governors are committed to further spending to update the computers in the suite and around the school. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, maintaining the quality of teaching and improving the resources in the subject.

MUSIC

110. Pupils' attainment in music varied throughout the school at the time of the previous inspection as did the quality of teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during this inspection and one lesson was very good. Pupils' attainment in the aspects seen is similar to that expected for pupils' ages and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. There was no evidence of pupils' having experience of composition. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

111. Pupils in Year 4 made good progress in a lesson during the inspection. The teacher had high expectations of her pupils' abilities and by the end of the lesson pupils were making a good attempt to sing a two-part song with challenging melody lines and a contrasting second part. The teacher has good subject knowledge and encourages her pupils to use musical vocabulary, to listen carefully and to watch the conductor in order to adjust the pace and volume in response to hand signals. Pupils responded with enthusiasm and worked hard. One pupil with SEN especially enjoyed the lesson and sang very well. Pupils in Year 3 made sound progress as they attempted to clap the rhythm of the 'Mini-beast Parade'. The teaching was sound in this lesson but the positioning of the overhead projector meant that pupils were very squashed as they sang and the singing suffered because of this.
112. Pupils respond well to the excitement of playing instruments. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils listened to 'The Quarrel' from a Verdi opera. They then performed a quarrel themselves, empathising with the moods of the characters in the trio. The teacher gave his pupils the opportunity to experiment themselves but skilfully judged when to give some instruction. This resulted in pupils making very good progress. The teacher had excellent relationships with his pupils, developing self-esteem and a pride in performance. One pupil with SEN who visits the class regularly from a special school, performed within his trio without any inhibitions.
113. The school uses a commercial scheme of work for music, which is supported with materials from another scheme. This provides a balanced curriculum and pupils make sound progress throughout the school, building on their previous learning successfully. Some pupils belong to the school choir, which performs regularly within the community. It has recently taken part in the Basildon music festival. There is a hand chime group and occasional recorder clubs. The choir and the hand chime group gave a good performance in the whole school singing session during the inspection. However, there is no music or singing during normal assemblies and too few opportunities for pupils to learn to play other instruments.
114. Resources for music have improved and, with the purchase of more instruments and the planned building of a new music room, will be good. The subject is co-ordinated well with good plans for development. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Standards in the work seen in physical education are similar to those expected for pupils' ages. Only work in the development of games' skills was observed. There is no significant difference in the quality of work of boys and girls and pupils who have SEN achieve standards that are comparable with all other pupils. Teachers' planning, scrutiny of photographic evidence and pupils' records indicate that all aspects of physical education are covered in appropriate units of work. The standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.
116. Records indicate that almost all pupils are able to swim the required distance of 25 metres by the age of eleven. Very good assessments of pupils' progress in athletics are kept. These record pupils' performance in throwing and running events over their time in school. They serve as a good stimulus to pupils and are effective in developing learning well. For example, pupils are eager to improve on their performance and have a visual record of their achievements. Good records are also kept that chart general achievements in dance, gymnastics, swimming and games. Over the past two years there has been good in-service training for the staff in dance and games. This has built successfully on the enthusiasm and expertise of the staff.

117. By the age of eleven, in warm-up activities to lessons in games, pupils are able to change speed and direction quickly and with control. They stop quickly on a given command. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils co-operate well in small groups to devise their own game. This involves utilising five pieces of different equipment and a number of different skills. Pupils enjoy the activity and share out various tasks sensibly in order to complete the activity. When participating in relay races, pupils in Year 4 show satisfactory skills in controlling a ball with a hockey stick around obstacles. Above-average pupils do this well using both the inside and outside of the stick. Pupils in Year 5 have sound hand-eye co-ordination when playing tennis activities and above average pupils are able to hit the ball on the volley with good control. Pupils show good perseverance when trying to improve their efforts.
118. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and is now at least satisfactory with half the lessons seen being good. The most effective teaching is characterised by clear instructions, good lesson management and high expectations of pupil involvement. Teachers' confidence and expertise have improved since the previous inspection and pupils' own work is now used to show good technique and how work might be improved. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher asks the pupils; *'How can we make your game more challenging?'* The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is transmitted well to the pupils who are keen and try hard. In encouraging pupils to work together as a group in order to achieve a common end, teachers develop pupils' social development well. In lessons that are not so effective, teachers tend to talk too much and the balance between pupil activity and instruction means that pupils sit for too long. Consequently, they do not make as much progress as they might.
119. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and offers support when necessary. Good in-service training has been organised and a good range of activities has been planned. These include athletics, games, swimming, dance, gymnastics, orienteering and problem solving activities. All these make a good contribution to the pupils' moral and social development. There has been no recent monitoring of teaching in order for the co-ordinator to gain a sufficient overview of how teaching of the subject is progressing. The accommodation and learning resources are good and make an effective contribution to pupils' achievements

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. There has been satisfactory improvement in the development of the subject since the previous inspection. The school has successfully implemented the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education and teachers follow it appropriately. The co-ordinator has effectively used the syllabus to devise guidelines for the subject that outline what is to be taught within each year group. This ensures that all aspects of the subject are now appropriately covered. However, these guidelines are very content based and do not sufficiently outline the skills to be developed from one year to the next. This restricts the rate of pupils' overall progress to a satisfactory level.
121. At the time of the previous inspection, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity was unsatisfactory and their knowledge and understanding of other world faiths was poor. Standards were judged to be well below average. Inspection findings indicate that the pupils are now beginning to gain a better awareness of the main principles of Christianity and of other world faiths. This is because of more consistent coverage of the subject. However, but by the age of eleven, pupils' attainment though improving, still remains below the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus.

122. Through the discussion of themes and well-chosen stories, including stories from the Bible, pupils across the school have opportunity to gain insight into the traditions and beliefs of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. For example, pupils in Year 4 learn about the significance of kosher food within the Jewish faith and in Year 6 pupils study key festivals and symbolism within different world faiths. In Year 3, pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of care and responsibility as they talk about how human beings relate to other creatures in the world. In Year 4, pupils become aware of the needs of others as they discuss the parable of the Good Samaritan. Visits to local churches enhance pupils learning well and enable them to experience some of the traditions of faith first hand. For example, pupils in Year 6 after a visit to two local churches discuss the various symbols and features found in a church. They talk about the altar and the cross and above-average pupils explain their function and significance within the Christian faith well.
123. Although teaching does cover all aspects outlined in the Local Agreed Syllabus, some of these aspects are not covered in sufficient depth to enable older pupils to gain a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject by the age of eleven. Pupils do not retain knowledge well and by the age eleven they are unable to recall and talk confidently about the work they have covered. Pupils' progress is sometimes restricted because there are too few opportunities for them to follow up and record in writing the themes they have discussed. This restricts their ability to consolidate their learning and extend further their knowledge and understanding.
124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and varies from very good to unsatisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers extend pupils' thinking well through challenging questioning. They give clear instructions and explanations. A good range of effective teaching strategies is used during lessons in order to maintain a brisk pace. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations. When there are weaknesses in teaching, lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge and this leads to unsatisfactory progress within the lesson.
125. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of standards, teaching and learning in the subject across the school and consequently progress in the development of the subject is too slow.